

# Safeguarding Applied Management of Water Resources in Kurdistan (SAMoWaR)



**Country / Region**  
Iraq – Kurdistan

**Partners**  
UNESCO Office for Iraq

**Background information**  
Drought conditions prevailing between the years 2005-2009 were a major factor, causing severe stress on supply for sector needs, as well for sustaining lifeline support for refugees and IDPs inside Iraq.

**Project objective**  
Improved sustainable management of water resources in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq that is notably responsive to the current humanitarian crisis.

**Beneficiaries**  
Direct: Government water management authorities  
Indirect: Water users in the region, including host communities and IDPs in Kurdistan

**Costs**  
CHF 990,000

**Duration**  
12.2016 – 12.2018

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 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

In light of a steadily growing water demand, additionally exacerbated by substantial influx of refugees, the water sector administration in Iraq is in urgent need to appropriately respond to the crisis with effective actions and prognostic recommendations. The project intends to generate and provide the required information and reliable data to improve sustainable management of water resources for the triangle border region Iraq, Syria, Turkey amidst the humanitarian crisis.

**Context**  
Availability of safe water in Iraq has undergone a dramatic change over the past 30 years. The quality and quantity of the country's water supply has been impacted by climate change, upstream damming and huge irrigation schemes, pollution, and inefficient use. Reservoirs, lakes and rivers are diminished to critical levels. Water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers have fallen to less than a third of their normal capacity and further decline is expected in the coming years due to a predicted reduction in rainfall. The decrease in water resources contributes to deterioration in water quality. However, its availability is crucial for supply and sustaining the livelihood of the domestic population and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) inside Kurdistan.

**Rationale**  
The alarming extent of the humanitarian crisis and the progressively growing water shortage call for

both, ad hoc action for sustaining the life-line support of the deprived population, plus securing mid-term stabilization of drinking water supply by sound management of ground- and surface water resources. Additional and more reliable data are urgently needed for an informed decision-making on the political level, resulting in effective action to be taken, and prognostic recommendations.

**Objective and Intervention Strategy**  
The project will deliver additional, new information on shallow groundwater. It is designed to foster skills' advancement and develop technical and institutional capacity in operational water resources management in the region of Kurdistan in Northern Iraq. Synergies and alignment with an ongoing intervention implemented by the UNESCO Office for Iraq are being sought during the implementation.

The overall goal of the project is an improved sustainable management of water resources in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq that is notably responsive to the current humanitarian crisis.

- The main expected outcomes are:
- Validated, reliable and new data on shallow groundwater in Kurdistan is obtained and integrated into a database
  - Standards and normative best practices in measuring and monitoring of shared water resources in Kurdistan are applied

