# Domestic Water Governance



# Recommendations

#### **Headline Recommendation**

Implement integrated approaches to water management at local, national, and transboundary levels; strengthen water governance; and ensure gender and social inclusion.

#### **Detailed Recommendations (Domestic water governance)**

- Pursue integrated approaches to water resources management across local, national, and regional levels.
- Promote principles and frameworks for encouraging better water governance, such as the Water Governance Initiative.

#### Challenges

There are many different answers to the domentic water governance challenges. From a holistic, perspective, one can argue that there are four reasons for global governance. First, the Earth has one hydrological system. Second, climate change and loss of biodiversity and their underlying causes are global in nature. Third, local challenges can cumulatively lead to problematic global trends. Fourth, the direct and indirect impacts of water use may have global implications. Hence, there is a need to structure water science based on challenges emerging from water governance as also stated by UNESCO.

Strong economy, solid institutional frameworks, legal acquis, and access to technologies will not alone address the challenges in the water sector without having efficient governance in place. Technological challenges might have been overcome but technology is not a panacea and demands a clear definition of legal powers, a sound allocation of roles, good evaluation and monitoring schemes, coordination of sectorial policies, trans disciplinary approaches, a clear commitment to transparency and accountability, a high ranking of water policy in the government priorities, adequate incentives, meaningful social engagement, adequacy of the scale of management, etc. Enhanced governance is urgently needed. Complex does not necessarily mean complicated, though.

### Principals for approaching the problem

Governance does not only involve the government, in its different levels; rather, it entails a wide diversity of stake-holders, multiple scales, different sectorial concerns, the whole set of water policy challenges. Enhanced governance requires aligning individual interests and agreed goals. This affects the identification of needs and aspirations, the formulation and prioritisation of policy objectives, addressing policy gaps, reconciling administrative and hydrological boundaries, combining supply - and demand - side approaches, bridging financing gaps, etc.

Water issues must be tackled at various levels. Water governance therefore requires flexibility between levels of government and society. Water is a development issue at the border between social and technical. Water governance has more to do with people than with water itself. Therefore, the emphasis should be on connecting people in order to achieve partnerships and collaborations in the sector.

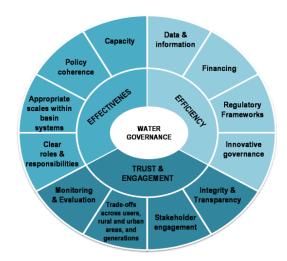
Water governance mainly focuses on the processes. Governance arrangements can only work if the processes associated with the underlying systems are understood. Water governance takes place in complex systems, making it difficult to find solutions that work in all circumstances, hence the panel advocates for sharing of experiences. Through these collaborations, the panel seeks to ensure that water supports other interests of humanity and sectors, as water is central to development Therefore it is important to increase adaptability by enhancing and updating knowledge and skills, making better use of people, and stimulating coordination.

The HLPW seeks to promote the implications and advantages of domestic governance that could achieve equity, legitimacy, create a platform for mobilization and cooperation, and promote domestic interest by communities. Governance can therefore be undertaken by all levels of governments, business, and communities.

The HLPW makes an explicit reference to the OECD policy forum on water governance<sup>1</sup>: the Water Governance Initiative (WGI) based on 12 principles of water governance, which were approved on June 2015, these are clustered in 3 groups:

- Effectiveness Building capacity, improving policy coherence, adopting adequate scales within basin systems, defining clear roles and responsibilities.
- Efficiency Improving data and information, securing financing, streamlining regulatory frameworks, adopting innovative governance approaches.
- Trust and Engagement Ensuring monitoring and evaluation, acknowledging trade-offs, fostering stakeholder engagement, enhancing integrity and transparency. The following diagram reflects components of domestic governance

The OECD plan of work includes key components: water governance indicators, exchange on good practices in water governance, and outreach outside OECD countries. The work plan creates an opportunity for countries to take part in the program to share knowledge and experience on water governance through exchange and twinning activities.



#### Contributions of the Panel

The HLPW approached the Head of the OECD WGI to explore synergies and cooperation and has identified members of the HLPW who are already engaged in the OECD WGI to foster the endorsement.

## Findings and conclusions

The HLPW encourages countries of the world to implement OECD WGI principles by developing a self-evaluation of domestic water governance, applying the set of indicators, and initiating a Policy Dialogue on Water Governance Initiative.

The Examples of Initiatives that could be shared with other countries could include:

Initiative	Purpose	Country
Back to Basics Initiative	Collaborate with all sector partners on governance and improvement of water programmes	SOUTH AFRICA
National Water Master Plan	Inclusive, integrated water plan that will inform all water programmes from Planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.	SOUTH AFRICA