



## Policies with Relation to Water Resources



### Summary

**Water plays an essential role in almost every sector of society and is therefore mentioned in a number of sectoral policies including, for instance, those related to agriculture, transport, land management, and industry. This Tool discusses the need for an integrated policy approach in relation to water. It suggests ways to rearticulate the water management component within other sectoral policies and make water more explicit, especially in the context of national development policies and plans.**

### Linkages Between Water Resources and Development Policies

Water management issues are typically addressed under a water resource policy, however non-water specific policies, plans, and programmes developed (at international, national, regional, or local scales) also indirectly or directly influence water resources. For example, policies for land use (particularly at the local level), environmental protection and conservation, economic development (in energy, agricultural, industrial development sectors), transport and navigation, and trade. Many of these policies are focused on development-related issues and ignore those related to water.

Through being both an environmental resource and a supporter of social and economic activities, water is fundamental for sustainable development. Water issues are however, often addressed by separate sectors. Responsibility over water is thus fragmented and managed by a variety of bodies, which often express little coordination between them. Consequently, the contribution of water to broader development goals is not well understood at the political level outside the water sector. There is therefore a need to

better link water with national developmental priorities and map out policies to identify their impact on water use and management. Once these relationships and synergies e.g., water-energy-food nexus ([Tool C1.09](#)), have been identified water resource policies can be better integrated with broader development policies and frameworks.

## **Integrated Policy Approach**

Developing processes to introduce an integrated policy approach (e.g., facilitating cross-sectoral understanding and collaboration) with non-water sectors can be a challenging and time-consuming task, exacerbated by politics and widely differing interests. There are thus several tools and mechanisms which can be utilised to coordinate policies and ensure that water is successfully integrated with development planning processes.

One particularly essential tool relates to the establishment of strong institutional arrangements such as inter-ministerial bodies, who are responsible for the coordination of water resources across water and non-water focused sectors. Examples include apex bodies, basin organisations, transboundary organisations, civil society organisations, and multi-stakeholder partnerships – at national and local levels ([Tools B3](#)). Success of these arrangements requires an assessment of the existing water resources and needs, and to make explicit the priorities of both water and non-water related sectors. Participation of a variety of stakeholders can often allow for clarification of interests and needs (both water and non-water related). Spatial planning tools such as GIS ([Tool C2.01](#)) and shared vision planning ([Tool C2.02](#)) can support these participatory processes. Here, they can provide an effective interface between regional or local planning processes i.e., land use change, watershed management, and other development proposals.

## **Key Principles for Integrating Water across Sectoral Policies**

Here are some key principles supporting a more effective integration of water across sectoral policies:

- Recognition of the multiple contributions of water to (and linkages between) various economic, social, and environmental sectors, and good water management practices prioritised by those sectors ([Tool C5.04](#)). Development planning processes should be structured for the engagement of the water sector and those managing it encourage the participation of water managers and advocates. Water managers and advocates should themselves understand and identify their national development planning system, priorities, and potential entry-points.
- Fostering of a learning culture where water-related data is collected, analysed, and shared widely among all water-related sectors. A learning culture around water furthers our understanding of the multiple values that water bring to our societies. This requires investing, for instance, in monitoring and evaluation systems to gather high-quality water-related information ([Tools B4](#)). For example, for the acquisition of prime cost and benefit data to ensure the accuracy of trade-off analysis ([Tools C2](#)).
- Promotion of multi-stakeholder communication between actors from different sectors and levels and ensure gender inclusion in this process. Multi-stakeholder communication is essential in the process of alignment around a common set of goals, and for all parties to remain aware of (and interested in) the national development

planning process. This can be aided by the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms to facilitate dialogue, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and ensure a sustainable road map for IWRM and other national development processes ([Tools B3](#); [Tools B4](#); [Tools B5](#); [Tools C6](#)).

- Clarification of the roles and responsibilities from the onset as to build trust, transparency, and accountability. Integration arrangements should make use of existing frameworks to reduce duplication, build capacity, and institutionalise the integration process. The integration process should be anchored by higher-level governmental body who can mobilise cross-sectoral collaboration e.g., national apex body for water. Strong political champions or committed senior bureaucrats, can help establish and drive the coordination mechanism.
- Ensuring financial and administrative support by mobilising a wider range of partners to work with government, including the private sector. National development funding should thus be kept separate from governmental budgeting. Financial mechanisms and incentives ([Tools C4](#); [Tools D2](#)) should be set up to prioritise funding towards achieving common objectives.
- Flexibility in the development planning process is necessary as agreements between parties are often difficult to achieve (particularly over transboundary water resources). Fostering cross-sectoral relationships across levels can be difficult to achieve when there exists strong chain of command from local to national government which restricts horizontal exchange. In these cases, innovative participatory ([Tools C2](#)) and awareness raising ([Tools C5](#)) tools can be utilised.

### **Thematic Tagging**

Climate , Gender , Private Sector , Transboundary , Urban , Water services , WEF Nexus , Youth

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