




Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

WATER DIALOGUES FOR RESULTS



FROM DIALOGUES TO RESULTS

**KEY MESSAGES**  
**FOR ACCELERATING**  
**CROSS-SECTORAL SDG 6**  
**IMPLEMENTATION**



**W**ater is a key enabler providing multiple co-benefits to other sectors and answers for global challenges. Without water, sustainable development is impossible. Climate change directly impacts water availability and quality; urbanisation, population growth and economic development put more pressure on resources; ecosystems and biodiversity are threatened, and pandemics are emerging – the urgency for cross-sectoral action is evident.

We, the global community of UN Member States, multilateral organisations, Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), and international actors are at a decisive point if we want to successfully realize sustainable development by 2030. We share a strong commitment to advancing Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda as well as other global agendas by accelerating action on water. We recognize that upholding human rights and ensuring inclusive and participatory processes are indispensable for realizing these Goals and targets.

We support the implementation of the objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (Water Action Decade), and consider the Midterm Review of the Water Action Decade in 2023 as an opportunity that the UN family and all stakeholders should use for intensifying inclusive and targeted actions for speeding up the implementation of the water-related Goals and targets of all Global Agendas. We welcome the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework as an excellent analytical orientation for achieving such progress.

We explicitly recognize the importance and critical role of MGoS to be involved as key actors to achieve the messages below. Governments, multilateral actors and the UN have to create enabling environments, channels and support structures to involve MGoS. Without their contribution we will not reach the water-related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The **WATER DIALOGUES** have brought together world regions, decision-makers from governments, technical experts and representatives of MGoS with the objective to overcome “business as usual” and thinking in silos, in order to propose cross-sectoral action to accelerate SDG 6 implementation. The results are comprehensive recommendations [[Link](#)] and below key messages, which will stand as official inputs into the Mid-term Review of the Water Decade in 2023.

# 1

## FINANCING FOR ACCELERATION

**A new paradigm: Governments, national and international financial institutions and multilateral actors need to improve targeting and effective use of existing funding, mobilize domestic resources, and attract additional investment from private and public sources.**



Sustainable management of water resources, safe drinking water as well as sanitation and hygiene can substantially improve public health, safeguard the environment, reduce the risk of disasters (including climate related disasters and pandemics) and provide the foundation for sustainable economic development. The scope and ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the already existing financing gap within the water sector demand more than traditional public finance and ODA. They require collective and inclusive efforts from governments, banks, the private sector, philanthropy as well as civil society for which a stable regulatory, institutional and policy environment is essential.

### **The immediate role of all levels of government and service providers is**

- ▶ To improve the enabling environment for investments in sustainable water-related infrastructure for resources management and services by taking interdependencies and co-benefits between water and other sectors into account and consider innovative finance models including lessons from climate financing.

### **The immediate role of multilateral organizations is**

- ▶ To strengthen institutional capacity in recipient countries by promoting transparency, participation and accountability as a means towards improving bankability, while funding feasibility studies and proof-of-concept activities to increase the number of bankable projects.

### **The immediate role of the UN system is**

- ▶ To incorporate sustainable financing, regulation and maintenance mechanisms into all water-related project interventions, including small-scale water and sanitation infrastructure from emergency to development measures.

# 2.

## DATA FOR ACCELERATION



**Data-based decision-making: Decision-makers (from household to policy level) need access and be enabled to employ quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data for analysis, planning and implementation of effective cross-sectoral action in order to leave no one behind.**

Water-related data and information are critical to understand the social, economic and environmental demands and complexity of water challenges and to effectively target measures and funding. Modern technologies and new data sources enable more data access, analysis and transparency than ever before. Data have to be fit for purpose on all levels and answer the inherent challenges brought by climate change. Only with capacities to effectively collect, analyse and share data informed decisions and policies, planning and investments can translate data to action.

### **The immediate role of all levels of government and service providers is**

- ▶ To invest and support institutions to operate fit-for-purpose water and sanitation monitoring systems, based on local needs and capacities, which are able to collect qualitative, accessible, timely and reliable gender-disaggregated data, as the basis for decision-making and public information.

### **The immediate role of multilateral organisations is**

- ▶ To actively support national governments in development and strengthening of country level disaggregated data collection, monitoring and reporting systems, adapted to local needs and resources, incl. support for innovative technologies and capacity development by including earmarked funds for data and monitoring in all project and program budgets.

### **The immediate role of the UN system is**

- ▶ To support local and national monitoring efforts by prioritising available UN resources towards increased staffing and resource allocation to the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative and the Regional Coordinators System and by strengthening the UN Water data hub to allow for integrated cross-sectoral data collection, discussion and impact on policy development.

# 3.

## CAPACITY FOR ACCELERATION

**An inclusive approach: Capacity development needs to holistically transfer knowledge beyond training to foster cross-sectoral decision-making, planning and implementation, intensifying horizontal and vertical cooperation on all levels.**



The need to consider interdependences and co-benefits with other sectors in planning, policymaking and action requires capacity, knowledge and the willingness to overcome sector and institutional boundaries. Form and content of capacity development need to reflect the nature of the cross-sectoral ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and its links with other global agendas. On an individual level, traditional training methods need to be complemented by cross-sectoral action learning and on-the-job training.

### **The immediate role of all levels of government and service providers is**

- ▶ To strengthen the capacities of national and local institutions and stakeholders for cross-sectoral cooperation, by increasing cooperation with educational, vocational and training institutions to foster new partnership models, develop cross-sectoral needs-based curricula, while supporting gender-sensitive peer-to-peer learning, on-the-job training and measures to provide capacities to where they are needed.

### **The immediate role of multilateral organizations is**

- ▶ To strengthen and promote knowledge transfer across sectoral uses and users, within and between countries and basins to foster application of gender-sensitive integrated water resources management, (incl. ground- and green water), with a special emphasis on alternative water sources, e.g. through recycling, reusing and recovering water and other resources from used water and faecal sludge.

### **The immediate role of the UN system is**

- ▶ To compile, assess and recommend best practices to foster the sharing of knowledge and experiences and provide guidance and capacity development, e.g. through the UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative and the Regional Coordinator System for scaling-up proven concepts and methods, e.g. on cross-sectoral approaches.

# 4.

## INNOVATION FOR ACCELERATION

**A transformative pathway: Decision-makers need to combine traditional knowledge with modern technology and innovative methods by involving multiple stakeholders to increase efficiency of water use and ensure sustainable freshwater supplies, especially in water-stressed and transboundary regions.**



Research and development, innovative technical as well as financial solutions, but also new inclusive governance and circular business models are a must when working towards accelerated cross-sectoral implementation of SDG 6. A transnational and inclusive mindset for continuous innovation incorporates the cultural value of water. Traditional and indigenous peoples' knowledge are needed just as modern technologies and digitalization present a chance to speed up implementation and manage increasing uncertainties through the impacts of climate change.

### **The immediate role of all levels of government and service providers is**

- ▶ To deploy nature-based solutions together with grey infrastructure, apply locally appropriate traditional and indigenous peoples' knowledge, and use modern technology to enhance water use efficiency, sustainable and integrated water resources and disaster management, and integrate conservation, e.g. in agriculture and industry, as the main means of adapting to climate change and to reverse current polluting trends that create habitat degradation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity.

### **The immediate role of multilateral organizations is**

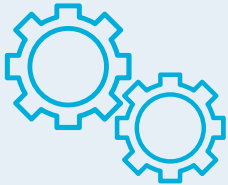
- ▶ To support investments on innovation and scaling-up of innovative pilots, which e.g. integrate ecosystem functions and nature-based solutions into grey infrastructure, develop low-cost solutions to leave no one behind and actively support the diversification of water sources in an environmentally sensitive way.

### **The immediate role of the UN system is**

- ▶ To develop a common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions in combination with grey infrastructure in programs and strategic plans and jointly foster their implementation among all relevant UN organisations.

# 5.

## GOVERNANCE FOR ACCELERATION



**A cross-sectoral, cooperative, good water governance approach: Growing water demands in view of increased water uncertainty calls for improved vertical and horizontal governance and intensified cooperation among stakeholders, sectors and countries.**

While SDG 6 is an essential enabler of the 2030 Agenda, water issues suffer from lack of visibility in international processes. Water governance, from the local to the global level, is highly fragmented, with roles and responsibilities for closely linked water aspects assigned to different entities. Multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches are needed at the systemic level to optimize the use of scarce resources, accounting for the maximisation of co-benefits and minimisation of trade-offs to manage conflicting and cross-sectoral interests and to ensure accountability.

### **The immediate role of all levels of government and service providers is**

- ▶ To optimize and coordinate planning, policy regulation and financing processes among water, energy, agri-food, environmental and waste sectors and enhance disaster risk reduction to manage water bodies in an integrative, gender-sensitive, participative and inclusive manner on the level of the water basin and establish effective legal and technical mechanisms for sustainable transboundary water management (as appropriate, through regional and international conventions) as an instrument of conflict prevention and peace.

### **The immediate role of multilateral organizations is**

- ▶ To support inclusive cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogues at all relevant levels to increase the coordination of strategies, prevent maladaptation and support mutual accountability.

### **The immediate role of the UN system is**

- ▶ To ensure the coherence of UN efforts in the water sector: through early-stage coordination in programming of all UN-Water members; by linking the UN-Water SDG 6+ Special Event with other sectors under HLPF review; by appointing a Special Envoy on Water to the UN to strengthen the international water voice and cross-sectoral connections; and by providing regular opportunities for Member States to discuss global water challenges at a high-level.

**The Key Messages for Accelerating Cross-sectoral SDG 6 Implementation  
are supported by:**

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