

The SDG 6 IWRM Support Program – An overview

1. Context

The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Integrated Water Resources Management Support Program (SDG 6 IWRM SP) is an initiative designed to assist countries in achieving a focused and coordinated approach to the monitoring and implementation of IWRM.

This initiative is driven by UNEP-DHI Centre, Global Water Partnership (GWP) and UNDP Cap-Net under the leadership of UN Environment, the custodian agency for the SDG 6.5.1 target on IWRM implementation. The work is anchored in the global initiative that supports official national reporting on the target on a three-year cycle. Monitoring and reporting is based on a survey questionnaire, with the first being conducted worldwide in 2017-2018¹. The questionnaire reviews the level of implementation of IWRM (scoring from 0 to 100), covering 35 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).

The progress report on SDG IWRM (2018) presents a global picture of the current situation on water management based on the above-mentioned questionnaire. Its central message can be distilled into two words: ACCELERATE PROGRESS. It further suggests that collective action that builds on the multi-stakeholder monitoring and reporting processes can accelerate implementation.

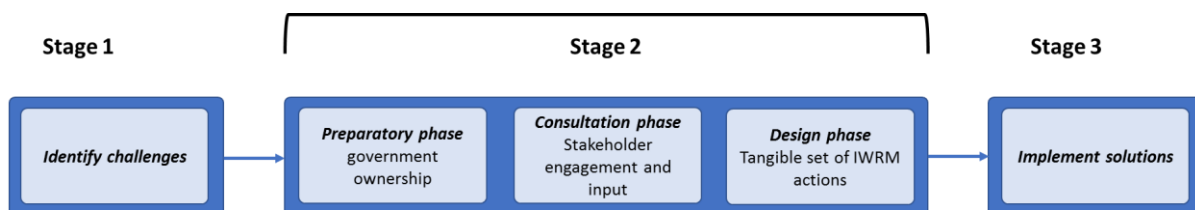
2. Objective and methodology

The main objective of the SDG 6 IWRM SP is to assist countries in improving and accelerating the level of implementation of IWRM, as a means to propose solutions for water related SDGs and therefore contributing to development as a whole. The SDG IWRM SP is organized around the following three stages:

Stage 1 – Identify challenges: This stage was completed, as mentioned above, in more than 170 countries through a series of surveys carried out in 2017 and 2018. A second round of the survey will be carried out in 2020, and this 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.



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

3. Pilot countries

During late 2018 and early 2019, stage 2 of the SDG IWRM SP was piloted in four countries representing different continents, different institutional and hydrogeological realities, but all using a consistent methodology based on a series of consultation workshops and the development of an SDG IWRM Action Plan. The four countries were: Ghana, Guatemala, Kazakhstan and Vietnam.

These countries had the flexibility to design the intervention in a way that makes optimal use of the resources available. Regardless of the approach chosen, the main aim was to have the interventions designed with complete ownership and buy-in from 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 centers, the private sector, NGOs, civil society as well as donors and international development agencies.

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. It further shows the agreed upon activities that national multi-stakeholder platforms have defined as a result of the SDG IWRM SP.

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. 	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 	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 	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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Incentive-based Strategy to attract the Private sector to support IWRM activities. 	<p>budget allocation platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote payment / compensation programs for ecosystem services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>coastal provinces, Vietnam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
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4. Lessons learnt

The SDG IWRM SP has been unanimously appreciated as a key mechanism to ensure that monitoring results do not remain on a shelf, but that they are considered and acted upon. It has been the occasion to revisit progress on implementation of IWRM and understand how to go beyond formulating policies and strategies and look at the wider angle of IWRM as a key entry point for all water-related SDGs and development.

In addition, the pilot experiences have revealed the following key lessons learnt:

- Country buy-in and ownership is essential right from the start. In fact, working on the SDGs also requires looking beyond the water box, and to include government agencies involved planning and budget. In order to reach a common vision on priorities and on action, it is vital to invite all the main relevant stakeholders (Government, NGOs, Private sector, river basin organizations, academia, ...) as well as the key donor agencies that are supporting water resources management in the country.
- 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 SDG IWRM SP provides guidance but no action plan “blueprint”, where sources of financing, expected results, timing, lead organisation and monitoring are recommended. The challenge will be to find the right balance between ambition and reality in action plans.
- The SDG IWRM SP can be time consuming, probably linked to the fact that IWRM was not given the right priority in government activities. There is indeed a need to first carefully understand the institutional landscape around the SDGs and Water, where the greatest priorities lie? Who can contribute to a change? (Government, private sector, civil society and/or donor agencies).
- This exercise is not only about the SDGs, it is about IWRM and linking water with development. Linking SDG IWRM with Climate Change, Nexus, Urban, Gender and Youth activities is highly relevant.

Finally, 2020 is the year during which a second round of the UNEP-DHI SDG IWRM surveys will be carried out, and it could also give the possibility for countries to start a comparative analysis between 2017 and 2020 and highlight priorities.