



# Ten years of the OECD Water Governance Initiative





The **OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI)** has championed good water governance as a means to achieve sustainable development for a decade. While the water governance landscape has changed significantly over the past ten years, the wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated by the WGI can support governments and stakeholders in addressing both new and longstanding water governance challenges.

The WGI Secretariat is hosted within the **OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE)** as part of the activities of the **OECD Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC)**.

The **CFE** helps national, regional and local governments unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promote inclusive and sustainable growth in regions and cities, boost local job creation and implement sound tourism policies.

This brochure shares 10 key takeaways from 10 years of WGI work in terms of the *why* (the drivers behind WGI work), the *what* (the pillars of WGI work) and the *how* (what made the WGI a game changer for water governance).

# Contents

	<b>The OECD WGI journey</b>	.....p. 4
	<b>10 takeaways from 10 years of OECD WGI work</b>	.....p. 6
<b>Why?</b> <i>The drivers behind the OECD WGI work</i>	<b>1 Water crises are often governance crises</b>	.....p. 6
	<small>The OECD WGI argued that water crises are often primarily water governance crises and supported governments in navigating them</small>	
	<b>2 There is no silver bullet for solving water governance crises, but 12 Principles can guide action</b>	.....p. 7
	<small>The OECD WGI identified the 12 must-do's for governments to design and implement effective, efficient, and inclusive water policies</small>	
	<b>3 What is not measured cannot be improved</b>	.....p. 10
	<small>The OECD WGI created the first-ever measurement framework for water governance and a guide for governments and stakeholders to self-assess water governance systems</small>	
<b>What?</b> <i>The OECD WGI pillars of good water governance</i>	<b>4 People matter</b>	.....p. 11
	<small>The OECD WGI strongly supported inclusive water governance and sought to make water governance accessible to all</small>	
	<b>5 Reconnect water with nature</b>	.....p. 12
	<small>The OECD WGI conveyed that governments should enhance climate resilience by reconnecting water with nature</small>	
	<b>6 Fit water policies to places</b>	.....p. 13
	<small>The OECD WGI highlighted that water is a local issue with global implications and raised the profile of subnational governments to achieve water security</small>	
<b>How?</b> <i>The OECD WGI as a game changer for water governance</i>	<b>7 Be vocal</b>	.....p. 14
	<small>The OECD WGI raised the voice and the profile of water governance in the global agenda and ensured continuity on water governance discussions between World Water Fora</small>	
	<b>8 Share to learn</b>	.....p. 15
	<small>The OECD WGI collected and shared knowledge and experience on water governance to help governments and stakeholders put good water governance into action</small>	
	<b>9 Think outside the water box</b>	.....p. 16
	<small>The OECD WGI explored how to transition to a circular economy and foster a sustainable blue economy</small>	
	<b>10 Go global</b>	.....p. 17
	<small>The WGI gathered evidence on water governance in Africa and Asia-Pacific</small>	
	<b>WGI members</b>	.....p. 18

# The OECD WGI journey

## A GLOBAL POLICY FORUM IN SUPPORT OF BETTER WATER GOVERNANCE

The OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI), created in 2013, is a global policy forum where 100+ members from the public, private and non-for-profit sectors share experience, learn from good practices and co-produce common outputs towards better water governance.

## Objectives of the OECD WGI



**Advise governments** in carrying out effective water reforms through peer-to-peer dialogue and stakeholder engagement.



**Share knowledge** experience and best practices on water governance across levels of government.



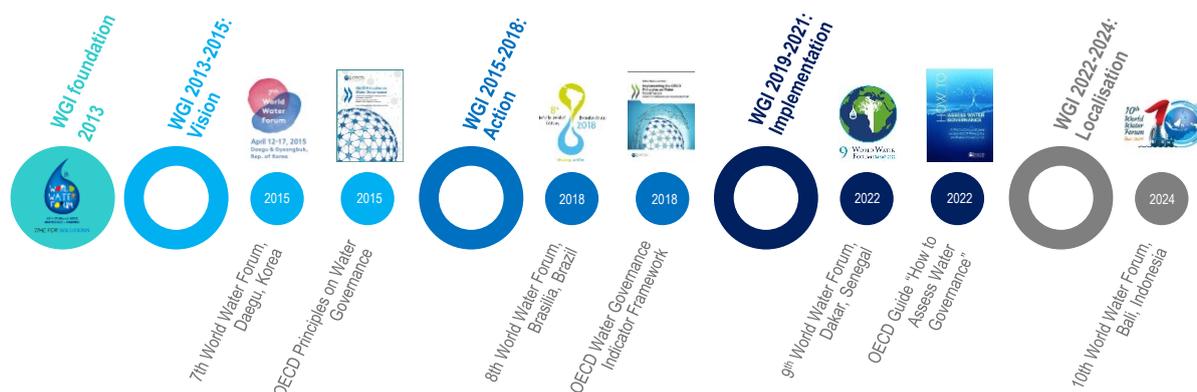
**Support governments** with the uptake of the OECD Principles on Water Governance and the Indicator Framework.



**Raise the profile of water governance** in the global agenda and foster continuity on governance discussions between World Water Fora.

## Programme of work

The OECD WGI programme of work is based on a coherent narrative on water governance across 4 consecutive phases: Vision (2013-15); Action (2015-18); Implementation (2019-21); and Localisation (2022-24). Co-produced outcomes are presented at the World Water Fora.



## Membership

The OECD WGI counts on a diversified geographic, economic and institutional representation at local, national and global levels. The 100+ members include representatives from national governments, basin and local authorities (and their networks), regulators (and their networks), donors and international financial institutions, NGOs, international organisations and institutions, service providers (both public and private, and their networks), as well as academics and independent experts. Members gather twice a year in plenary meetings.

## Leadership

The OECD WGI is hosted by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) and has been chaired since 2022 by Barbara Pompili, Member of Parliament and former Minister for the Ecological Transition of France. Peter Glas, Delta Commissioner for the Netherlands, served as the Chair of the OECD WGI from 2013 to 2022. The OECD WGI is led by a Steering Committee composed of partner institutions providing strategic orientations and operational support: the Aquae Foundation, the French Scientific and Technical Association for Water and the Environment (ASTEE), the International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO), the International Office for Water (OiEau), United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLG Africa), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), SUEZ, Transparency International, the Water Integrity Network (WIN), the Water Research Commission of South Africa and the Water Youth Network. Previously, UNESCO and the Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation (AEAS) were Steering Committee members for 3 and 6 years respectively.



## Why? The drivers behind OECD WGI work

# 1. Water crises are often water governance crises

**The OECD WGI argued that water crises are often primarily water governance crises and supported governments in navigating them**

In a nutshell, water governance is the set of rules of the game to ensure that everyone, everywhere, at all times has access to the water they need and to protect people from the growing risks of “too much”, “too little” and “too polluted” water. By 2050, two billion additional people on the planet will demand more water, food and energy, in a context where many countries are seeing their water sources dry up. By then, around 1.6 billion people are projected to be at risk of flooding, and almost 4 billion are likely to be living in river basins under severe water stress. This raises questions about not only *what* to do, but also *by whom*, *why*, *how*, and at *which level*.

The world is sleepwalking into a water crisis, which is mostly a water governance crisis. In many cases, water strategies and reforms are not designed and implemented to adequately tackle current challenges and effectively respond to future ones. Over the last decade, the OECD WGI supported several governments in navigating water governance crises and highlighted that faced with climate uncertainty, pandemics and conflicts, water governance should be fit for purpose, for example by encouraging action – rather than reaction – to water disasters; saving every drop through circular approaches; and valuing water as an asset connecting multiple policies, such as energy, food, climate change and biodiversity.

## Achievements

### Lessons learned from water policy reforms

From 2014 to 2022, the OECD WGI peer-reviewed OECD Water Policy Dialogues, such as in [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Jordan](#), [Netherlands](#), [Peru](#), [Tunisia](#) and [Cape Town](#), [South Africa](#). In addition, some members joined OECD fact-finding missions to share their experience and knowledge.



Some common lessons can be drawn from these dialogues:

- The main cause of inefficiencies is not the number of institutions involved in water governance *per se*, but the lack of co-ordination between them, which hampers efficient fund allocation, policy alignment and information sharing to avoid duplications and overlaps.
- While significant investments in water infrastructure are needed, the question is not just about securing funds, but ensuring their sustainability and efficient spending. In the context of fiscal and economic constraints, solutions should focus on attracting private investors, reducing investment needs and spending money wisely by increasing transparency and monitoring.
- Several new actors are emerging in the water governance landscape, such as property developers (Netherlands, 2014), indigenous communities (Peru, 2021), and women (Cape Town, South Africa, 2021).

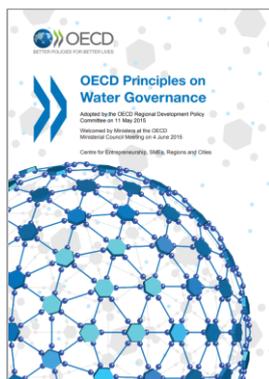
## Why? The drivers behind OECD WGI work

# 2. There is no silver bullet for solving water governance crises, but 12 Principles can guide action

The OECD WGI identified the 12 must-do's for governments to design and implement effective, efficient, and inclusive water policies

The OECD WGI co-designed the **OECD Principles on Water Governance**, which provide a checklist of 12 enabling conditions building around three mutually reinforcing and complementary dimensions of water governance: how you hit the targets (effectiveness), at the least cost (efficiency) and with whom (trust and engagement).

The OECD Principles apply to the overarching water policy cycle. They cut across water management functions (e.g. drinking water supply, sanitation, flood protection, water quality, water quantity, rainwater and stormwater), water uses (e.g. domestic, industry, agriculture, energy and environment) and ownership of water management, resources and assets (e.g. public, private, mixed).



OECD (2015), *OECD Principles on Water Governance*, [oe.cd/waterprinciples](http://oe.cd/waterprinciples)

To date, the OECD Principles have been made available in 18 languages and endorsed by 170+ stakeholder groups and governments, including the 38 OECD member countries, 7 non-member countries and 140 stakeholder groups.

## Achievements

A participatory and co-production approach towards the OECD Principles on Water Governance

### 2013

- March**
- November** Launch of the WGI and kick-off of 4 thematic working groups to develop the content of the Principles
- Establishment of a timeline for the co-creation of OECD Principles on Water Governance at 2<sup>nd</sup> OECD WGI meeting

### 2014

- April**
- April** OECD Inventory of Tools, Practices and Guidelines to Foster Governance in the Water Sector
- Working group input discussion at 3<sup>rd</sup> OECD WGI meeting
- April-September** Consolidation through advisory groups, working groups inputs and broader consultation
- September** Zero draft for comments
- November** Zero draft discussion at 4<sup>th</sup> OECD WGI meeting

### 2015

- January-April**
- Consultation of relevant OECD bodies
- April** Daegu Multi-stakeholder Declaration on the OECD Principles on Water Governance and dedicated session at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Daegu, Korea)
- May** Adoption of the Principles by the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee
- May** Welcome of the Principles at the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- June** Welcome of the Principles by Ministers at the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting
- December** Translation of the Principles in 18 languages

### 2016

- August**
- December** Global Coalition for Good Water Governance at Stockholm World Water Week
- Inclusion of the Principles in the OECD Council Recommendation on Water 2016

### 2018

- February**
- March** Water International Special Issue *The OECD Principles on Water Governance: from policy standards to practice*
- OECD report on Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance

## Why? The drivers behind OECD WGI work

### Principle 4

Adapt the level of capacity of responsible authorities to the complexity of water challenges to be met, and to the set of competencies required to carry out their duties.

### Principle 3

Encourage policy coherence through effective cross-sectoral co-ordination, especially between policies for water and the environment, health, energy, agriculture, industry, spatial planning and land use.

### Principle 2

Manage water at the appropriate scale(s) within integrated basin governance systems to reflect local conditions, and foster co-ordination between the different scales.

### Principle 1

Clearly allocate and distinguish roles and responsibilities for water policymaking, policy implementation, operational management and regulation, and foster co-ordination across these responsible authorities

### Principle 12

Promote regular monitoring and evaluation of water policy and governance where appropriate, share the results with the public and make adjustments when needed

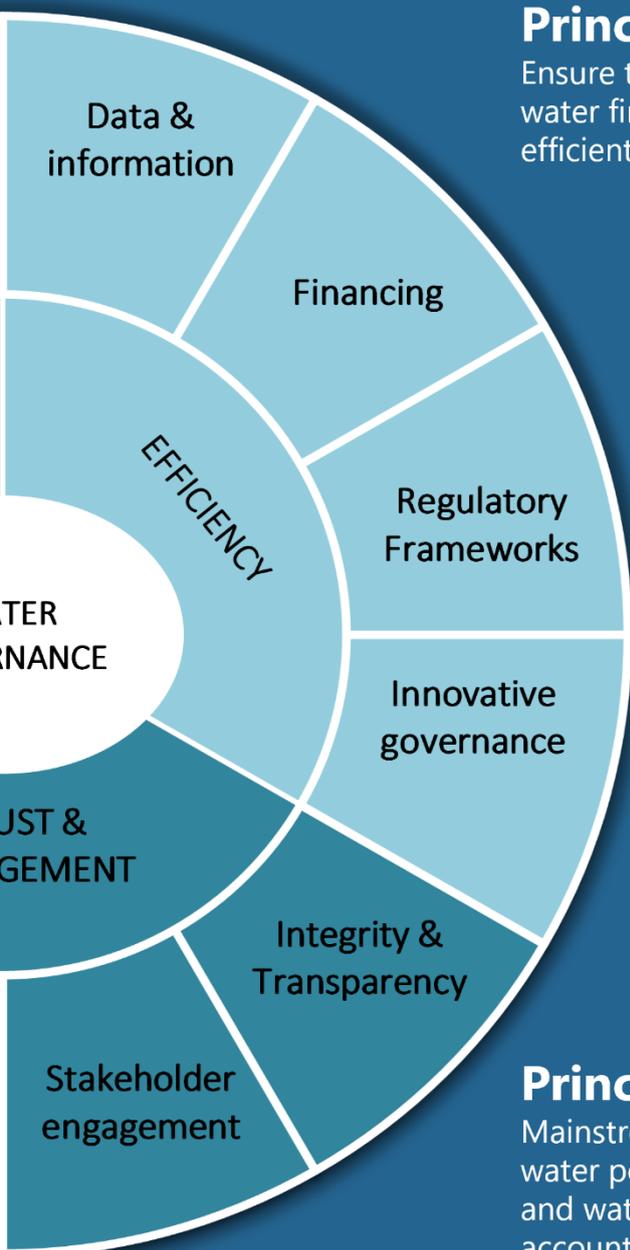
### Principle 11

Encourage water governance frameworks that help manage trade-offs across water users, rural and urban areas, and generations



## Principle 5

Produce, update, and share timely, consistent, comparable and policy-relevant water and water-related data and information, and use it to guide, assess and improve water policy



## Principle 6

Ensure that governance arrangements help mobilise water finance and allocate financial resources in an efficient, transparent and timely manner.

## Principle 7

Ensure that sound water management regulatory frameworks are effectively implemented and enforced in pursuit of the public interest

## Principle 8

Promote the adoption and implementation of innovative water governance practices across responsible authorities, levels of government and relevant stakeholders

## Principle 9

Mainstream integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions and water governance frameworks for greater accountability and trust in decision-making

## Principle 10

Promote stakeholder engagement for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation

## Why? The drivers behind OECD WGI work

### 3. What is not measured cannot be improved

The OECD WGI created the first-ever measurement framework for water governance and a guide for governments and stakeholders to assess their own water governance systems

The OECD WGI concurred that monitoring the implementation of the OECD Principles would help identify gaps, needs, priorities and responses for effective, efficient and inclusive water policies, as “one cannot improve what is not measured”.

There is no single way to measure water governance, nor a finite number of indicators that can capture the variety of water governance dimensions, along with the diversity of political, historical, legal, administrative, geographic and economic characteristics. However, having some indicators is better than no indicator to foster water policy implementation, raise awareness and engage in constructive dialogue with actors from public, private and non-profit sectors as a first step towards better water governance.

To this end, the OECD WGI co-developed the **OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework** – the first-ever measurement framework for water governance – and the **OECD Guide on How To Assess Water Governance**, which sets out a ten-step methodology to undertake assessments of water governance systems through multi-stakeholder dialogues.



OECD (2018), *Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance*, [oe.cd/implementingwaterprinciples](http://oe.cd/implementingwaterprinciples)

OECD (2022), *How to Assess Water Governance*, [oe.cd/howto](http://oe.cd/howto)

The OECD WGI contributed to the Special Issue of Water International on **Measuring the impacts of water governance**, collecting 9 academic articles discussing the complexity of measuring impacts and highlighting case studies in countries including Brazil, Egypt, France, Iran, Vietnam and the United States.

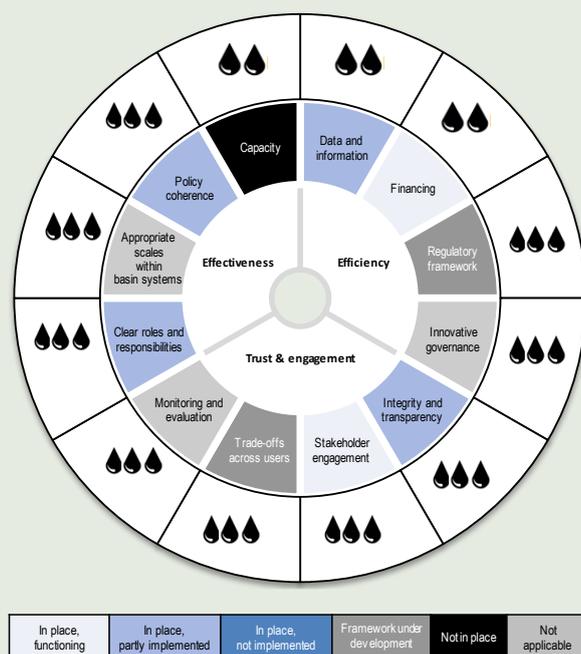
#### Achievements

##### Measuring water governance to foster multi-stakeholder dialogues

Three years after the OECD Principles, the **OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework** (2018) was co-created through a bottom-up and multi-stakeholder process within the OECD WGI, with pilot testing in 11 countries at national, regional, provincial, basin and city levels.

It is composed of a traffic light system of 36 water governance indicators (input and process), a checklist containing 100+ questions on water governance, and an action plan for improvement in the short, medium and long run.

The traffic light system appraises the existence and level of implementation of the framework conditions of the water governance system, expected changes over time and the level of consensus on the assessments of different stakeholders (represented by 1 to 3 drops).



## What? The OECD WGI pillars of good water governance

### 4. People matter

The OECD WGI has strongly supported inclusive water governance and sought to make water governance accessible to all

As a multi-stakeholder platform, inclusive water governance across players – from policy makers to farmers, businesses and households – is in the nature of the OECD WGI.

From the outset, the OECD WGI co-developed an in-depth, evidence-based analysis of the main trends, drivers, obstacles, mechanisms, costs and benefits of stakeholder engagement in water. Results highlighted the many economic, environmental and social benefits stemming from effectively engaging stakeholders in water policies and projects, such as acceptance, trust and cost savings. If policy makers and the broad range of people who have a stake in water choose to only work with their peers and within their own spheres of activity, instead of across the board, they will fail to meet current and future water challenges.



OECD (2015), *Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance*, [oe.cd/inclusivewatergov](http://oe.cd/inclusivewatergov)

### Achievements

#### OECD WGI work to foster inclusive water governance

##### 2014

- January**
  - Kick-off, OECD Survey on Stakeholder Engagement for Effective Water Governance developed by the OECD Secretariat with the support of the members of the OECD Water Governance Initiative Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement
- May**
  - 1st Webinar: Discussion of preliminary results of OECD Survey
- May**
  - 3rd Istanbul International Water Forum, side event to present findings and carry out broader consultations
- June**
  - Collection of 215 responses and 69 case studies
- July**
  - 2nd Webinar, feedback collection on 1st draft report
- September**
  - Multi-stakeholder workshop (Paris, France) and IWA World Water Congress (Lisbon, Portugal) to present findings
- November**
  - Peer review of the draft report at the 4th OECD WGI meeting

##### 2015

- April**
  - Publication of the OECD report *Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance*



##### 2018-20

- OECD Women in Water Decision-Making Project with the Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development Cooperation (BMZ)



##### 2020-22

- Broad engagement of a non-expert audience through the video on the OECD Principles directed by Let's Talk About Water



## What? The OECD WGI pillars of good water governance

### 5. Reconnect water with nature

**The OECD WGI conveyed that governments should enhance climate resilience by reconnecting water with nature**

Urbanisation trends, land-use changes and population growth have made more and more room for people to the detriment of nature, with dire consequences for water security. The growing disconnect between water, nature and human settlements hampers resilience to floods and droughts, magnified by climate change, putting people, food, energy and water security at risk.

As highlighted by the OECD Principles, water security cannot rely on infrastructure such as dams and reservoirs alone. Measures towards greater water security (e.g., combining supply and demand, grey and green infrastructure, risk management and resilience, with a holistic view in connection with the environment, territorial development and land use) should build on robust water governance.

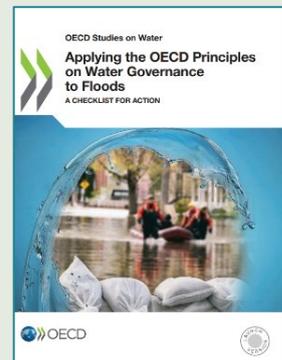


#### Achievements

##### OECD WGI work to reconnect water with nature for climate resilience

Over the past decade, the OECD WGI has shed light on how to apply the OECD Principles to tackle floods and groundwater depletion through the report [Applying the OECD Principles on Water Governance to Floods: A Checklist for Action](#) (2019) and the paper on [Assessing and Monitoring Groundwater Governance](#) (2018).

The next programme of work of the OECD WGI (2022-24) will specifically focus on water governance for the climate transition, highlighting the need for nature-based solutions and a systems approach to link water with climate, biodiversity and related policies.



The OECD WGI peer-reviewed and shared international best practices for OECD Water Policy Dialogues with a strong focus on nature-based solutions and ecosystems:

- **Water Governance in the Netherlands: Fit for the Future?** (2013) highlighted the “make room for the river” paradigm combining innovative architecture, urbanisation and landscape solutions to build with nature and live with water.
- **Water Governance in Peru** (2021) shed light on the country’s scheme to protect headwaters, the Compensation Mechanism for Ecosystem Services (MERESE), which channels funds towards the conservation, recovery and sustainable use of sources of ecosystem services through agreements and payments between public and private sector parties.
- **Fostering Water Resilience in Brazil: Turning Strategy into Action** (2022) put a spotlight on the country’s Water Producer Programme, which ensures the environmental regeneration of watersheds through payments for ecosystem services to rural areas, which is reflected in the quantity and the quality of the water that reaches cities.

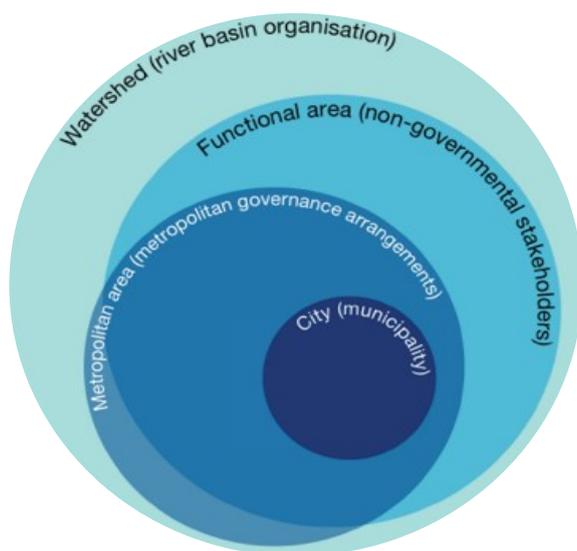
## What? The OECD WGI pillars of good water governance

### 6. Fit water policies to places

**The OECD WGI highlighted that water is a local issue with global implications and raised the profile of subnational governments to achieve water security**

The OECD Principles recognise that water policies need to be tailored to different water resources and places, considering historical and territorial specificities. The OECD WGI highlighted that the scale at which water is managed depends on the function: it can be managed at the local or metropolitan level for drinking water and sanitation; at the sub-basin or basin level for water resources management; or at higher levels for flood protection. Multiple scales should be combined within integrated basin governance systems to foster efficient use of water resources, information sharing and cost savings.

The WGI's 2022-24 programme of work will focus on a local (or territorial) approach to water governance that moves from a traditional, sectoral, top-down approach to water policy towards a multi-sectoral, context-specific and bottom-up one. A local focus can demonstrate how the Principles help achieve water security; shed light on interactions across urban areas and basins, as part of a functional approach; and highlight solutions towards more effective, efficient and inclusive water governance, building on local knowledge and stakeholders' action.



Source: OECD (2016), *Water Governance in Cities*, [oe.cd/watergovcities](https://www.oecd.org/watergovcities)

#### Achievements

##### OECD WGI work on water governance in cities and basins



##### Leadership and membership

The place-based dimension of water governance is in the DNA of the OECD WGI. The International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO) is a founding member and Steering Committee member of the OECD WGI. Basin organisations such as the Jucar River Basin, Spain are also members. The Steering Committee welcomed United Cities and Local Governments-Africa (UCLG-Africa) as a new member in 2022. City umbrella organisations such as ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and the Resilient Cities Network have become OECD WGI members alongside local water operators such as those of Paris, France and Porto, Portugal.



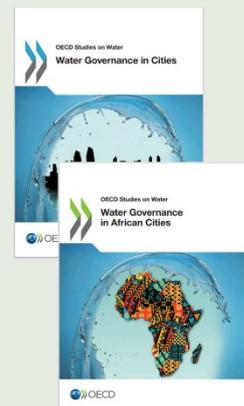
##### Guidance

The OECD WGI has provided guidance on managing water at the basin scale in OECD Water Policy Dialogues in the [Netherlands](#) (2013), [Brazil](#) (2015, 2022), [Korea](#) (2018), [Argentina](#) (2019) and [Peru](#) (2021).



##### Benchmarking

The work of the OECD WGI contributed to developing, sharing and analysing targeted surveys to build new evidence and data on cities, such as [Water Governance in Cities](#) (2016), with a survey of 48 cities in OECD countries and beyond, and [Water Governance in African Cities](#) (2021), with a survey of 36 African cities of all sizes.



## How? The OECD WGI as a game changer for water governance

### 7. Be vocal

**The OECD WGI elevated the voice and the profile of water governance in the global agenda and ensured continuity on water governance discussions between World Water Fora**

As a consultation mechanism to raise the profile of water governance in the global agenda, the OECD WGI has served as a co-ordination platform to ensure the water governance community speaks with a single voice towards the implementation of global agendas (e.g. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). Achieving SDG 6 on “Clean water and sanitation for all” requires good water governance, data, capacity building, and robust policy implementation. OECD WGI members made co-ordinated contributions to key international milestones such as the UN 2023 Water Conference (New York, United States), marking the mid-term review of SDG 6.

Similarly, OECD WGI members have drawn attention to water governance at climate COPs, which have historically overlooked the role of water in climate mitigation and adaptation. OECD WGI members were active in the first-ever Water Pavilion at COP 26 (Glasgow, United Kingdom, 2021), as well as COP 27 (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 2022), where water made it into the final declaration of a climate COP for the first time.

From its inception, the OECD WGI co-led discussions on Governance at World Water Fora in relation to governance targets on stakeholder engagement, regulation, basin management, integrated water resources management (IWRM), integrity and transparency, defined at the 6th World Water Forum (Marseille, France, 2012). Since then, the OECD WGI has worked together over three-year periods to develop common outputs (e.g. the OECD Principles) and commitments and declarations (e.g. Brasilia Multi-stakeholder Pledge) for each triennial Forum.

#### Achievements

##### The WGI in the international agenda

Over the past decade, the OECD WGI exchanged information, ideas and actions in a series of key international events, such as:



## How? The OECD WGI as a game changer for water governance

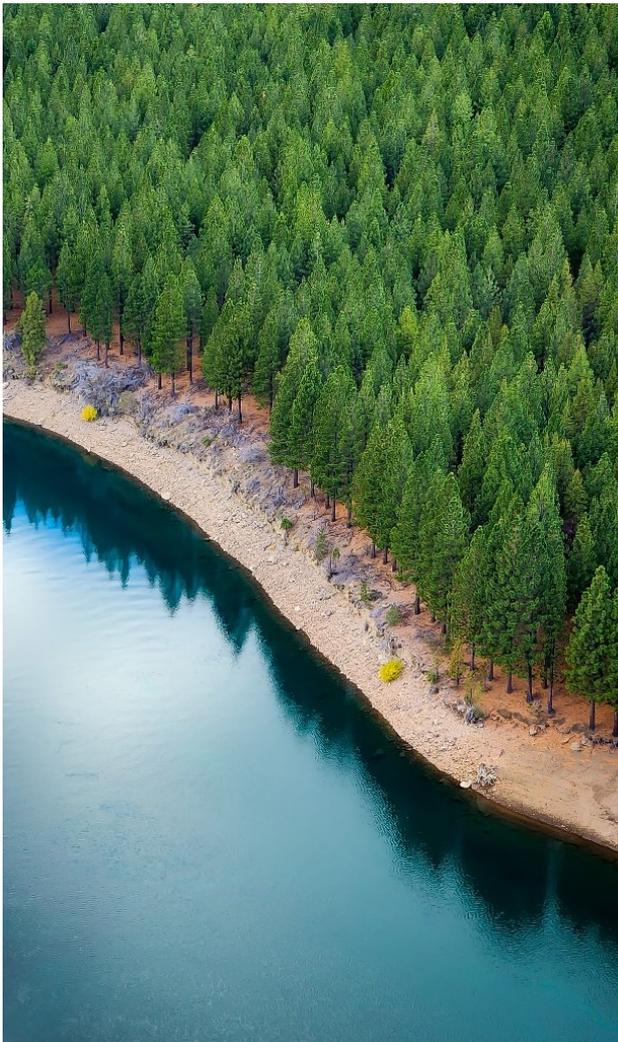
### 8. Share to learn

**The OECD WGI collected and shared knowledge and experience on water governance to help governments and stakeholders put good water governance into action**

The OECD WGI is a multi-stakeholder platform where mutual learning and experience-sharing can take place and useful water governance practices can be identified with a view to being scaled up.

A key initiative to support the implementation of the OECD Principles was to identify, collect and scale up practices to help governments and stakeholders move from vision to action.

Learning from practices is about gaining insights from real examples, looking at what works (and what does not work), how others deal with challenges and what made the difference in successful stories.



#### Achievements

##### Learning from evolving water governance practices

The OECD WGI collected and shared 54 evolving practices spanning across all five continents and different scales, from local to international. Practices were selected for peer-to-peer dialogue and published in the OECD report [Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance](#) (2018).

Despite the diversity of contexts analysed, three key positive impacts from water governance measures have emerged: better provision of water services; improvements in environmental quality; and reduced risks of water-related disasters. Early engagement of stakeholders is key for success, creating acceptability and ownership of policy reform processes, strategy design (e.g. climate adaptation) and project implementation.



## How? The OECD WGI as a game changer for water governance

### 9. Think outside the water box

#### The OECD WGI explored how to transition to a circular economy and foster a sustainable blue economy

The OECD Principles and their implementation inspired innovative new workstreams on the circular economy and the blue economy in cities and regions, highlighting water as a vector for sustainable economic development.

By reusing water, ensuring more sustainable water flows and recovering materials and energy from wastewater, circular economy practices can help improve environmental quality and reduce sectoral greenhouse gas emissions, while generating business opportunities and enhancing well-being.

Water resilience is key to economic resilience. Water-based economic activities such as fisheries, port activities and blue biotechnology, all under the blue economy umbrella, depend on water security, but the risks of “too much”, “too little” and “too polluted” water – magnified by climate change – increasingly threaten water-related economic activities as well as human health and coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems. According to the OECD Principles, the mismatch between hydrological and administrative boundaries calls for a “city-basin” approach to water resources management, from source to sea, to tackle water risks and unlock the potential of the blue economy through stakeholder engagement, planning, co-ordination, data collection and monitoring.

#### Achievements

##### Shedding light on water for climate and sustainable economic development

More than two-thirds (69%) of WGI members flagged climate resilience and adaptation as a priority for thematic work in 2022-2024 in the 2022 OECD WGI Satisfaction Survey. As a result, the new programme of work will focus on “water governance for climate transition”.

The WGI contributed to the OECD Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions and the OECD project on Cities and Regions for a Blue Economy by sharing surveys to collect information and practices and by providing feedback and input on surveys, scoping notes and reports. The circular and blue economy were discussed at the 10th meeting and 15th meeting of the WGI respectively.



## How? The OECD WGI as a game changer for water governance

### 10. Go global

#### The OECD WGI gathered evidence on water governance in Africa and Asia-Pacific

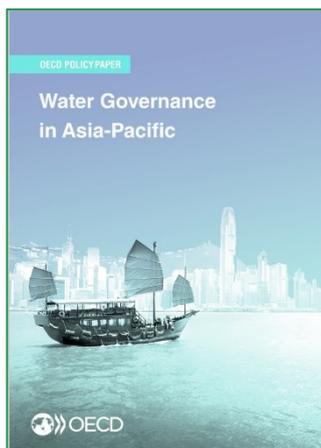
OECD WGI members have consistently pointed to Africa and Asia-Pacific as priority areas to focus on and carried out extensive work on them. As emerging regions, Africa and Asia-Pacific are particularly exposed to the effects of global megatrends such as urbanisation, population growth and climate change, with strong impacts on water quality and quantity.

With a projected additional 750 million inhabitants by 2050, water resources will be under increasing pressure in Asia-Pacific. Building on a survey of 48 countries, OECD WGI work on **Asia-Pacific** (2021) highlights that leveraging water policy instruments (e.g. economic), building capacity and engaging

stakeholders are key to mitigate water risks, enable data collection and analysis, and foster transparency and accountability for effective, efficient and inclusive water governance in the region.

In the past 15 years in Africa, floods and landslides have affected 38 million people and caused an estimated USD 4 billion in damages, magnified by rampant

and often uncontrolled urbanisation. OECD WGI work on **African Cities** (2021) has highlighted that although water policy is driven at national level in most African countries, the last decade has seen increasing leadership of city governments. Mapping and engaging with local stakeholders and getting funding and capacities right are key priorities to improve water governance for water security in African cities.

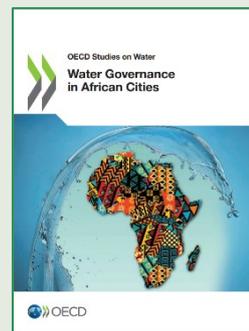


OECD (2021), *Water Governance in Asia-Pacific*, [oe.cd/waterasiapacific](https://www.oecd.org/waterasiapacific)

#### Achievements

##### Water governance in Africa

OECD WGI work on Africa was supported by the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize being awarded to the OECD at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in 2018. The work culminated in 2021 with a report on **Water Governance in African Cities** and a policy dialogue with the city of **Cape Town, South Africa**, a city that came close to “Day Zero” requiring all taps to be shut and citizens to fetch a daily ration of 25 litres of water per person.



OECD (2021), *Water Governance in African Cities*, [oe.cd/il/waterafricanities](https://www.oecd.org/il/waterafricanities)

As a follow up, the OECD and UCLG-Africa set up the **Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security** in 2022, gathering Mayors, city networks and international organisations to elevate the voice and boost the capacity of city leaders.

The Roundtable was launched at the “Cities, Local and Regional Governments Day”, which was co-organised by the OECD and UCLG-Africa at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2022), and ended with 80+ Mayors

and associations of local authorities signing the **Action Plan of Mayors, Local and Regional Governments for Water Security** (also available in **French**). The Action Plan builds on commitments and declarations from past editions of the World Water Forum such as the **Brasilia Multi-stakeholder Pledge** to Implement the OECD Principles on Water Governance.

# WGI members

- Action Against Hunger (ACF)
- African Civil Society Network for Water and Sanitation (ANEW)
- African Development Bank Group (AFDB)
- AgroParisTech
- Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)
- Aqua Publica Europea
- Aquae Foundation
- AquaFed
- Argentina, University of Buenos Aires, Centre for Transdisciplinary Water Studies (CETA - FVET)
- Arup
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Association of Water Supply and Sanitation (AEAS)
- Australia, University of New South Wales (UNSW), Global Water Institute
- Austria, Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism
- Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (AACT)
- Brazil, National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA)
- Butterfly Effect
- Cap-Net UNDP
- Chile, Ministry of Environment
- China, General Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Planning and Design (GIWP)
- Colombia, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
- Deltares
- Dutch Water Authorities (UVW)
- Eau de Paris
- ENGIE
- Estonia, Ministry of Environment
- EurEau
- Expert, Avik Mondal
- Expert, Dirk Van der Stede
- Expert, Ian Barker
- Expert, Peter Gammeltoft
- Finland, Ministry of the Environment
- Flanders Knowledge Center Water (Vlakwa/Vito)
- Forest Trends Association
- France, Ministry of Ecological Transition
- French Development Agency (AFD)
- French Water Partnership (FWP)
- French Water Private Operators Federation (FP2E)
- German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW)
- Germany, University of Dortmund
- Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)
- Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Hungary, Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority
- Hungary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
- IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- International Association for Water Law (AIDA)
- International Groundwater Resources Assessment Center (IGRAC)
- International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO)
- International Office for Water (OiEau)
- International Research Centre for Environment and Development (CIRED)
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- International Water Association (IWA)
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
- International Water Resources Association (IWRA)
- Israeli Water Authority
- Japan Water Forum
- Let's Talk About Water (LTAW)
- Luxembourg, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Environment Department
- Mediterranean Water Institute (IME)
- Netherlands, University of Utrecht
- Nordic Innovation
- Norwegian Environment Agency
- Office of Geological and Mining Research (BRGM)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Peru, National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA)
- Portugal,
- Portuguese Association for Water Distribution and Drainage (APDA)
- Portuguese Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority (ERSAR)
- Romania, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
- Royal HaskoningDHV
- Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)
- Scientific and Technical Association for Water and the Environment (ASTEE)
- Slovenian Water Agency
- South African Water Research Commission (WRC)
- Spain, Jucar River Basin Organisation
- Spain, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Water Directorate
- Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)
- SUEZ
- The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- The Open University
- Transparency International (TI)
- Turkish Water Institute (SUEN)
- UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
- UN-Water
- UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)
- Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLG Africa)
- University of California Davis, Center for Watershed Sciences
- University of Dundee, Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science
- University of Glasgow, Centre for Water Policy, Initiative for Environment and Sustainability (IES)
- University of Lisbon, Civil Engineering Research for Innovation and Sustainability (CERIS)
- University of Sorbonne, Economy Center, France
- United States, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (UAWRRC)
- Veolia
- Water and Energy of Porto, Portugal
- Water Integrity Network (WIN)
- Water Solidarity Program (pS-Eau)
- Water Youth Network (WYN)
- Waterpreneurs
- Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)
- World Bank
- World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- World Water Council



The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** consists of 38 member countries and works to build better policies for better lives. It provides a forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation is at the forefront of efforts to help governments understand and respond to developments and concerns such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. Through the OECD, governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The **OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE)** helps national, regional and local governments unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promote inclusive and sustainable growth in regions and cities, boost local job creation and implement sound tourism policies.

[www.oecd.org/cfe/](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/) | [@OECD\\_local](https://twitter.com/OECD_local) | [CFECities@oecd.org](mailto:CFECities@oecd.org)

The **OECD Water Governance Programme** advises governments at all levels on how to design and implement water reforms. It relies on multi-stakeholder engagement and bottom-up processes to produce policy analysis, policy dialogues, policy standards and a policy forum. Since its creation in 2009, it has produced evidence-based analysis, benchmarks and peer reviews. The key milestones of the Programme include the bottom-up and multi-stakeholder design of the OECD Principles on Water Governance (2015), which provide the 12 must-do's for governments to design and implement effective, efficient and inclusive water policies. The Principles were co-produced within the OECD Water Governance Initiative, an international multi-stakeholder network of members from the public, private and non-for-profit sectors gathering regularly to share good practices in support of better governance in the water sector.

[www.oecd.org/cfe/watergovernanceprogramme.htm](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/watergovernanceprogramme.htm)  
[www.oecd.org/water/regional](http://www.oecd.org/water/regional) | [water.governance@oecd.org](mailto:water.governance@oecd.org)

