

# INTEGRATING GOVERNANCE INTO THE WATER SECTOR A PRACTICAL GUIDE

## About this document

- **Context:** This guide is one in a series written to support SDC staff in integrating governance in SDC's priority themes/sectors – in this case, water. It is related to SDC's Guideline on Integrating Governance (available [here](#)).
- **Content:** The document outlines [key governance issues](#) regarding the water sector<sup>1</sup> and provides [practical guidance](#) on how to integrate governance aspects into sector and cooperation strategies, programs/project planning, [implementation, monitoring and reporting](#). It provides a summary of [good practice projects](#) as well as an overview over water governance related [tools](#) and [references](#).
- **Target audience:** The document is written for SDC staff and its partner organizations

## Introduction

### The significance of water and water governance

Water forms the basis of all life on Earth and is essential for sustainable development. Water is a habitat and a source of essential sustenance, a prerequisite for fostering livelihood, supporting economic growth and ensuring the integrity of ecosystems. Water is both a common good of overriding public interest as well as a limited natural resource, at the focus of **different uses** and competed for by a **multiplicity of users**. The use of water encompasses urban and rural, national as well as transboundary challenges and implies linkages across sectors such as agriculture, environment, energy, water and sanitation and health. This makes **governance of the water sector** particularly complex and challenging with a very crowded stakeholder space and often complex and contradictory policies and legal frameworks. The competition among different stakeholders often happens to the detriment of the poor and less powerful population groups, which obstructs the ambitions for inclusive development and just societies. This calls for additional targeted measures for more inclusive policies and functional power relations.

All over the world, the water sector faces rapidly growing challenges: population growth, migration, urbanisation, industrialisation, climate change and agricultural expansion are placing further pressure on water resources. Increased competition among different users results in overuse and pollution of surface water and over-abstraction of groundwater, which in turn creates public health risks and is detrimental to the environment. Apart from creating massive challenges this panorama also presents opportunities, for example for improved cooperation, for more efficient use of water, or for promoting peace.

**In conflict, post-conflict or otherwise fragile contexts** water governance is particularly challenging, yet all the more relevant. Weak or non-existent institutions and scarce resources and knowledge often result in weak water management (e.g. regarding the provision of water and sanitation services) and low efficiency in water use, thus exacerbating food scarcity and health problems and contributing to migration. In war, water is sometimes used as a strategic lever, at the expense of civilians (e.g. in Syria and Ukraine); and conflicts over water can exacerbate geopolitical tensions (e.g. between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). At the same time working sector-wide on water in fragile contexts is also an opportunity: for example,

---

<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term "water sector" is used in a broad sense and refers to all institutions, actors, as well as the legal frameworks and socio-cultural aspects related to water. Specifically "water sector" includes also sanitation, but not only refers to the WASH sector, which is rather understood as a sub-sector of the water sector.

improving the provision of public services such as water supply can improve capacities of local governance bodies to manage resources and involve citizens, thus building trust and supporting democratization; water can also be used as an instrument for peace-building between countries (e.g. the SDC's Blue Peace Initiatives). This is why, even in urgency-driven interventions, particular focus on governance is essential.

**The global agenda and its implications:** In 2010, the UN General Assembly recognized the **Human Right to Water**, which later was complemented with its equivalent for **sanitation**. The Human Rights to Water and Sanitation entitle everyone to sufficient, safe, accessible, culturally acceptable and affordable water and sanitation services for personal and domestic uses. They also state that these services have to be delivered in a participatory, accountable and non-discriminatory manner. Governments are obliged to ensure that everybody gains access to these services over a certain timeframe through creating an enabling environment, namely by adopting appropriate legislation, policies, interventions, and ensuring that these are adequately resourced and monitored.

The **2030 Agenda** includes a dedicated water goal, SDG 6, which aims to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. This goal crystalizes an important paradigm shift: away from purely building more infrastructure with an emphasis on “access” towards a more holistic approach **to improve governance of the water** and other key sectors. Both the recognition of access to water and sanitation as Human Rights and the Agenda 2030 clearly emphasize the need to go beyond business as usual and to work toward universal access. To reach the ambitious water goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 6) and implement the Human Rights Resolutions, considerable, coordinated global, national and local efforts are needed. Good water governance (see box below<sup>2</sup>) is a key factor for this. This is even more the case, as water is also required for productive uses such as energy production, agriculture, or extractive industries. Consequently water governance and other related concepts have come to the fore.

## **Water governance, integrated water resource management and a human rights based approach**

Water governance seeks to improve the management of water resources, enhance the opportunities of different interest groups to articulate their interests and exercise their legal rights, shed light on who takes decisions and how legal obligations are met, and contribute to non-violent deliberation and mediation of conflicting interests.

**'Integrated water resource management (IWRM)** is a process which promotes 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.<sup>3</sup> IWRM is an

### **Water governance**

Water governance refers to the political, social, economic and administrative systems in place that influence water's use and management. Essentially, who gets which water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related services, and their benefits.

integrated, trans-sectoral approach to the sustainable management of water resources, which recognizes that water is a valuable resource, with its value reflected in how it is used; and which uses a participatory approach to water resources management involving stakeholders, to ensure equity as well as efficiency in water use. It is the basic underlying concept for any intervention related to water management by SDC. Moreover, the SDC also supports a **'Human Rights based approach to water'**, which (i) makes authorities responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the access to water and sanitation and (ii) empowers people to exercise their rights and responsibilities<sup>4</sup>. In fragile or conflict affected contexts, SDC applies a **Conflict Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM)**<sup>5</sup> approach to ensure a project contributes to peace- and state-building. Furthermore, corruption in the water sector is both a cause and

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://watergovernance.org/governance/what-is-water-governance/>

<sup>3</sup> Definition by the Global Water Partnership : <http://www.gwp.org/en/About/why/the-need-for-an-integrated-approach/>

<sup>4</sup> Further information on Human Rights Based Approaches can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> Further information on Conflict Sensitive Programme Management can be found [here](#).

a consequence of poor governance in the water sector. The concept of ‘**water integrity**’ is based on the three pillars of transparency, accountability and participation and aims for equity and sustainability in water resource management and service delivery<sup>6</sup>. Water integrity tools can be used to improve governance and address major risks of corruption in water. Over the past decades, Switzerland, and in particular the SDC, built a reputation on its focus on “soft” components, including governance. The focus on governance and Human Rights is strongly reflected in the Strategic Framework 2017-2020 of SDC’s Global Programme Water, and is also apparent in many of Switzerland’s bilateral projects, whether implemented by the SDC (focus mainly on WASH, governance, climate change, and food security) or SECO (focus mainly on urban infrastructure and public water utilities).

While governance is anchored well at a strategic level in the water sector within SDC, the operationalization of water governance and a Human Rights based approach to water remain a challenge in this highly contested field. The following chapters thus aim at providing concrete guidance on **how to address governance in the water sector**, both at global level, through multi-lateral partnerships, as well as at national and sub-national level through bi- or multi-lateral water projects, programmes and initiatives.

## **Governance in SDC**

SDC addresses governance as a strategic goal and domain in its own right, with targeted programming in key thematic priorities. This transversal dimension implies that it must be integrated in interventions of all SDC Departments. SDC addresses governance through a political and system development approach that addresses *structures* (laws, policies, institutional set up, assignment of responsibilities and resources), *governance processes* (performance, collaboration/interaction), and *actors’ behavior and power relations* (attitudes, motivations, capacities, power positions and forms). It encompasses multiple levels (subnational, national, global), and it consequently involves a range of actors within and outside the state institutions/state bureaucracy, including from civil society, the private sector, NGOs, indigenous communities and other stakeholders. To various degrees, all of these actors engage in processes for decision making, regulation, control and organization of society. Addressing Sector Governance recognizes that Governance is at the heart of sustainable development cooperation.

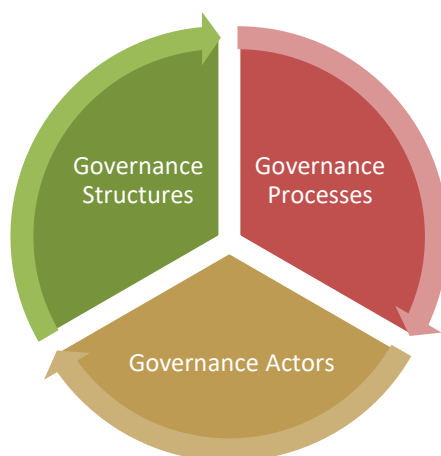
SDC believes that the quality of governance is decisive and underscores the principles of good governance (Participation; Equality and non-discrimination (encompassing social inclusion and gender equality); Transparency; Accountability; The rule of law; Effectiveness and efficiency). They describe how public affairs ideally should be managed and political authority should be exercised and negotiated. This underpins SDC’s value based approach.

---

<sup>6</sup> Further information on water integrity can be found [here](#).

## A. Key Governance challenges and considerations for programming

This chapter describes common governance challenges in the water sector and provides guidance on how to address these challenges when designing a water sector project, programme or strategy. Challenges are described along three different dimensions: 1) Governance Structures, 2) Governance Processes and 3) Key Actors. These challenges and the respective considerations for programming are confined to generic water governance issues and do not address specific challenges related to particular water uses and users. In cases where considerations are tailored for a specific actor, they need to be adjusted when considering different actors.



### Governance Structures: policies, strategies, laws and institutional setup

*A comprehensive and dedicated legislative framework for water sets out **goals, responsibilities and resources** needed for successfully managing water resources and services. Ideally, policies are aligned and complement each other across government levels with existing mechanisms for cooperation. Likewise horizontal cooperation should be in place to ensure coherent implementation at sub-national level and policy coherence at national level. Ideally, national policies relate to international or supranational frameworks and regulations.*

#### **Challenge: Fragmented national policy framework**

Multiple legal and policy frameworks governing water at national level often overlap and diverge, both among sectors and across government levels. Weak public policies are also characterized by poor objective-setting, unclear assignment of duties, deficient enforcement and lack of monitoring and evaluation systems. Without a comprehensive legal framework (from the essential legal statutes to the practical guidance materials) to drive policy implementation, strategies, programs and projects run the risk of violating societal norms and failing to address the objectives for which the policies were established

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Support the **development of an enabling environment** of suitable policies, strategies and legislation including means for their enforcement to favour integrated water resources management (IWRM)
- ✓ Support the **transposition of international or supranational regulations and conventions**<sup>7</sup> to national and subnational levels
- ✓ Promote a **multi-stakeholder approach to policy development** and regulatory reforms, including government, civil society, parliament commissions, private sector, etc.
- ✓ Promote the establishment of **vertical coordination mechanisms** and platforms that promote alignment, complementarity and cooperation between different levels of government

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- Are the **Human Rights to water and sanitation articulated in the legal frameworks** (e.g. water law or national constitution) and in key regulatory documents (e.g., strategic planning of service providers)?
- Are **traditional water management practices** and traditional rules, values and decision-making processes considered in the legal framework? What is the relation between customary and state laws? In what aspects do they contradict each other?
- Are **long-term social, environmental and economic objectives** balanced in the policy frameworks governing water use, protection and clean-up? (e.g. through fair tariff setting for public services or incentives to conserve resources / protect the environment?)
- Are adequate country **safeguard systems** in place to address social and environmental issues in development projects, particularly for large-scale infrastructure (e.g. dams)?
- In **fragile contexts**, keep an eye on the quickly changing space for policy reforms and on institutional capacities and be flexible to adapt to changes

### Challenge: Financing of Water Sector

Sustainable financing of the water sector remains a challenge: Capital investments (often externally financed) are not matched with budgets for recurring costs, leading to rapidly deteriorating infrastructure or expensive rehabilitation/replacement efforts. This in turn leads to an unsustainable/unaffordable level of costs for the operator of water infrastructure, or non-provision of services.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Support the establishment of a **revenues system** that allows water utilities to function in a sustainable manner – consider transfers, local taxes and tariffs
- ✓ Support the establishment of a **fair and sustainable tariff system** that covers recurring costs but that is affordable to everyone, socially inclusive and doesn't exacerbate existing inequalities.
- ✓ Support the establishment of **multi-annual strategic plans** that include operating and **maintenance costs and investment needs**
- ✓ Consider supporting the introduction of **abstraction or pollution charges** at national or sub-national level

---

<sup>7</sup> [UNECE Water Convention](#) (1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes), including the [Protocol on Water and Health](#); [UN Watercourses Convention](#) (1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses) [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

- ✓ Foster the **equitable, efficient and transparent allocation** of water-related revenues

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- Are adequate responsibilities and financing **devolved to basin/regional/local authorities** in order to provide well-functioning public services?
- Do the available **resources match the assigned functions** and needs at all levels?
- What is the potential for **own source revenue** generation?
- Are principles such as **polluter-pays and user-pays or payment for environmental services** applied?
- Do flexible and solidarity mechanisms exist in case of **water-related disasters**?
- Are **budget transparency** rules and principles applied at all government levels?

### Challenge: Unclear roles and responsibilities

The level of centralization/decentralization of a national government has an impact on how efficiently and effectively water resources are managed. Decentralized countries tend to struggle coordinating different local/regional bodies to manage resources at a basin level. Where decentralization processes are incomplete, roles and responsibilities of different actors are often blurred and finances allocated to lower levels of government don't match their assigned functions. Centralized countries, on the other hand, tend to be less responsive to citizens' concerns and are more prone to capture by special interests, which can translate into corruption or inequitable distribution of water resources. Where the state is too weak or not present at all, the informal sector may provide essential water and sanitation services, especially to marginalized populations. While these actors provide vital services, the very nature of their informality makes quality, equity and effectiveness hard to control.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ When planning an intervention analyse **roles and responsibilities of key actors** and informal **power structures** in the sector as well as their capacities and keep an eye on changes.
- ✓ Support the design of **functional and financial assignments** as well as decision making powers at different levels (central, sub-national, local) within the Ministries and agencies responsible for water, and support reforms for corresponding human resource management
- ✓ Promote roles and responsibilities in the water sector to the lowest appropriate and competent (political/administrative) level: **make use of decentralisation processes**.
- ✓ Promote the **principle of subsidiarity**, with planning and decision making deferred to the lowest possible level, while also considering other criteria, such as economies of scale.
- ✓ **Collaborative water management** at decentralized levels can be used as entry point for a bottom decentralisation push. This is even more powerful if linked with other related sector development initiatives at decentralized levels
- ✓ Support the establishment of **clear communication and information** channels and processes across government tiers.
- ✓ Support the incorporation of **informal service providers** into the national water service provision scheme

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- *Are decision-making powers and processes, as well as administrative roles and responsibilities **clearly defined and are functions shared** across levels and across agencies?*
- *Do **sub-national platforms** exist where water stakeholders can agree on priorities and allocation of resources? How are the roles of professional associations, NGOs, community groups and private sector providers defined and how do they play out in reality?*
- *Is water managed at the **appropriate scale**, with mechanisms for coordination between scales?*



## Governance Processes: adherence to good governance principles

*Governance processes describe the management of public goods and services, based on shared responsibility and decision making, collective action and joint negotiation by state institutions and a multitude of other actors. Ideally, the actors involved adhere to good governance principles in their interactions, thus ensuring equitable and sustainable benefits for the people, environment and economy resulting from the management of water related resources.*

### Challenge: Effectiveness and efficiency of water resource management

Effective and efficient management of water resources is challenged by the lack of accurate data and timely information, weak strategic planning processes (including territorial / spatial planning) and low human resources and capacities. Lack of coordination and cooperation across sectors and government tiers, including unreliable financial transfers, stemming from an incomplete decentralization process add to the challenge. The monopolistic nature of water utilities contributes to weak internal control mechanisms and income/expenditure management processes, which also result in inefficient resource allocation. Additionally, transboundary issues and insufficient multi-stakeholder coordination aggravate the complexity of the issues at hand, often resulting in an ineffective and inefficient management of water resources.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Support the production and/or collection, update, and sharing of timely, consistent, comparable and policy-relevant water and water-related **data and information**, including in the case of transboundary water, to guide, assess and contribute to improving water policies based on evidence-based decision-making.
- ✓ Promote **multi-level cooperation** at the appropriate scale (including transboundary cooperation) among users, stakeholders and levels of government for the management of water resources.
- ✓ Adapt the **level of capacity** of responsible authorities to the complexity of water challenges to be met, and to the set of competencies required to carry out their duties.
- ✓ Ensure that governance arrangements help **mobilising funds** and allocating financial resources in an efficient, transparent and timely manner.
- ✓ Promote inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement across sectors and scales for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation.
- ✓ Support the use and proliferation of locally adapted technologies (e.g. drip irrigation, water saving devices) as well as circular systems of resource management and complementing traditional infrastructure with nature-based solutions.
- ✓ Promote **multi-sector cooperation between key institutions in related domains** such as health, agriculture, education, environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction and promote transboundary cooperation on local, basin and regional level



## Key questions for analysis and programming

- How effective is the **decentralisation architecture** working in reality? E.g. is the transfer of resources to subnational state institutions happening on time and according to the rules? Do they receive important information, guidance from next higher levels and are they capable to take decisions? Are the vertical and horizontal coordination and cooperation arrangements working?
- What is the **performance of responsible actors** in fulfilling their duties in given sector compared to defined targets and budgets, and compared to acknowledged standards?
- How is **data in the water sector collected, managed and used**? What is the quality and accuracy of this data? Is the data relevant and used for evidence-based decision-making?
- Are **multi-stakeholder, cross-sectorial and transboundary mechanisms** in place to foster effective, efficient and equitable water resources management? Is there coordination and clear distribution of roles between concerned ministries (e.g. Agriculture, Energy, Environment, Planning, Industry, and Health)?
- Do **national policies and regulations** support and favour an integrated approach to water resource management? Is water considered an integral part of the ecosystem, a natural resource, and a social and economic good?
- Does the **current set-up of water management** contribute to resource conservation and environmental protection by maximising efficient use and minimizing pollution, recycling and safe reuse of resources used?
- Where they exist, do catchment-based institutions have the necessary level of autonomy, financial and human resources to carry out their functions?

## Challenge: Weak accountability architecture in the Water Sector<sup>8</sup>

Public oversight over water utilities is often weak and non-transparent planning and decision making processes fuel mismanagement, corruption and elite capture of water resources. Citizens and public institutions lack the ability to demand accountability and effectively monitor performance and denounce corruption. Infrastructure projects are particularly prone to corruption and mismanagement given their high price tag, public sector involvement (regulation and financing) and technical complexities.

## Considerations for programming

- ✓ Strengthen the accountability architecture by **supporting accountability stakeholders**, such as regulatory agencies and strengthen interlinkages and collaboration between them.
- ✓ Support **social accountability initiatives** and initiatives pushing for access to information related to water management.
- ✓ Promote **regular monitoring and evaluation of water policy and governance**, share the results with the public and make adjustments when needed.
- ✓ Consider working on **more transparent budget information**, participatory budgeting and evaluation, budget oversight, redress mechanisms and sanctions against corruption.
- ✓ **Strengthen local capacities** to generate and make freely accessible high-quality data and information that are understandable and usable.
- ✓ Promote **mechanisms for state authorities** and other actors to explain and justify their actions.
- ✓ Strengthen **civic and public oversight bodies** that demand accountability or monitor performance

---

<sup>8</sup> Source: WIGO 2016 ([www.waterintegritynetwork.net/?docs=4959](http://www.waterintegritynetwork.net/?docs=4959))

## Key questions for analysis and programming

- *What state institutions are involved in ensuring accountability in the Water Sector?*
- *Is there a procedure to collate, analyse and summarize information on **performance monitoring and evaluation**? (e.g., are audits on performance systematically carried out?)*
- *What **measures and processes are in place for state authorities** and other actors to explain and justify their actions? Are there civic and public oversight bodies that can demand accountability or monitor performance?*
- *What are the **roles of parliaments, regulatory agencies, watchdog institutions, auditor general**? What non-state institutions are present and what is their role (e.g. media)? Where measures can be anchored to increase accountability of the system?*
- *How is **information exchanged** across different stakeholders, private and public? Is the public informed about rules, responsibilities, available resources and distribution of resources? Is corresponding data available?*
- *Is there a clearly defined and **empowered (independent) regulatory agency** responsible for water supply and sanitation (economic and environmental regulation)?*

## Challenge: Poor stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation

Existing decision-making processes around resource allocation are often dominated by a few actors thus limiting the benefits of investments in water and sanitation to specific groups and not reflecting the needs of all stakeholders, particularly the most marginalized ones. This in turn may lead to increased conflicts around water resources while at the same time leading to low levels of efficiency, effectiveness and the exclusion of marginalized groups. Women in particular are often excluded or under-represented in planning and decision making processes.

## Considerations for programming

- ✓ Integrate **participatory processes** throughout the whole project cycle, including project planning.
- ✓ Strengthen and establish spaces for participation and improve the **quality of participation**. Facilitate **meaningful participation** of marginalized group and resource-poor groups at different levels, e.g. at water user's committees, at local government bodies, as part of the workforce of a utility, etc. and ensure that these groups have the capacity to participate meaningfully.
- ✓ Aspire for systemic changes in participation and seek to **institutionalize participation** with partner institutions, e.g. anchored in local governance rules and regulations, and not only within the project.
- ✓ Consider initiatives such as support to river basin associations or water users' groups, water stewardship initiatives<sup>9</sup>, and participatory budgeting to **broaden the base of decision-making**.
- ✓ Ensure that the stakeholder groups have sufficient and relevant **knowledge and skills** to make well-informed choices and decisions.
- ✓ **Involve women** with equal rights as individual users and partners for institutional development.

---

<sup>9</sup> Water stewardship can be defined as "[t]he use of water that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site and catchment-based actions. Good water stewards understand their own water use, catchment context and shared risk in terms of water governance, water balance, water quality and important water-related areas; and then engage in meaningful individual and collective actions that benefit people and nature." (<http://a4ws.org/about/>)

- ✓ Participation involves obligations as well as rights: promote the adherence to and **compliance with legal rules and regulations** of all stakeholders.<sup>10</sup>

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure **participation of civil society** in general, and marginalized groups in particular, in the process of resource allocation?
- Are civil society organizations **involved in important processes**, such as defining tariff structures?
- If there are possibilities for participation: do they **include all relevant groups** in the decision making-process?
- Are the citizens aware of their rights? Are they interested in participation?
- Are **officials willing** to allow truly participatory processes?
- Is the information provided in the **local language**? Is key information provided through means that reach illiterate people?
- Is there **institutionalized consultation with consumers** by the regulator and utilities (e.g. with the assistance of local committees composed of volunteers)?

### Challenge: Exclusion and discrimination

The provision of water and sanitation services to marginalized population groups (ethnic or religious minorities, people living in informal settlements, remotely located households, people marginalised based on their gender or age, etc.) frequently is a challenge and leads to disparities in the distribution of public resources. The resulting inequalities in access can be further exacerbated during droughts or conflicts. Patterns of exclusion are often the result of an inadequate policy framework: For example, municipal authorities may refuse to install water distribution networks at informal settlements due to land tenure issues. In many countries investments in sewerage are funded by government, whereas investments in household latrines are considered a private household cost that cannot be subsidised. This results in public funds being spent on relatively wealthy urban residents and not on their rural counterparts.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Support the establishment of dedicated pro-poor units within utilities to promote a pro-poor approach to the provision of water and sanitation services (e.g. in urban settlements).
- ✓ Take the disparate interests of all stakeholders into consideration – especially those of the poor and marginalized segments of society.
- ✓ Promote and advocate for tariffs which take into consideration the need to cover all costs for constructing and maintaining infrastructure without excluding the poorest. Targeted subsidies can be an adequate solution
- ✓ Address power relations in the water sector that lead to inequality and discrimination of certain stakeholders (and the non-fulfilment of their right to water). E.g. business interests of big companies that rely on water vs. needs of subsistence farmers etc.

---

<sup>10</sup> Source: WIGO 2016 ([www.waterintegritynetwork.net/?docs=4959](http://www.waterintegritynetwork.net/?docs=4959))

- ✓ Consider also invisible power<sup>11</sup> (norms – also internalised ones – that have an exclusionary effect, based on gender, ethnicity, race, etc.).
- ✓ Support a Human Rights based approach to water and sanitation, while promoting a multi-stakeholder approach to water resource allocation

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- *Does the administrative and political set up promote effective, inclusive and affordable service provision; does it protect the most vulnerable and empower the disadvantaged?*
- *Who are those excluded from benefiting in a given sector (e.g. based on income level, gender, ethnic/religious affiliation, sexual orientation, disabilities, age, other)? What are the particular needs and preferences of these population groups?*
- *What are the reasons and patterns of exclusion, and the expressions of multiple discrimination?*
- *What are issues of poverty in the water sector?*
- *Do mechanisms exist that ensure equal benefits for all, and inclusive participation and decision making?*
- *Are the principles of the Human Rights to water and sanitation (specifically: water and sanitation services are sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable) adhered to?*
- *Are there norms and structures in place that can have an exclusionary effect on certain groups? E.g. do marginalised groups question their lack of access and the inequalities causing it, or do they accept it as natural*

### Challenge: Weak rule of law<sup>12</sup>

The rights to water and sanitation are human rights and the obligation to guarantee and secure the provision of public services is anchored in many national constitutions. Often, this right is foregone and there is a marked gap between policy and practice, e.g. remote or marginalized settlements not being provided with adequate water and sanitation by their respective municipality or corruption not being sanctioned. Citizens lack the means and knowledge to call upon the judiciary and even if court rulings are handed down many times they are not enforced.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Address weaknesses in the **enforcement of the legal and regulatory system** and build capacities within the judiciary on water sector specific issues.
- ✓ Facilitate **access to justice**, especially for marginalized groups, e.g. legal advisory services or conflict resolution mechanisms.

<sup>11</sup> Invisible power shapes whether and how people understand that an issue exists at all. This can lead to the internalisation and acceptance of an unjust or unequal status quo, as a 'normal' practice, or at least one which is not possible to challenge. For elites, such internalisation can support the reproduction of certain norms, prejudice and ideologies that justify maintaining the status quo. (Source: Mehta 2016: Why invisible power and structural violence persist in the water domain. [IDS Bulletin 47 \(5\)](#).)

<sup>12</sup> From: "The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies", Report of the UN Secretary General, 2004. See also: [Rule of Law, Justice Sector Reforms and Development Cooperation](#), SDC concept paper, 2008 and the [SDC policy on decentralization, democratization, and local governance](#).

- ✓ Take the **customary laws** into consideration

### **Key questions for analysis and programming**

- Do responsible sector stakeholders **adhere to rules and regulations** and are mechanisms in place to guarantee their enforcement?
- What is the **role of the legal and regulatory system** related to water?
- What is the **role of the judiciary** in water, including customary justice mechanisms, related disputes and enforcement of the right to water?
- Do people have **access to legal services and redress**?

## Key actors: capacities and interests that shape governance structures and processes

*The capacity and interest of actors involved in the water sector – including line ministries, regulatory agencies, municipalities, citizens, civil society organisations and private enterprises at all levels shape governance structures and the management of water related resources. Benefits from the management of water related resources are likely to be more equitable, sustainable and effective if capacities are high amongst all actors, if their interests are aligned and negotiated transparently and if their resources and negotiating powers are on an equal footing.*

### Challenge: Asymmetry of power, differing incentives and motivations

Water is a crowded stakeholder space and a highly contested issue with many competing uses and users of water resources. Actors with very different levels of resources, power and/or information interact directly or indirectly, often leading to tensions, conflicts and sometimes violence. These tensions can arise at all levels: local, national, and international, as well as across different areas (e.g., rural/urban) or different interest groups. Decision-makers are prone to favour economic goals (e.g. industry, large-scale agriculture), over social (e.g. right to water, religious significance) or environmental (e.g. ecosystem health) ones, leading to unequitable benefits for different users.

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Consider implementation of approaches to **allocate a value** (economic, ecological, social, cultural etc.) to water as a mechanism to establish multi-stakeholder dialogues and cooperation (Water stewardship initiatives, payment for watershed services, etc.). Use these approaches to link local interventions with regional or global initiatives.
- ✓ Use **regional and/or global initiatives**, platforms that can help to trigger more conducive water governance (e.g., see where you can link up with the SDC Global Programme Water).
- ✓ **Identify incentives** that can trigger policy and practice/behavioural changes for enhanced water governance. Likewise, identify disincentives that impact negatively on performance (e.g. working conditions) and propose remedial action.
- ✓ Pay particular attention to **actors of the private sector** who have the potential to strongly influence management of water resources.
- ✓ Identify **drivers for policy and practice/behavioural changes and obstacles**, and empower actual/potential drivers.
- ✓ Establish mechanisms to enable a **constructive and non-violent dialogue** between different actors, both within watersheds but also more widely, including trans-national processes.
- ✓ Strengthen the role of advocacy work in promoting water-related platforms for multi-stakeholder and multi-level exchange.

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- What are the **decision making processes**, for example on water resource allocation (where, how, by whom are decisions made)?

- Are key stakeholders able to **advocate for specific water issues**, including the right to water and sanitation for all?
- Are **relations between key stakeholders** defined by domination or collaboration and alliance, strong, weak or conflict relations?
- Which actors/key institutions enjoy **most trust and legitimacy**? (e.g. local operators, private/public utilities, water committees etc.).
- Which actors are the **most powerful** (e.g. in terms of financial resources, but also position, force or networks)? Who are reform-minded stakeholders within the state bureaucracy, and other state institutions? What is their motivation? Who are possible allies?

### Challenge: weak human resources and capacities

Lack of capacities and human resources at the local level (municipalities, water utility, citizens, and businesses) can lead to inefficient operation and poor maintenance of infrastructure and consequently deteriorating service delivery and further reluctance of clients to pay. Many water resource authorities suffer from insufficient human resources and technical capacities of staff, posing a challenge to the institutional development of the water sector

### Considerations for programming

- ✓ Strengthen the **capacities of stakeholders** (regulator, utilities, training institutes, academia, professional association bodies, civil society organisations etc.) to perform their duties.
- ✓ Apart from formal capacity building (training courses), also take into consideration formats such as **exchange visits, on-the-job training, learning exchange**, dialogue platforms etc
- ✓ Support key actors to develop capacities **to attract young talents** and retain them within the sector and empower the young generation as agents of change to innovate the sector.

### Key questions for analysis and programming

- Are **skills (knowledge, competences and ethics)** of authorities and service providers sufficient to fulfil assigned duties?
- What **qualification systems** are in place for (continuous) education and training?
- Are **training curricula** for different career options standardized and comply with international standards?
- Is the **professional staff management system fair and motivating**
- Are there **adequate mechanisms in place to attract young talents** and retain them in the sector?



## B. Important aspects for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

### During strategy development...

- Include governance considerations (legal framework, state of decentralization, performance and interaction of responsible actors in public sector management processes compared to good governance principles, power dimensions, personal interests, incentives/disincentives and available capacities of key stakeholders) **both at the level of people and institutions when designing the domain outcome in the Cooperation Strategy Results Framework.**
- Include a **specific field of observation/indicator in the water domain** to measure progress in improving governance in the water sector. Key outcome indicators are the Aggregated Reference Indicators (ARI) that allow to assess outcomes and outputs achieved with SDC support. The ARI for water are available on the [RéseEAU Shareweb](#). For governance, indicator W1 (Global challenges – Water policies); and indicator W2 (Access to resources – Water) are the most relevant of the four indicators, but indicators W3 and W4 (Basic services – Access to water and sanitation) should also be considered, since they are strongly linked to the implementation of the Human Rights to water and sanitation.
- Include changes in aspect of governance in the Risks and Assumptions part of the Cooperation Strategy.
- Include governance relevant **Country Development Indicators** (e.g. linked to accountability, transparency and oversight mechanisms and equity concerns) in the water sector.

### During analysis and programming...

- Conduct a governance analysis of the water sector at the start of an intervention.
- Establish at least one governance specific Outcome (backed by governance-specific indicators and outputs) or at least Outcome indicators at Project level, linked to water governance systems (e.g. improved policies for water governance), processes (e.g. clear functional assignment of roles and responsibilities) and key actors in water (e.g. individual/group behaviour changes).
- Identify vulnerable groups facing obstacles in accessing water services, in order to establish targets for specific groups in project LogFrame.
- When defining indicators make use of existing definitions at international levels, such as the ones used by the United Nations (JMP, GLAAS and GEMI<sup>13</sup>).

### During reporting, monitoring and evaluating...

- Disaggregate data and indicators by potentially disadvantaged population groups and gender
- Address persistent social determinants within other sectors through specific interventions (e.g. in health) and monitor and evaluate their relevance for water governance systems and processes.
- Address governance issues in the water sector in project reviews and evaluations.
- Keep in mind to not only include line ministry actors in M&E but also communities, unions, (formal and informal), professional associations, umbrella organizations, other sector actors and international partners' performance.
- Keep in mind that indicators need a reliable source of information, either based on national statistics or certified surveys.

---

<sup>13</sup> Further information is available [here](#) (JMP), [here](#) (GEMI) and [here](#) (GLAAS).

# Annex I: Good Practices - Implementing Governance in Water Projects

## Addressing water governance at global, regional and local level

### Blue Peace Middle East

The Middle East is the most water scarce region in the world. Water plays a central role in the region's conflicts and in defining priorities with regard to the sustainable development agenda. Aggravating this situation, the majority of water resources in the region are shared between two or more countries. Other important challenges include the need for more sustainable water use, access to more reliable water services, and improved water governance for national and transboundary surface water and groundwater resources. As water problems in the region and their impacts are often transboundary, regional solutions are required, which can encourage regional cooperation.

Blue Peace Middle East is an initiative that was launched in 2011 by SDC to contribute to peace building and strengthening cooperation on sustainable management of shared water resources through combined political and technical dialogues between relevant stakeholders from national and local governments, academia, civil society, private sector and media, which are substantiated with concrete regional projects and direct activities on the ground. Together with the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), which is the implementing partner for the political dialogues, and local partners from academia, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector, the SDC promotes policy and concrete solutions for sustainable development serving those threatened by water scarcity and conflict.

The Blue Peace Middle East Community was created in 2011 and in 2017 constituted a network of more than 200 opinion leaders and policy makers in the Middle East. From 2011 to 2017, a period during which the Middle East saw violent conflicts and multiple crises of governance, it has been the only sustained mechanism for regional dialogue on water. Tangible results since 2011 include:

- In spite of the volatile political situation and security environment in the region, the initiative created a soft infrastructure for dialogue engaging stakeholders from Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and to a limited extent Syria.
- The creation of a political umbrella facilitated progress on operational projects, such as the sharing of hydrological and meteorological data and preparations for the development of a coordinated and sustainable management framework in the Orontes Basin shared between Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.
- The facilitation of a long-term political dialogue between Turkey and Iraq on data harmonisation on the Tigris River. This dialogue is supported on an operational level by the set-up of a monitoring station at the Tigris in Iraq that contributes to better data and thus improved water management.
- To address the capacity gap in water and sanitation in the region, the creation of over 60 start-ups developing innovative solutions for improved water management has been supported in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.
- In the framework of the Blue Peace media network, more than 500 articles, media reports and television programmes highlighted important water issues in the region.

With regard to specific actions on the ground, the initiative focuses on closing the knowledge gap by helping to gather reliable data on surface and groundwater resources and ensuring efficient water management and effective capacity building.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> More information on the Blue Peace Middle East Initiative is available [here](#). Further reading: Water as an Asset for Peace – Atlas of Risks and Opportunities, SDC 2017. <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Water/news-networking-tools/Documents/SDC-Water-Atlas-FINAL-WEB-.pdf>

## **Working towards more integrity in the water sector: Water Integrity Network (WIN)**

The Water Integrity Network (WIN) is a network of organizations and individuals promoting water integrity to reduce corruption and improve water sector performance worldwide. Integrity with its four main pillars - transparency, accountability, participation and anti-corruption - is at the centre of WIN's activities. At the international level, WIN advocates for developing strategic partnerships to bring water integrity on the global agenda and into the programmes and practices of important players in the international water sector. WIN contributed to OECD principles on water governance and released own publications such as the Water Integrity Global Outlook<sup>15</sup>. Another aspect is the development, testing and promotion of water integrity tools, as well as knowledge sharing and collecting evidence on corruption and the effectiveness of water integrity initiatives. Since 2009, when awareness on the issues of corruption in the water sector and integrity as a strong counterforce only started to emerge, SDC has provided a core contribution to WIN to support its global advocacy on water integrity and been part of its general assembly that serves as a steering mechanism.

- The Multi Country Water Integrity Programme (MCWIP) is a partnership between WIN and several Swiss Organizations (Helvetas, Caritas, Cewas) and encompasses engagement in Guatemala, Kenya, Mozambique and Nepal. The MCWIP aims to build capacities of local authorities and public/private service providers to set up water management systems and improving water service delivery while influencing national government policies. For the different implementation countries, locally adopted water integrity concepts, approaches and tools are developed and applied. While the specific approaches and focus areas are adapted to the local context in country component, all of them pursue four common lines of action: use of water integrity and social accountability tools (focus: local level); alliance building (across levels); advocacy and lobbying for policy changes (focus: national level); and capacity development and knowledge management (across levels).<sup>16</sup> A further central aspect is the learning and leverage component, which serves as a mechanism for knowledge exchange and aims at mainstreaming the principles integrity among Swiss-based organisations working in the water sector in developing countries. Lessons from these activities on to how to successfully implement a water integrity programme include: To speak or not to speak about corruption? Corruption happens, everywhere. Keeping it hidden makes it thrive. Being transparent about it can build trust. It is critical to carefully evaluate how far one can go when discussing corruption and only gradually push the limits. Being sensitive about the topic means taking into account cultural relativity and using positive entry points to generate discussion and action. The human rights to water and sanitation have proven to be a very useful entry point to promoting integrity.
- Preventing rather than cleaning up a mess. Prevention is a sign of due diligence: it can build trust with financing partners and ensure effectiveness of projects.
- Not a fight to fight alone: engaging with partners for change. Concerted action for advocacy and tool implementation is key, even if it is difficult to keep up.
- Combining top-down and bottom-up approaches for lasting change. Political will or top support helps and acting at lower levels and building up momentum for integrity is possible and effective.
- Building integrity walls. Transparency is not just about opening up the books. Civil society and the media play a key role in independent monitoring and reviews of budgets or service levels. Empowered, capacitated regulators can be strong change agents in the fight against corruption.
- Ensuring stakeholder engagement is a slow process but if it is real and multi-directional, integrity work will be stronger. Integrity programmes require thorough assessments and context analyses, detailed stakeholder mapping, and quality follow-up.

## **Improving sector governance at all levels: SABA+**

---

<sup>15</sup> Water Integrity Global Outlook. WIN, 2016. [Link](#)

<sup>16</sup> Further information on this project is available [here](#).

The Integral Basic Sanitation (SABA) is an intervention supported by SDC, which developed a successful integrated model for sustainable management of water and sanitation services in rural areas. More than two million people benefited from the programme. SABA asks for and facilitates active participation and involvement of local water and sanitation stakeholders (regional governments, local governments, communities, private companies, education, and civil society organizations). This model integrates infrastructure-related aspects with management, technical and social components by combining the installation of household water and sanitation services with community capacity building, sanitary education, institutional capacity building, and liaison between all players. Good governance is promoted through strengthening capacities of the actors at all levels of the state, but also by increasing the transparency and strengthening the role of civil society in holding local, regional and national governments accountable for the implementation of the national or regional investment plan in water and sanitation.

SABA started already 1995 in Peru with an initial focus at the communal and local level. An important development in the continuously evolving programme was the development of Municipal Technical Water and Sanitation Areas (ATMs) – one of SABA's "export products". The ATM depend on the municipalities both organically and administratively, meaning that they have always been financed and managed by the municipalities with public budget.

This model allowed having a team in each municipality that served as support and an instrument of connection among the small operators and rural WASH actors from subnational levels, which the national government hardly could have reached all. Between 2007 and 2009, programmes were initiated to monitor water quality and, in particular, launch rural water and sanitation courses at several regional universities. There was a significant scaling-up of the model later to 14 regions in Peru. Throughout the history of SABA, 638 ATMs were promoted and there are currently 1426 ATMs in Peru. This means that the national government, together with the regional and local governments, replicated the SABA approach, making it a public policy on water and rural sanitation. Since 2007, Switzerland does not pay for infrastructure related expenses any longer in the SABA programme, as a growing Peruvian economy allowed the national and sub-national governments to contribute more. The SDC focused its activities instead more on advocacy and the SABA team also acted as technical advisers to the WASH Regional offices (DRVCS), which themselves give technical support to the municipalities and the creation of ATM.

The model has since been replicated and adapted to the reality of rural areas in post-conflict Colombia resulting in (more equal access, less pollution etc.). Currently, a new programme is being developed by the SDC to capitalise the vast experiences that have been gained in over 20 years of implementing SABA.

Several factors contributed to this success story. The models developed and validated at local levels are comprehensive, integrated and highly adaptable to different contexts, which made them attractive to the Peruvian government and suitable for nationwide upscaling. The SDC's long-term commitment gave sufficient time to develop models to maturity and allowed to build up strong relationships with different actors. The approach of SABA aimed strongly at strengthening the local, regional and national authorities and supported efforts for decentralisation. The experiences that were gained with SABA informed the political dialogue at all levels.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Further information is available [here](#).

## Addressing transboundary water governance

### Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE)

The “Water Diplomacy and Governance in Transboundary Hot Spots” programme, which was established in 2011 by SDC’s Global Programme Water, seeks to foster cooperation among countries and communities that share water resources. Four implementing partners conduct a wide range of synergetic activities that address transboundary cooperation at multiple levels around the world. One of the four programmes is BRIDGE (Building River Dialogue and Governance), an initiative by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). As a membership organisation for governmental and civil society organisations, IUCN has the ability to work with member and partner organisations at multiple levels, allowing it to collaborate fruitfully with diverse stakeholder groups. Working across scales, as well as focussing on evidence-based knowledge, contributes to the organisation’s reputation of being a reliable actor. Through water diplomacy, countries are able to reach negotiated agreements on water management. Because of the importance of water for development and poverty reduction at local levels, agreements among national governments often do not lead, by themselves, to implementation. For transboundary agreements on water management to be effective on the ground, they need buy-in and agreement from water users. Water diplomacy is a process that operates under the authority of States, but which unlocks cooperation among multiple stakeholders, including at the level of provinces and municipalities. BRIDGE builds on IUCN’s ‘Strategy for Creating Water Governance Capacity,’ which aims to catalyse sustainable water resources development, including progress on safe water supply and sanitation, sustainable watershed management, biodiversity conservation and transboundary cooperation. The basic framework for this strategy comprises of five elements: i) Demonstration; ii) Learning; iii) Dialogue for consensus building; iv) Leadership Development; and v) Support facilities. BRIDGE serves as a neutral broker, creates informal spaces for dialogue, generates knowledge that can motivate cooperation, and provides on-demand advisory and training to stakeholders from local to national levels, enabling them to seize opportunities towards greater cooperation. BRIDGE uses an adaptive approach aimed at facilitating systemic change for the management of shared waters, whereby the concrete means of fostering cooperation are tailored to each socio-eco-political context. BRIDGE currently (2018) works in 14 basins around the world, from Asia to Latin America to Africa.

The BRIDGE initiative is active in the Mekong region, among others. The programme started in 2011, building on past achievements and programmes of IUCN in the region. BRIDGE applies a multi-level and multi-stakeholder process, addressing both the 3s basins (Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok), transboundary tributaries of the Mekong river, and the Lower Mekong river basin as a whole in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. Cooperation with the governments at different levels – including national assemblies – is absolutely crucial in this context. The inclusion of other stakeholder groups is also key in ensuring comprehensive, robust and long lasting water governance mechanisms. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are often relatively newly established actors and therefore greatly profit from training and support by BRIDGE, fostering their engagement in regional meetings.

Since its establishment, BRIDGE contributed to several noteworthy successes. At the regional level, IUCN supported the ratification of the UN Watercourses Convention (UNWC) by Viet Nam through advocacy and trainings on the legal framework. This ratification triggered the interest from the other countries in the region and from the Mekong River Commission (MRC) which BRIDGE builds on by supporting capacity building events and dialogues on improving the legal framework for cooperation in the basin. A further success is the establishment of a champion’s network gathering representatives from governments, CSOs and academia. Important for its growth was the decreasing formality: Organising more informal events and gatherings, such as field visits, allowed for a stronger personal engagement of the participants. The network became a central pillar of the programme and was, for instance, strongly implicated in the development of a new phase. BRIDGE also works in engaging the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional intergovernmental organisation with a strong economic agenda, to include water more prominently in their narrative. Finally, BRIDGE supports the development of cooperation plans and strategies, ensuring the demonstration part of cooperation, through looking at benefit sharing mechanisms between countries and the development of a strategy Nexus water - energy - food, to be integrated within local, national and regional plans. The success of BRIDGE Mekong led to the development of a new component in the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basin shared between

Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal and India where tools and processes applied in the Mekong are tailored to and implemented in this transboundary basin. <sup>18</sup>

## Addressing governance at national level

### An integrated approach to water in the Swiss Cooperation in Kosovo

The Swiss Cooperation with Kosovo provides a good example of an approach to water in which governance plays a central role. Switzerland funds several programmes which combine investments in water infrastructure, strengthening of sector institutions, as well as policy development and influencing:

- SECO is financing a project supporting the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Water Council (IMWC) in Kosovo and its activities, and is co-financing wastewater treatment plants in two cities, from construction to capacity building measures.
- SDC is financing the Rural Water and Sanitation Support Program (RWSSP), designed to increase the coverage of water and sanitation infrastructure in rural areas of Kosovo, better management of water services through the Regional Water Companies (RWCs) and better sector governance through its regulatory bodies.
- The Swiss Cooperation Office and the Swiss Embassy actively engage in policy influencing in the water sector.

The Swiss programmes in Kosovo are complementary and comprehensive, they intervene at all levels from national policy to local communities on the entire territory of Kosovo, and they support all relevant stakeholders of the water services sector: IMWC, Ministries, seven RWCs and Shukos (the Association of RWCs), Water Services Regulatory Authority (WSRA) and National Institute of Public Health (NIPH).

The significant Swiss investments over a long period and the solid experience gained through working on the ground and with all sector stakeholders gave Switzerland a strong reputation and credibility in the water sector and important leverage to impact on policy level. At the same time, with its support to IMWC and other national sector institutions, Switzerland disposes of powerful tools to effectively contribute to the development of policy and legal frameworks.

Successful examples of the combined support of Swiss programmes include completing Kosovo's consolidation strategy (consolidating all municipal water companies into seven regional companies) and the successful integration of all rural water systems in the country into the management of RWCs. The Swiss support has significantly contributed to Kosovo establishing a future-oriented water sector with relevant policies and legal frameworks in place. As lead donor in the water sector and through policy influencing, Switzerland contributed to improving legal frameworks, setting priorities and standards, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, among others. Support to RWCs led to better capacities for project implementation, customer strategies, reduction of non-revenue water; efficient procedures for operation and maintenance (O&M), water source protection, and evidence-based decision making processes. Swiss support to the supervisory bodies of the Kosovo water sector, WSRA and NIPH, combined with the capacity development of the RWCs, contributed to better sector governance and resulted in improved performance of water service provision through RWCs better drinking water quality.

With RWSSP, Switzerland will now (2018) also invest in rural water infrastructure in Northern Kosovo, an area which is politically highly sensitive. The Swiss support to the North is designed as a contribution to the integration of structures in Northern Kosovo into the overall Kosovo administration and system and to the long-term solution of the political conflict.<sup>19</sup>

### Water as the entry point for improved governance: DESPRO (Ukraine)

---

<sup>18</sup> Further information is available [here](#).

<sup>19</sup> Further information is available [here](#).



The DESPRO (Decentralization Support Project in Ukraine) is a long-term initiative of the SDC in the Ukraine implemented by Skat Consulting Ltd. It aims at promoting decentralisation and the Local Self-Government reform by introducing decentralised service provision using the water sector as an entry point. For its interventions, DESPRO successfully cooperates with stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels. In the course of four phases, DESPRO has not only supported the implementation of around 139 rural water supply projects benefiting around 80,000 people in Ukraine but it has also been supporting the improvement of national policies to further advance the decentralisation reform process. The latter includes also the work DESPRO is doing in strengthening the capacities of key national reform stakeholders.

DESPRO has been operating within a dynamic political context, which has not always been favourable to the decentralisation process. However, the community-centred approach applied by DESPRO at local and regional levels resulted in improved water and sanitation services and high levels of local accountability. The main focus on social mobilisation and active participation of Local Self-Governments resulted in the introduction of the “local government-led-projects” modality, where the Village Council becomes the key actor in the planning and the implementation of Water and Sanitation projects.

At the same time, DESPRO has successfully fostered the co-financing of community Water and Sanitation projects creating a strong level of ownership of the projects from the side of the various actors involved. This means that the funds for Water and Sanitation projects not only come from DESPRO’s resources but are also integrated in local and regional budgets and include a contribution from individual households. As a result, the partner’s financial share exceeded two thirds of the total projects cost.

In the context of the decentralization reform taking place at national level, DESPRO has become a recognized partner of the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Services. At this level, DESPRO has contributed to the drafting of a policy on municipal waste, as a chapter to the Framework Law on Solid Waste Management and it has supported the Ministry in the elaboration of a National Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy. Additionally, DESPRO is actively participating in the Decentralisation Reform process by raising awareness of the citizens on key issues of the reform and by playing a key role in supporting the strategic planning of newly amalgamated communities.

Substantial efforts were also put in the development of capacities of Local Self-Government officers and Local Self Government Association’s (LGA) through institutional and professional training such as: the Local Self-Government School and the Community of Practice for Local Development. Through e-learning, face-to-face and peer-learning methods, DESPRO responds to the needs of both the decentralisation and Water and Sanitation sectors by addressing issues of Project Management, Community Cohesion, Conflict sensitivity, Gender, Communities’ Financial Management and Decentralised Water and Sanitation Services.

DESPRO is an example of a project where the combination of interventions not only at all levels of power: from central, to local, but also within two sectors (governance and water), has made it possible to address the challenges of decentralisation and local self-governance in Ukraine.<sup>20</sup>

## **Governance at all levels in Mozambique (PROGOAS)**

More than half of the rural population in Mozambique does not have access to safe water, corresponding to more than 300’000 persons without access to clean water in the four target districts of the programme intervention in Cabo Delgado and Nampula Provinces. Only 12.4% of the rural population use improved latrines and only 9% of the households have a specific space for washing hands using water and soap or ashes. National Policies and the legal framework transferred more competences and resources for water and sanitation to district governments. Districts now also manage their own human and budget resources and are thus key players in the promotion of local development and service delivery. However, the lack of human and financial resources with the capacities required for leading the local investment planning, implementing and monitoring process remains an important challenge. In the same line, civil society is still relatively young and lack experience in claiming rights and accountability or in influencing

---

<sup>20</sup> Further information is available [here](#).



government priorities. The provision of quality public water and sanitation services that respond to community priorities remains therefore a considerable challenge.

The Governance, Water and Sanitation Program (PROGOAS) is co-financed by the SDC and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and being implemented in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula of Mozambique. The first two phases of the program (2009-2015) focused on community monitoring and organization by introducing approaches to ensure effective participation and transparency during local governance processes in the area of water and sanitation. During the third phase (2015-2018) the program promotes the adoption of these approaches by local district actors to sustain principles of good governance.

PROGOAS strengthened the institutional capacity of local councils, community development councils and water/sanitation committees by providing further training, including ongoing support through self-assessment, on important aspects such as internal governance (bylaws, accountability, advocacy), gender integration, operational and maintenance of water points. PROGOAS also promoted on-system support by transferring the training capacity to local institutions (Provincial training centre, national NGO) in order to promote the replication of these good practices beyond project implementation.

Throughout the program, different tools were developed like Planning Fairs used by local government for yearly participatory planning process and accountability, and public hearings used by technical services to guarantee ownership of new water infrastructures. Furthermore, the program facilitates advocacy activities for increased public WASH investment and O&M, and integrates financial incentives for well performing districts.<sup>21</sup>

## **Addressing governance form the Humanitarian Aid perspective**

### **Contribution to managing drinking water and sanitation with Humanitarian Aid in Lebanon**

As a consequence of the war in Syria, Lebanon is facing a massive influx of displaced people, who now (2017/2018) account for about one third of the total population. This situation accentuates the already existing challenges in the water sector such as population growth, increasing water shortage due to climate change especially in summer months and has placed considerable strain on the already fragile and weak service infrastructures, leading to adverse effects on access to safe drinking water, water quality, and wastewater management.

It is within this context that the SDC, who has been active in Lebanon for years already, decided to start a new programme in 2016 tackling the issues related to water and sanitation. The programme works in close collaboration with the Bekaa Water Establishment (BWE), the regional arm of the Ministry of Energy and Water. BWE administers the Bekaa Valley, one of four regions in Lebanon that entails approximately 42% of the country's total area. This includes the major part of the Lebanese territory along the Syrian border where also most refugees are temporarily living in many informal tented settlements. The BWE is mandated to provide water and sanitation services and is responsible for all tasks related to water quality and quantity.

Through close cooperation with the Bekaa Water Establishment, the Swiss Cooperation Office aims to enhance resilient, sustainable and conflict-sensitive water management.

The programme itself evolved since its start: While the initial focus was rather technical, institutional capacity building gained in momentum. For example, processes are made leaner and accountability and transparency are increased. Hence, from a pure water management and engineering point of view, the Swiss approach is rather traditional and includes activities such as rehabilitation of infrastructure as well as improvement of management processes within the BWE.

Improving governance and building up the capacity of BWE, however, requires in the current context a novel approach. The Bekaa valley includes 18 official religions (sects), clans, families, political parties,

---

<sup>21</sup> Further information is available [here](#).

and a very turbulent conflict history. Meaning, aspects of Conflict-Sensitive Program Management (CSPM) are in particular important. In the current very diverse context, all Swiss activities need to be balanced carefully around the different governance dimensions. To support BWE in improving their own performance, governance, and activities we support a Technical Audit of BWE, which is done based on a methodology of the International Water Association (IWA). In addition, activities of SDC encompass ongoing coaching of the various water stakeholders in the Bekaa but also management and coaching of staff of BWE itself. Moreover, improving governance includes intensive training of the BWE customer service to be better able to interact with individuals and entire municipalities under BWE's jurisdiction. Other measures include the support to the BWE in coordinating the monthly donor meetings. A further strain of activities that may seem less obvious - but is no less important - is concerned with keeping the employees of BWE motivated. This is done by improving the working conditions, but also by organising team days.<sup>22</sup>

Last but not least the Swiss Cooperation/SHA is very well perceived in the area as reliable and impartial actor. As such the Swiss Cooperation offers its service as a mediation platform and promotes cooperation and conflict resolution from joint water management among different groups.

Taking the need for all above into account, technical improvement and a conflict sensitive approach at the same time, the Swiss intervention is based on four lines of action: 1) supporting the BWE in its daily operations; 2) contributing to more equitable access to drinking water for both Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees; 3) supporting the management of wastewater treatment plants; and 4) contributing to improving the water quality. SDC seeks to have an adequate representation among the beneficiaries, considering religious and political groups as well as gender.

On a broader level, the Swiss project together with Bekaa Water Establishment and funding of other activities across Lebanon by SDC is adding a lot of credibility to the Swiss presence in Lebanon in general. Moreover it improves the stance of SDC/SHA with regards to water management and institutional capacity building on a strategic level.

---

<sup>22</sup> Further information is available [here](#).

## **Addressing water from a multi-stakeholder perspective**

### **The PUSH-PULL POLICY Approach to increase water productivity in agriculture**

The complexity of water productivity in agriculture cannot be tackled by individual actors. A comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach is required to address a) inappropriate water governance, b) the lack of incentives and c) the knowledge gap. Positioned within SDC a multi-sectoral group of actors under the lead of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation addresses these three issues jointly in an innovative project.

The PUSH Component fills the knowledge gap by compiling know-how and tools on water management, raising awareness among stakeholders, promoting improved measures and technologies and measure and monitor water use. The PULL Component addresses the lack of incentives. Farmers are motivated to change production and irrigation practices, because the buyers of the product support this change by a premium or other benefits. The POLICY Component fills the gap that inappropriate water governance is creating. Water distribution, maintenance of the irrigation system or the timing of irrigation leaves ample room for improvement and requires efforts beyond the reach of an individual farmer or a single private sector entity. The water stewardship approach brings water users together to agree on a way to share available water resources and to improve the local water situation. Such joint processes are based on the “International Water Stewardship Standard”, administered by the Alliance for Water Stewardship, with its set of criteria and indicators that specify the steps required to achieve a local water management plan that is accepted by all local water users. Examples for activities include water saving irrigation measures, diversification of the crop rotation towards lower water requirements, improved water distribution plans (timing and volumes of water delivery) or interaction with local authorities responsible for the maintenance of water infrastructure. In combination with the other two components a jointly elaborated water management plan has chances to be endorsed and implemented. Through the SDC project local implementers are trained in facilitation skills around water stewardship and on how to handle sensitive discussions, hydrology and legal aspect that have to be respected to achieve sustainable results. Furthermore capacities of water user associations in implementing joint action plans are strengthened.

The interplay of businesses that adopt water productivity in their sourcing policies and civil society or water user associations that raise awareness for water issues and promote better approaches can lead to improved local and national policies conducive to efficient water use based on evidence and experience.

## Annex II: Governance related tools

Source	Comment
<p>Tools developed by the Water Integrity Network (WIN) and its partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overview (<a href="#">Link</a>)</li> <li>- Budgeting and Procurement Tools (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Capacity Development (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Communication and Awareness-Raising (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- How to Select Tools for your Programmes (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Integrity in Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Integrity Management in Water Sector Organizations (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Policy and Oversight (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Social Accountability Tool (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> <li>- Sub-Sector Participatory Assessments (2015, <a href="#">link</a>)</li> </ul>	<p>A series of tools are available from the website of the Water Integrity Network (see <a href="#">Overview</a>), several of which may be used to integrate governance aspects in processes of planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting.</p>
<p>Gender &amp; Water SDC, 2017. <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>A guidebook to mainstreaming gender equality into water, hygiene and sanitation interventions.</p>
<p>Guidebook for decentralized water supply in Moldova</p> <p>Chapter 1.2: How to set-up Water Consumer Associations (WCAs), community-based organizations tasked with the management of local water supply. (Skat, SDC, ADA). <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>A guidebook to support implementers of rural water supply interventions. Written for the context of Moldova but with potential applications elsewhere.</p>
<p>How to establish full cost recovery in water supply systems? SDC 2016. <a href="#">Link</a>.</p>	<p>A case study and lessons learned on how to ensure long-term management of water utilities through the establishment of a full cost recovery system.</p>
<p>Human Rights-based approach to integrated water resources management, draft – (UNDP CAP-Net, REDICA, the Water Governance Facility, and WaterLex) 2016. <a href="#">Link</a>.</p>	<p>This manual introduces Human Rights and IWRM to the reader, progressively integrating them into a single approach that has been dubbed a 'Human Rights-based approach (HRBA) to integrated water resources management'.</p>
<p>Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol. Accessed 2017. <a href="#">Link</a>.</p>	<p>Assesses the sustainability of hydropower projects in twenty areas including governance, health, economic activity, etc.</p>
<p>IWRM ToolBox. GWP, not dated: <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>The GWP IWRM ToolBox is a comprehensive database containing tools, references and case studies on integrated water resources management</p>

<p>Sustainable Sanitation and Water Management Toolbox (SSWM), CEWAS, 2017. <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>The SSWM toolbox facilitates holistic approaches by considering the entire water cycle from source to sea, and back, and putting human influence on the water and nutrient cycle at the centre.</p>
<p>Urban Water Utility Reform – A tool for analysis and dialogue. SECO, 2017. <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>The tool, based on a review of success stories in urban water utility reform (<a href="#">Link</a>), can support a structured dialogue amongst stakeholders in a utility reform process, the formulation of a utility-specific reform strategy, and the monitoring of reforms.</p>
<p>Water Footprint. Water footprint network, 2017, <a href="#">Link</a>.</p>	<p>Allows companies, regions, and even individuals to calculate the amount of water they use; can help businesses or sectors to increase their efficiency.</p>
<p>Water Risk Filter. WWF/DEG, 2017. <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>Assesses current and future water-related risks (quality and quantity) at the river basin level. Helps to better plan industrial and large-scale agriculture use.</p>

## Annex III: Governance related references

Source	Comment
The Governance of Regulators (OECD, 2014): In series: OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy. <a href="#">Link</a>	Best practice principles for the governance of regulators that address the different aspects of a regulator's governance and identify the best or good practices.
National Human Rights Institutions and Water Governance: Compilation of Good Practices. WaterLex, 2014. <a href="#">Link</a>	Collection of Good Practices on how to implement a Human Rights Based Approach.
The need for an integrated approach. Global Water Partnership, 2017: <a href="#">Link</a> .	Brief introduction to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
OECD Principles on Water Governance. OECD, 2015. <a href="#">Link</a>	The OECD Water Governance Principles provide the 12 must-do for governments to design and implement effective, efficient, and inclusive water policies in a shared responsibility with the broader range of stakeholders.
Water Integrity Global Outlook. WIN, 2016. <a href="#">Link</a>	This publication highlights the issues corruption causes, shows how integrity and good governance as well specific tools make improvements achievable, and makes recommendations by type of actor.
Corruption and the Human Right to water and sanitation: Human Right-based approach to tackling corruption in the water sector. Waterlex, WIN, 2013. <a href="#">Link</a>	A foundation study undertaken on integrating the human rights-based approach into integrity issues so as to promote a TAP framework (transparency, accountability and participation) to tackle corruption in the water sector.
Fostering Cooperation on Transboundary Waters: Success stories from SDC's Global Programme Water. SDC 2016. <a href="#">Link</a>	A collection of best practices in how to build strong transboundary water cooperation based on a coherent multi-level approach.
Best Practices Data Base (to be published <a href="#">here</a> ).	OECD set up a working group to collect best practices in water governance. This data base will be presented at the World Water Forum in Brasilia in 2018 and the Best Practices will be available on the OECD website.
Water Integrity Good Practice Data Base (2018). Water Integrity Network. <a href="#">Link</a>	The Water Integrity Network maintains an on-line data base for best practices in relation to Water Integrity.
SECO Cooperation Portfolio. Data base on improving basic access. <a href="#">Link</a>	A collection of best practices and guidelines on public-private partnerships for SECO projects in the water sector