

The post-2015 development agenda

National stakeholder perspectives on a water goal and its implementation

Executive summary

Between February and April 2014 the Global Water Partnership (GWP) brought together around 1,200 participants in 29 countries to give voice to stakeholders on the proposals for a water goal and targets within the post-2015 development agenda. The consultations brought together voices from the environment, agriculture, planning, and infrastructure sectors including political representatives, government officials, and delegates from the private sector and civil society.

The most important conclusion from the stakeholder consultations was an overall acceptance of the goal and the five targets proposed in the UN-Water Technical Advice paper. There was:

- **broad consensus** that a dedicated water goal is fundamental within the post-2015 development agenda
- **strong support** for comprehensive and inter-related targets that further advance integrated approaches to water
- **clear preference** for a “dashboard” approach, with flexibility for setting national targets, supported by clear definitions of terms and indicators.

Participants also highlighted that the proposed goal of “*Securing sustainable water for all*” fits with national development priorities, and the five suggested targets are in line with existing or planned national visions, policies, and development plans in most countries.

With strong consensus on the proposed goal and support for the targets emerging, participants were able to move quickly into rich discussions on the means of and challenges to implementation. In particular the consultations highlight that:

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an opportunity to adopt new implementation pathways, including greater stakeholder participation, particularly of the poor, indigenous peoples, youth, and women.
- Institutions will need to be strengthened to deliver results across the broad spectrum of water, sanitation, and related areas.
- Improving individual and institutional capacity will be key to achieving the future development agenda.
- Institutional coordination remains a challenge, especially in circumstances where there is an underlying capacity deficit.
- There is a clear call for new infrastructure, and the rehabilitation, operation, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- The scale of investment required to meet the proposed targets will be substantial.
- New technology is seen as playing a crucial role in implementing the water goal and targets.
- An innovative and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system is needed to measure progress on implementing the SDGs.

Throughout these consultations participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to critically look at the future development agenda in the context of their own development priorities. In particular they felt that these consultations:

- helped countries look towards the future and where they wanted to be in terms of water-related issues by 2030

- created a platform for broader ownership of and influence on the global development agenda beyond 2015
- informed governments of local perspectives on water as input to the Open Working Group (OWG) negotiation process.

In summary these consultations strongly reinforce that a dedicated water SDG is not just needed – it is fundamental for the post-2015 sustainable development framework. This sentiment is so strong in the consultations that the debate for stakeholders is now about 1) How to frame national targets and indicators, and 2) How to enable countries to realise a dedicated water goal.

“A dedicated global goal offers a unique opportunity to ensure water for people, economies, and environmental needs, while conserving the Earth’s finite and vulnerable water resource base for current and future generations.” (Romania consultation)

“Water is ‘the engine of our sustainable development’.”
(Argentina consultation)

“A water goal makes economic sense.” (Pakistan consultation)

“The multi-dimensional nature of poverty means inequalities in access to WASH and discrimination of poor and marginalised groups must be tackled together.” (Uganda consultation)

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Abbreviations

EU	European Union	OWG	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
GIS	Geographic information system	PPP	Public-private partnership
GWP	Global Water Partnership	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
IWRM	Integrated water resources management	UN	United Nations
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation	USD	United States dollars
MDG	Millennium Development Goals	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
NGO	Non-governmental organisation		

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1. Background

2015 marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have been a driver for progress on addressing one of the most pressing and evolving challenges facing humanity – water. Yet, despite the progress made to date, there is more to be done.

This need to do more was recognised at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which embraced a new vision for action that will better integrate the three pillars of sustainable development: environment, society, and economy. Importantly, water features prominently in the outcome document of Rio+20, [The Future We Want](#), which states: “*water is at the core of sustainable development as it is closely linked to a number of key global challenges*”.

To inform a new development framework the United Nations initially undertook an online consultation: [The World We Want](#). This had water as one of its thematic areas. The results of this online consultation were a key input to the work of the [High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#), who submitted a final report to the UN General Assembly in May 2013. More recently, in October 2013, the Hungarian Government organised the [Budapest Water Summit](#), which reinforced the centrality of water in sustainable development.

Beyond these high-level events, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, also emphasised the need for inclusion, consultation, and participation with stakeholders worldwide: “*We need everyone to work together to create the future we want, eradicate poverty and promote inclusive growth. The Post 2015 national consultative process is priceless since consensus building is a strong ingredient for national development.*”

Against this background, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), a partner organisation of UN-Water, convened a series of 22 national consultations between February and May 2013. These national consultations complemented the thematic online consultation and brought valuable nuances and local perspectives on what countries’ needs and priorities are for a future development framework.

The consultations in 2013 concluded that water is a “*pivotal ingredient*” for national development, especially related to food, energy and livelihoods. Water was also seen to have the potential to contribute even more to future prosperity and well-being through further development and management of water resources and the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation. Water quality, wastewater treatment, integrated management approaches, and mitigating risks from water-related events also emerged as priorities. This initial phase of national consultations contributed to the development of the UN-Water Technical Advice and to preliminary discussions in the Open Working Group (OWG).

To inform the OWG negotiation process, and to inform member states involved in the negotiations, GWP launched a second series of consultations between February and April 2014 to test the UN-Water Technical Advice at the country level. This second series of national consultations involved about 1,200 stakeholders in 29 countries, 17 of which were participating for the first time. The consultations brought together a balance of stakeholders covering the key sectors of society: government (e.g. ministry officials, agencies, regulators, local government, and basin managers), the private sector (e.g. industry, consultants, and utility companies), and civil society (e.g. NGOs and academics) from the environment, agriculture, planning, and infrastructure sectors.

What follows is a synthesis report on the outcomes of these national consultations.

2. Perspectives on a water goal and targets

In February 2014, [UN-Water](#) presented its Technical Advice paper¹ as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) consultation process as well as to the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. The paper outlined proposals for a dedicated water goal, “*Securing sustainable water for all*” and five potential targets under the goal:

- achieve universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene
- improve by (x%) the sustainable use and development of water resources in all countries
- all countries strengthen equitable, participatory and accountable water governance
- reduce untreated wastewater by (x%), nutrient pollution by (y%), and increase wastewater reuse by (z%)
- reduce mortality by (x%) and economic loss by (y%) from natural and human-induced water-related disasters.



Each national consultation was asked to give their views on the UN-Water proposals for a water goal and associated targets. In particular, each country was invited to comment on the degree of alignment between the UN-Water proposals and their own national priorities for water and sustainable development. Taking this a step further, the participants were asked to examine the means for implementing these proposed targets.

The following key findings emerge from the national consultations:

- a **broad consensus** that a dedicated water goal is fundamental within the post-2015 development agenda
- **strong support** for comprehensive and inter-related targets that further advance integrated approaches to water
- **clear preference** for a “dashboard” approach, with flexibility for setting national targets, supported by clear definitions of terms and indicators.

Participants also highlighted that the proposed goal of “*Securing sustainable water for all*” fits with national development priorities, and the five suggested targets are in line with existing or planned national visions, policies, and development plans in most countries.

2.1 Consensus on a water goal

Overall, there was consensus across the national consultations on the need for a dedicated water goal. Most countries agreed that the goal proposed by UN-Water captured both the essence and the spirit of their development priorities, especially those linked to socio-economic development and poverty eradication.

¹ A Post-2015 Global Goal for Water: Synthesis of Key Findings and Recommendations from UN-Water, February 2014

“Water as one of the greatest global challenges of the modern world must have a visible place in the objectives of sustainable development and the overall development agenda of the UN by 2015.”

(Slovenia consultation)

This second series of national consultations again strongly reinforced how important water is for national development, with countries that did not participate in the first round of consultations also stressing this issue. However, these consultations went further, with nations identifying a dedicated water goal as essential for progress on the sustainable development agenda with potentially transformational impacts at both national and global levels. For example, according to Romania, “A dedicated global goal offers a unique opportunity to ensure water for people, economies, and environmental needs, while conserving the Earth’s finite and vulnerable water resource base for current and future generations.”

Other national consultations (e.g. Cameroon, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe) identify that water is “central” to national development, yet it is often overlooked in favour of other sectors that have historically gained more attention. Some consultations (e.g. Indonesia, Nigeria, Romania, and Uganda) mention the fact that water is a common factor in all basic human needs, as well as being inextricably linked to important issues such as forests, wetlands, and climate change. Additionally, consultations highlight that development is not possible in other social and economic sectors unless there is access to water. This reinforces the centrality of water, not only for development, but also for achieving other goals in the future post-2015 development framework. For example, Cameroon believes that water should be “truly integrated in all post-2015 programs” and Indonesia states, “Water is much more than a cross-cutting issue – unless the fundamental role of water and the water issues can be resolved, other important elements of the new development agenda will be unachievable.”

The consultations reinforce that water issues are highly inter-dependent and inter-related physically, economically, and socially. While the consultations discuss addressing these in a cross-cutting way, a strong preference emerges for a dedicated water goal plus links to other goals through targets and indicators. It is felt that a dedicated goal is essential for the future development framework to ensure that solutions can be found.

“From a broad perspective, water is upstream of all social and economic development. It cannot be treated on a sectoral basis and be included as an indicator of a sectoral lens while it is an engine that achieves the objectives of other sectors.” (Tunisia consultation)

2.2 A comprehensive view of water

Besides the importance of water for national development, many countries cited wider global challenges as a reason why water needed to be a critical part of the post-2015 development agenda. For example, many consultations (e.g. Benin, Peru, and Zambia) identify that population growth will be a significant driver of water use, investment, policy, and reform. Zambia highlighted that “the population will almost double by 2030, the year when the future SDGs will be completed”. Such growth will place enormous pressure on already water-stressed countries across all facets of water, including increasing demand, water resources management, water supply and sanitation, and water quality. While advances in both supply and demand management will help, there is an expectation that increased incentives via a dedicated water goal will be vital to adaptation in the face of increased population.

One of the central targets of the MDGs is access to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and this remains an important issue for many countries. Zimbabwe presented part of the problem: *“Access to safe water and sanitation has declined tremendously in both rural and urban areas owing to the economic challenges, ageing infrastructure and low investments in the water sector, making it almost impossible for Zimbabwe to meet the WASH MDG target.”* Bangladesh also mentions going backwards in terms of access, due to arsenic contamination of groundwater. Therefore, the proposed SDG target is seen as an aspiration for universal access to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene. For example, Tajikistan states: *“One of the priority areas of the development for the period after 2015 is a healthy population, which covers the aspects of a sustainable development and will promote poverty reduction. We only achieve this through the provision of access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene.”*

Managing waste water has also gained much attention in the debate on the future development agenda, not only because it is a significant source of pollution and degrading water quality, but also because with recycling and reuse it is possible to turn *“waste into wealth,”* as stated in the Pakistan consultation.

“Vietnam is facing challenges of poor management that is the main reason for water quality degradation due to pollution from different sources including non-treated domestic waste, agricultural activities (crop production and aquaculture), industries, mining; hydropower, etc.”
(Vietnam consultation)

Reducing poverty and inequalities featured prominently in many consultations with clear links to water. Uganda stated that *“the multi-dimensional nature of poverty means inequalities in access to WASH and discrimination [against] poor and marginalised groups must be tackled together.”* For example, the divide between rural and urban areas was repeatedly noted throughout the consultations, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, and brought some doubt that, even by 2030, there could be universal coverage of water supply and sanitation. One of the main reasons that progress has been more difficult in rural areas is distance and low-density rural populations.

Climate change was also mentioned frequently through the consultations (e.g. Brazil, Bulgaria, and Tajikistan) with regards to a water goal. Participants highlighted that the impacts of climate change are already visible worldwide with growing intensity and unpredictability of floods and droughts. Looking to the future, they argue that there are clearly strong links between adaptation to climate change and addressing the requirement of a *“secure”* and *“sustainable”* source of water for all. Therefore, a water goal with a target that focuses on water-related disasters is considered crucial.

There was a strong sense from the consultations that a comprehensive and integrated perspective to water resources management is still needed. This should improve on the progress that has already been made and be more linked to targets in the post-2015 development agenda. Since 2002, when the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) included a target that countries should *“develop integrated water resources management [IWRM] and water efficiency plans by 2005”*, many countries have been active in making this a reality, but more work remains to be done and a dedicated water goal with related targets provides an opportunity to further the advancement of integrated approaches.

For example, Kenya believes that all targets under a water goal should *“work towards the implementation of the IWRM process”*. Guatemala believes that the SDG targets related to water need to be considered within *“an IWRM framework”* with Zimbabwe stating that IWRM should be

implemented at “all levels,” which is explained more in detail by Uganda: “While the IWRM concept is based on sound principles, it requires functional institutions with clear roles and responsibilities, which are lacking in many low-and middle-income countries, especially at the basin and local level.” Participation remains a key element, again, as Poland stresses: “To implement an integrated approach towards , water management at the local, the river basin, and the national level, taking into consideration a wider participation (of stakeholders) in the decision-making process.”

“Responsible, efficient, and sustainable water uses are necessary in national watersheds as well as in those shared with other countries, so as to ensure adequate supply. This entails moving from an inefficient sectoral management of water to a more integrated and holistic approach that takes into account the need for conserving ecosystems services.” (Peru consultation)

“The strong synergies between water and other fundamental issues, such as energy and food, require clearer recognition and an integrated approach.” (Romania consultation)

Other global challenges that were referenced during the consultations included urbanisation, land-use change, change in diet, demand for land, and migration. Several nations mentioned the fact that droughts are often overlooked in favour of floods when discussing water-related disasters. In addition, some countries commented that transboundary waters have largely been left out of discussions during the post-2015 development agenda. Finally, several countries cited wetlands as an important water resource that needs to be protected as part of a future SDG framework.

“All stakeholders warned about the serious consequences of delayed decision-making in the light of climate change challenges, which were undermining national development by seriously cutting into the economic growth of the nation.” (Pakistan consultation)

“Damage arising as a result of climate change is usually much larger than the investment in preventive measures, besides the adaptation could also bring new opportunities as the protection of water resources is a basis for economic and environmental investments.” (Slovenia consultation)

2.3 Targets – national and global alignment

It is significant that the consultations concluded that the five targets proposed by UN-Water are in alignment with existing or planned national goals, targets, policies, legislation, laws, and national development plans. For example, Zambia reflected that the goal is in line with its 2030 Vision: “A Zambia where all users have access to water and sanitation and utilise them in an efficient and sustainable manner for wealth creation and improved livelihood by 2030”.

Another example is Romania, which stated that “national policy and plans take into consideration outputs of global dialogues such as Agenda 21, the MDGs, the Rio Conventions, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and Rio+20”. This alignment augurs well for the positive implementation of the development framework.

“The global goal dedicated to water and the targets adopted by UN-Water are consistent with the main goal of the National Water Resources Management Strategy and Policy.” (Peru consultation)

“The proposed goal for Sustainable Development of securing sustainable water for all is suitable in the country as it aligns with the Tanzania 2025 development vision.” (Tanzania consultation)

“We are now at the beginning of a period when the implementation of the requirements agreed upon with the European Union will be verified. Due to inconsistencies between the Polish and the EU regulations, as well as the unsynchronised system of water management in Poland, many obligations were not realised. The implementation of the State Water Policy until 2030 would enable the realisation of the Water Framework Directive objectives including the realisation of the SDGs after 2015.”
(Poland consultation)

There are two possible approaches to target setting within the post-2015 development framework: the approach of the Millennium Development Goals where each country was recommended to meet global goals agreed upon within the UN General Assembly, or a “dashboard” approach, which would comprise an agreed global goal and set of broad targets, with each country setting their own target values. Overwhelmingly, the national consultations show that stakeholders at the country level prefer the “dashboard” approach.

The consultations identify the following arguments in favour of the “dashboard” approach:

- Some countries already have similar targets to those proposed embedded in their national development plans that have established budgets and monitoring systems. They argue that it would be counter-productive to develop new programmes, budgets, monitoring, and, potentially, legislation to deal with a new set of targets (Cameroon, Sri Lanka, and Zambia).
- The 'dashboard' approach allows countries to be more flexible in how they address the targets. It helps them prioritise their own national needs rather than simply accepting the results of a negotiation between the Member States of the UN (Tanzania).
- Different countries are at different places on the development spectrum; therefore country-specific targets can help address those differences (Romania and Tanzania).

“All people who attended this consultation believe that the global goal needs to consider national targets, taking into account the contexts, realities, potentials, and limitations presented by each country.”
(Nicaragua consultation)

A few consultations acknowledged some potential disadvantages with the “dashboard” approach. For example, Tanzania remarked that there is a direct relationship between globally agreed targets and the funding to achieve them. Another disadvantage of the “dashboard” approach is lack of comparability, i.e. it is easy to compare globally agreed targets between countries and follow the

global trends that are happening. This may not be possible if national targets were not comparable between countries. Another potential drawback is that it may lead to varying degrees of ambition and important development gains might be lost.

Several countries (e.g. Argentina, Pakistan, and Tunisia) were concerned that terms used in the targets were not clear, and have not been universally agreed. Colombia summarizes the point well:

“The inappropriate understanding of terms involved in the redaction of goals presented by UN-Water makes difficult the acceptance and definition of values for target, elements, and indicators, therefore it is suggested that future proposal be accompanied by a glossary that may help to clarify the meaning of the wording.”

3. Perspectives on implementing the proposed targets

During the national consultations participants were asked to discuss and reflect on whether countries will have the know-how to carry them out. Will they be able to fund such initiatives? Do the countries have the infrastructure and institutions necessary to attain the targets that are proposed? Are countries, and the global community able to monitor and evaluate the progress that is accomplished on the ground?

The following findings emerged from the national consultations with regards to the means of implementing the proposed water goal and targets:

- The SDGs represent an opportunity to adopt new implementation pathways, including greater stakeholder participation, particularly of the poor, indigenous peoples, youth, and women.
- Institutions will need to be strengthened to deliver results across the broad spectrum of water, sanitation, and related areas.
- Improving individual and institutional capacity will be key to achieving the future development agenda.
- Institutional coordination remains a challenge, especially in circumstances where there is an underlying capacity deficit.
- There is a clear call for new infrastructure, and the rehabilitation, operation, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- The scale of investment to meet the proposed targets will be substantial.
- New technology is seen as playing a crucial role in implementing the water goal and targets.
- An innovative and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system is needed to measure progress on implementing the SDGs.

“Meeting the proposed global goal for water and its associated targets, as outlined above, will require a major effort by countries to ensure that the specific actions proposed can actually be implemented. Countries accepting the challenge of the new global development framework will need to accelerate their efforts to improve the “enabling environment” in which to plan and implement projects.” (Indonesia consultation)

3.1 Institutions and their interactions

Several consultations raised concern over the ability of institutions to deliver results. For example, Nepal stated “while there are policies, strategies and plans in place, there is a lack of institutional set-up and mechanisms to implement them”.

One of the most frequently mentioned implementation issues is coordination of action between national, regional, provincial, basin, and local institutions. While the water community has put an emphasis on coordination between government agencies and other stakeholders through integrated water resources management, there is still much work to be done in developing efficient processes through which policies get carried out on the ground. As Slovenia points out, they need to “*strengthen cooperation between sectors and agreement at national and local level*”. Similarly, Kenya discusses improving “*coordination and cooperative governance*”. As a result, it is believed that this lack of coordination will impact the effectiveness with which the future SDGs can be implemented at the national level. Tanzania calls coordination a “*challenge*” and Poland identifies it as its “*main problem of water management*”. Sri Lanka would like to see as an indicator the existence of a policy-making level water-related coordination mechanism.

The issue of coordination and cooperation also extends to the question of effective multilevel governance. For example, Romania thinks there should be a more “*frequent dialogue*” between the levels of government, and Argentina points out “*that it is important to ensure that institutions at all levels – national, regional, provincial, municipal, and basin – get involved in the achievement of the goal, targets, and sustainable development agenda*”.

This is especially a challenge for federal governments, some of which do not have national-level water policies and plans, but must rely on the sub-national policies to implement action on the ground. For example, Poland highlighted their three tiers or levels for water management: “*At the national level (the National Water Management Board), at the regional catchment basin level (the Regional Water Management Boards), and at the partial catchment basin level (the Catchment Basin Boards)*.” This illustrates that a governance framework needs to be in place that addresses requirements at all levels so that progress can be made towards meeting national targets.

In some consultations part of the problem is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. For example, both Uganda and Colombia reiterated this point of view, while Nicaragua believes that a harmonisation of the roles and responsibilities of institutions is pertinent for governing water resources at the national level.

“For the implementation of this target, a key element is the strengthening of an “enabling environment” to facilitate institutional reforms, and capacity building of communities and individuals, taking into account the diverse realities existing in our country (biophysical, social and normative). This also involves the modernisation of enterprises and institutions.” (Peru consultation)

“For effective implementation of national water policies, it is desirable to combine the responsibilities for water in one government department to avoid the multiplicity of interlocutors, which generates diffusive financial and human resources. This efficient coordination should ensure the existence of frameworks for communication, and information exchange

between different actors, accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation.”

(Cameroon consultation)

3.2 Participation

Many consultations (e.g. Peru, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia) identify the opportunity for institutions to implement future SDGs in a different way. For example, Guatemala suggests *“institutions should focus on participatory decisions more than a centralised institutional structure”*. The theme of stakeholder participation was common in many consultations, and was seen as being important in the success of the development agenda. As Argentina noted, *“It is necessary for countries to formulate their water policy principles through a broad participatory process.”*

Other countries also mentioned the benefits of participation, such as Pakistan and how *“civil society can be a catalyst for change”*. Brazil speaks to make stakeholder participation more effective, while Kazakhstan brings up the increasing participation of water users more at the basin level. Peru, believes that there should be indicators within the SDG agenda on access to information and participation in decision-making.

Very much in line with participation is youth and gender. Nigeria states the aim quite clearly. *“Youth and gender mainstreaming should be carried through at all levels of government and institutions while cooperation with tertiary academic and research institutions should be vigorously promoted for knowledge creation and skills impartation in the water sector.”*

“To include public participation, consultation, and active involvement is useful and necessary in the process of the preparation and adoption of relevant documents in the field of sustainable development and water management. Among the people at the local level is a lot of historical memory and the transfer of knowledge between generations should not be ignored by politicians and experts.” (Slovenia consultation)

3.3 Capacity

A clear link was made between the institutional issues identified above and the more general issue of capacity. For example, many African nations (e.g. Cameroon, Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia) cite a lack of institutional capacity, which will, without strengthening, prevent them from advancing the SDG targets. This capacity deficit was a concern expressed by countries all along the development spectrum. For example, Zambia mentioned that this deficiency in capacity is not just at the individual level, but the institutional one as well. They highlight that there is a lack of individuals with the necessary training and education, and that institutions themselves do not have the capacity in terms of human resources, management, accounting, and communications. Equally, there may be a shortage of actual personnel. For example, Poland identifies that, *“Currently, in the public administration, the tasks of environment protection, water management, and wastewater and waste treatment are realised within one quarter of a full-time equivalent civil servant position.”*

The consultations highlight capacity deficits across all areas related to water, including water law, policy, and management. For example, Sri Lanka cites a need for those who are experts in infrastructure development and climate. In comparison, Cameroon desires more capacity for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene as well as IWRM. Cameroon also identifies that they would like to extend capacity to local level officials who are often in charge of implementing policies on the ground. Bangladesh concurs, stating that community-based capacity-building is necessary to progress whatever targets are part of the SDG framework. Nepal states clearly: *“This should go*

hand-in-hand with the human resource development and capacity building of the institutions as the reforms demand.”

“The management and development of water resources and the provision of water services needs to be under-taken from a sound scientific and technical basis. It is therefore important that relevant institutions involved in water affairs have the technical capacity and instruments necessary to undertake systematic collection, storage, processing, and analysis of data and information.”

(Zimbabwe consultation)

“Indeed, the country has an impressive arsenal of legislation and policy documents and strategies, not very well known to the actors, which are unenforced for various reasons including that of excessive politicisation of the administration and the low capacity of human resources.”

(Benin consultation)

“There is a need for strengthening the States' institutions by investing in capacity building and operational resources. Human resources training and updating/recycling of current technical staff is needed to disseminate and incorporate new concepts into the management of water resources, especially regarding the sustainability issue.”

(Brazil consultation)

3.4 Infrastructure

“Investment in physical infrastructures is the primary constraint in Nepal for enhancing water services to the Nepalese population.”

(Nepal consultation)

A central theme to emerge from most of the developing countries that carried out national consultations was the need to invest in and improve infrastructure. In many cases this was not only for the large infrastructure that is typically associated with water resources management, but also for smaller rural water supply and sanitation networks.

The need for investment in new infrastructure for storage, hydropower generation, water supply and sanitation, irrigation development, and aquifer recharge was identified in many consultations. For example, both Sri Lanka and Guatemala cited the need for dams as an adaptation to climate change, both in terms of floods and droughts. In comparison, Kenya highlighted the need to be efficient with the use of infrastructure, which was corroborated by other countries (e.g. Guatemala and Nigeria) in their desire to utilise infrastructure for multipurpose functions.

More of a surprise inclusion in the discussions was that over a quarter of the countries brought up rainwater harvesting as a priority in order to meet future water needs.

“Water and water infrastructure is a vital part of the foundations for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and human well-being.”

(Indonesia consultation)

“The protection, use, and restoration of ecosystem services (including natural infrastructure) has, in many cases, proven to be an effective and cost-saving alternative to conventional infrastructure as a solution to water resources management and pollution control. Ecosystems can provide services for drinking water supply, water for food production, wastewater treatment, and disaster risk reduction.”

(Indonesia consultation)

While new infrastructure is often mentioned, the national consultations also identified the importance of maintaining, repairing, and rehabilitating ageing infrastructure. For example, according to Nigeria, *“Many of the more than 220 dams require maintenance and completion of the multipurpose objectives, particularly irrigation development and hydropower generation.”* Argentina agrees: *“The infrastructure solution of water-related problems requires the availability of funds for the entire work cycle, especially operation and maintenance of water infrastructure.”*

3.5 Financing and investment

The national consultations identified that one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of future SDGs is finance. A clear theme emerging from the majority of national consultations is that significant investment will be needed in order to meet the proposed targets and goals. This was put starkly in the Zimbabwe consultation, which proposed that a sixth target *“financing of the water goal”* is added. Most countries argue that they need investment in water because it has simply not been a priority in recent decades. In some developing nations, basic infrastructure is still needed for water supply and sanitation as well as financing for water resources management. When combined with the costs of wastewater management and maintaining or improving water quality, the overall scale of investment increases significantly.

“A dedicated global goal for water could be a catalyst for mobilising capital investment in the water sector.” (Nepal consultation)

The reality from the national consultations is that water is not very high on the political agenda, despite significant progress to date. However, the consultations also noted that this is gradually changing as politicians and decision-makers appreciate how intricately water is connected to economic development. For example, water has entered into the speeches of politicians, but this has not yet translated into budgets for water at the different jurisdictional levels. The Argentina consultation views a dedicated water goal as helpful in that the *“incorporation of a goal for water will enable decision-makers to include funds for water management in the budgets apart from those for infrastructure works, and the mobilisation of international resources for funding for water”*. Uganda also states that *“financial incentives for sector ministries and agencies to work together”* are needed.

“The budgetary impact will be significant, given the scale of needs. Increased funding in the water sector should prioritise public infrastructure, capacity building of human resources, the continuation of

institutional reforms, the development of second generation agriculture. An increase in the budgetary allocation for water and improving the quality of investment planning and effectiveness of public spending in the water sector are needed.” (Cameroon consultation)

In three consultations, attempts were made to provide rough estimates of the likely scale of investment from 2015 to 2030 to meet the targets: USD13.1 billion (Zambia), USD17.1 billion (Sri Lanka) and USD30 billion (Bulgaria). Bangladesh also indicated the overall cost of their national water plan. In some consultations (e.g. Nepal and Sri Lanka) the participants highlight that large infrastructure is given most attention when it comes to funding and often requires international support. However, Romania also identifies small-scale projects, which could be funded at the national level.

An issue that emerged from the Zambian consultation was the need to incorporate the implementation of SDGs into already existing budget lines in their government’s national plan: *“Of critical concern will be [the need] to align/mainstream the adopted goal and targets for the 2015-2030 targets into the government’s national plan and accompanying budget.”* This again highlights the importance of alignment between globally agreed goals and targets and the existing or planned national approaches.

A last theme that emerged from several of the consultations was the potential for public-private partnerships (PPPs). For example, Brazil, Kenya, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe all encourage greater involvement of the private sector in the water sectors of their respective countries.

We need “a conducive regulatory environment to attract private sector participation and aggressive promotion of internal generation of operations and maintenance by users, based on the principles of affordability, accountability, and transparency.” (Nigeria consultation)

3.6 A role for technology

Almost half of the consultations brought up the theme of technology as important for them in implementing any future post-2015 development framework. One of the reasons for this emphasis is the increasing efficiency of water use. For example, Brazil wants to *“encourage the development of technologies that increase efficiency in water use with a focus on water reuse and combating water waste”*. Zimbabwe concurs, expressing a priority to introduce new sanitation infrastructure technology.

Investment in research and the development of new technologies was also seen as important, such as early warning systems, infrastructure, GIS, and remote sensing. For example Pakistan states, investments in technology can help in the monitoring, development, and implementation of the future SDGs.

“Support for research and development needs to be substantially increased so as to drive technological innovation and reduce the cost of efficient technologies.” (Indonesia consultation)

3.7 Monitoring and evaluation

One of the most often mentioned issues in the national consultations was monitoring and evaluation. It is widely viewed that a more comprehensive, robust monitoring system for the SDG targets is essential to measure and evaluate progress.

For example, African nations identify that there is no adequate monitoring and evaluation system in place in their region, at any level. Other nations state that it is hard to monitor when there is no baseline from which to start. For water and sanitation this is not considered the case given the previous MDG targets and programmes, such as the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme. However, for other proposed targets there are few global or national baselines, although this does vary from country to country. In some situations while frameworks may exist they may be under resourced, as highlighted by Poland.

Again there was a strong correlation between the general capacity deficit and monitoring. Several countries mention how the capacity to carry out proper monitoring and evaluation is simply not there and would require, according to Argentina, investment in both human and financial resources. This is an issue at the national level, but many consultations highlight that it is more of a problem at the sub-national level where a lot of data are collected especially in decentralised and federal governments.

The issue of monitoring also relates strongly to the theme of institutions and coordination. For example, Colombia states, "The improvement in coordination among entities should make a clear delegation of monitoring activities and decision-making based on trustful results in order to ensure the target achievement." Given that water is an issue that cuts across many aspects of national governments, many consultations highlight the importance of coordination between government entities as a prerequisite for the effective and efficient collection and analysis of data. However, some consultations suggest that it is time to look for new solutions on how to improve the collection and evaluation of data, for example utilising the private sector and a more participatory data collection approach at local levels.

"Monitoring requires baseline data, but, as has been mentioned in the previous section, baseline data for many of the proposed indicators do not exist. Therefore, investment in establishing baseline data and institutional mechanism for gathering data should be the initial and integral parts of the programmes that are proposed for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal." (Nepal consultation)

"Water-related data need to be shared with the public to ensure the contribution of intellectuals, professionals, and the general public to water resources management. Monitoring could be improved by a participatory approach and community empowerment. Lessons from success stories about community-based monitoring should be useful. Private sector participation in monitoring is very important."
(Sri Lanka consultation)

“The weakest link in the current system of management of water resources is the lack of reliable data on the available potential and its quantitative and qualitative evolution in space and time.”

(Benin consultation)

3.8 A rich discussion

The national consultations generated significant debate on the means of implementation. They highlight a readiness and desire of stakeholders to move from policy and plans to action. It also reinforces that people and organisations are eager to participate, to share and utilise their knowledge to make sustainable development a success at all levels.

In summary these consultations strongly reinforce that a dedicated water SDG is not just needed – it is fundamental for the post-2015 sustainable development framework. This sentiment is so strong in the consultations that the debate for stakeholders is now about 1) How to frame national targets and indicators, and 2) How to enable countries to realise a dedicated water goal.

4. List of consultations

Country	Meeting Date	Number of Participants
Argentina	26-Mar-14	35
Bangladesh	15-Mar-14	65
Benin	30-Mar-14	20
Brazil	18-Mar-14	27
Bulgaria	21-Mar-14	57
Cameroon	11-Apr-14	38
Colombia	31-Mar-14	62
Ghana	14-Mar-14	33
Guatemala	28-Feb-14	57
Indonesia	26-Mar-14	32
Kazakhstan	20-Mar-14	44
Kenya	7-Mar-14	27
Nepal	21-Feb-14	68
Nicaragua	6-Mar-14	77
Nigeria	4-Apr-14	36
Pakistan	18-Feb-14	38
Peru	11-Mar-14	45
Poland	11-Apr-14	46
Romania	21-Mar-14	25
Slovenia	21-Mar-14	73
Sri Lanka	24-Mar-14	39
Tajikistan	7-Mar-14	42
Tanzania	14-Mar-14	44
Trinidad & Tobago	28-Mar-14	44
Tunisia	23-Apr-14	42
Uganda	14-Mar-14	31
Vietnam	28-Feb-14	45
Zambia	5-Mar-14	38
Zimbabwe	28-Mar-14	33
Total		1263

Water features prominently in the outcome document of Rio+20, The Future We Want, which states: “water is at the core of sustainable development as it is closely linked to a number of key global challenges”.

To inform a post-2015 development framework, Global Water Partnership (GWP), a partner organisation of UN-Water, convened a series of 22 national consultations between February and May 2013. This initial phase of national consultations contributed to the development of the UN-Water Technical Advice.

GWP launched a second series of consultations between February and April 2014 to test the UN-Water Technical Advice at the country level. This second series of national consultations involved about 1,200 stakeholders in 29 countries, 17 of which were participating for the first time.

This report contains a synthesis on the outcomes of these national consultations.