

WATER 2015

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES



Context

The guidelines for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are today widely recognised as an important basis for development policy. At the Johannesburg Conference in 2002, the MDG in the drinking water sector were extended to include an additional target: access to sanitation. So far, SDC's activities in the water sector have been based on the "SDC Sector Policy on Water Supply and Sanitation" (1994). For the numerous water programmes in rural development there used to be no overall guideline document. Based on the Rio + 10 Summit for Sustainable Development, the Freshwater Conference in Bonn in 2001, the International Year of Water 2003, and the Kyoto World Water Forum in 2003, a need has arisen for a coherent orientation of SDC's future commitment in the entire water sector.

The international reference framework is provided by the various Rio Conventions as well as environment agreements such as – among others – the Climate Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Desertification and Preservation of Wetlands (Ramsar). Further, SDC orients itself according to the global guidelines issued by the "World Commission on Dams".

The present Principles and Guidelines are a short version of the more comprehensive orientation paper "Water 2015 – Policy Principles and Strategic Guidelines for Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM", which has been elaborated with broad participation of Coordination Offices, Thematic Divisions at the Head Office and external partners. It outlines SDC's focus with regard to water in the coming years, how it will participate in the international policy dialogue on water, and thus, how SDC will contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable management of resources.

Today, SDC's multilateral engagement in the water sector amounts to approximately CHF 20 million, together with – among others – the World Bank, UNDP, WHO and UNICEF. SDC also supports 125 bilateral activities of around CHF 60 million annually. In case of water related disasters (Tsunami 2004, floods in 2002), the Humanitarian Aid Department provides additional funds.

Water, an Irreplaceable Resource

Water is essential for life and it has no substitute. Globally there is sufficient freshwater, but regionally water needs rarely coincide with the available resources. Due to continuous population growth and increasingly intensive but often inefficient water use for nutrition, production and health, water resources are becoming ever scarcer. Water and soil pollution, declining water tables, salinisation and soil erosion are increasing, leading to more and more conflicts of interests. For international cooperation, a comprehensive strategy in the water sector is thus necessary. SDC supports the globally accepted and recognised concept of "Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM".



Water becomes ever scarcer causing dry spells and drought

Water, a Common Good

Historically, the right of access to water has been time and again a matter of conflict. Control over water usually also leads to political and economic power. As a result of scarcity, greater settlement density, and increased economic activities, water has nowadays become a resource with a market value.

Water must remain a common good and the right of access to drinking water is a fundamental human right for which national governments must assume full responsibility. The provision of water, however, has a cost. Governments which cannot themselves ensure the supply of water can assign supply and operating rights and duties to private companies. But the state must invariably retain sovereignty over the resource and remain the owner of the public infrastructures. User rights must be assigned with clear obligations, for example the protection of poor or low-income groups, the environment, or the respect for traditional local access rights. The establishment of tariffs and eventual subsidies should be a matter of negotiation between the state and the service operator.

SDC is committed to ensure that access to water remains an inalienable right for all (rights-based approach). It supports political processes for the sustainable and socially equitable organization and distribution of water supplies, and supports users in demanding their civil rights. SDC therefore considers local knowledge, socio-cultural and religious values, and supports the local population in its efforts to maintain a decentralised and autonomous control over its water supply. Strengthening local and regional governance structures and mechanisms is considered an effective measure for conflict prevention.

Integrated Water Resource Management IWRM¹

SDC takes a holistic view of water issues with a focus on poverty reduction and putting people at the centre. Water use and interventions in the hydrological cycle must not jeopardise long term resource regeneration and ecosystem functions. The IWRM approach includes, inter alia, planning and management of drinking water supplies, access to sanitation services and provision of sufficient water for production. It thereby complies with the objectives of sustainability laid down in the Rio Convention and confirmed in the Millennium Development Goals.

Equitable access for all without discrimination is the focal point, especially for the poorer segments of society. Supply systems for water of appropriate quality and quantity are a prerequisite for health, nutrition and production. The objective is an efficient and sustainable utilisation of water resources and water infrastructure. Preventive measures in dealing with either too little or too much water are an essential part of integrated water management. In the case of extreme events such as drought or floods, the Humanitarian Aid Department provides additional support.

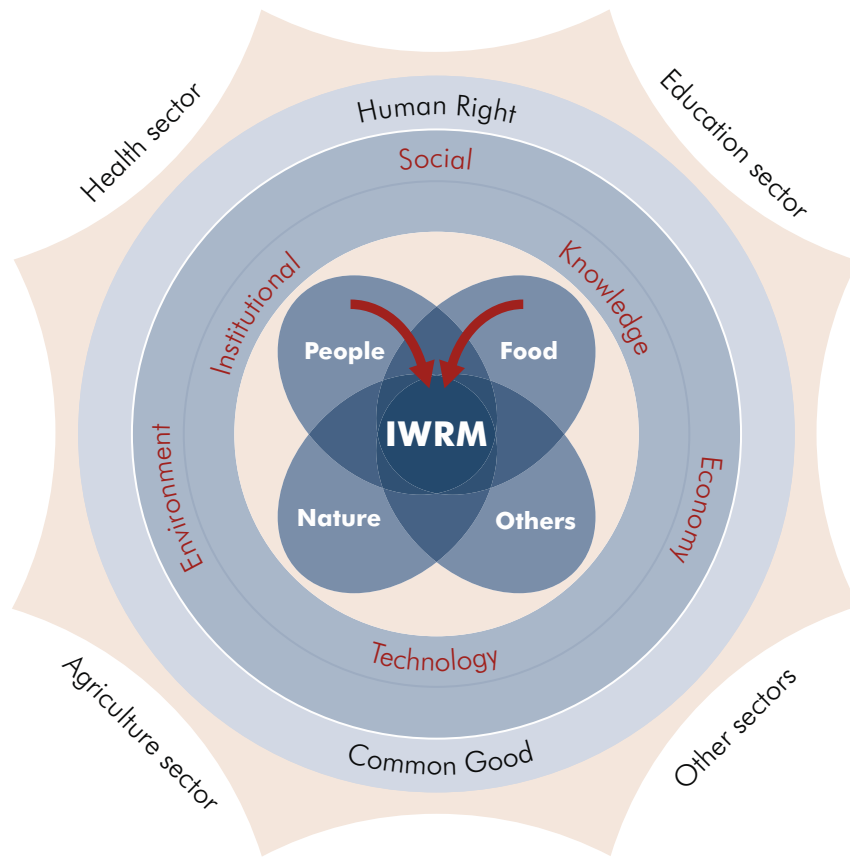
SDC bases its interventions on the four water use categories defined by the Global Water Partnership (GWP). Water for people and water for food are the two thematic entry points in the water sector due to their importance for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

For project implementation, several of the six inter-linked dimensions usually need to be considered: environment, economy, social issues, institutional set-up, technology and knowledge. These transversal aspects of water form important interfaces with other policy areas such as health, education, agriculture etc.



Irrigation channel in
Central America

¹ IWRM is a process which promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. (Source: TEC Background papers No. 4 GWP)
Integrated management has to be applied through a complete re-thinking of water management institutions – putting people at the centre.



SDC prioritises “Water for People” and “Water for Food” as entry points for its interventions. Water as a common good and water as a human right are basic values (●). Interventions are guided by six interdependent strategic fields (●): the 3 pillars of sustainable development – environment, economy and social issues – and the 3 thematic fields – institutional, technology and knowledge.

The Global Water Partnership defines 4 Water Use Categories, which all depend on the resources available in a catchment area:

Water for People is related to both the drinking water sector and sanitation;

Water for Food refers to the agricultural sector and includes livestock and fisheries and rainfed or irrigated cultivation of food, fodder or fibre crops;

Water for Nature refers to the water source as well as to the availability of water for nature and for the conservation of ecosystems;

Water for other uses refers mainly to the use of water for industry, energy and transportation.

Drinking Water and Sanitation (water for people)

In line with the MDG number 7, SDC strives to contribute to reducing by half the number of people without access to clean drinking water or basic sanitation by the year 2015. This requires a marked increase in efficiency of the sector and the mobilisation of additional means. In particular, the sustainability of supply systems needs to be improved and new sources of finance must be mobilised. For this to become reality, a stronger involvement and commitment of civil society stakeholders as well as of the public and private sectors are required.

In order to achieve these objectives, SDC participates in policy discussions both internationally and at country level with the aim to strengthen sustainable strategies and activities in the drinking water, sanitation and waste disposal sectors. In rural areas, small towns or slums, SDC applies a demand responsive approach. It is complemented – where suitable – by the involvement of the private sector as provider of services and supplier of spare parts and goods. The local capacities of the sector are promoted which contributes specifically to the on-going decentralisation processes in these countries.

Geographically, priority is given to rural areas, where water problems are most acute because of the large number of agricultural users, the generally weak supply systems, and the widespread poverty. Where comparative advantages exist, these priorities can also be extended through pilot schemes to impoverished urban zones where various forms of financing can be tested.



Food Security (water for food)

The first Millennium Development Goal postulates that extreme poverty and hunger are to be halved by the year 2015. Water is indispensable for the production of food: globally more than 70%, and in developing countries even more than 80%, of all water withdrawals is used for the production of food. Increased food production for export is an important source of income. In the past, many large scale irrigation projects have proved to be inefficient and badly operated and managed. Sustainable land and water use is of utmost importance to prevent soil degradation and salinisation.

Focal points of SDC's strategy are the increase in water use efficiency and the local responsibility and control of the management of the systems. To increase water productivity, SDC promotes the strategy of "more crop and jobs per drop". SDC's involvement is primarily in semi-arid and arid regions where rainfed farming and soil moisture conservation are supported. This includes small-scale irrigation with locally adapted, demand-oriented technologies which are affordable for small farmers and which are integrated in the overall livelihood system. SDC also promotes innovative approaches in agricultural research and supports education, training and strengthening of water user-groups.



Retention basin for supplementary irrigation and groundwater recharge

Women and girls could make better use of the time spent for the daily water carrying

Articulation with SDC Instruments

The present guidelines provide the overriding principles for all activities supported by SDC in the water sector. These are applied through context related specific strategies and approaches. Where appropriate, they are introduced in country programmes and national policy dialogue, and implemented locally through suitable tools.

The existing SDC Sector Policy for Water and Sanitation (1994) will be revised in accordance with the IWRM approach. In the Water for Food sector, adapted implementation tools will be developed in the frame of country programmes together with the local partners.

Organisation in SDC

The organisational units are responsible for the implementation of the “Water 2015 Principles and Guidelines”. Support is provided by the focal point for water at Head Office, the *IWRM Team*. The team is under the joint responsibility of the divisions “Social Development” and “Natural Resources and Environment” and may mobilize support from representatives from all organisational units within SDC.

The Team is the focal point for technical questions, it is responsible for coordination with other federal authorities and SDC’s position in multilateral discussions within the *Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC)* for Water. The IWRM Team is also in charge of technical advice and support for programmes and partners, and of institutional networking and institutional learning on the water and development topic.



Drip irrigation in Central America

Operational Guidelines for Implementation

In countries where SDC has included the water sector as a programmatic priority, programmes and measures are coordinated in close partnership with all important actors, especially for the elaboration of national policies on water and related sectors as well as of general development strategies e.g. the “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers” (PRSP). The orientation paper “Water 2015 – Policy Principles and Strategic Guidelines for Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM” (SDC, 2005) provides relevant recommendations and support.

The operational implementation uses – among others – the following strategies, adjusted and adapted to the local situation:

- Increasing water utilisation efficiency in watershed areas, supply systems and at user level (households; agriculture; industry; ecosystems etc.)
- Decentralised system management, organisation of water user-groups
- Access to water resources and services
- Innovative approaches such as “payment for environmental services” etc.
- Partnerships with private sector participation (not privatisation of water resources) with particular emphasis on local enterprises
- More effective use of existing, and support for new, adapted, small scale infrastructures
- Promotion of affordable and more efficient water-use technologies
- Organisational and institutional support, capacity development
- Micro-Projects with potential for scaling up and influencing national sector policies
- Greater prominence of support for small scale infrastructures combined with management and operating capacity building

Monitoring

The IWRM Team compiles an annual report on the coherence of the portfolio and the goal-oriented utilisation of resources in the water sector. If deemed necessary, the orientation paper “Water 2015 – Policy Principles and Strategic Guidelines for Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM” will be adapted to changed frame conditions.

Postscript

Every day, more than 6000 human beings die world-wide because of inadequate water supply. More than 95% of African farmers have no access to irrigation water for agriculture. SDC makes use of its possibilities and resources to resolutely and effectively remedy this deplorable situation.



During planning often forgotten:
water needs for livestock

The present guidelines were adopted by the Board of Directors (COSTRA) on 16th March 2005.

For further information please contact the



SDC IWRM Team

François Münger

Social Development Division (SoDev)

Telephone: +41 (0)31 325 92 52

E-mail: francois.muenger@deza.admin.ch

Willi Graf

Natural Resources & Environment Division (NRE)

Telephone: +41 (0)31 325 93 07

E-mail: willi.graf@deza.admin.ch

The more detailed orientation paper

“Water 2015 – Policy Principles and Strategic Guidelines
for Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM”

is available under:

http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_en_1750.pdf

SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Freiburgstrasse 130
3003 Berne

Phone: +41 (0)31 322 34 75

E-mail: info@deza.admin.ch

DEZA DIREKTION FÜR ENTWICKLUNG UND ZUSAMMENARBEIT
DDC DIRECTION DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ET DE LA COOPÉRATION
DSC DIREZIONE DELLO SVILUPPO E DELLA COOPERAZIONE
SDC SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
COSUDE AGENCIA SUIZA PARA EL DESARROLLO Y LA COOPERACIÓN

