



SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme

IWRM Acceleration Package

Guidelines for participation and inclusion

April 2021

Why Engage Multiple Stakeholders in IWRM

Multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue is embedded within the basic definitions of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). To “promote the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment”, it is imperative that stakeholders whose decisions affect and those who are affected by those resources be brought together in an open and constructive dialogue.

Participants in multi-stakeholder consultations on SDG 6.5.1

To contribute to the drafting and formalisation of the national IWRM Action Plan during Stage 2, stakeholders relevant to the national context should be invited to take part in the consultation process, including one or more in-person or virtual multi-stakeholder workshops or consultations. This helps to increase ownership of decision-making processes, resulting in a robust and inclusive Action Plan. Virtual means of consultation may include online surveys, individual or collective interviews, focus groups, pre- and/or post-workshop consultations, discussion fora, etc., as appropriate. However, facilitators should be aware that virtual meetings and tools might be difficult for certain stakeholder groups to take part in. It is important to recognise these difficulties to ensure broad participation. More details on the means of virtual engagement can be found in document *2B Facilitators' Guide*.

With the objective of ensuring a broad, balanced and consensual set of water-related actions, it is suggested that the following stakeholders, from different sectors and levels, be considered as potential participants in this process:

- **Central government authorities:** representatives from the main ministry/ministries responsible for water resources, as well as those from other government authorities involved in or with an impact on water issues (e.g. agriculture/livestock, forestry, energy, environment, tourism, urban planning, sanitation, finance, climate change, risk management, health, etc.).
- **Basin, aquifer, protected area, and city level authorities:** local governments, protected area representatives and organisations with responsibility for water resources management or oversight at the river basin, lake basin, or aquifer level. This should also include representatives of relevant IWRM-related projects. The Stage 2 process should engage broad geographical perspectives within the country. Good communication with users at all levels is key to the success of the process.
- **Scientific and technological community:** academic institutions, universities, research institutions, think tanks, and other bodies with relevant information, studies, data and analyses on different aspects of water resources.
- **Civil society:** non-governmental organisations, community groups, water user associations, environmental organisations, and/or farmer organisations with a focus on water resources.
- **United Nations Country Representatives and entities in the country:** UN entities most relevant for sustainable development, the environment, social considerations and economic development: <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/country-level>.
- **Those in charge of transboundary water issues:** Including representatives of official government bodies and/or coordination mechanisms that deal with transboundary aquifers or river basins.

- **GWP partners in your country:** GWP's partners represent a range of different stakeholders concerned with IWRM, from different sectors: <https://www.gwp.org/en/partner/existing-partners/Partner-Search/>
- **Cap-Net partners in your country:** water-focused capacity development networks and organisations: <http://www.cap-net.org/networks-partnerships/>
- **Financial/Donor community:** foundations, bilateral and multilateral cooperation bodies, regional and/or global development banks and other financiers with whom opportunities identified in this process for strengthening IWRM implementation may be aligned. It is important to include these stakeholders from the outset because of the need for external financing to implement the Action Plan.
- **Business and industry:** Companies with a significant environmental, social and economic footprint, which provide innovative water solutions and/or have a stated interest in water issues, be they from the beverage, food, mining, energy, paper, consumer products, tourism or other sectors.
- **National focal points for other water-related SDG targets and indicators:** government officials named as focal points for each of the SDG targets and indicators related to water (not just SDG 6). Contact details for SDG 6 focal points should be available through official government channels, may be obtained from the UN-Water International Monitoring Initiative website, or can be provided by GWPO.
- **Gender advocacy groups:** Dublin Principle 3¹ highlights that “Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water.” Gender discrimination can limit women’s chances of accessing vital water resources. Limiting participation in water resources management based on gender can often result in unfair and self-perpetuating impacts on the lives of women and men. Limited participation may, in turn, lead to further forms of marginalization and reduce access to productive resources. Identifying and engaging gender-based organisations in IWRM can mean that opportunities and benefits of water-related interventions are equally available to both men and women.
- **Vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples:** Institutions and organised groups representing the rights, interests and perspectives of vulnerable groups, as defined in the SDG 6.5.1 survey. It is particularly important to hear the voice of indigenous peoples, given that the land they traditionally occupy is estimated to contain most of the world’s remaining biodiversity. Here it is important to note that workshop(s) may need to accommodate languages other than the predominant national language.
- **Young people:** Engaging both youth² and young professionals³ can increase the quality and relevance of water-related initiatives, policies and programmes, as they can provide innovative information, ideas and solutions. Youth organisations engaged in water or sustainable development can be a good starting point for identifying the best participants.



¹ See <https://www.gwp.org/contentassets/05190d0c938f47d1b254d6606ec6bb04/dublin-rio-principles.pdf>

² Different organisations have differing definitions of youth. GWP recognizes youth as young people aged 15-35, whereas the UN typically considers youth as being between the ages of 15 and 24.

³ “Young professionals” refers to recent graduates under the age of 35 who have some work experience, according to the [GWP Youth Strategy](#).

Young people are not a homogenous group and can include a range of backgrounds such as researchers, civil society, indigenous tribes, entrepreneurs, and young water professionals.



GWP Youth Engagement Strategy



GWP Gender Strategy