



6th World Water Forum

Key Messages - Good Governance Core Group

Revised draft – 15 November 2011

- **The “water crisis” the world community faces today is largely a governance crisis.** Securing water for all, especially vulnerable populations, is often not only a question of hydrology (water quantity, quality, supply, demand) and financing, but equally a matter of good governance. Managing water scarcity and water-related risks (floods, natural disasters etc.) requires resilient institutions, collaborative efforts and sound capacity at all ;
- **The real challenge is “implementing” the existing solutions on the ground, tailoring them to local contexts and engaging all stakeholders** (end users, utilities, governments, agencies, regulators...) to join forces and share the risks and tasks; There is no one-size-fits-all answer, but rather a plea for home-grown and place-based policies integrating territorial specificities;
- **Key water governance implementation challenges usually include** the high degree of territorial and institutional fragmentation; lack of capacity of local actors; poor legislative, regulatory, integrity and transparency frameworks; questionable resource allocation; patchy financial management; weak accountability; unclear policy objectives, strategies and monitoring mechanisms; as well as unpredictable investment climate. Such challenges are peculiarly acute because of the intrinsic characteristics of the water sector (local/global issue, property rights, high investment costs, human right, condition for sustainable development, multiple externalities, etc.) which often combines several “governance gaps” as compared to other natural resources areas or infrastructure sectors;
- **Well-functioning institutions underpin increased and more effective investments in water development, hence the importance of the governance-financing nexus.** Poor institutions constitute amplified investment risk and affect the competitiveness of countries in global markets. Sustainable water management (and cost recovery) can only be achieved through stable policy and regulation, institutions with clear responsibilities, coordination of national, local and “outside water box” actors (multi-level governance). Decentralisation has impacts on access to and cost of funding and realistic investment programmes need to be based on long-term strategy, achievable targets, realistic goals, and appropriate governance tools.
- **Concrete and pragmatic tools can help diagnose governance challenges *ex ante* and design adequate responses to address the complexity in the water sector.** Meeting new global challenges requires innovative policies that “do better with less” and allow the emergence of co-ordination and consultation mechanisms at all levels. Some of these tools already exist - they have been developed by various organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO, SIWI, Transparency International, WIN, ISO etc. -, but need to be better applied and used by countries. Some still need to be developed (up to and beyond Marseilles 2012) and strengthened. In addition to national players, global leaders and institutions are also strong vehicles to foster good governance in the water sector;
- **To foster good governance in the water sector, national and local political leaders should :**
 1. Develop **early warning diagnostic tools** to identify key governance issues across *public* and *private* actors involved in water service delivery - including wastewater treatment and investment - and water resources management; Governance “gaps” need to be identified first, before action is taken to set-up new models where needed;

2. Adopt **participation, consultation and co-ordination mechanisms** allowing stakeholders at (sub-) basin/aquifer, local, regional, national and international levels to effectively contribute to decision-making in a coherent, holistic and integrated way, including for what regards groundwater management;
3. **Clarify and strengthen the institutional framework** that underpins water governance at all levels, including regulatory aspects;
4. **Allocate human and financial resources** in line with responsibilities of public authorities;
5. Consider the **governance-financing nexus** to design realistic investment programmes and foster sustainable cost recovery in the water sector;
6. **Enhance IWRM based on national frameworks implemented at different hydrological levels** with a clear vision of water resources uses, evolutions, quantity and quality;
7. Adopt the **principle of river basin management** as the appropriate scale for managing water resources; encourage the adoption of river basin management plans and favour the systematic **water security diagnoses** to better cope with geographic, demographic, and urbanization challenges;
8. **Foster** the adoption of relevant **capacity building and monitoring mechanisms** (including performance indicators) to strengthen and evaluate water policies; E-government could be promoted as an interesting mechanism in this regards;
9. Promote the **implementation of internationally agreed principles** containing provisions on water governance, such as: UN Conventions (i.e. UNECE Helsinki Convention, UNCCD, UNFCCC, etc.), Regional instruments such as the European Water Framework Directive and the SADC Water Act., and other non-binding global instruments such as the 1992 Rio Declaration, the UNGA Resolution on the “Law on Transboundary Aquifers”;
10. **Create, update and harmonise water information systems and databases** for sharing water data across basin, and (local, national and international) administrative frontiers;
11. **Create coalitions at all levels** and engaging with media professionals to raise awareness on the damages of corruption in the water sector;
12. **Map potential corruption risks**, publicise water-related budgets and provide **public information** on water infrastructure plans and investment projects;
13. **Strengthen integrity, transparency** and **accountability** as part of on-going water-related reforms in countries, and continue to specifically address the combined anti-corruption and human right or equity perspectives;