

Water Security and Nexus

A global initiative by UNU-INWEH that supports decision makers and development community in applying water security agenda.

The Challenge

Safeguarding water resources for human and environmental needs is one of the major concerns globally. This challenge is aggravated by the volatile geopolitical environment, changes in demography, increasing urbanization and climatic variability, and other factors associated with globalization. Availability and access to water are critical factors and key global priorities for ensuring peace and sustainability. The challenges governments and development partners' face on water management for political stability include:

- tradeoffs in inter-sectoral water allocation;
- finding solutions to complexities in transboundary water management;
- alleviating pressures on freshwater ecosystems;
- better understanding and quantifying reasons, trends and impacts of water-driven migration, and;
- the need to resolve water-energy-food nexus in specific geographical settings.

The Solution

Assessing key gaps and needs to improve global Water Security require a clear understanding of the drivers, trends and patterns of collective action, and of the newer dimensions of the Water Security Nexus. These include human migration/displacement issues, nature-based solutions (NbS), green infrastructure, and other factors. The Water Security (WS) agenda¹ addresses a wide range aspects of the water nexus: drinking water, ecosystems, climate change, water supply for food and energy production, governance, transboundary cooperation, political stability and financing. The agenda also presents innovative aspects of water as a vehicle for peace in conflict resolution, and how this helps address trans-boundary water-related challenges. This initiative will provide national stakeholders and international decision makers with new and useful data, information and knowledge that they can use to address critical aspects of water management that affect the Water Security Nexus, but are typically overlooked.

The Project

The Water Security and Nexus initiative encourages integrated thinking and aims to inform and influence policy action. It does this by providing practical knowledge to national policy makers, international development partners and their technical experts. It also facilitates the creation and sharing of a body of new knowledge products and services that inform practical approaches to help develop effective policies, programs and investments. This knowledge will address all socio-economic aspects of water for sustainable development.

Beneficiaries

Project beneficiaries are policy makers and water resource planners, actors delivering the water security agenda; negotiators for water as a peace vehicle. Government officials and academics working on water security; youth and water professionals, and international and regional funding agencies interested in global water governance.



¹UN-Water (2013). "Water security & the global water agenda." UN-Water Analytical Brief. Hamilton, ON: UN University.

Objectives

The initiative aims to unpack, quantify and put into practice various aspects of the Water Security framework. The specific objectives are:

- Strengthen technical and institutional capacity of UN Member States on how to put Water Security into action and help establish it as a tool to implement water-related SDGs;
- Develop policy-relevant and science-based tools and technical synthesis on indicators (e.g. index and score card) of Water Security for policy makers;
- Develop a research agenda on 'water and migration' as a global development challenge, addressing direct and indirect water-related drivers of human migration e.g. water quality, quantity, extremes.
- Unpack the water nexus components in the Water Security agenda, such as: food and energy security, services of water and wetland ecosystems.
- Deliver on-line courses that address Water Security-related capacity gaps via webinars, seminars, and other knowledge-focused activities

The SDG Goals to be addressed by the project are mainly SDG 6 ('water goal') and specific targets, SDG 6.4 (increasing water-use efficiency and addressing water security); SDG 6.5 (implementing integrated water resources management and trans-boundary cooperation); SDG 6.6 (protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems); and SDG 6B (supporting and strengthening communities participation in water management). It will also support several other SDGs: 3, 4, 10, 11 and 17.

Outputs and Services

The project will deliver a range of innovative products and services including:

- Global Database and Atlas on migration patterns- reflecting multidimensional reality of water and human migration with global Water Security Agenda components viz., peace, conflict resolution and the SDGs;
- Research and policy publications, practical tools – Water Security policy briefs, policy synthesis reports and practical information for decision makers, technical reports, underpinned by peer-reviewed papers, opinion articles, blog 'think pieces', conference presentations
- Research monograph on Nature-Based Solutions and Ecosystem Services Approaches with a focus on natural and constructed wetlands;
- Synthesis report on national and trans-national migration and stories of failure in shared water resources to inform sovereign states to reach consensus for mutual benefit;
- Capacity developed among youth, water professionals and practitioners on the understanding of the water security agenda

The initiative links with Canada's Feminist International-Assistance policy on gender equality (Action Area 4: Environment and Climate Action and Action Area 6: Peace and Security).

The project engages global and regional experts, international networks and partners to help UN Member States address water security concerns. This includes an analysis of how the water security agenda can guide financing and investment in the public and private sector.

Initiated in 2017, the Water Security and Nexus initiative contributes to UNU-INWEH's mandate to synthesize and deliver to decision makers and development partners, practical knowledge drawn from global research – to help improve policies, inform investments and, over all, support to the Sustainable Development Agenda.

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