

#### **Comms Lab: Webinar V**

# IW:LEARN Project Website Made Easy

From Set Up to Stand Out

23 April 2025

Funded by

Implemented by







Executed by





#### **AGENDA**

- Welcome & Introduction
- Why: Purpose of the Website Guidelines
- What: Key Requirements & Must-Haves
- How: Design, Functionality & User Experience
- Showcase: Examples of Good IW Project Websites
- Q&A
- Wrap Up & Resources









## **IW:LEARN Welcome** & Introduction

Framing the need for strong digital presence





# Why: Purpose of the Website Guidelines

Strategic goals behind the update









#### **Why Website Guidelines Matter**

- ✓ Ensure consistency, accessibility, and quality across all GEF IW project websites
- ✓ Help projects create user-friendly, credible, and informative digital platforms
- ✓ Support long-term visibility beyond a project's active cycle





#### Strategic Goals Behind the Guidelines

- ✓ Standardize project site structure & branding
- ✓ Strengthen outreach and global visibility
- ✓ Promote interoperability across the IW:LEARN network
- ✓ Enhance data sharing and knowledge transfer
- ✓ Ensure mobile-friendly, accessible, and inclusive experiences

# What: Key Requirements & Must-Haves

Walkthrough of mandatory compliance elements

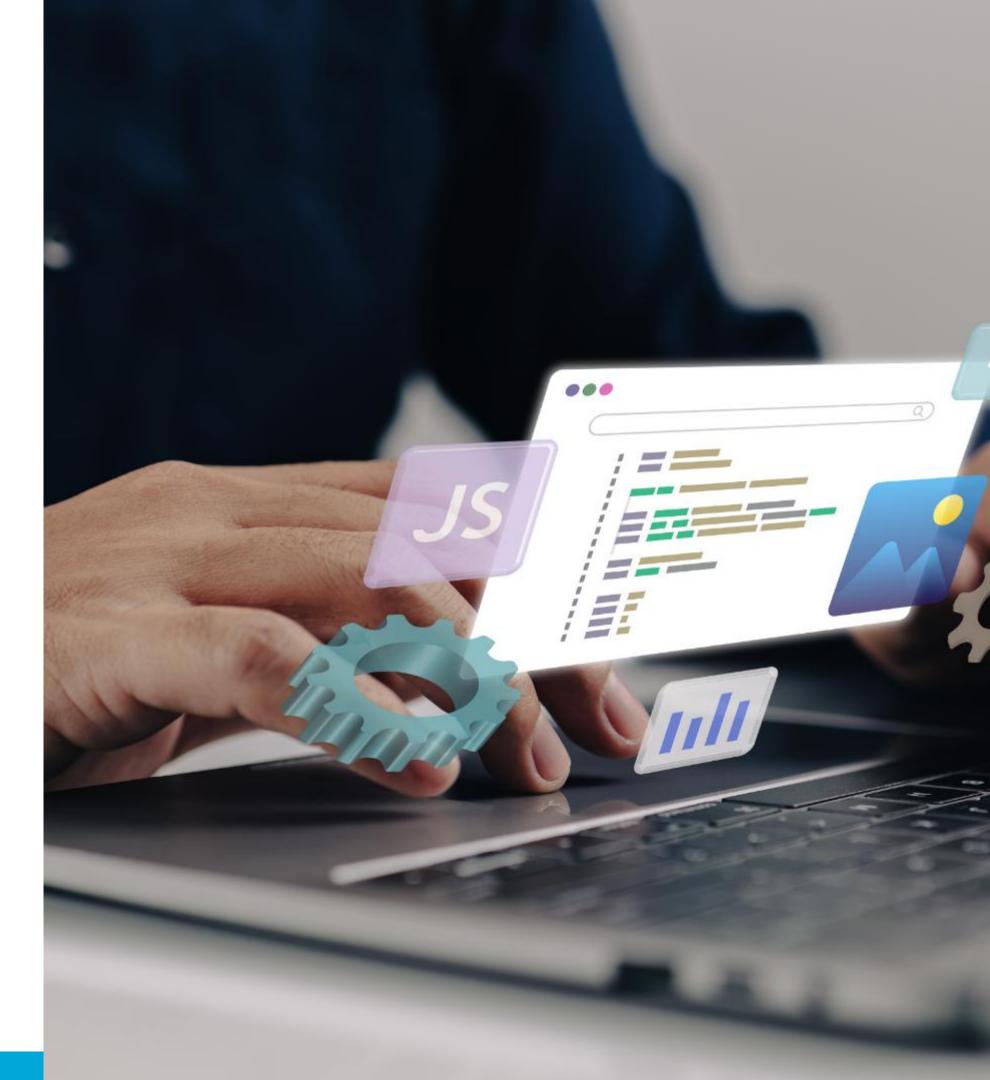












#### Walkthrough of mandatory compliance elements

Mandatory requirements checklist		
Funding Acknowledgment	Logos	
	Funding Statement	
Structure	About	
	Project Activities	
	News & Events	
	Resources	
	Contact information	
	Engaging Homepage	
Functions	Search Function	
	Social Media Integration	
	Multimedia Richness	
	Responsive Design	
	Browser Compatibility	
	Accessibility	
Performance	Fast Loading Time	
	Link Integrity	
Security and Privacy	Secure Browsing > HTTPS	
	Data Privacy > GDPR	

#### What can IW:LEARN do for you?

Two main resources:

- ✓ Website guidelines
- ✓ Website toolkit

Website Guidelines: Outline the essential features and best practices for creating your project website.

Website toolkit: Practical service to assist you in building your project website.

This involves filling out a **form** to initiate the website creation process.

IW:LEARN staff will then provide support in setting up your site and ensuring it's automatically integrated with IW:LEARN's International Waters Information Management System.

Domain: xxxxxx.iwlearn.org

#### **Website Toolkit**

The Website Toolkit provides support for developing a dynamic content management system, that is linked and searchable through IW:LEARN's International Waters Information Management System. The resulting network will allow access to high quality data and information and ensure dissemination to a broader community of stakeholders.

IW:LEARN works with GEF International Waters projects to improve online sharing of data and information relevant to managing international waters, including marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems.

To request assistance in generating a project web site please fill ou this form.

With the Website Toolkit, IW:LEARN is able to provide GEF IW projects the support they need for developing a dynamic content management system. Websites developed using the Toolkit incorporate usability, accessibility and metadata

standards, and will be linked through IW:LEARN and UNEP's distributed discovery mechanism. The resulting network will allow access to high quality data and information and ensure dissemination to a broader community of stakeholders.



- > Website Toolkit
- > How to: Edit content
- > How to: Work with sections
- > How to: Work with page layout
- > How to: Work with styles & scripts
- > How to: Work with other languages
- > How to: Use the admin interface
- > How to: Setup a server (Server admins)
- > How to edit a project on IW:Learn.net
- > How to: Work with custom layouts
- > How to: Add and edit project results

https://iwlearn.net/learning/toolkits









# IW: LEARN Website Toolkit

Websites created with the toolkit adhere to usability, accessibility, and metadata standards, and they are connected through IW: LEARN.

The toolkit websites are simple in layout, design, and function on purpose so that anyone with little web knowledge can maintain them.





https://mmcg.iwlearn.org/

# How: Design, Functionality & User Experience

Tips, tools, & layout guidance















#### Webinar Overview

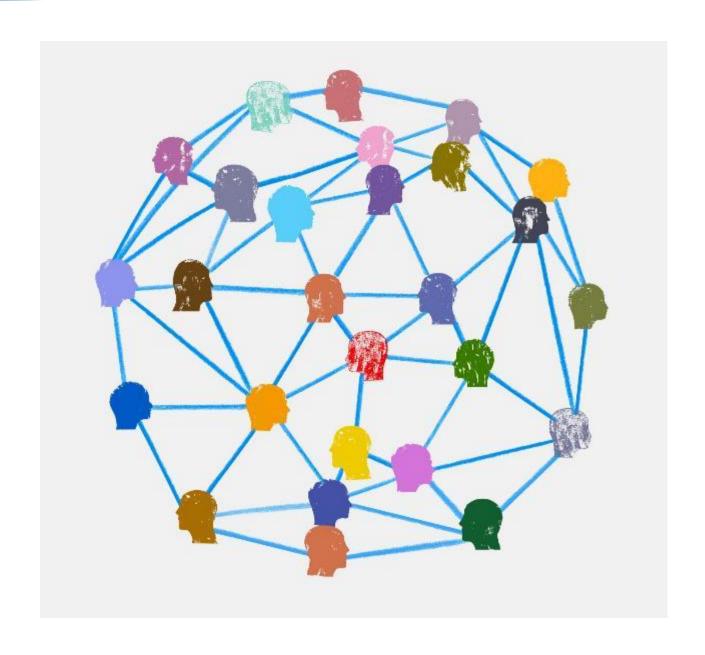
This webinar will equip participants with practical website tools to enhance IW project outreach, stakeholder engagement, and funding acquisition.

This webinar emphasizes websites as core communications tools. Suitable for all experience levels, the webinar highlights the role of IW project websites in increasing visibility, supporting collaboration, and extending the impact beyond the IW project's lifespan.

## Why Websites Matter for YOUR IW Project

In today's digital world, your website is often the **first impression** of your project. It shapes how partners, funders, and the public perceive your work, instantly. **Make it count!** 

- It's your project's digital home
- ► It's more than a homepage → it's a key tool for outreach, visibility, and credibility
- Helps share your mission, important data, and results clearly
- Supports IW:LEARN's mission of collaboration and knowledge exchange → a strong website helps build bridges across projects by making knowledge sharable





# Core Functions of a Great Website

Every IW project site should:

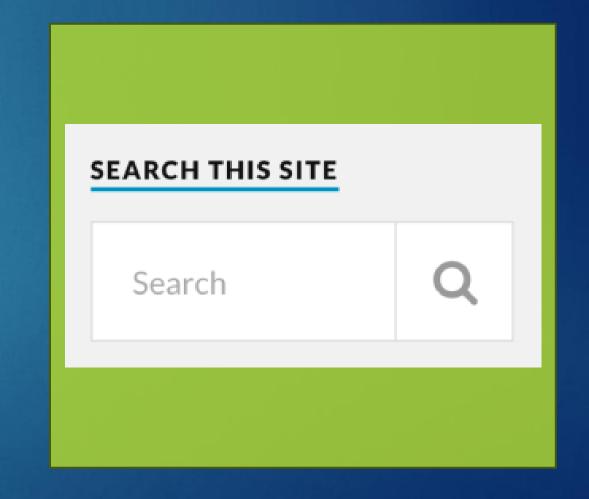
- Clearly explain your IW project's purpose
- Share updates and resources in a central place
- Be accessible & mobile-friendly
- Keep your project visible and useful, even after the project has ended

\*Think of your IW project's website as a living tool to add to your communications toolbox, not a static report!

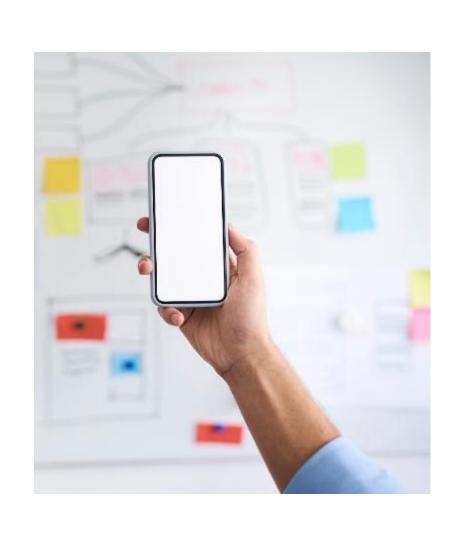
# Design That Works: Layout & Navigation

Keep it clean. Keep it clear. Keep it easy.

- Make your homepage do the heavy lifting → it should answer the what, who, and why of your project in under 10 seconds
- ► Use clear, simple menus → keep the structure intuitive and content easy to find
- Include a search bar
- Highlight latest updates and key project areas



# User Experience: Mobile & Accessibility First



If your site doesn't work for everyone, it doesn't work.

- Mobile optimization is a must → Most users are browsing on their phone; your layout should adjust accordingly and stay readable.
- Accessibility helps <u>everyone</u> → Alt text, high contrast, and keyboard navigation support a wider audience and boost credibility.
- Fast, smooth navigation keeps users engaged → Large files or confusing interfaces lead to high bounce rates. Keep it clean and efficient.

### Content Strategy: Clear, Fresh, & Focused

- Write for your audience, not yourself > Use plain language (avoid jargon) and organize content by what users actually need
- What should your website content do?
  - Communicate your IW project's mission
  - Share updates, milestones, and results in plain language
  - Use a mix of text and visuals for variety and clarity
  - Stay relevant with regular reviews (every 3-6 months)
- ▶ Use strong CTAs to give users clear direction →
  - "Download report"
  - "Subscribe to our newsletter"
  - "Explore our map"
  - "Follow along on social media"



## Show, Don't Just Tell

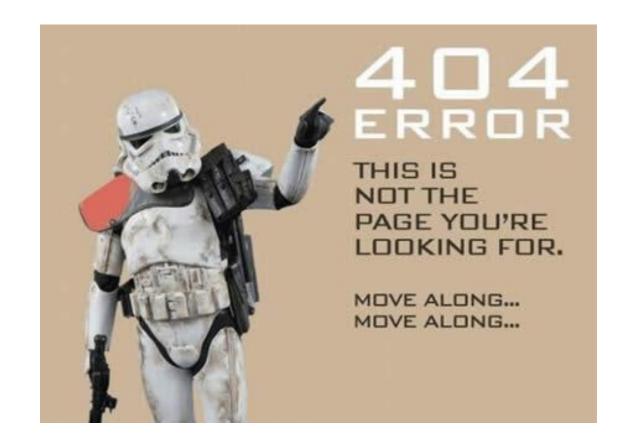
Visual storytelling supports understanding and makes your IW project's message more engaging.

- Use visuals to simplify and support your message
   → Infographics, charts, maps, and videos help make complex info easier to understand.
- Avoid visual clutter → Every image should serve a purpose. Leave white space and be sure to break up long blocks of text.
- ▶ Balance media and content → Pair quality visuals with text to keep users engaged without any distraction.



#### Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ► Too much content all at once → Overloading users with dense text or images can overwhelm and confuse.
- Confusing navigation or structure → If people can't find what they need quickly, they'll leave.
- Neglecting updates or mobile optimization → Outdated or non-responsive sites damage credibility and reduce reach.



#### What We Can Learn



- A good web site focuses on what really matters: the audience and the message.
- Plan your IW project's website structure and content to remain useful even after the project ends.
- Your IW project website reflects your professionalism → A clean, strategic site can elevate how your project is perceived and supported.

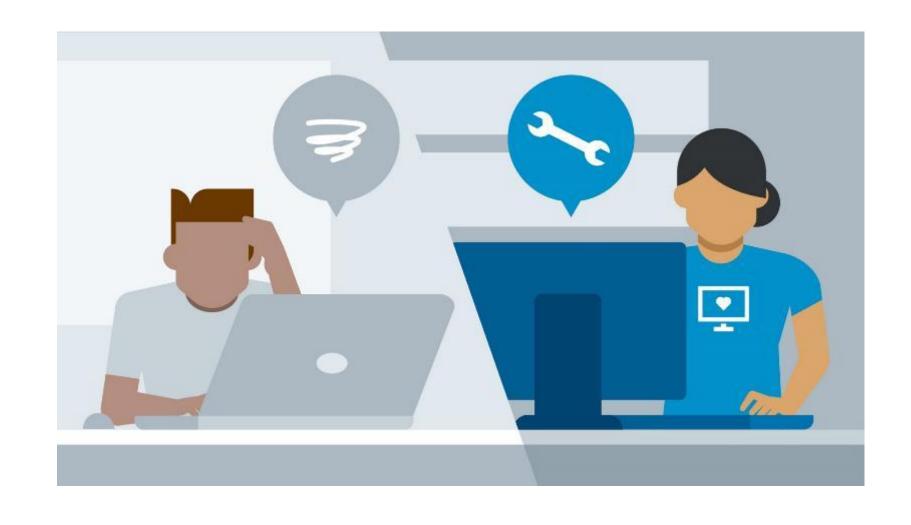
### Quick Website Audit Checklist

- Does your homepage explain your project? → Keep it clear, concise, and purpose-driven.
- Is your IW project website easy to navigate and upto-date? → Check menus, dates, links, and whether users can find info quickly.
- Is it mobile-friendly and accessible? → Try loading your website on different devices (phone, laptop, desktop, tablet) and make adjustments for optimized and inclusive design.



# Resources to Support You

- Use the IW:LEARN Website Guidelines Template → A step-by-step reference to help you structure and manage your site effectively.
- Try the website audit checklist → A simple tool to help identify improvements and prioritize next steps for your IW project's website.
- Explore successful project sites → See what's working and adapt strategies that fit your context.



#### Let's Discuss!



- ► What's working on your current website? → Feel free to share examples or features that you've found to be especially helpful.
- Where are you still facing challenges? → Let's explore solutions and support across the IW community.
- ► Any great website examples to highlight? → We'd love to hear what's inspired you!

## Showcase: Examples of Good IW Project Websites

Inspiration & learnings



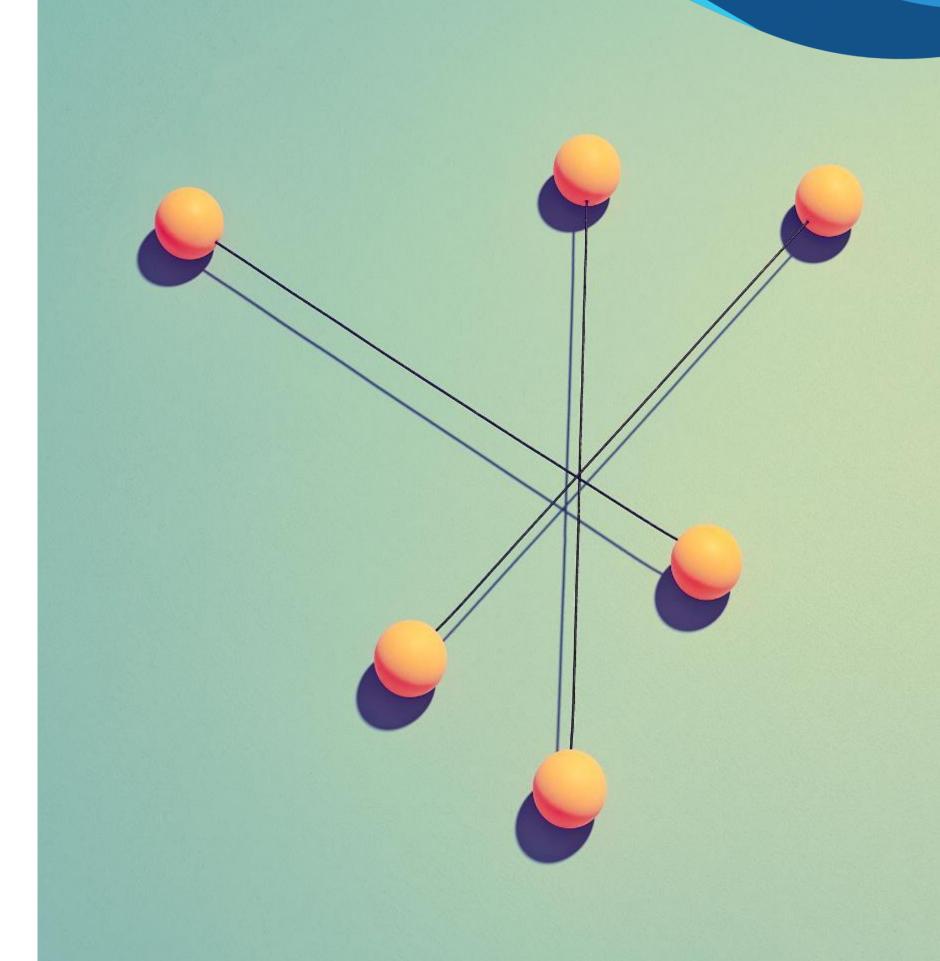












# Website Highlight:

ICPDR Website Redesign Highlights

- Migrated to a new CMS for easier updates
- Introduced mobile-responsive design
- Improved accessibility features
- Streamlined navigation and sitemap
- Updated layout for **better readability** and **user navigation**
- Modernized visual design

#### OLD ICPDR Website





VIENNA, 22 March - World Water Day 2022 is focusing on groundwater and making the invisible visible



VIENNA, 15th March 2021 - The environmental art competition, "Danube Art Master" is delighted to have received a surprisingly large number of artworks submitted in 2021, despite taking place under truly exceptional circumstances. This year's international winners were announced at an online ceremony last



5th March 2022, VIENNA - The ICPOR has announced Bingit Vogel as its new Executive Secretary. Mr. Vogel will be taking on the role later this year following the ratiroment of Ivan Zaradsky after nearly a decade in the





Following the publication of the ICPOR's Danuba River Racin Management Plan (DRBMP) & Danube Flood Ric Management Plan (DRBMP) Update 2021, and their andorsement at the 4th Canuba Ministerial Meeting.







website and sincerely hope we can inspire you to learn more about how the ICPOR works tirelessly towards deaner, healthier and refer waters in the Danube River Essin, for everyone

Mr. Röbert-Eugen Szép K.PCR President 2022

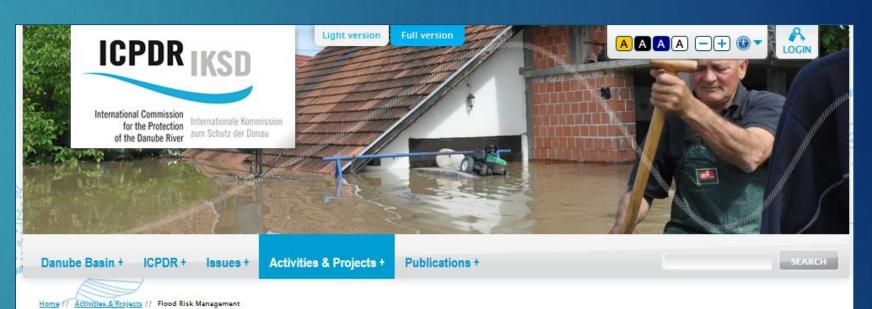


Save our Danube Sturgeon





Layout element or feature	Action (keep/remove/improve)	Remark
General layout	Improve	We have a "traditional" layout with header, menu, content area and sidebar, fixed content width and background image on top and bottom of the page – rather looking for a modernisation/evolution, not something completely different
(4) "Light" version	Keep/improve?	A theme without background images intended for users with low-bandwidth – is there a more elegant way to achieve the same effect?
(4) Accessibility features	Keep/improve?	3 additional colour-contrast themes and font-size change function – is this still current state of art?
(4) Link to internal working area	Improve	Only useful for ICPDR community -> could be moved to footer
(2) Main navigation	Improve	Rethink structure, simplify, should work on small/touch screens
(3) Search	Improve	Search results should be enriched with facets, e.g. types of content (e.g. News, Articles , Documents) and thematic areas (menu area)
(1) Main content	Improve	Depends on content type, see below
(5) Sidebar	Improve	Contains editable blocks (e.g. President greeting, Social media links, Sturgeon banner, latest magazine issue).
(6) Footer	Keep	Links to Contact, Data privacy, Disclaimer, plus address and cookies info.



#### Flood Risk Management

In response to the danger of flooding, the ICPDR is engaged in a range of activities that aim to manage flood risks in a sustainable way.

The ICPDR is a coordination platform for the implementation of the EU Floods Directive and for the preparation and update of the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. Linking of flood risk management with the river basin management is one of the key goals of the ICPDR.

Recently, three project applications addressing transboundary flood risk management between Austria and Hungary received funding from the EU Cross Border Cooperation:



#### Follow us!







#### Did you know?

The ICPDR involves the stakeholders from a broad spectrum of backgrounds in its River Basin Management. Learn more about how Public Participation contributes to making water policies more successful.

## NEW ICPDR Website



ICPDR IKSD

Photo Gallery Press Releases

**NEWS & MEDIA** 

TNMN Yearbooks

Documents

**PUBLICATIONS** 

Annual Reports

Danube Watch Magazine

General Publications

Management Plans

Strategic & Technical

TASKS & TOPICS ~

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Danube Declarations ICPDR Framework

Documents Memoranda of Understanding

Terms of Reference

MAPS & DATA

Databases

Interactive Maps PDF Maps

QBO

#### Welcome to ICPDR.org!



We invite you to browse through our website and sincerely hope we can inspire you to learn more about how the JCPDR works tirelessly towards cleaner, healthler and safer waters in the Danube River Basin, for everyone

Ms. Lidija Globevnik

#### Danube 2025-2030



Ukraine Adopts Nine River Basin Management Plans: A Major Milestone Towards Sustainable Water Management

Ukraine, one of the 15 ICPDR contracting parties, has officially adopted all its nine River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), marking a significant step towards sustainable water management in line with European Union (EU) and international standards,







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# More Examples of Good IW Project Websites

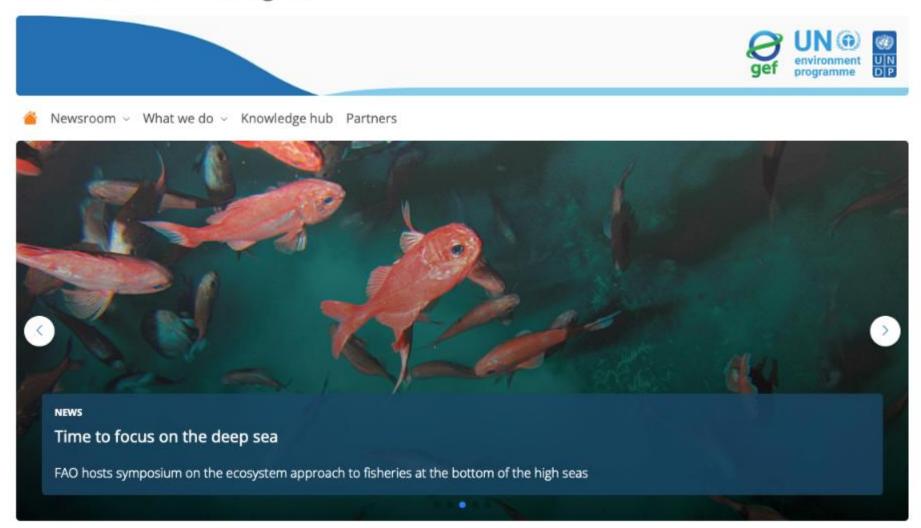


- Clear menu with reference to activities
- Prominent logos
- Clear website structure in the footer



#### **More Examples of Good IW Project Websites**

Common Oceans Program



https://www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/en

- Clean design and menu
- What We Do tab





#### Video: Common Oceans Program

Our Common Oceans is the home of vitally important ecosystems and essential resources.



#### Ecosystems

A database of actions taken in ocean areas beyond national jurisdiction to avert significant. bottom fisheries impacts on deep-sea VMEs.



#### fisheries?

and responsibilities of regional levels.



#### Who manages deep-sea

An introductory course on managing deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ outlining the roles governments at national and



Events

Celebrating 80 Years of FAO: Recognizing excellence in aquatic food systems



#### What we do



Tuna fisheries



Deep-sea fisheries



Related links

- Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (NFI)
- @ FAO and the GEF

Stay tuned

Contact

Common-Oceans@fao.org



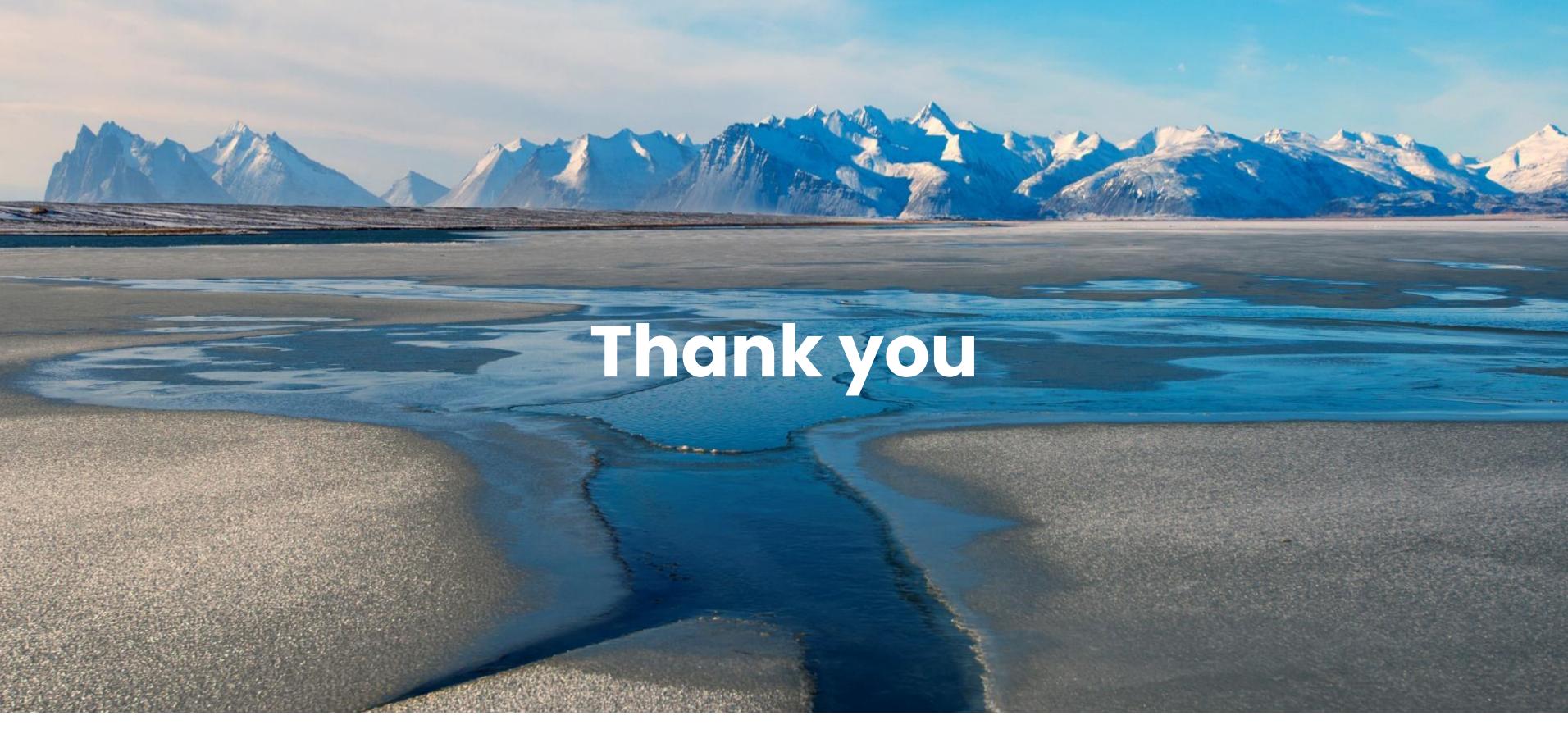
Sargasso Sea



Cross-sectoral cooperation

## Questions?





pcu@iwlearn.org www.iwlearn.net **GEF** 



**IW:LEARN** 



**IW STORYMAP** 

