

UNEP-DHI Centre
on water and environment



SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme

How to Contribute?

Note on Options for Additional Contributions from Partners

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Introduction

This note is to support discussions between potential contributing partners to the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme, on where and how best they can engage. The Programme assists countries to track and advance IWRM implementation as a contribution to sustainable development, using the official national reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.1 as a basis for national multi-stakeholder consultation processes to develop and implement national IWRM implementation strategies. UN Environment Programme (UNEP) -the custodian agency for the SDG 6.5.1 indicator on IWRM implementation- provides overall leadership and general guidance; while Global Water Partnership (GWP) coordinates and drives the Programme, with close support from UNEP-DHI Centre and contributions from UNDP Cap-Net.

The Programme is unique, flexible and demand driven, operating without a steering committee, and unlike a typical programme with a fixed results framework, hard-wired deliverables and so on. Instead it synergistically brings together partners with shared objectives to plug-in their own complementary projects, initiatives, etc. The benefit of doing so means that resources from multiple organizations can be brought together in an agile and cohesive way to better respond to and support country needs, and ultimately create a greater impact.

Partner contributions come from resources from ongoing work, as well as new resources that have been leveraged as a result of their engagement in the programme. While resources may be shared between partners for certain activities, it is expected that partners source their own funding for their contributions to the programme from outside the partner pool. Also, since the programme is meant to be agile and responsive, it is important that it maintains its fundamental shape and balance, and that partner contributions are used to address key country recipient needs and key areas requiring attention within the programme.

The following sections outline the context, programme objective and methodology, pilot countries and key lessons learnt, before presenting some potential options for new contributing partners to engage.

1. Context

Monitoring and reporting on indicator 6.5.1 are done on a three-year cycle and includes a national self-assessment process and a survey questionnaire. The first reporting cycle took place in 2017¹ and the second is taking place in 2020. The questionnaire reviews the level of implementation of IWRM (scoring from 0 to 100), covering 33 parameters grouped into 4 categories: the **enabling environment** (policies, laws, plans and arrangements); **institutional frameworks** (cross-sectoral coordination, private-sector, stakeholder participation and gender objectives); **management instruments** (water availability monitoring and sustainable water use, pollution control, water-related ecosystems and disasters, and data and information sharing); and **financing** (investments, recurring costs and revenue raising).

A periodic global progress report on SDG indicator 6.5.1 on IWRM presents a global picture of the current situation on water management based on the above-mentioned national surveys. The central message stemming from the 2017 review can be distilled into two words, “Accelerate Progress”. The findings further suggest that collective action that builds on the multi-stakeholder monitoring and reporting processes can accelerate implementation. With that in mind, and building on the monitoring and reporting process, the Programme assists governments in designing and supporting the implementation of country-led responses to IWRM as a cornerstone of sustainable development. This

¹ Results are available on the UNEP-DHI IWRM portal:
<http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/iwrmonitoring.html>

typically takes the form of targeted IWRM Action Plans or similar, which aim to bring together a range of stakeholders, led by the central government, to address opportunities to implement in an integrated manner specific aspects of water resources management identified in the reporting process.

2. Objective and methodology of the Programme

The main objective of the Programme is to assist countries in improving and accelerating the level of implementation of IWRM, to identify solutions and catalyse action thereby contribute to sustainable development within the country.

The Programme is organized around the following three stages:

- **Stage 1 – Identify challenges:** In 2017-18, this stage was completed for more than 170 countries through a series of surveys. A second round of the survey is being carried out in 2020, and this will happen every three years until 2030.
- **Stage 2 – Formulate responses:** Assist countries in formulating appropriate responses to water resources management challenges, based on their needs and appropriate to their ambitions, priorities and capacities, in the context of the baseline for SDG indicator 6.5.1 and the national water resources management priority issues more broadly; and
- **Stage 3 – Implement solutions:** Support countries in implementing IWRM solutions aimed at achieving SDG 6 and other water-related goals through the development of bankable project proposals.



3. Pilot stage 2 phase

During late 2018 and through 2019, stage 2 of the Programme was piloted in four countries representing different continents, different institutional and hydrogeological realities, but all using a broadly consistent methodology based on a series of consultation workshops and the development of an SDG IWRM Action Plan, or similar. These countries had the flexibility to design the intervention in a way that makes optimal use of the resources available, led by the national institution(s) with a mandate to advance the water-related SDGs, including government agencies (representing not only the environment and water sectors but also the national agencies in charge of SDG monitoring, national development, planning and budget), river basin commissions, universities, research centres, the private sector, NGOs, civil society as well as donors and international development agencies. The four countries were Ghana, Guatemala, Kazakhstan and Vietnam. These four stage 2 pilot countries are now moving towards stage 3, the implementation of their Action Plans.

4. Key Lessons learnt

The Programme has been broadly appreciated as a key mechanism to ensure that monitoring results are the starting point for action. More specifically, the programme has enabled countries to revisit progress on the implementation of IWRM and understand how to go beyond formulating policies and

strategies and consider the broader reality of IWRM as a key entry point for all water-related SDGs and development.

Key lessons learnt from the pilot experiences have included:

- **Country buy-in and ownership is essential right from the start:** In order to reach a common vision on priorities and on action, it is vital to engage with all the main relevant stakeholders (Government, NGOs, Private sector, river basin organizations, academia, CBOs...) as well as the key donor partners that are supporting water resources management in the country.
- **Capacity building and country support** greatly helped in achieving a focused and coordinated national approach to the monitoring and reporting of the SDG indicator on IWRM.
- **Not a new national IWRM plan:** The elaboration of an SDG IWRM action plan is not the development of a new national IWRM plan, but rather the development of activities that will help to resolve IWRM implementation and acceleration challenges, while being subordinate to and supportive of an existing IWRM Plan and National Development objectives.
- **The Programme provides guidance but not an action plan “blueprint”:** While the country is requested to identify the activities along with the sources of financing, expected results, timing, lead organization and monitoring mechanisms, and while templates and prior examples are available if needed, each country may define and implement their interventions according to their reality and particular circumstances.
- **Joined-up thinking and action:** This exercise is not only about the SDGs, it is about IWRM, climate resilience and linking water with development. Linking IWRM with the response to Climate Change, Nexus, Urban, Health, Food Security, Gender and Youth activities, among others, is highly relevant.
- **Funding for Stage 3 implementation:** In terms of activities, it is a challenge for countries to find an appropriate balance between ambition and reality. This challenge stems from uncertainty as to sources financing/potential financing. This is an area for increased attention moving forwards and is one of the key areas where new partners could help to play a catalytic role.

5. Examples for New Contributing Partners

New contributing partners in the Programme should ideally contribute in a significant way to its objectives, as has been the case for the existing partners. They may contribute at whatever level is most appropriate, be it globally, regionally and/or in specific countries. In terms of specifics, a range of different contributions can be envisaged. These contributions should ideally be an alignment of the institution’s ongoing activities, and as such may be made in-cash and/or in-kind, by lending their institutional weight to the success of the Programme’s different activities and stages. The following represent some, but not all, of the areas where there are opportunities for further partner engagement, as a starting point for further conversations with potential partners:

Stage 1: Identify challenges

- The stage 1 methodology is proven and robust, and is considered open-source information. Assistance in supporting the creation and delivery of a cohesive open source package that could be applied in countries not directly supported by the Programme, could be considered. Online and national capacity building training packages could potentially also be a useful addition (see also bullet related to capacity development under stage 2 below.)
- The quality of outcomes generated through the consultations around the current status and challenges related to IWRM depends directly upon the range of stakeholders that take part in

these consultations. In particular, the participation of under-represented groups from outside national capitals should be facilitated, in order to consider their perspectives in national reporting frameworks. In addition to this, emphasis could be placed on facilitating the meaningful participation of representatives of young people and gender groups. The focus could be on guidelines and analyses of the benefits of their participation, as well as specifically funding broader participation of these and other groups in relevant national processes.

- The identification of common challenges and trends affecting IWRM through detailed cross-country and/or regional analysis should allow for a greater understanding of the best means of overcoming those shared challenges, in order to provide more precise guidance to countries, in particular through peer-to-peer experience and knowledge-sharing. Identifying certain regional trends could lead to a streamlining of funding, policy and technical assistance opportunities, increasing future resource efficiency while impacting countries' IWRM performance in a more meaningful manner. Structured regional analyses of these challenges, which could be carried out hand-in-hand with Regional Economic Commissions and other regional bodies to address transboundary issues, could feed into regional fundraising plans to more clearly align supply and demand for sustainable funding where it is most needed.

Stage 2: Identify solutions

- Providing appropriate support to countries in advancing IWRM for the achievement of other sustainable development objectives requires both knowledge of and application of existing solutions to the challenges identified in stage 1 (e.g. solutions to challenges with data and monitoring, water allocation systems, integrity and transparency, etc). Contributions aligned with “Water Solutions for the SDGs” (one of GWP’s three main strategies) could be in the form of strengthening the enabling environment for IWRM implementation i.a. policies and regulations, technology, the engagement of specific stakeholder groups or communication. An inventory of existing solutions could be developed, thus bringing together the supply and demand for water-focused solutions, indexed thematically and geographically. In addition to this, UNEP-DHI Centre is leading the development of a “Water Solutions Dashboard”, that will directly link water managers with solution providers. UNEP-DHI Centre is currently looking for partners for this work.
- An improved science to policy-to-practice approach towards land and water use for agriculture, as the largest global user of water, could contribute significantly to water-related quality and quantity targets as well as SDG targets related to food security, ecosystem health, and others. Yet previous efforts to generate a truly integrated approach between water, land management and food production have been unsuccessful at the scale required to tip the balance. Targeted multi-sectoral analysis of the lessons learned and identification of areas of opportunity in water, land and agriculture policy could reap significant benefits for a range of developmental objectives. This line of work could be coordinated with leading practitioners, researchers, UN and civil society networks, and should involve the debunking or proving of standard assumptions around water and irrigation, based on field research.
- When common challenges are identified around IWRM implementation, common demand-driven training and capacity development courses could be prepared and offered, hand-in-hand with leading water capacity development networks, with a multi-annual perspective, measurement of impact and focusing on figures from different governmental and non-governmental bodies within a given region or sub-region. This should allow for not just increased knowledge sharing but also greater cooperation between countries facing those shared challenges.

Stage 3: Implement solutions

- The extent to which an IWRM Action Plan can improve a country's SDG 6.5.1 rating is highly dependent upon the funding available to support and sustain the Plan's implementation over a period of time. In that sense, carrying out a return on investment study for multiple investors contained in existing IWRM Action Plans should provide a boost towards their implementation. The study should be carried out by a leading water or environmental economist, be peer-reviewed and should be the basis of a targeted uptake and outreach strategy.
- The private sector is an often-neglected partner in water resources management, yet often has both the interest and the means to make a significant contribution to water security, in a way that fully serves both the public good and its own business sustainability. Finding a means of reconciling the two perspectives in a safe space could potentially unlock significant opportunities for innovation, efficiency and greater funding for sustainable development. In partnership with leading business coalitions, particular areas of focus should be identified that lead to enhanced private sector engagement and include aligning water offsetting metrics with multiple SDG targets, value-chain mapping, water entrepreneurship and sustainable utilities.
- More diversified funding sources are required for implementation of long-term water management interventions, going beyond public sources, to include increasingly sophisticated financial instruments, such as hedge funds, impact investment, and many others. The study of successful and unsuccessful examples of such schemes from other sectors would provide pointers to what may be applicable to water resources management. The results of the study should be two easy-to-follow and complementary sets of recommendations, one for water policy makers, and the other for investors, which would aim to bring the two worlds more closely together.

Crosscutting issues

- There is an opportunity to link the Programme's country engagement workshops with other ongoing initiatives (e.g. related to other SDG targets, climate related work (NDC, NAPs, GFC) etc.), to strengthen understanding and action around water resources management's contribution to broader sustainable development at the national and regional level. Partners who can support the facilitation of meaningful interactions are required.
- The challenge that climate change represents for water security is well-documented, as is the possible pathway of more clearly mainstreaming IWRM as part of the integrated response to climate change. However, the potential measurable contribution of IWRM to climate change adaptation and mitigation targets is not sufficiently explored. The same can be said about conflict prevention, displacement and migration. Improved implementation of an IWRM approach can help to address the root causes of these problems. A multi-country- or regional-scale analysis leading to a clear return on investment in terms of how IWRM could contribute to various development objectives would be the starting point for an advocacy campaign which should attempt to open up potential new funding sources for the achievement of SDG and Paris Agreement targets through the lens of an enhanced management of a country's or region's water resources.
- The gender indicator in the SDG 6.5.1 survey was the least well reported, despite the burden for water resources management falling disproportionately on women and girls. There is therefore a clear need for specific strategies that aim to contribute to improved water

resources management through the adequate and effective inclusion of a stronger gender component in IWRM policies, strategies and projects, which could subsequently be implemented at national, sub-national and transboundary scales, as pilots with a shared learning component that feeds into policy recommendations.

6. Contacts

GWPO

Colin Herron, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist, Global Water Partnership, colin.herron@gwp.org

UNEP-DHI

Joakim Harlin, Head of the Freshwater Unit and Chief Manager of UNDP-DHI Centre, UNEP, Joakim.Harlin@unep.org

Gareth James Lloyd, Deputy Chief Manager, UNEP-DHI Centre, gjl@dhigroup.com

UNDP Cap-Net

Bekithemba (Themba) Gumbo, Director, UNDP Cap-Net, themba.gumbo@cap-net.org

Annex 1: Pilot Overview

The table below provides an overview of the IWRM implementation scores (0-100) as established by each of the National IWRM focal points and group of stakeholders during the SDG 6.5.1 baseline survey in the four pilot countries. It further shows the agreed upon activities that national multi-stakeholder platforms have defined as a result of the Programme.

Ghana	Guatemala	Kazakhstan	Vietnam
IWRM Implementation scores Enabling environment: 56 Institutions / participation: 55 Management instruments: 40 Financing: 44 Total average: 49	IWRM Implementation scores Enabling environment: 28 Institutions / participation: 36 Management instruments: 19 Financing: 16 Total average: 25	IWRM Implementation scores Enabling environment: 29 Institutions / participation: 24 Management instruments: 40 Financing: 28 Total average: 30	IWRM Implementation scores Enabling environment: 56 Institutions / participation: 55 Management instruments: 40 Financing: 44 Total average: 49
Leading Institution Water Resources Commission	Leading Institution Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources with support of the Ministry of Planning (SEGEPLAN)	Leading Institution Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Agriculture	Leading Institution Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with support of Ministry of Natural Resources
Planned IWRM activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Review of National Water Policy Review existing IWRM Plans for the Tano and Pra Basins. Mapping opportunities to engage the Business Community in IWRM activities. Build Capacity of Water related Stakeholders in IWRM to achieve SDG 6.5 targets. Develop Harmonised M&E System for efficient and effective IWRM activities at the Basin level. Develop EIC Material on key Water Security and Climate Resilient issues considering Gender. Strengthen operations of the primary water resources data collection and monitoring stations. Increase coverage and strengthen activities of water quality monitoring in the country. Develop Incentive-based Strategy to attract the Private sector to support IWRM activities. 	Planned IWRM activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize the approval process of the Policy Framework for IWRM. Review / strengthen, in a participatory manner, the proposal of the Water Law, using the criteria of IWRM. Establish a Management Group for Action Plan Facilitate Inter-institutional coordination mechanisms at all levels. Management capabilities for strengthened decision making. National Water Resources Information System linked to the SNICC. Strengthen capacities for hydrological planning. Programs for the improvement of the quality and quantity of water. Link Action Plan with the SEGEPLAN programmatic network and the MINFIN budget allocation platform. Promote payment / compensation programs for ecosystem services 	Planned IWRM activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensify the work of the Interdepartmental Council on WRM. Raise the status of basin organizations. Adopt a new Water Code Raise the status of SKIEUR as the basic document for planning economic activities. Improve specific norms of water use: standards of public services. Introduce a complete ban on discharges into water bodies and the environment without cleaning up to the required standards. Restore the function of the BWI to agree on the use of groundwater Update of tariff policy Implementation and dissemination of the best available technologies to save water and reduce pollution Improve water accounting system Involve NGOs, private sector, universities, water users (including women and youth). Implementation of automated control, accounting and monitoring systems water resources in transboundary basins. 	Planned IWRM activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernization of Irrigation system serving sustainable agriculture development in ecological regions of Mekong River Delta. Cross-border Water resources Management in Se San – Sre Pok River basin Management, Vietnam. Assessment and propose measures for sustainable underground water sources in Central Highland. Assessment of water pollution sources and propose management solution for An Kim Hai Irrigation system. Sustainability Assessment for Water Resources of Sre pok, upstream part of lower Mekong River Basin, Vietnam. Engagement of private sector in disaster risk reduction in central coastal provinces, Vietnam. Water use assessment and proposed measures to strengthen the application of water saving irrigation technology in medium and large hydraulic work system ensuring effectiveness and sustainability of water use.