



BMZ Water Strategy

Key to implementing Agenda 2030 and the climate agreement

Water and sanitation are key to implementing Agenda 2030 and the Paris climate agreement. The new water strategy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) accounts for the importance of water in these global agreements. In the strategy, BMZ commits to contributing to creating a new dynamic in the sector necessary to reach SDG 6 and other water-related targets. Therefore, the ministry commits to expand its engagement in WASH, wastewater as well as climate sensitive water resources management (WRM). BMZ aims to expand its activities in water security by one third.

The strategy is a binding framework for all measures of German Development Cooperation (GDC) in the water sector, i.e. for the dialogue with partners, development of country strategies, for German implementing agencies as well as for the dialogue with international and multilateral organizations. German Development Cooperation (GDC) in other sectors must be in line with the strategy if it touches water-related questions.

Four objectives

BMZ pursues four objectives in the sector: to contribute to...

- 1) creating access to sanitation and drinking water and to ensure hygiene – in line with the human rights;
- 2) promoting water resources security and supporting the implementation of SDG 6.3. to 6.6.;
- 3) mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- 4) utilising water as a resource for peace and to tackle the causes of forced displacement.

Contributions to tackling the challenges

Human rights to water and sanitation

GDC follows a human rights approach in the water sector. Water and sanitation must be safe, available in sufficient quantity, accessible, affordable and provided in a socially and culturally acceptable manner. The human rights principles of non-discrimination, participation and accountability are to be respected. GDC supports WASH in public places or institutions and puts a new emphasis on hygiene as a field of action.

GDC welcomes the stricter SDG monitoring standards involving water quality tests, the safe management of faeces as well as the requirement that the service must be on premises. However, if resources are limited, priorities will be on serving the large numbers of disadvantaged people, as required by the human rights as well as Agenda 2030's principle to leave no one behind (LNOB), instead of exclusively focusing on services on premises.

Good governance in the sector (e.g. well managed service providers, effective regulation & monitoring, corruption resistant financing systems and well trained staff) as well as sustainable financing of services (socially acceptable tariff systems as the standard, and subsidies dependent on context) are key concerns.

We intend to...

- ...give sanitation a stronger role, e.g. by expanding the BMZ initiative „Sanitation for Millions“, which is to reach 4 million people by 2022, and through networks such as the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance and partnerships, e.g. with the BMGF;
-prioritize the human right to water in resource conflicts;

Water, energy and food security – Nexus

Water, energy and food security are inextricably linked: difficulties in one area can easily affect another, e.g. when power plants shut down for a lack of water for cooling. Agenda 2030 demands an integrated perspective, i.e. not to optimize results for one sector at the cost of another, but to balance trade-offs in an equitable and fair manner and look for synergies. BMZ supports partner countries in addressing access to services and security of supplies with such an integrated Nexus perspective.

Sustainable and efficient water resources management

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a guiding principle for GDC. Promoting good governance, i.e. an effective administration, in WRM is a key precondition for success. This encompasses regulation (e.g. permits and prices), monitoring, strong basin organizations, and participation by stakeholders.

Water demand and supply are to be managed. Demand management needs cooperation specifically with the agriculture and energy sectors. Water prices are an important instrument. Supply management can involve the reuse of treated wastewater, the recharge of groundwater, the rehabilitation of ecosystems or – under certain conditions – desalination.

To prevent the contamination of water resources, expanding wastewater management and the treatment of faecal sludge is another priority. GDC follows a circular economy approach and promotes treating wastewater as a resource, e.g. for energy generation or irrigation. Decentralized solutions and the rehabilitation of facilities are aspects to be considered. Containing the pollution from agriculture, industry and waste is a key challenge.

Engaging all relevant stakeholders is another core challenge. The agriculture and energy sectors should make sustainable water

management a priority of their own. Mitigating water-related risks as limiting factors for industrial production and job creation is another area where GDC supports partner countries.

Demand for goods in industrialized countries influences resource use in exporting countries. Measures to foster sustainable production and consumption need to be oriented upon minimizing environmental cost in terms of water and land resources as well as CO₂ emissions.

We intend to...

- ...focus on supporting infrastructure-related adaptation measures (NDC context);
- ...start dialogue with climate financing facilities with the aim that water is better taken into account in the portfolio;
- ...integrate water into adaptation to climate change within international processes (climate conferences).

Minimizing climate-induced water risks

BMZ supports partner countries in integrating climate aspects in water policies, planning and budgeting processes. It supports National Adaption Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions and their implementation. BMZ focusses on the promotion of i) increasing water storage in ecosystems and infrastructure, ii) tapping of new resources through reuse and desalination, iii) water loss reduction, iv) ecosystem- and non ecosystem-based flood protection. BMZ also recognizes that resilience strategies at household level are of growing importance.

Integrating water-related aspects in climate activities of other sectors is a decisive factor; water and climate sector experts must better cooperate, the water sector experience of GDC must be better made use of.

We intend to...

- ...raise water resources engagement of currently 10 to 20% of financing volume in the water sector, focusing on improved water storage and local water management;
- ...counter water scarcity through reuse, rain water management and desalination;
- ...protect water resources by reinforcing wastewater, waste and faeces management;
- ...reinforce water management in agricultural programs.

Preventing conflict & mitigating causes of forced displacement

GDC supports measures to improve WASH in refugee camps and communities which accommodate refugees. To prevent secondary migration, job creation measures benefitting refugees as well as the local population are integrated into programming.

To prevent conflict, GDC supports water related dialogue and cooperation at national and transboundary level. It intends to expand its engagement in transboundary water management. The development of water treaties or charters, dialogue and arbitration processes are especially fostered.

We intend to...

- ...expand our engagement in transboundary water management to new catchments with severe scarcity and conflicts about water use;
- ...strengthen water security in refugees' regions of origin;
- ...adapt engagement to mitigate causes of forced displacement and to support communities which accommodate refugees

Achieving lasting impact and sustainability

Key building blocks for achieving lasting impact and sustainability by GDC are i) partner orientation; ii) a multi-stakeholder approach; iii) fostering good governance and capable institutions; iv) ensuring sustainable financing; v) achieving structural impacts.

Dealing with sectoral interlinkages

Agenda 2030 makes clear that sectoral interlinkages are highly important and that SDGs will not be reached without taking them into account. Documents on six SDG clusters will assist GDC programming in the water sector, and the respective neighboring sectors: 1) water, education, health and nutrition; 2) water, sustainable economic development, employment and professional education; 3) water, agriculture and energy; 4) water, environment and climate change; 5) water, good governance and urban development; and 6) water, population growth and migration.

Perspectives

BMZ will contribute to a new dynamic in the water sector by i) supporting partner countries; ii) positioning water internationally, including by fostering a new international water architecture to support SDG 6; iii) mobilizing more financial resources, including at national levels, through innovative financing mechanisms, through a better prioritization of water in the EU and by fighting corruption.

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