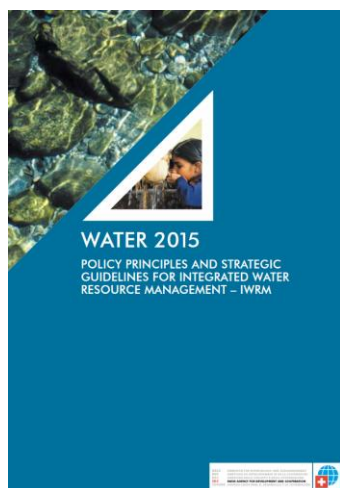


Background Information on the New SDC Water Policy

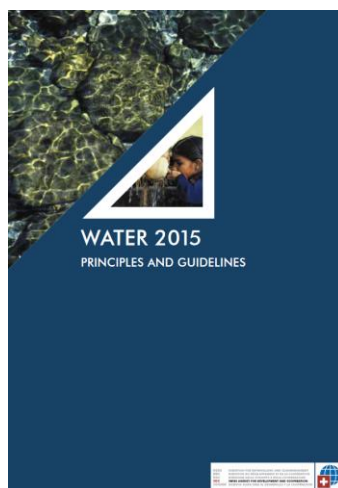
Water 2015

The Document “Water 2015 - Policy Principles and Strategic Guidelines for Integrated Water Resources Management – IWRM” was developed in 2005 and for the first time gave a coherent guidance framework to SDC’s interventions in water. The document now needs to be updated to reflect the current strategic framework of SDC’s work and to properly address the future challenges.

[Water 2015 - Full document](#)



[Water 2015 - Short version](#)



Proposal regarding the scope of the new SDC Water Policy

Title	SDC Water Policy
For whom?	The document is applicable for SDC, including all divisions of SDC. It does not cover SECO or other Swiss institutions.
Purpose	<p>Communicate SDC’s priorities and approaches in water to SDC staff and partners.</p> <p>It presents the position of SDC facing the global and local water challenges – both in terms of long term development cooperation and of emergency humanitarian aid – and it charts options for action for Switzerland’s cooperation in the coming years in response to those challenges.</p> <p>The policy paper intends to present the key principles that should guide the implementation of SDC water projects with a view to the realization of the SDG 6 and related water targets as well as the successful implementation of the UN Resolution on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation. It defines the framework within which 40 years of practical experiences in the water sector will be applied in the next 15 years until the completion of the current SDG framework in 2030. The paper provides pointers towards setting up and upgrading competencies to give appropriate advice and support in the challenging period ahead.</p> <p>The document can be viewed at two levels: firstly, it is a document describing priorities and principles across the water sector (policy principles); secondly, it is a guidance document for the planning of country strategies and programmes related to water (water domains in country strategies, water programmes, but also other domains or</p>

	programmes that include some elements related to water)
Degree of bindingness	Not binding. Policy can be used voluntarily by country offices or head office to guide planning of country strategies and programmes etc.
Time frame	Time frame is in line with the 2030 agenda (drafted with a view until 2030, regular updates reserved).
How specific on implementation?	As in Water 2015: a general but no detailed guidance on implementation mechanisms and approaches.
What is different to Water 2015?	Largely an update of Water 2015 to reflect the new paradigm brought about the SDG framework.

SDC Water Policy

Outline (version 16.06.2017)

0 Preface

1 Introduction

- SDC and SDGs
- Scope of the document

2 Major Challenges in the Water Sector

- Major challenges
- New developments and opportunities

3 SDC's Vision: A Water-Secure World

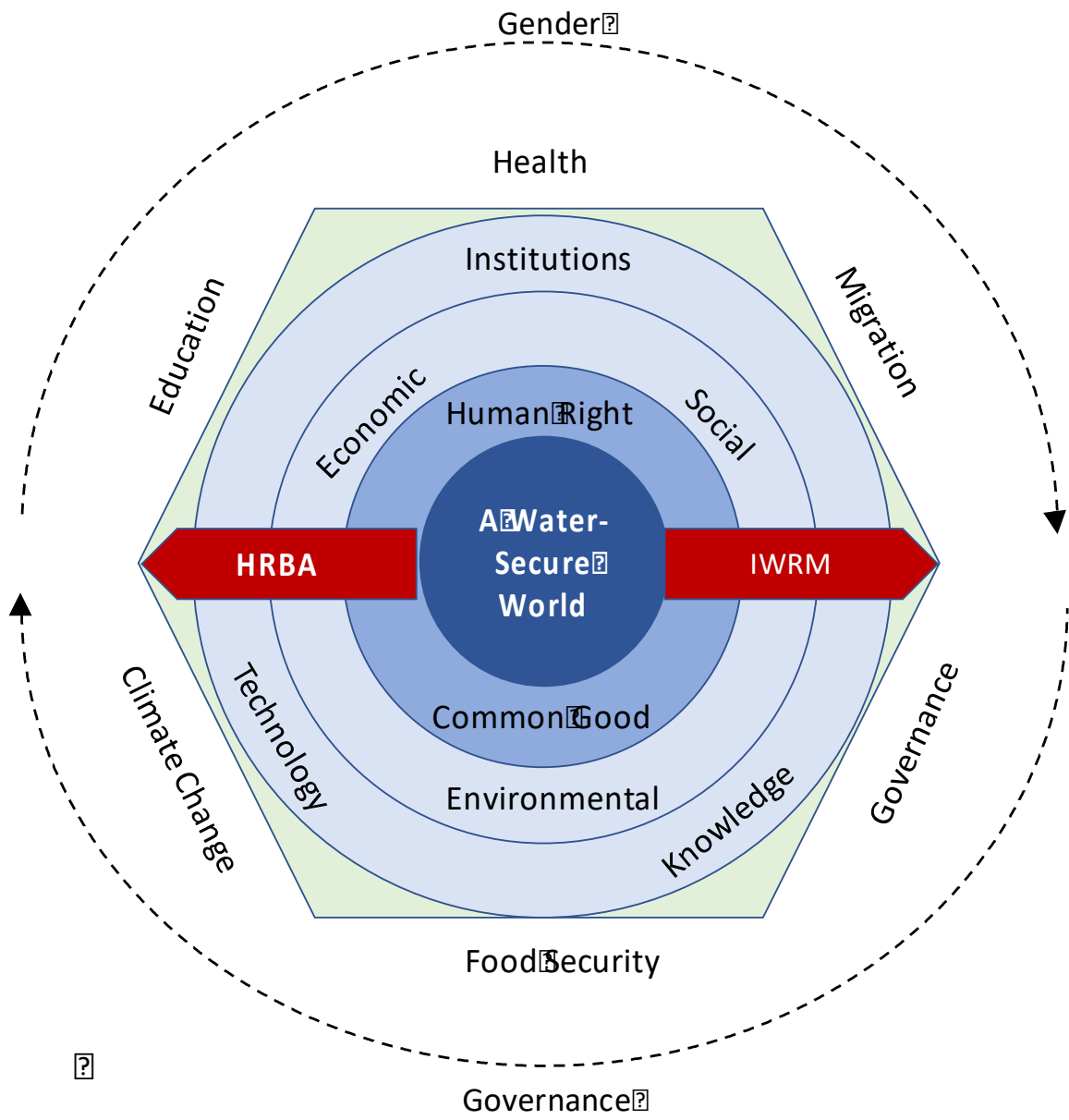
In chapter 3, the vision of the water sector at SDC is outlined as well as the overarching framework that shall provide guidance for implementation to ensure alignment with the vision.

Vision

- Water resources are managed sustainably, which leads to a healthy environment, economic prosperity, peace and stability, and resilience against climate change
- The Human Right to Water and Sanitation is enjoyed by everyone
Refer to the Satisfaction of Basic Needs

Overarching framework

- IWRM and HRBA are the guiding concepts for implementation (short explanation of the concepts, including their interlinkages)
- Links and potential synergies with other programs, themes and domains addressing water-related issues are highlighted.
- Descriptive framework placing the vision 'A Water-Secure World' at the centre of the framework (see figure):



4 Objectives

In this section, the objectives of the water sector at SDC are shortly introduced.

1. Universal, equitable and adequate access to water and sanitation

Based on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation (HRTWS) Convention and the 2030 SDG framework, SDC strives to ensure universal access to safely managed drinking water and adequate sanitation services, accessible when needed and affordable to all.

2. Efficient use of water and water infrastructure

SDC promotes the efficient use of water and water infrastructure at all levels, everywhere.

3. Enhance water quality by reducing pollution of water resources

SDC supports the improvement of water quality and by reducing water pollution.

4. Sustainable water management and governance across all sectors

SDC promotes the sustainable management of water, seeking to balance different uses and the interest of different users.

5. Promotion of international and intersectorial cooperation on shared water for peace and political stability

Acting on the basis of the FDFA lines of action in the field of water and security, Switzerland seeks to ensure that water does not contribute to conflicts arising and is used instead to promote cooperation among countries and among key stakeholders.

5 Policy Principles and Programmatic Priorities

This chapter first outlines general principles that apply across all objectives and interventions, and in a second step provides more specific guidance on principles and priorities, structured along the objectives defined in chapter 4.

5.1 General Policy Principles

- Consideration of the full water cycle (including sanitation)
- Balancing all water uses at watershed or river basin scale. Referring to IWRM for implementation (6.2)
- Compliance with the human rights to water and sanitation (HRTWS). Referring to HRBA for implementation (6.2)
- Water as a common good with an economic value
- Inclusive and deliberative participation. In particular, women are involved with equal rights as individual users and as partners for institutional development.
- Consideration and promotion of all appropriate sources and new/ innovative instruments for financing and promotion of the use of modern economic instruments in the water sector
- Recognition of local and indigenous knowledge in national water strategies and recognition of this knowledge in the planning and implementation of SDC programmes and projects.
- Coherence with the international and national legal frameworks
- Policy engagement at national and/or international level
- Water integrity. Referring to the Water Integrity concept (6.2).
- Promotion of public-private development partnerships (PPDP) and social businesses where relevant
- Consideration of scaling-up and accelerating implementation of successful activities and approaches wherever feasible.
- Adoption of the three sustainability pillars: Social, Economic, Environmental
- Enabling and promoting innovation in approaches, concepts and technologies
- In all activities related to water use, SDC applies the approach of integrated risk and disaster risk reduction.

5.2. Programmatic priorities and specific policy principles

The main priorities correspond to the objectives but may be reformulated.

A. Universal, equitable and adequate access to water and sanitation

Policy Principles:

- In line with SDC's vision and with SDG 6.1. and 6.2., SDC promotes the universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and the access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, while taking into account the HR-principle of progressive realization.
- Universal access also includes the provision of these services at schools and health facilities.
- SDC supports efforts to move people up the water and sanitation ladders in rural areas, small towns and peri-urban areas, with a priority on people who currently are on the lowest steps of these ladders (i.e., those people using surface drinking water source and practicing open defecation, as well as those with basic water and sanitation services).
- To improve welfare in a sustainable way, investments in water supply and sanitation should be linked to income generation (for instance horticulture, livestock keeping) and/or job creation (social businesses, entrepreneurship).
- The cultural and social context is of paramount importance in the design of sanitation and hygiene interventions.

- Water and sanitation services have a price but tariffs must be designed to ensure affordability of these services.
- The provision of water for drinking purposes has priority over all other uses.

Programmatic priorities:

- In emergency situations and disasters, supply of drinking water and sanitation are of highest priority.
- SDC programmes comprise water supply, sanitation, hygiene, wastewater and solid waste management and recycling.
- Sanitation programmes are attributed high priority because urgent action is needed in this field to reach SDG target 6.2.
- In addition to a long-standing focus on rural drinking water supply issues, SDC supports the improvement of drinking water supply and sanitation services in small towns and peri-urban areas. SDC is not in a position to fund comprehensive water supply and sanitation programmes in urban areas. However, SECO does fund such programmes, and where it does, SDC coordinates its interventions with SECO.
- SDC supports local governments and strengthens their capacities to provide sustainable water supply and sanitation services to all citizens. SDC also supports national reforms that strengthen local government in their capacities to provide basic services.
- SDC supports the improvement of safety of water in water supply systems, e.g. water quality monitoring, water treatment, water safety planning
- SDC supports public health and information campaigns.
- SDC promotes concepts and models that support the sustainability and viability of supply chains for infrastructure and service delivery of water supply and sanitation.
- SDC supports the development of an enabling environment for private sector participation through multi-stakeholder dialogues and advocates for an adequate system of rules and regulations, particularly where this enhances the role and potential of small-scale providers.
- SDC encourages public-public-partnerships (PPPs) in water supply services.
- SDC interventions in this category, which have a fundamental impact on water related diseases (e.g. diarrhoea) seek to create synergies with actors working on major environmental diseases at the household level to increase the overall health impact.

B. Efficient use of water and water infrastructure

Policy principles:

- SDC promotes systems, concepts, tools, technologies and practices that lead to the efficient use of water by all sectors.
- Water as a key resource has a price, and tariffs are set and implemented to ensure efficient use of water, while taking into account the HR-principle of affordability in the case of water for drinking purposes.
- SDC supports the adoption of water stewardship principles, especially by the corporate sector.

Programmatic priorities:

- Agriculture sector:
 - promotion of efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sound technologies and user systems for irrigation (drip irrigation, treadle pumps) that increase water efficiency and promotion of soil and water conservation (water efficient crop varieties, slope agriculture technologies, rainwater harvesting)

- SDC does not support new construction of large-scale irrigation schemes. Where such schemes already exist, SDC supports improved management and rehabilitation measures.
- Where rainfed farming is possible, measure aimed at soil and water conservation are supported.
- Corporate sector:
 - Awareness raising and support of platforms, standards and concepts for increased water efficiency in the corporate sector (e.g. water footprint, water stewardship)
- Overall:
 - integration of economic incentives and promotion of social businesses and entrepreneurship is a vital element for strengthening the income-generating aspect of water projects.

C. Improvement of water quality by reducing water pollution

Policy principles:

- In line with SDG 6.3., SDC promotes the improvement of water quality through reducing pollution, expanding (geographically) and upgrading (technologically) the treatment of wastewater.
- SDC's supports efforts to close the cycle of water and other resource through recycling of wastewater (Circular Economy).
- SDC supports the promotion of the polluter pays principle.
- Enough freshwater has to be preserved for ecosystems to maintain their biodiversity; overexploitation of ground- and surface *water resources* must be avoided.

Programmatic priorities:

- SDC works to strengthen international and in-country systems to monitor, report and evaluate improvements in service levels, water quality and wastewater treatment.
- SDC promotes and supports measures which aim for cleaner industrial production.
- To protect wetlands, water-related ecosystems and forests and to raise awareness, SDC supports a range of international nature conservation organisations.
- SDC supports permanent ground- and surface water monitoring, mapping and modelling systems.

D. Sustainable water management and governance across all sectors

Policy principles:

- SDC aims to develop an approach fostering inter-sectorial synergies (with protection and livelihood, for example) and alleviate tensions among multiple needs and multiple actors for a common resource. Refer to IWRM and the Nexus approach (6.2)
- Following the notion of water as a common good, the public sector must remain the owner of the resource and carry the ultimate responsibility for all legal and regulatory aspects of water management, but it can delegate or transfer the right to use and/or the task of distribution to private operators under transparent and fair conditions. To avoid abuse of monopolistic power, it is also strongly recommended that the public sector retains the main ownership of public water supply and sanitation assets.
- SDC promotes a participatory approach in water management, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels.
- Principle of subsidiarity: management of resources at the lowest appropriate level
- SDC follows the concept of Water Integrity to strengthen water governance.

- SDC advocates capacity building of the public sector in order to enable civil authorities to assume their responsibilities in the water and sanitation sector (with regard to legislation, regulation, monitoring and distribution).
- SDC supports the implementation of the Demand Responsive Approach (DRA), where people are empowered to make informed choices and where they have control over investment and operational decisions. Under this approach, governments take on a facilitating role.

Programmatic priorities:

- On a global level, SDC seeks to influence and steer global policy dialogue and the global water governance system towards good water governance at all levels to foster global commitments, accelerated action and targeted responses.
- SDC promotes strengthening of the evidence-base for water governance and decision-making through data-sharing, monitoring and reporting systems.
- SDC supports political processes at all levels that enable government authorities to act as effective regulators, in building institutions and legal frameworks for managing water resources in basins and according the IRWM principles. SDC supports both projects aiming at improving management of water in large basin and projects improving water management in smaller catchments
- Bilaterally, SDC is not in a position to finance large-scale water-management projects. This specifically includes dams or large-scale irrigation. However, SDC can support management and rehabilitation of existing schemes as well as policy, feasibility and impact studies. In cases where SDC is involved with multilateral projects, SDC insists on appropriate compliance with the guidelines of the World Commission on Dams and defends the interests of the poorest segments of society through advocacy.

E. Promotion of international and intersectorial cooperation on shared water for peace and political stability

Policy principles:

- SDC complies to international agreements and conventions, notably on transboundary water management.
- SDC promotes the use of Water Diplomacy as a tool to improve international cooperation of neighbouring countries for an improved management of shared water resources
- SDC supports mechanisms, networks and dialogue platforms to improve international cooperation of shared water for peace and stability.

Programmatic priorities:

- SDC works to resolve international cross-border conflicts of interests through various conflict mediation techniques
- SDC works towards solutions that are characterised by equity between the various parties residing in and using watersheds.
- SDC supports data-collection and –sharing between neighbouring states to facilitate dialogue and informed decision-making.
- SDC supports the development of tools (i.e. impact studies) for use by river commissions. It supports the development of appropriate, balanced membership and representation in such organisations. However, long-term assistance to large commissions is not considered effective.

6 Implementation in SDC

6.1 Intervention levels and spatial focus

In this section, the different intervention levels/ approaches and their linkages are presented

- Intervention level and spatial focus: watershed/river basin approach
- Local, national, regional and global levels linkages
- Interventions in both rural and small towns, and specifically for Swiss Humanitarian Aid also urban settings, including the interface rural-urban
- Scaling-up of interventions: potential scaling-up activities are considered in planning and implementation of projects.
- Pillars of intervention: Social, Economic and Environmental
- Contiguum Concept: foster successful interaction between development initiatives and humanitarian aid responses

6.2 Relevant concepts and frameworks

The concepts and frameworks which are useful to implementation and achievement of most SDC water policy objectives have been selected here. In reference to the vision, IWRM and HRBA are highlighted as guiding implementation frameworks or principles.

- IWRM (described here in more details)
- Human Right Based Approach (HRBA)
- Integrated watershed/catchment management
- Water Security
- Nexus approach: emphasis on interconnections/interdependencies with other sectors such as food security, energy/industry, and climate change.
- Water Integrity

6.3 Transversal Themes

SDC has selected governance and gender as transversal themes. This section highlights the main principles to integrate and mainstream governance and gender in the water and sanitation sector.

- Governance
- Gender

6.4 Water in other domains

In this section, very short, practical hints will be provided on how water can be linked with other domains/ themes (or highlighted if it is present already) and how synergies between domains/ themes could be developed.

Water in Agriculture and Food Security

- Water as key resource for agriculture and food security
- Link between water quality, nutritional status of people and food security

Water in Climate Change

- Water as a risk (flood/drought), water related disasters (e.g. mudflows)
- Water for adaptation to climate change

Water in Health

- Health system as a key actor for improving hygiene at home (e.g. handwashing campaigns)
- WASH interventions as prevention of diarrhoea and other diseases

- WASH services at hospitals and primary health care facilities

Water in Migration

- For example, creation of job opportunities in water sector

Water in Governance

- Role of water in creating opportunities or spaces for bringing a wide variety of actors together
- Water and sanitation as a key basic service is an ideal vehicle to improve local governance beyond water services

Water in Education

- Especially WASH-related -> campaigns
- WASH at school (also focus on girls; menstrual hygiene etc.)

7 Organisational Structure and Instruments in SDC

This chapter outlines organisational/ working modalities/ administrative aspects.

7.1 Instruments

- Bilateral cooperation
- Multilateral cooperation
- Multi-Bi contributions
- Contribution to NGOs
- PPDPs
- Direct actions and contributions for Humanitarian Aid
- Swiss Humanitarian Aid Expert Group
- Secondments

7.2 SDC divisions

- South cooperation
- Cooperation with Eastern Europe
- Humanitarian Aid: WASH Expert Group (EG)
- Global Cooperation: GPW
- Coordination within SDC divisions: Focal point water (GPW)

7.3 Coordination and partnerships with other actors

Coordination with other Swiss Government departments/ divisions: SECO, BAFU, EDA, BLW, BAG:

- IDANE-Wasser, the water sub-group of the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee: Briefly explain what it is and what it does
- The Blue Peace DFAE Group

Synergies-partnerships-networking:

- Mention the networks RésEAU, SWP, AGUASAN
- Cooperation with academic institutions/ research partners
- Private sector and financial services
- Multilateral partners: Cooperation with UN agencies, ICRC

- Governmental Counterparts
- Other bilateral agencies
- Non-Governmental partners: local/ international NGOs

7.4 Knowledge management & Experience

- Focal point, RésEAU/ Core Group, AGUASAN
- HA: Facharbeitsgruppe FAG of EG WASH
- Water Team Days

7.5 M&E

- Continuous monitoring: annual programme and project monitoring and reporting
- Regular internal and external project evaluations
- Periodic thematic impact evaluations on water
- Annual report on the water portfolio
- Peer-review mechanisms
- Indicators: ARI

7.6 Finances

- Bilateral funding
- Multilateral funding
- Direct Action (HA)
- Other