

South America Fact Sheet

Working for a water secure world

A water secure world considers the use of the production capacity of water and the reduction of its destructive force, the eradication of poverty, better education and rising living standards, especially for the most vulnerable, usually women and children, who are the ones who benefit the most from good water governance.

What is Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)?

"It is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize the economic and social welfare in an equitable manner, without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment."
(GWP 2000)

Why is IWRM important in South America?

Water abounds in South America. The region contains three of the largest river basins in the world- the Amazon, Orinoco and Rio de la Plata- and the Guarani aquifer, one of the world's largest groundwater bodies, extending more than 1,200,000 square kilometres.

28% of the world's freshwater resources are in this continent, but only 6% of the world's population. Nevertheless, 23% of the territory is covered by dry areas and the region continues to experience deteriorating water quality from high rates of deforestation and soil erosion, among others.

The Andes, a magnificent mountain range of 7,240 kilometres in length which crosses the continent, and the highest tropical snow-covered mountain range in the world, play a vital role in the water supply of both the Amazon and Pacific coastal river basins.

These water supplies are undergoing an increasing melting of its glaciers due to global warming. Water resources in the Amazon region are also in danger due to land clearance, and forest fires and fragmentation. By 2050 30% to 60% of the Amazon rainforest could be abruptly and irreversibly replaced by a type of dry savannah, with consequent large-scale loss of livelihoods and biodiversity.

In this context, some water-related problems that many countries in the region face -extreme drought, flooding, groundwater overuse, pollution, waterborne diseases and escalating social conflicts over water, among others- are proving to be unmanageable due to sectoral approaches and the lack of consensus regarding its management.

The solution to such problems may be beyond the reach of the agencies responsible for solving them, so it requires the cooperation of the different sectors and actors involved in the management and use of water. An integrated management approach facilitates the identification and implementation of effective solutions.

GWP South America

GWP is present in South America since 1998 and was established as a Regional Water Partnership (GWP South America) in 2006 to promote strategies and provide tools to facilitate the promotion of an increasingly responsible management and efficient use of our water resources.

Currently, GWP South America works through Water Associations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, being the rest of the countries of the region in process of accreditation.

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Become part of this effort

GWP is open to organizations interested in contributing towards sustainable water management, such as government institutions, academic and research institutions, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, users associations, service providers in the public sector, and the private sector.

Being Partner of GWP allows you to integrate national dialogue forums which may influence decision-making and raise their voice to regional and international scenarios, access opportunities for capacity-building and the generation of publications, exchange experiences and establish contacts leading to the development of synergies and a better coordination at different levels.

Any legally established organization and committed to IWRM can be a Partner of GWP. To become a Partner, it is necessary to print and fill out the application form available at:

www.gwpsudamerica.org

and send it to the GWP contact in your country or to:

info@gwpsudamerica.org

Global Water Partnership

The Global Water Partnership is an international network open to all water-related organizations. Created in 1996, GWP currently has more than 2500 institutional partners.

GWP's vision is for a water secure world. Its task is to promote integrated water resources management (IWRM) as a means to ensure sustainable water use. In order to carry it out, GWP has promoted the creation of neutral dialogue platforms in over 80 countries across 13 regions. These spaces for dialogue are a mechanism to facilitate IWRM processes by stretching bonds and providing tools to combine efforts and build consensus.

The network is based on the values of integration, openness, transparency, accountability, respect, gender sensitivity and solidarity.

GWP objectives

GWP believes that an integrated approach to water resource management is the best way to carry out this vision which includes all living beings. Among its objectives there are:

1. PROMOTE WATER AS A KEY PART OF SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, placing emphasis on an integrated approach, good governance, adequate infrastructure and sustainable financing to help countries achieve growth and water security.
2. ADDRESS CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES, defining and recommending solutions to problems such as climate change, growing urbanization and food security, among others.
3. REINFORCE KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COMMUNICATION, developing the capacity to share knowledge and promote a dynamic communication culture, so as to support better water management.
4. BUILD A MORE EFFECTIVE NETWORK, enhancing the network's resilience and effectiveness through stronger partnerships, good governance, measuring performance to help learning and financial sustainability.

GWP Principles

GWP takes its guiding principles from the Dublin and Rio statements (1992), from the Millennium Assembly (2000), which gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals, and from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) Plan of Action, which set a target for the preparation of IWRM and Water Efficiency plans. Over time, GWP has adapted and elaborated these principles to reflect international understanding of the 'equitable and efficient management and sustainable use of water'. The guiding principles are:

- Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment.
- Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels.
- Women play a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water.
- Water is a public good and has a social and economic value in all its competing uses.
- Integrated water resources management is based on the equitable and efficient management and sustainable use of water and recognises that water is an integral part of the ecosystem, a natural resource, and a social and economic good, whose quantity and quality determine the nature of its utilisation.

