

Implementing the Water Goal – SDG in practice

A workshop for shapers of the Water and Sanitation 2030 Agenda

June 26th to July 1st 2016, ABZ Spiez, Switzerland

About AGUASAN

AGUASAN (www.aguasan.ch) is an interdisciplinary Swiss Community of Practice (CoP) that brings together a broad range of specialists to promote wider and deeper understanding of key water and sanitation management issues in developing and transition countries. It builds on committed sector professionals from various specialised institutions involved in Swiss development cooperation, humanitarian aid and research. Since 1984, the CoP provides an exemplary, vibrant and most pertinent exchange platform and think-tank serving the water sector, and constitutes an essential link in the innovation and knowledge management strategy of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Besides convening quarterly knowledge sharing events, every year members of the CoP organise an international AGUASAN Workshop in Switzerland. During the **annual AGUASAN Workshop** water and sanitation specialists from all over the world gather for five days to collectively reflect on a cutting-edge topic of the water sector. The workshops provide a joint learning experience and utilise the broad knowledge gathered by the participants to elaborate strategies and conceptual tools of practical use for development work, highly relevant for sector interventions at local, national and global level. They are the annual highlight of AGUASAN and provide a unique forum for in-depth exchange and cognition by exploring new issues, whilst consolidating relevant experiences. 2016 will see the 32nd consecutive workshop that will be dedicated to **preparing the participants to shape the Water and Sanitation 2030 Agenda on the project and the policy level.**

Topic

In what is arguably the most inclusive process in UN history, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was defined to succeed the Millennium Declaration and to set the sustainable development priorities between 2015 and 2030. The new agenda encompasses a set of 17 concrete Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that embrace a wide range of inter-connected development challenges.

With the aim of positioning sustainable management of water and sanitation prominently within the new development agenda, international water and sanitation experts and sector organisations have actively participated in the negotiation of the SDGs. As a result of their influential work, sustainable management of water and sanitation is placed at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is represented by a dedicated Water Goal (SDG #6):

GOAL 6

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- 6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- 6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- 6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Source: United Nations

The Water Goal and related targets (see box) cover the entire water cycle in an integrated manner. While the MDG target was limited to access to water and sanitation facilities the new targets cover equitable access to water and sanitation, water quality, wastewater management, water-use efficiency, integrated water resource management, transboundary cooperation, the protection of water related ecosystems, capacity building and the strengthening of local communities as well as the reduction of water related disasters (target 11.5). Water cuts across all SDGs and achieving Goal 6 will be essential for the achievement many other SDGs and targets, most importantly those on food security, energy, climate change and biodiversity.¹

With the formal adoption of SDG #6 and the other Goals by the UN in September 2015, the negotiations on aspects of design and interpretation of the Goals have drawn to a close. The water community's attention is now shifting towards the **practical implementation of the Water Goal**, for even the most well-defined goal will not lead to its desired impact unless taken up on the policy level and operationalised on the programme and project level.

Towards implementation of the Water Goal

Translating the Water Goal into concrete actions without losing the goal's narrative and the focus on human well-being will present water and sanitation practitioners as well as policy makers with a challenging but also auspicious task.

Cost-effective technological solutions for water supply, sanitation and hygiene are readily available and implementable. The **challenge, however, is to ensure that sound solutions are sustained within an enabling environment**. Adequate capacities (knowledge, financial and institutional) have to be developed in order to ensure local ownership and sustainable implementation. This requires adopting behavioural change approaches, scaling-up services that are appropriate within the local context and broadening the scope of funding for water projects. Projects must also look at the entire water cycle and consider sanitation, that is less accessible than water supply for many people: drinking water continues to attract most WASH funds, even in countries with relatively high drinking water supply coverage and relatively low sanitation coverage.²

In addition to targets 6.a and 6.b, Goal 17 lays out seven building blocks as **means of implementation**: finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as data, monitoring and accountability. These seven building blocks are mutually reinforcing and interdependent. Experience shows that for example the timely investment in technology and infrastructure is essential and needs to be backed by institutional arrangements. Financing mechanisms, too, are only possible when accompanied by effective governance, enhanced capacities and properly adapted technologies, as well as appropriate tariff systems and legal and regulatory frameworks.

Scope of the AGUASAN Workshop

The AGUASAN Workshop is open to **field staff, desk officers, policy makers, researchers, consultants** and other **water and sanitation specialists** with a background in the various sectors/ topics covered by the Water Goal. The focus will be on the assessment and development of practical tools for shaping the Water and Sanitation 2030 Agenda on the project and policy level. Participants will do so by looking at the means of implementation **finance, technology transfer, policy and institutional frameworks** and **multi-stakeholder partnerships** from the various angles that reflect their scopes of action. A particular focus will be put on building **coherence in the entire implementation process** and ensuring that the Goal's integrated

¹ UN Water (2015): Water in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

² UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

narrative is not lost when translating it into adequate policies, enabling institutions and partnerships, financing schemes and technology choices.

Exploring new financial resources

The case for investing financial resources into achieving the Water Goal has been made clear in numerous studies and conferences like the 2015 Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa. Costs for contributing to the achievement of targets 6.1 and 6.2 have been estimated at 50 billion US\$ annually³. Benefits, on the other hand, outnumber the costs by far thanks to water's cross-cutting nature. The gains – both in societal and economic terms, such as improved health and economic activity – that can be derived from achieving targets 6.1 and 6.2 are estimated to be three to six fold compared to the investments⁴. The achievement of universal access to WASH is inherently linked to investments in targets 6.3 to 6.6 however. Addressing the entire water cycle from sustainable withdrawals to wastewater treatment is prerequisite to securing universal access to safe drinking water. Inaction further causes countries to sacrifice considerable parts of their GDP to dealing with water-related disasters, water scarcity, and insufficient water quality. Africa for example loses 2% of GDP to power outages, between 5 - 25% to droughts and floods in affected countries, and perhaps a further 5% to the probable future impacts of climate change⁵. While using existing financial resources more effectively and efficiently, new public and private finances from multiple sources need to be developed⁶. The lion's share of public investment needs to be derived from taxes and tariffs which calls for strong institutions, better governance and accountability. Public finances are particularly important when tackling the non-service oriented targets 6.3 to 6.6⁷.

The willingness and ability to pay of users should not be underestimated – especially when services become more reliable and convenient. **Pro-poor pricing mechanisms** must be adapted to the needs and contexts of users and involve water users in decision-making and implementation. Results-based funding has the potential of creating improved and more cost-efficient service delivery and better pro-poor targeting⁸. To drive investment into achieving **water efficiency in businesses** in agriculture, energy and other industries, incentives need to be established, as water prices are often too low to incite companies to save water. Examples include companies that account water risks in their books in terms of availability rather than in terms of pricing and thus invest into water efficient technology. When it comes to securing new sources of financing that complement stronger fiscal systems and water pricing, funds may come from related, but not water-specific topics. The Green Climate Fund, for instance, has funds available for mitigation and adaptation strategies, in which water plays a pivotal role. Here, concerted efforts need to be made so that the varying uses lead to the desired impacts. The creation of **water funds**, where major stakeholders invest into ecosystem services, may be another future option to attract funds to water management and environmental protection. **Public-private-partnerships** may play an important role in professionalizing of small-scale businesses by building new infrastructure, improving technology or building much needed skill-sets.⁹

Transfer and scaling up of technology, developing enabling technologies

In certain thematic areas such as wastewater collection and treatment, promotion of water reuse or enhancement of water use efficiency, technological innovations need to be rapidly developed and brought to scale. In many other cases, however, the achievement of the Water Goal does not call for new technologies, but rather for a **transfer** and **scaling up** of adequate, cost-effective and environmentally sound approaches to other contexts. Against this background, particular

³ WHO (2012), "Global costs and benefits of drinking-water supply and sanitation interventions to reach the MDG target and universal coverage". In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

⁴ Greenhill, R, and Ali, A (2013), "Paying for Progress: How will emerging post-2015 goals be financed in the new aid landscape?". ODI Working Paper 366. In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

⁵ Africa Regional Position Paper, 5th World Water Forum, Istanbul. In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

⁶ UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

⁷ Outcomes of 2015 UN-Water annual international Zaragoza conference. In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

⁸ Trémolet, S. (2011), Identifying the Potential for Results-Based Financing for Sanitation, WSP

⁹ UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

attention will need to be paid to behavioural change and forming of public acceptance as well as the enhancement of North-South, South-South and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing for **building and strengthening local capacities**, on which the implementation, operation and maintenance of technological solutions and innovations critically depend. Here, the **choice of adequate technologies** deserves special attention. These decisions require technology evaluation and assessment tools looking beyond mechanical considerations in terms of resource efficiency but also economic and social impacts of the alternative technologies like creating new business opportunities, markets and jobs.¹⁰ **Enabling technology**, in particular information and communication technology, offer a vast potential for the achievement of the SDGs but also for measuring their progress. New technologies are not only rapidly improving data collection, storage, analysis, reporting and sharing¹¹ but through real time, online, mobile phone- or cloud-based systems, they also facilitate public access to data and thereby transparent, participatory monitoring. Particularly poor countries have a lot to gain from harnessing new technologies for decision-making and effectively targeting their development efforts.¹²

Achieving policy and institutional coherence and facilitating implementation

Given the water cycle's cross-cutting nature, integrated responses, **policy coordination and policy coherence across different ministries and agencies** are required to overcome the institutional silos that are water, land use planning and agriculture, and to take advantage of the multiple synergies at the nexus of water, food security and energy. IWRM plans need to be implemented rapidly in order to encourage bottom up inclusive planning. In many countries, **institutional or legal reforms are required to facilitate implementation**, increase joint decision-making at national or basin level, or to legitimize stakeholder structures at community level. Improved regulation and enforcement can also help to curb environmental degradation and reduce health risks. Many countries however still need to develop or adapt their own national benchmarks and strengthen capacities and build robust frameworks for monitoring of relevant parameters on the status of water resources and on pressures exerted on them. Streamlining timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information into the decision-making process is also an effective means to build a better connected and empowered civil society and to foster transparency and accountability. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships** can facilitate the mobilization and sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. Those external support agencies, the UN and pressure groups such as the private sector, academia and civil society all have a part to play to **help governments implement** their plans and avoid a constant cycle of plan formulation that never leads to implementation.¹³ In this context, **supporting and strengthening the participation of local communities** is also fundamental for the implementation of the Water Goal.¹⁴

Strengthening and remodelling multi-stakeholder partnerships

Recognizing that the SDGs have many, often competing, demands for limited resources, multi-stakeholder partnerships can be an important tool to catalyse political action, to facilitate political dialogue, to monitor progress or to build consensus and trust. While facilitating political dialogue between Member States and monitoring progress should be lead by **intergovernmental committees** or UN agencies¹⁵, promoting effective social dialogue that leads to legitimate decision-making on the **national and local level** requires shared perceptions, trust and mutual recognition of the stakeholders' vested interests. A broad multi-stakeholder partnership may be an appropriate umbrella to bring those various stakeholders together at national level. The **private sector** can play an important role in such partnerships to help addressing the lack of skills and organisational abilities as well as to provide access to financial resources. **Existing**

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ United Nations Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (2014), "A world that counts". In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

¹² UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

¹³ UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

¹⁴ Outcomes of the 2015 the UN-Water annual international Zaragoza conference. In UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

¹⁵ UNSGAB (2015): The UNSGAB Journey

alliances like Sanitation and Water for All with specific tasks such as catalysing political action should be **strengthened** where necessary or **built upon** rather than initiating new platforms.¹⁶

Key questions and issues

Based on the scope presented above, the 2016 AGUASAN Workshop will focus on the **means of implementation** of the Water Goal with a particular focus on **finance, technology transfer, policy and institutional framework** as well as **multi-stakeholder partnerships**. The issues discussed include (but are not limited to) the following questions.

- How can **financing** mechanisms like water funds and public-private partnerships (PPPs) be exploited to cover the investment needs for the non-service oriented targets 6.3 to 6.6? How can financing schemes like results-based funding be fitted to pro-poor principles to tap into the ability and willingness to pay of 'Base of the Pyramid' markets and to fill investment gaps along the entire water cycle (i.e. incl. sanitation)? How can businesses be incentivized to invest into addressing water risks and promoting reuse of resources?
- Which promising approaches exist for transferring and scaling up of environmentally sound, economically efficient and socially accepted **technologies**? What role do local knowledge sharing platforms and networks play in this and how can they be strengthened? Which tools exist for holistically assessing technologies and making better technological choices? How can enabling technologies support this decision-making progress?
- How does the implementation of the Water Goal need to be framed at the **policy and institutional level** in order to capture and reflect water's crosscutting and human-rights based nature? How can the assignment of roles and responsibilities be facilitated among various stakeholders and how can the local level be strengthened? Which multi-stakeholder partnerships are conducive to the practical implementation of IWRM and the Water Goal? How can the setting of benchmarks and monitoring be strengthened to support the enforcement of regulations?
- Which potential do **multi-stakeholder partnerships** have in achieving the Water Goal and how effective are existing platforms in supporting the implementation and monitoring the progress of the Water Goal? How can existing partnerships become more action oriented and focused? How can partnerships be remodelled or build upon to integrate market dynamics and promote the involvement of the private sector? How can Swiss development partners and initiatives better contribute to existing and new partnerships?

Objectives and expected results

The key questions and issues above will frame the 2016 AGUASAN Workshop. The overall objective of the event is to **exchange and generate knowledge to prepare water and sanitation practitioners and policy makers for successfully implementing the Water Goal**. The specific workshop objectives and expected results are:

- Build a common understanding of the Water Goal and its specific targets and the means of implementation as proposed by UN Water (Goals 6 and 17)
 - ✓ Expected results: Participants have a sound understanding of the Water Goal, its changes from the MDG and the most important means for implementation
- Share experiences on successful and failed approaches to implementing the SDGs
 - ✓ Expected results: Drawing on case studies, participants have created an inventory of concrete best practices, tools and approaches regarding the means of implementation and have detected knowledge gaps for the implementation of the Water Goal.
 - ✓ Expected results: Participants are aware of non-technical factors that are challenging the implementation of the Water Goal
- Generate knowledge relevant to the participants' scopes of action with regard to the implementation of the Water Goal
 - ✓ Expected results: Participants have identified and prioritized key entry points for better targeting the implementation of the Water Goal

¹⁶ UN Water (2015): A compilation of aspects on the means of implementation: water and sanitation

- ✓ Expected results: Participants have assessed or developed conceptual tools to tackle the implementation of the Water Goal
- Provide a platform for strengthening networks and partnerships
 - ✓ Expected results: The cornerstone for future exchange of experiences is set

Resources and features

Participants

As mutual learning with joint elaboration of practical recommendations, tools and take-home messages for all is the basic concept of AGUASAN Workshops, the participants themselves will constitute the main knowledge resource for the event. The workshop is open to everybody strongly interested in the topic and closely connected with it in his/her personal work. A well-balanced mix regarding the participants' expertise (experienced practitioners and learning professionals) as well as their thematic, organisational, operational as well as geographic background is aimed at.

In order to optimise the working environment, the number of participants is limited to about 46 and all candidates have to undergo a selection procedure handled by the workshop steering committee. A proper application therefore has to be submitted within the pre-registration deadline of **March 24th 2016** by means of the respective form provided. Late applications cannot be considered. The applicants will receive a motivated response within two weeks after the submission deadline.

Workshop participation does not involve any registration fee, but you have to count on costs of approx. **1'060 CHF** (~970 EUR or ~1'090 USD) for full board, lodging, facilities and excursion (excluding all personal expenses) to be settled by you on the spot or by your sponsoring organisation. The workshop convenor does not provide any financial support to participants.

Resource persons and topic cases

For providing the base upon which the topic will be addressed and developed in a structured way, the workshop will feature thematic key inputs and selected topic cases from different contexts. Local and international resource persons as well as topic case presenters being highly knowledgeable and directly involved in the issues addressed will bring in this knowledge resource.

Facilitation and reporting

A professional team will facilitate the workshop process and its outcomes, while a rapporteur will be responsible for collecting the outputs and compiling the workshop report.

Steering committee

Throughout the months preceding the workshop, a steering committee carefully prepares the event and its topic. Given the nature and purpose of the event, the committee only defines the playing field for/ the design of the workshop, but does not anticipate its outcomes. This allows the committee to have flexibility in steering the workshop process, to adopt continuous planning and to react effectively on the workshop dynamics.

Other workshop features

- Alternate working in plenary and small groups, whilst proceeding in a stimulating and participatory manner by using a variety of visual aids and innovative working methods.
- A mid-week excursion (half-day) for illustrating the workshop topic in the Swiss context.
- An experience fair where the participants may present their specific experiences or challenges in a market or storytelling setting.
- English as the workshop language - work groups may exchange ad-hoc in a language understood by the others, but inputs and feedbacks in plenary are always in English.
- An open networking session with Swiss water and sanitation experts from SDC, the private sector, NGOs, etc.
- A venue (www.abzspiez.ch) ideal for a retreat and sufficient time for informal exchanges in a friendly setting.