

Governance

The world's water crisis is essentially a crisis of governance. Improving governance is a key component to achieve sustainable, efficient and equitable water and sanitation and is, as such, a priority for Sida.

Sweden recognises that technical solutions to manage the water crisis are not sufficient to obtain sustainable, efficient and equitable use of the world's water resources. Rather, the importance of governance to manage the wide range of challenges and impacts is emphasised. Generally, 'governance' describes in what way power and authority are exercised and distributed, how decisions are made, and to what extent citizens are able to participate in decision making processes. Good governance will minimise the opportunities for corruption, or the abuse of entrusted powers for private gains.

This brief provides an overview of Sida's approach to water and sanitation governance and presents a few examples relevant to the theme.

GOVERNANCE OF WATER AND SANITATION

Due to its fluidity, dynamic flow, and the multiple and often overlapping uses and users, water is more challenging to govern than many other natural resources. In addition, water is generally a resource that is shared across national boundaries which further complicates its governance. To be able to understand and prioritise problems, agree on allocation principles and implement policy as well as legal and institutional reforms, multi-country cooperation is required. Although difficult, the need to find mutually acceptable solutions to shared water challenges can facilitate dialogue, prompt governance reform, and coordinated investments.

With economic development and changes in demography and climate, countries will continue to face tough decisions on balancing competing demands from

households, farmers, industry, tourism, ecosystems and hydropower to optimise the use of this finite resource. Water governance is about making these choices, defining who gets what water, when, how and to what cost.



Wildlife, tourists and hydro power stations are some of the water users that could have competing water demands, which need to be governed jointly by the riparian countries of a shared river system. Photo: Gunilla Ölund Wingqvist

SWEDEN'S ENGAGEMENT

Sweden acknowledges that water governance deals with several dimensions of society and therefore social, economic, political and environmental aspects must be considered. Sweden highlights the importance of an integrated and human-rights based approach to water governance. The water resource should be used in a sustainable, efficient and equitable manner, where pro-poor considerations are taken. Furthermore, there should be equal and democratic opportunities to influence and monitor political processes and outcomes.

Governance aspects are vital ingredients and mainstreamed in Sida's support. Sweden acknowledges that, while a well-capacitated public sector has a key role in the formulation and implementation of water policies and legislation, the private sector, communities and civil society also play important roles related to water and sanitation governance. Active participation of women and minorities is particularly strived for.

Examples of Swedish support related to water sanitation governance

SHARED WATERS PARTNERSHIP

The Shared Waters Partnership (SWP) aims to advance peace, security and environmental protection through strengthening multi-country dialogue around water and build trust, capacity, and platforms for cooperative management of shared waters. Sida provides support, through UNDP, to the SWP, which serves as a neutral facilitator and aims to increase political will for regional cooperation particularly where water is, or may become, a source of conflict. For instance, Sida supports SWP to facilitate a dialogue in the Mekong on the water-food-energy nexus. The SWP is implemented by the UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI and the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre. The SWP primarily cooperates with governments or regional transboundary waters organisations.



Gold panning in the Pungwe river is a source of income but also a source of pollution. Photo: Klas Palm

COOPERATION IN THE PUNGWE RIVER

The Pungwe River is shared between Mozambique and Zimbabwe and flows through one of the poorest areas of Mozambique, an area prone to recurrent periods of floods and droughts. Sweden supports the two countries to strengthen the capacity of the key basin institutions ARA-Centro and ZINWA-Save, for more effective management of the basin resources. The support has e.g. led to better coordinated institutions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and established structures for early warning systems. Strengthened capacity of key actors (farmers, smallholders, households, gold panners, etc.) to participate in decision making has been beneficial for the management of the basin.

KENYAN WATER SECTOR REFORM

Sweden provides long-term support to Kenya's water sector, including the water sector reform. Through the reform, new institutions have been established with clearly

defined mandates and separation of functions to ensure effective policy making and planning, independent regulation, asset development, and enhanced accountability. As a result of the ongoing decentralisation process in Kenya, governance and responsibility for providing water and sanitation services have been transferred to 47 county governments. The key principles of sector reform must therefore also be adopted at the local level and the county governments require support in taking on new responsibilities and in building capacity.

SUPPORT TO NON-STATE ACTORS

As a complement to the cooperation with government institutions in Kenya, Sweden also currently supports a facility for non-state actors. The aim is to improve meaningful stakeholder participation in policy making, decisions, implementation and monitoring of service delivery, etc. When citizens, including the poor and marginalised, have access to information as well as capacity and confidence to act on it, water governance is likely to improve.

ECOPEACE MIDDLE EAST

The project Good Water Neighbours is implemented by EcoPeace Middle East. It utilises the mutual dependence on shared water resources as a basis for dialogue and cooperation. Through education, study visits and exchange between 28 cross-border communities in Jordan, Palestine and Israel, the project has contributed to a greater understanding of water problems, practical solutions and the need for cooperation. The project has contributed to establish a framework for collaboration and a network of people on different sides of national borders to promote trust, which is the basis for conflict resolution and peace building. This framework has also been critical for mobilising funding for infrastructure investments that address water related problems. Another purpose of the project is to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River through advocacy directed at different interest groups and on a higher policy level in the countries.

Policy direction – water and sanitation

Sweden promotes efficient, fair and sustainable management of water and sanitation. Sida's interventions are directed by the results strategies at country, regional and global levels.