



CATALYZING WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

Framing Water within the Post 2015 Development Agenda: Options and Considerations

KEY MESSAGES

- Water is important across sectors and as a sector in its own right.
- There is a need for co-ordination of water at the highest level given its cross-cutting nature and essential role in social and economic development and environmental integrity, as well as the strong threat it faces from externalities.
- A post-2015 agenda on water is achievable; the investment required is large, but not prohibitive and will drive job creation.
- Innovative financing mechanisms mean that costs can be borne across sectors, societies and stakeholders.
- Water-related implementation post-2015 must be built upon comprehensive national water assessment and risk plans; however, it is essential to move beyond these assessments to action on the ground.
- The development of robust national assessments of capacity needs, potential financial flows and economic analyses, underpinned by core national and international monitoring systems and data harmonisation is strongly encouraged.

SUMMARY FOR DECISION MAKERS

Water should not be treated as a “sector” alone, but as a cross-linked issue given its crosscutting nature and essential roles in social and economic development and environmental integrity.

Water is both a resource and a sector; a key to social development, environmental integrity and economic growth. As a sector, water requires infrastructure development and operational funds, while as a resource it cuts across sectors and requires integrated approaches to management and a recognized value in economic terms. Water is extremely sensitive to external drivers, such as increased consumption or mismanagement through increased food demand and changing diets, increased demand for and access to energy, climate change impacts, and new geopolitical dynamics. A growing, increasingly prosperous and rapidly urbanizing global population will demand more and different food, more energy and more water resources to meet its needs. These demands from industrial development and rapid population growth must be viewed as incentives for mobilizing new investments in water and increasing efficiency.

Any proposed SDGs should follow eight fundamental principles based on desired outcomes and pragmatic attributes.

Our analysis of the identified strengths and weaknesses of the MDGs helped us identify these principles that should feed into the transition from MDGs to post-2015/SDGs. Four outcome-based principles reflect aspirations and ambitions, which should ensure: poverty eradication, equity, sustainability, and economic growth. Four attribute-based principles focus on practical dimensions essential to the success of SDGs; these include: universality, measurability and time-boundedness, sensitivity to external drivers, and grounded in good governance.

All SDGs should include dimensions of economic growth, social development and environmental management.

Dedicated goals must establish and maintain links to targets and indicators in other related goals. This will facilitate, for example, “nexus thinking”, recognizing and internalizing the inter-relationships between themes. It further provides a mechanism for monitoring integrated progress.

A wide range of proposals exist for how water may be incorporated in the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Fourteen water-based proposals, from as many stakeholder groups, had emerged by mid-2013. These proposals fall into three broad groupings, or clusters: Water as a Sector (with a dedicated goal), Water as an Enabler (with distributed targets), and Water as a Supporter (to development and economic growth). Further examination of these clusters indicates that they more or less lie along a continuum. At the one end, proposals emphasize a continuation and expansion of the water sector focus of existing MDGs with an extended timeline, continuing through to proposals in which water is seen as an enabler and tied to key processes of national development and growth plans, ending with proposals in which water supports a comprehensive high-level development agenda. Cluster characteristics and conceptualization vary considerably, but there are distinct points of convergence between the three clusters.

Each cluster for implementing SDGs would require enabling environments, institutions and policies, and human and technological capacity.

It is simply not possible for one cluster alone to capture all dimensions of water that are relevant for development. Taken all together, however, the clusters can be seen to comprise the water agenda that is needed to support and fully

backstop goals related to water in the post-2015 agenda. This cross-cluster framework can begin to be articulated into a dedicated water goal, while establishing and maintaining its links to targets and indicators in other related goals.

We estimate that between 1.8 and 2.5% of the annual global GDP is needed for implementation of water-related SDGs, which would generate a minimum \$3,108 billion in additional benefits; a net benefit of \$734 billion.

The implementation of water-related SDGs come with a price tag as well as revenue and savings opportunities. Conservative estimates of global investments in a post-2015 water for sustainable development and growth agenda range between approximately US\$ 1.25 and 2.25 trillion dollars per year over a 20-year investment period. These estimates are based on available data and account for benefits from cost savings, such as efficiencies in systems, but not benefits provided, for example through time, health savings and ecosystem services. At 1.8–2.5% of global GDP (2011), this is up to triple the current median annual WaSH expenditure of about of 0.73% global GDP.

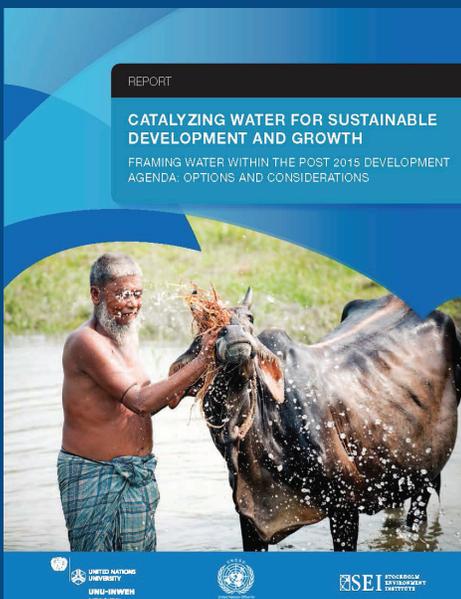
Implementation of water-related SDGs must be built upon comprehensive national water assessments and linked to national development strategies.

Despite their universality, SDGs should take into account national realities, capacities and

levels of development as well as respecting national policies and priorities. Several conditions are required for implementation, including but not limited to: promoting stakeholder engagement through non-traditional mechanisms, building vertical and horizontal linkages, feasibility assessment and prioritization, the need for bottom-up, participatory processes, global mechanisms, as well as high-level political commitment and ownership. Practical support required includes policy-focused implementation guidelines, national monitoring and reporting structures, scaling of innovative financing mechanisms, and capacity development strategies.

National monitoring systems, linked to global harmonization and assessment, will be central to ensuring implementation of SDGs and instigating possible course correction.

Many of the existing national and global monitoring systems would need to be re-tooled to additionally monitor potential financial flows in the water domain, allowing for evidence-based economic analyses. Significant capacity development would be required to put such monitoring and assessment systems in place and to ensure that information generation is harmonized, while implementation is being undertaken in parallel. We anticipate that this will be linked to formulation of a strong governance structure based in transparency, cooperation and integration.



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