



WATER
GOVERNANCE
FACILITY

Water governance in perspective

Water Governance Facility
10 years | 2005-2015



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*





Foreword

Photo: iStock

Content

- 2 Foreword
- 3 Perspective on water governance
- 6 Missing governance means missing sustainability

Fold out spread: Water's flow through Society X. Illustration by Valero Doval

- 8 What we do
- 10 The way forward
- 11 Who we are

Water Governance Facility 2015
 Texts: Dr Marianne Kjellén,
 Dr Håkan Tropp,
 Dr Alejandro Jiménez
 Front cover photo: iStock
 Production editor:
 Victoria Engstrand-Neacsu, SIWI
 Design: Elin Ingblom, SIWI

The Water Governance Facility (WGF), the long-standing collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) has been in operation for ten years.

The Facility is a knowledge and operations hub for water governance that collaborates with UNDP and other UN agencies and partners to support governance reform and improved water resources and related services management in low- and middle income countries. By promoting improved legal frameworks, policies and institutions for sustainable water management, the mandate and work of the WGF is strongly aligned with the new UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-17. The Facility strategically supports, manages and implements programmes like GoAL WaSH (Governance, Advocacy and Leadership in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), the Shared Waters Partnership (SWP) and “Accountability for Sustainability” in collaboration with UNICEF.

With ten years of experience, proven approaches and tangible results, we look ahead towards the next decade with a new international Sustainable Development

Agenda to be implemented worldwide. This is a world with significant challenges at the geopolitical, economic and planetary levels. It is also a world where access to water and sanitation services has been recognized as a human right, and where the rule of law is becoming more established among an increasing number of democracies around the world.

Regardless of development level, effective governance of water resources and related services is of critical importance to sustainable human development and the safeguarding of peoples livelihoods and living environments. The WGF is here to provide knowledge and tools, and to share experiences for more transparent, accountable and participatory water governance so that water is used and managed in a more efficient, equitable and environmentally sustainable manner.

This brochure has been developed to share our perspective on the water governance agenda, and explain its importance for sustaining services and investments as well as to foster integrity in the use and allocation of resources.

Andrew Hudson
 Head, Water & Ocean Governance
 Programme, Bureau of Policy &
 Programme Support, UNDP

Torgny Holmgren
 Executive Director
 SIWI

Perspective on water governance

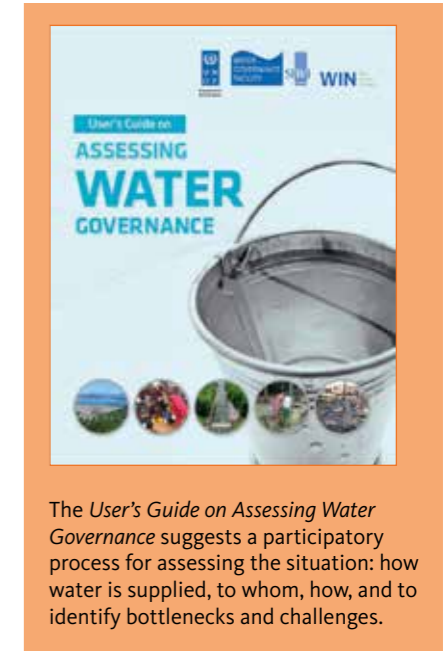
During the 1990s, the development sector increasingly emphasized the critical importance of good governance for social and economic development. This was in part a consequence of many development cooperation programmes and structural adjustment programmes failing to yield desired results. With failing development programmes as well as many governments not being able to deliver on various development needs, a new agenda started to take shape which recognized the key role of effective governance for development.

The concept of governance has not been without political tensions. The introduction of good governance in development cooperation was perceived as another entry-point for imposing donor conditionality. In international negotiations, such as in the United Nations, many developing countries of the G-77 group disfavoured use of the concept. But winds have changed since the 1990s and most governments around the world put emphasis on the need for improving governance. The water sector also began to engage in the governance debate and the concept started to pick up speed within the development

community. In 2000, the Ministerial Declaration of the Hague on Water Security in the 21st Century mentioned “Governing water wisely” and made reference to improved governance as one of the main challenges to achieve water security. This provided impetus to start developing the concept of governance in relation to water and the concept began to receive increasing attention from international organizations addressing different water issues. Already in 2001, UNDP started to organize its water work using governance as the main entry-point.

Water governance has evolved over the years. Water has been – and still is to a large degree – perceived as an “engineering and technology”-related challenge by many water decision-makers. Much of the gut response has been to fix water problems by increasing the supplies of water, irrespective of where the problems lie along the water services value chain. While there are of course still needs in many places for infrastructure development and technology uptake for improved water storage and more efficient use, water demand led responses and institutional changes and capacities remain neglected. But increasingly, improved governance is seen as an essential element of managing and using water resources more sustainably, efficiently and equitably.

The distribution and allocation of water and related services reflects distribution and allocation of power in society. Focusing on governance opens the door for the more difficult discussions on complex societal issues,



The *User's Guide on Assessing Water Governance* suggests a participatory process for assessing the situation: how water is supplied, to whom, how, and to identify bottlenecks and challenges.

such as power and politics. It is often these issues, not strict water quantity, that decides who gets what water, when and how. This is at the core of any governance system, involving processes and relations between different actors, as well as the quality and capacity of institutions.

Governance should mainly be perceived as a neutral term. What is good for some can be bad for others. In this sense, improved governance is path dependent and needs to be linked to particular development goals in society, such as water services and sanita- ▶

► tion for all, equitable reallocation of water between users, or any other goal. Governance should be perceived as a means to an end. Water governance has evolved from being very state-centric to more polycentric structures emphasizing inclusiveness by civil society and private sector. The new version of governance puts increasing emphasis on power diffusion, co-steering, bottom-up decision-making, negotiation and participation. In short, water governance relates not only to the state or government but also to civil society and the private sector, and where development takes place within different constellations of these three entities.

In other words and put in a simplified way, earlier development models did not work out as expected. In many places the government took on an unrealistic and too burdensome development role – and in some cases more or less monopolizing power and decision-making in society. In many instances this led to ineffectiveness in policy development and implementation and incentivizing behaviours of vested interests and illicit rent-seeking. In recent years, and clearly visible in many countries’ water reform work, there has been a shift towards an increased power diffusion and co-steering with other parts of society. But co-steering can be challenging, especially if there are less clear road maps, or where different groups and water users have diverging views on what goals ought to be achieved. But this is also the useful thing with improved governance, since it can provide a useful space for negotiations, trade-offs and dialogues for shared visions.

The concept of water governance has made an impressive journey over the last decade and a half. The UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI (WGF) was established in 2005 as a means to promote the practical use and application of governance in water. How can governance be worked with in an understandable and practical way? How can, for example, water managers and decision-makers in India, Uganda, or Spain work with governance in constructive ways? While governance is important for policy formulation, it is perhaps even more important for how such policies are implemented. Making water governance understandable and to promote implementation has been a very important mandate for WGF, and the journey continues.

The introduction of governance into the water sector has provided several benefits:

- It puts quality of relationships and institutions into focus, especially with regard to implementation of law and policy.
- Power and politics are increasingly addressed as root causes to dwindling water resources, pollution and inequitable allocation: water crises tend to be linked to crises of governance, not absolute water scarcity.
- Transparency, accountability and participation are increasingly seen as the “bricks and mortar” of governance, also placing water integrity or anti-corruption

increasingly on water agendas. Water governance has paved the way for introducing these sensitive and tough issues to water decision-makers.

- While supply-side investments and engineering-driven solutions are still required, governance has helped to put a sharper focus on the hard societal issues of power and politics, equity and fairness, as well as how societies can organize their water use in more economically efficient and environmentally sustainable ways.
- Water governance has become more refined and there is, for example, increasing work on different governance aspects of

“Water governance... ... is what determines who gets water when and how much”

water, WASH governance and waste water governance.

- The knowledge on water governance has gained considerable ground. Remarkably, water governance has become a field of research of its own and annually articles and papers are produced in the thousands.
- Governance is a dynamic and process-related concept: working with the process can be just as important as the water reform content itself.

- While there are many useful examples of governance improvements, success stories cannot be readily transferred to other contexts. They need adaptation and proper contextual understanding (path dependence). Hence, best fit rather than best practice should be pursued – always ensuring to address local opportunities and constraints for improving governance.
- Distinguishing between “hard” and “soft” issues, where the hard refers to infrastructure and technology and soft to governance may at times give rise to a false impression that the “hard” matters more, or that the “soft” is too complicated to deal with. In reality, the hard and soft are intertwined and any infrastructure investment is wasted unless surrounded by a governance system that makes it work in a purposeful and sustainable way.
- Improved governance is important for better sustainability in water investments. Many countries are currently seeking to develop water infrastructures and it is thus important that decision-makers in water are not only committed to improving water governance, but also that required investments are made. Water governance and investments are interdependent.

Water governance does not exist in a vacuum but also depends on overarching governance system. There is a need to work much more in the interface of sector governance and generic governance. For example, at the same time as many countries undergo water reform they also implement civil service reform. There is thus a huge development potential



Photo: Marianne Kjellén

Effective water governance is necessary for societies to collectively meet society’s needs for water-related services. Where resources are not strategically aligned, and water systems develop only in response to immediate individual demands rather than an agreed plan, solutions may be far from optimal.

The photo shows some ten private household connections in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, that have connected directly onto an underground transmission main. A conducive governance framework would have pooled resources to develop a distribution system for this rapidly urbanizing area, allowing all households – rather than a wealthier few – to connect at a lower individual cost.

A low service coverage not only discriminates access to service, but also forfeits potential tariff income for the water utility.

in many countries if water governance is connected to other governance reforms. Similarly, the cross-cutting nature of water makes it imperative to integrate water governance in other areas such as food, energy and environment.

Since polycentric governance largely is about the quality of relations between water users, decision-makers, managers and consumers, the issue of trust becomes very important.

Still, we know too little about how trust can be better promoted as one key element to improve water decision-making and the actual implementation of policies and plans. The concept of water governance will continue to evolve and its importance will only grow, considering that demands for water is increasing as countries are developing. 💧

Missing governance means missing sustainability

While the water sector globally is struggling to improve water services coverage, efforts are undermined by the lack of long-term sustainability of many water systems. It implies that many people that are recorded as beneficiaries are in fact not receiving services, as the systems that are supposed to provide them with services are not functioning as intended. Available evidence is pointing out the importance of governance to ensure function and long-term sustainability:

In a European Union evaluation of 23 water supply and sanitation projects in sub-Saharan Africa it was found that equipment was generally installed as planned, but fewer than half of the projects delivered results meeting the needs of beneficiaries. It was suggested that a majority of the projects were potentially sustainable in the sense of using standard technologies and local materials but for the majority of projects, results and benefits would not continue to flow in the medium and long term unless issues of non-tariff revenue is ensured; institutional weaknesses to regulate, monitor, collect service fees, manage procurement, collection and dissemination of information, and weak capacities by operators to run the equipment installed, are all addressed.

Research conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) focused on the challenges to service delivery in the African context, identified three main constraints for it:

- Incoherent policies
- Poor top-down disciplines and limited bottom-up accountability relationships
- Limited scope for problem solving and local collective action.

A sustainability analysis of two rural water systems in Kenya undertaken by the Netherlands Development Organization, SNV, found the following constraints:

- Inadequate support to the local water management committees, for example, their legal status and mandate had not been explained clearly;
- Lack of participation and, therefore, limited ownership by water users;
- Poor financial controls and lack of financial accountability;
- Limited engagement of the private sector;
- No mechanism for the maintenance of water points and environmental protection.

Follow-up actions included the training and the signing of professional management contracts between the Water Service Board and the committees, reportedly improving the functionality.

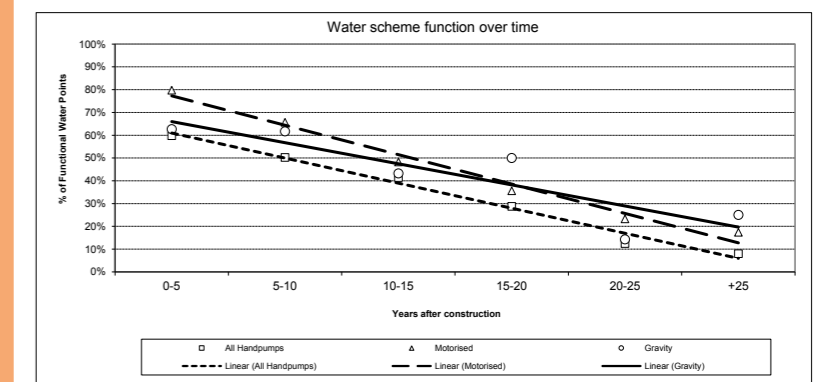


Photo: iStock

These and many other examples demonstrate that few of the deficiencies in service delivery have to do with a lack of water or infrastructure as such. The way ahead is to be found in the governance structures, including the relations of support from national authorities, involving clarity of policies and laws and facilities for capacity development. Relations between communities and the local private sector stand to be improved through a better mutual understanding and agreement of rights and responsibilities.

Recognizing that the root causes of many water problems reside in persistent poverty, inequality and discrimination, the water sector should seek empowering forms of participation, increased accountability and real influence over the way services are provided.

“Don’t just add water – add governance!”



From: Jiménez, A. & Pérez-Foguet, A. (2011) 'The relationship between technology and functionality of rural water points: evidence from Tanzania'. Water Science & Technology, vol 63, no 5: 948-955 (Figure 4)

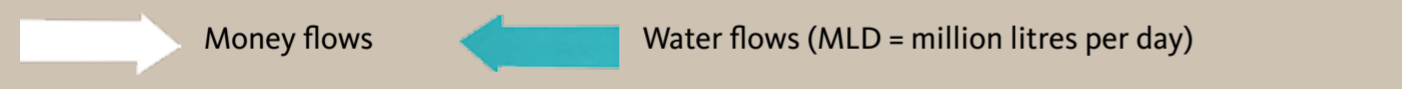
The results of an extensive water point mapping study in rural Tanzania, showed that some five years after installation, only about two thirds of the schemes remained in function, 60% of hand pumps, 63% of gravity schemes and 80% of motorized pumps. The simplest technology (handpumps) has the worst performance, while the most difficult technology (motorized)

remained more sustainable in the first 20 years of operation. This indicates that non-technology factors determine the ability to keep water systems functioning. In the study, the capacity of water associations to have payments (incomes and particularly expenditures) came out as an important predictor of functionality.

Water's flow through Society X



Illustration by: Valero Doval



“The hydrological cycle is powered by solar energy and gravity”

“The hydro-social cycle – water’s movement through society – is powered by human action”

Society relies on water to sustain all human life and activities. How water is actually used is determined by myriads of decisions taken by people as individuals and in organizations – in harmony or through struggles. Legal provisions and policy proclamations guide the allocation – the way that available water is divided between and distributed to different users and types of uses; between rich and poor; between men and women. The human right to water to sustain healthy lives is realized (or not) through these decisions, and the resulting action.

Allocation decisions are made tangible through the infrastructures that transport water and all things that contain water, or make use of water in the production process.

Actions and decisions of the past or in spheres of society beyond the water sector have great bearings on how water is allocated and used today. Likewise, the future – where much is uncertain and whose stakeholders may not yet have been born – is shaped by the decisions and actions taken today.

Water indeed has an economic value in all its uses, which may become very tangible as its delivery from one actor to another across the water value chain is commonly accompanied by a payment. Water also has a social and a cultural value in all its uses, realized through the way that water supports activities in people’s homes or in institutions like schools and hospitals.

Lacking access to water and sanitation services implies that the social value of water is forfeited. Consequences are drudgery – predominantly borne by women and girls – and ill-health – particularly affecting young children. Losing access to water for livelihoods not only undermines vulnerable people’s food production and source of revenue, it also impinges on cultural identities.

Environmental values are realized in the way that water flows (through nature and society) support biodiversity and ecosystems, now and in the future. A typical way of (illicit) appropriation of water resources is by contamination: pollution of waters by one user can make the resource unusable for others.

Yet, pollution is a waste of resources produced by short-term private interests prevailing over longer-term collective pursuits. Protecting land and water from contamination or degradation remains key for managing water scarcity.

We have a joint responsibility for ensuring the sustainable and equitable management of our waters. This is accomplished through the political, social, economic, and administrative arrangements that are put in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services – the governance of the hydro-social cycle.

What we do

The Water Governance Facility engages in programme management, knowledge and capacity development and contributes with analyses and advocacy for international processes. WGF manages programmes that help governments and support agencies to jointly define priorities or to build on what is already in place, by facilitating the coordination of roles and support capacities. Water resource management and service delivery systems are bound to function better when formal policies and laws are in line with people's priorities and actual practices. This is an iterative process which most effectively focuses on getting existing systems to function.

The Shared Waters Partnership

(SWP) addresses transboundary water governance by promoting cooperative approaches to advance peace and security, environmental protection and to open new opportunities for riparian states to sustainably develop their water resources. The programme seeks to build trust and prevent conflict through multi-stakeholder platforms, diplomacy and capacity development.

www.watergovernance.org/sharedwaters



Photo: Biyayang Kalikasan

An effective intercultural approach that builds on mutual respect, trust and dialogue is important for working with indigenous peoples, particularly in rural communities.

www.watergovernance.org/TTT/en

GoAL WaSH is a UNDP global programme established in 2008 to accelerate achievement of the water and sanitation MDG targets. In its future work, it will support achievement of the SDGs. The overall goal is to support effective, equitable and sustainable service delivery. This is done through the support of governance reform, sector leadership and capacity development.

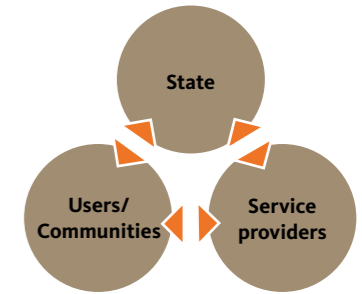
The GoAL WaSH process supports work in three sequential areas – as appropriate in response to country demands:
1) Setting priorities and building shared stakeholder vision (formulating required changes).

- 2) Supporting development and reform of action plans, policies, laws, coordinating mechanisms and regulatory functions (preparing for change).
- 3) Supporting institutional implementation with accountability and transparency (making change happen).

External reviews have concluded that GoAL WaSH was able to provide adequate responses to national demands, supporting the improvement of water governance in strategic areas for the countries targeted.

www.watergovernance.org/goalwash

*“Water governance...
... is about the human relations that
determine how the water system works”*



Knowledge management is an important part of WGF's activities.

The WGF Report Series analyses experiences and puts useful water governance knowledge and insight into a format that is accessible for water sector practitioners and professionals.

www.watergovernance.org/resources

Working more directly with development programmes WGF also assists with knowledge management – particularly by facilitating the exchange of experience among practitioners, and emphasizing the importance of putting resources as time and money into taking new and old insights on board into the process of programme and project development.

The WGF coordinated the knowledge management work for a set of water governance programmes supported by the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund.



Accountability for Sustainability: a partnership with UNICEF

Sustainable WASH services depend on whether service delivery is governed in an accountable fashion. Institutions that are held to account for results either through internal controls, by users or other stakeholders simply deliver services better.

This partnership between UNICEF and the Water Governance Facility at SIWI puts focus on how to improve accountability in the WASH service delivery triangle. It operates by providing UNICEF and UNDP WaSH staff worldwide with the tools and practical guidance they need to support improved governance in their programmes.

www.watergovernance.org/accountability-for-sustainability



Water Integrity Capacity Development

Integrity is the opposite of corruption – the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. The way corruption plays out in society can be seen as

power struggles and a way of gaining control over resources and policy processes. It is not only something that goes on between individuals, but is embedded in society and may sometimes be deeply institutionalized and considered normal.

SIWI and the WGF, in collaboration with Cap-Net, Water Integrity Network (WIN) and others, have chosen regional capacity development as the entry point for reducing corruption in the water sector. The approach targets water sector institutions, aiming to harness a culture of integrity and empower these institutions to manage and improve its performance to be worthy of public trust.

The regional programmes work with a variety of actors, including also trainings for specific utilities as well as journalists and civil society, and in some cases with a particular focus on gender and integrity.

www.watergovernance.org/integrity

The way forward

The coming decade will see a new global governance structure for development; uniting the world around a set of commonly agreed Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are not only more ambitious and more complex than the Millennium Development Goals they are replacing, this new agenda relates to all countries in the world, developing and developed. The significant global consultation that has culminated in this new agenda provides legitimacy for guiding development efforts and implementation strategies at international, national and local levels. WGF particularly embraces the goal to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. It recognizes the importance of participation and capacity building for integrated management and ecosystem protection, water quality and quantity management as well as universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene. WGF will explore ways of supporting monitoring and analysis for continued learning in the implementation of water governance aspects of the new sustainable development agenda.

The recognition of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation (HRWS) has provided credence and momentum for addressing inequities in service provision. The world has just started the realization of these rights, which place important responsibilities on the

state as a primary duty bearer – by recognizing that it indeed has an obligation to ensure access to services. Whereas the universal access needs to be implemented progressively, it should be done without discrimination. This is a key entry point for water governance; ensuring that rules, roles and incentives are aligned to deliver quality services to all, equally. It involves working with users and providers to ensure the rules and roles (de jure as much as de facto) are conducive towards sustainable services provision and use, as well as prudent resource management.

The importance of economic aspects of water resource and services management has been duly recognized internationally, although more equitable and sustainable ways of covering the costs of services and resource management still need to be developed. All resources stand to be more efficiently utilized for the common good with continued abatement of corruption.

Water integrity will remain high on the international water agenda, and is of utmost importance for governments and their partners in the private sector and civil society. As recognized by the governance agenda, the different parts of society need to work jointly towards finding sustainable solutions. Such responsibilities require all actors to become more accountable for their actions, deliver

more diligently on commitments, and show greater concern for reaching proclaimed good intentions.

With continued economic and population growth, society's water demands will continue to increase. With most water already being allocated in the areas of growth, the solution lies in a different approach to wastewater: ensuring that production not only consumes less water, but also pollutes less. Treating residues as resources, water in the hydro-social cycle can be used many more times before finally being released into the ocean. After all, the natural process of the hydrological cycle is for water to be recycled infinitely.

WGF is poised to help bring water provisioning and management onto local, national and international agendas. Water governance aspects need a greater share of the attention and enhanced funding, from both governments and donors. The hardware, i.e. water infrastructure, would function more sustainably if greater attention, and proportion of funding, would be directed to the software, i.e. the governance structures and human capacities. The soft and hard are intrinsically linked – recognizing and acting on this will be crucial for a more sustainable world.

*“Water governance...
... is the software that makes
the hardware function”*

Who we are

WGF draws on all of SIWI's expertise. Beyond the Water governance thematic staff presented here, SIWI's Transboundary water management team also contributes greatly to WGF-related programmes.



Dr Marianne Kjellén
Director

Leads WGF and the Water governance theme at SIWI. Works on urban, rural and cross-cutting issues.



Dr Håkan Tropp
Director

SIWI's Managing Director and first Director of WGF. Provides overall direction and strategic advice on Water governance.



Pilar Avello
Programme Officer

Supports water integrity capacity building, particularly in Latin America.



Alice Jaraiseh
Programme Manager

Manages Water Integrity Capacity Building for Middle East and North Africa and coordinates capacity and knowledge development.



Moa Cortobius
Programme Officer

Focuses on gender and equity; and has developed much of WGF's work on water and indigenous peoples.



Dr Alejandro Jiménez
Programme Manager

As WASH specialist, he manages GoAL WaSH and the “Accountability for Sustainability” collaboration with UNICEF.



Dr Jenny Grönwall
Programme Manager

Supports WGF's work in the area of human rights and the rights-based approach.



James Leten
Programme Manager

Programme and partnership manager, working on Water Integrity and the Africa-EU Water Partnership.



Lotten Hubendick
Programme Officer

Supports the GoAL WaSH programme, and takes on issues of sanitation governance.



John Livsey
Programme Officer

Manages the Every Drop Matters programme; reporting, knowledge development, and communications.



Maria Jacobson
Programme Manager

WGF's water integrity specialist. Develops thematic content on water integrity.



Mohammad Naeem Shinwari
Programme Manager

Manages WGF's planning and result reporting, and coordinates the integrity work.



WATER
GOVERNANCE
FACILITY

UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI

Box 101 87 | SE-100 55, Stockholm, Sweden
Visiting Address: Linnégatan 87A
watergovernance@siwi.org

www.watergovernance.org
www.siwi.org | www.undp.org/water



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

