

Together we make water a political priority

**“Strengthening water security
is a key priority in a changing world”**



**WORLD
WATER
COUNCIL**

**WORLD WATER COUNCIL
TRIENNIAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
/ 2023-2025**



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The World Water Council is an international multi-stakeholder platform organisation, the founder and co-organiser of the World Water Forum. The Council's mission is to mobilise action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, by engaging people in debate and challenging conventional thinking. The World Water Council, headquartered in Marseille, France, was created in 1996. It brings together 272 member organisations from more than 56 different countries.

www.worldwatercouncil.org

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Introduction



Since the beginning of the WWC's last term, **our highly inter-connected world has been hit by several disruptive events**, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, military conflicts, droughts and floods, which have had severe impacts on a global scale on our societies. These events are having a **knock-on effect on the global economy and the wellbeing of billions of people** and affect the **geopolitical equilibrium and international cooperation**.

Water management has not been spared from these impacts, which have slowed down and hampered the international community's implementation of the sustainable development agenda, including the targets under the SDG 6 on water, and the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**. As we are moving closer to 2030, we will **need to intensify and accelerate efforts** to reach the set targets.

As we know, **without water, and in particular clean water, there can be no life**. This has been recognized by the **UN Declaration on the Right to Water** and the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**, which has included "Access to Clean Water and Sanitation" into its 17 Goals, as **SDG 6**, in 2015.

Moreover, the scientific community is increasingly stressing the **impact of humanity on planet Earth's ecosystems**, notably warning that a number of "planetary boundaries" have now been reached or even crossed, with possible "tipping points". Among the **nine identified "planetary boundaries"**, one is water. The decade from 2018 to 2028 was declared the **"International Decade for Action for Water"** and more recently the UN have adopted the **International Decade for Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)**, while working on a **Post-2020 Biodiversity framework**.

Finally, in a world that is inhabited by **8 billion human beings** as of November 2022, **water's role in ensuring food, energy and environmental security** is more vital than ever. The interlinkages between these areas must be addressed in a synergistic way, as different aspects of the same central problem. In addition, **water is becoming an ever more critical parameter in the necessary transition** to an equitable, sustainable and climate-resilient development.

For more than two decades, **the World Water Council has strived to be a key voice for water** and to position water at the top of the global political agenda. The WWC's mission is to **mobilize action on critical water issues** at all levels by engaging people in debate and challenging conventional thinking. The **WWC's role will be even more relevant in the future** as the world is heading towards a multi-polar geopolitical configuration, where new important actors will want to **make their perspectives on water heard**.

"Water at the top of the international political agenda is urgent."*

Moreover, every three years, with the active involvement of the WWC, the **World Water Forum becomes the key meeting place and networking platform** for a large number of stakeholders addressing water issues. The World Water Forums are **major milestones in the development of the international water agenda, the strengthening of networks** and bringing new stakeholders together to tackle existing challenges, in addition to **generating political momentum** on water issues.

The **upcoming 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia, in 2024**, will again represent such a key milestone and will **support the acceleration of the international water community's efforts in achieving the 2030 agenda** in the aftermath of the 2023 UN-Water Conference.

**Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey*

Our "raison d'être":

Representing a unique network of stakeholders and platform for debate, the World Water Council has adopted as its "raison d'être" to ensure that water becomes more and more a priority on the global political agenda. To achieve this mission, the WWC works to:

Vision and mission



Bring the international community together

The World Water Council brings together a **broad diversity of stakeholders** representing different sectors, regions, disciplines and professional fields with wide-ranging expertise. Under the umbrella of the WWC, members collaborate to **advance the global water agenda** and make use of their skills, experience and competencies to help solve the **complex water-related challenges** encountered all over the world.

The **active involvement of all members, including youth, to achieve common goals** being one of its key priorities, the WWC calls on them to **develop its strategy and shape its programmes** by participating in its various working bodies.

"We need to reach out to the young generation and encourage their participation."*

**Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey*

Since **water is strongly connected to energy, food, health and education**, the WWC has adopted an inclusive approach, promoting multi-disciplinarity and inter-sectoral cooperation that goes **beyond the "water box"**.

"Water and energy security will be key in the next years."*

Promote political action, advocacy and hydrodiplomacy

Convincing decision-makers in all countries that making **water a political priority** for the sustainable and equitable development of humanity and the planet is of vital importance to the WWC.

*“Political will remain an essential element to get other actors involved. It is strategic to mobilize the international community.”**

The WWC hence aims to **mobilize political actors at all levels** to guarantee the right of **access to water and sanitation for all** and to **promote hydrodiplomacy** so as to contribute to peace and conflict resolution regarding water issues across the world.

To do so the WWC, seeks notably to:

- **build political commitment and trigger action on critical issues**
- **give water more weight in international negotiations**
- **foster hydrodiplomacy as a vital means of dialogue for peace**

**Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey*

Promote water security

To achieve water security, **all stakeholders need to work together to increase water supply** while also fostering water savings. The WWC hence strongly encourages and supports its members in **developing innovative approaches, concrete solutions and responses on the ground**, through improved knowledge, finance and governance.

*“The sustainable management of water resources is one of the most critical political issues we will be facing in the coming decades.”**

The sound, comprehensive and equitable management of water is vital for human beings as well as for nature, including ecosystems and biodiversity.

By promoting innovations in water management, such as non-conventional water resources, water saving or efficiency measures and Nature-based solutions, the WWC seeks to contribute to making water security an attainable goal.

Organize the World Water Forum

By co-organizing every three years the **World Water Forum**, the largest water event at international level and a **key milestone in the global water agenda**, the WWC aims to catalyze collective action for water and **achieve concrete results** on the ground.

The **10th World Water Forum**, taking place in Bali, Indonesia, in 2024, will focus on **Water for shared prosperity**.



Strategic orientations : a guiding framework

With a view to enhance the **World Water Council's substantive and numerous achievements** during its previous mandates, the current Strategic Framework aims to further **focus efforts on a number of thematic areas** where the Council can offer **significant added value during the period 2023-2025**. Many of these efforts will also have direct relevance to the 2030 Agenda and the International Decade for Action on Water.

Moreover, the Council's efforts towards political mobilization remain the primary reason for its existence and **involving key political actors from every level** in each of these topics, as well as upcoming others, is essential.

Finally, as described above the World Water Council's substantive work is supported strongly by its **extensive communications efforts**, the **relationships built with its members**, and **sound administration and financial support**. It is equally important that the roles and responsibilities of each of the Task Forces be later clarified and detailed in order to render their work more efficient and effective.



Key thematic areas

Based on its Strategic Orientations and the outcomes of the Membership survey conducted ahead of its 10th General Assembly in 2022, the WWC proposes to focus efforts on the following key thematic areas during the 2023-2025 mandate, in which it has gained substantial expertise over the last two decades and which it considers to be of critical importance in the near future.

Water security through a strong approach

As water is becoming increasingly unevenly distributed, polluted or a cause of disasters - whether through its excess or its absence -, water security not only implies **ensuring the supply of clean water to all users**, but also **enhancing water savings and efficiency as well as the prevention and mitigation of water-related risks**.

Therefore, **the water community needs to look into all types and categories of solutions** - ranging from non-conventional water resources to water demand-related policies, over to Nature-based Solutions and innovative digital technologies - to achieve water security.

As an example, the WWC is supporting the creation of an **Observatory on Non-Conventional Resources using Renewable Energy Resources**, which are part of the solution in many parts of the world suffering from water scarcity or drought.

Moreover, as our world faces an increasing complexity, notably due to highly sophisticated technologies and new geopolitical developments, the **interlinkages between water and other sectors**, oblige us to appre-



hend water management in a more comprehensive manner and to **step "out of the (water) box"**.

This means only a **systemic management of water across all sectors** can lead to its sustainable use and equitable distribution, and the very much needed water security we are all seeking to achieve.

To improve water security across sectors and society also implies **enhanced cooperation at all levels, between all stakeholders**, be it at **local, regional, basin, national or international level**, including through informal collaboration, international mechanisms and transboundary agreements.

"Since sound water management is the sum of efforts, the involvement of all actors is required to achieve the common good."*

*Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey

Water for health and life



As we all know, water is crucial for all life on Earth, and unsustainable management as well as the evolving climate are hampering its equitable, safe distribution between all water users, including people, agriculture, energy, industry and ecosystems.

The WWC has accomplished **substantial work addressing water-related issues emerging during the Covid-19 pandemic** and other potential epidemics, through its dedicated Task Force specially created during the period of 2020-2021. Building on the significant experience and knowledge acquired on that occasion, the WWC will further work on topics related to **access to clean water and sanitation as well as water-related diseases**, including epidemics, that might emerge in the near future.

Clean and sufficient water, however, is not only critical for humans. It is also the **life support for nature**. All **ecosystems and biodiversity** depend on the availability of a certain amount of water to function and thrive.

As humans, we also depend on **functioning ecosystems, which provide us with a multitude of goods, services and wellbeing**. Their degradation, or destruction, inevitably leads to immense problems for our livelihoods and wellbeing. **Nature-based Solutions** have moreover been identified as **key for humanity** in facing climate change and increasing its climate resilience, notably through reducing water-related disasters.

*“Healthy ecosystems are key to water security.”**

Building on the thorough work already done during the previous mandates on the topic of **Water and Ecological Security**, the WWC hence will pursue efforts related to the **preservation and restoration of water-related ecosystems** as well as to explore further the **role of Nature-based Solutions** in making humanity more resilient to the changing climate.

**Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey*

Financing water solutions

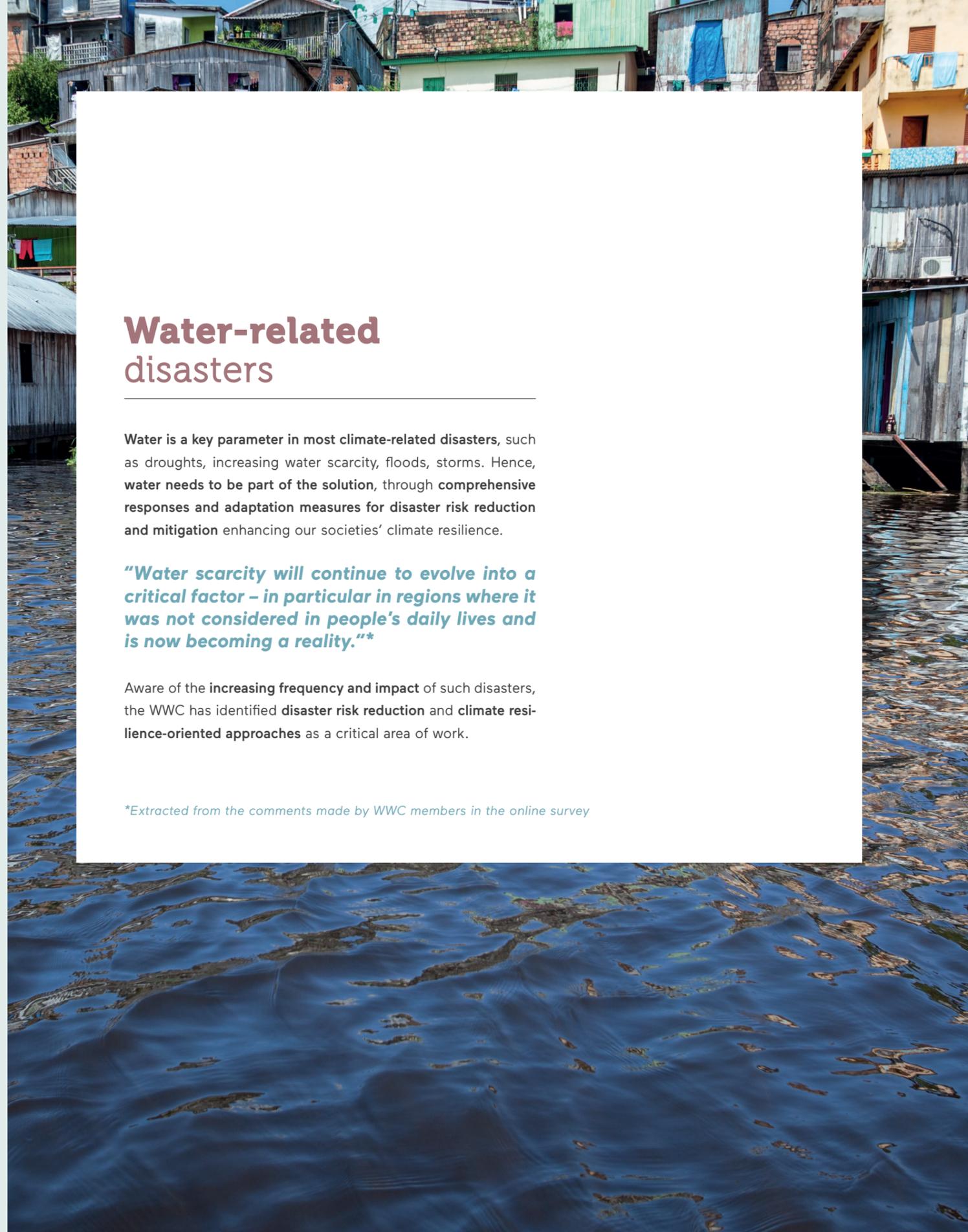
The third key thematic area identified by the WWC is the **indispensable need for financing water** – be it water supply and waste water services, water-related infrastructure, prevention and mitigation of water-related disasters and the sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems.

Millions of people throughout the world still suffer from insufficient access to clean water and sanitation, from unreliable or unavailable water supply, and more and more people are exposed to water-borne diseases and water-related disasters induced by climate evolution. **Rapid urbanization causes additional challenges** for water supply and sanitation in very densely populated areas, meanwhile **leaving rural and natural areas behind**.

The **lack of funding for water** hence remains a **crucial issue to address**, and the WWC has been very active in supporting studies and other activities which explore more **innovative, flexible, sustainable and efficient approaches to water financing** in order to help meet the needs of the poorest part of the world’s population.

*“There is an urgent need to increase the level of financing, especially to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6.”**

The WWC hence proposes to build on its past and existing expertise to further foster work on this topic done by and with its members.



Water-related disasters

Water is a key parameter in most climate-related disasters, such as droughts, increasing water scarcity, floods, storms. Hence, **water needs to be part of the solution**, through **comprehensive responses and adaptation measures for disaster risk reduction and mitigation** enhancing our societies’ climate resilience.

*“Water scarcity will continue to evolve into a critical factor – in particular in regions where it was not considered in people’s daily lives and is now becoming a reality.”**

Aware of the **increasing frequency and impact** of such disasters, the WWC has identified **disaster risk reduction and climate resilience-oriented approaches** as a critical area of work.

**Extracted from the comments made by WWC members in the online survey*

Cross-cutting

In addition to addressing thematic issues, as a multi-stakeholder platform, the WWC gives strong importance to horizontal, cross-cutting activities that allow it to reach out to crucial target audiences and actively involve its own constituency.

activities



Engaging with key political actors

It goes without saying that the **primary reason of existence, or "raison d'être"**, of the WWC is its **strong and proactive engagement with key political actors**, whether at the highest level, such as Heads of State and ministers, or at more local and regional level, notably regional governors, mayors and community leaders.

This is the reason why the WWC is **represented in major international fora and events** organized by the water community. The World Water Council is also leading the organization of the World Water Forum, which is a **key meeting point and networking occasion** for many high-level stakeholders, such as government representatives, delegates from international institutions, leaders from civil society organisations as well as the corporate world.

Strengthening communications and outreach

During its previous mandate, the WWC has pledged to enhance its communications and outreach activities, and while it has achieved significant improvements, it will **further develop relevant actions, notably on social media and networks**, so as to **increase its visibility** within the water community, but also beyond it.

The **high-light of its communication and outreach activities** is of course the preparation of the World Water Forum, which the WWC organizes jointly with a national government every three years.

Involving our Members and supporting their Initiatives

To foster the **active involvement of its members**, which are its **most valuable asset**, the WWC promotes, **supports or organizes numerous activities**, such as studies, webinars, workshops, etc., via its **five colleges** and the **Task Forces** set up by its Board members.

Another opportunity for members to take part in the WWC's activities is to **contribute to shaping the World Water Forums' events** through their **commitment in the kick-off and stakeholder consultation meetings** and the preparation of the WWFs' thematic and political segments.

World Water Forums

Every three years, the **World Water Forum** becomes the **key meeting place for stakeholders involved in water issues**. These Forums represent **major milestones in the development and expansion of networks** and bring new stakeholders together to tackle existing and emerging challenges, in addition to **generating political momentum on urgent water issues**.

The next and **10th World Water Forum** will take place in **Bali, Indonesia, from 18 to 24 May 2024**. It will be dedicated to **“Water for shared prosperity”**, looking into water **challenges through an Asian lens** – in particular delivering **water to the poor, disaster risk reduction and water for food** –, while also building on the results of other events from across the world, notably the 2023 UN-Water Conference.



The key milestones in the preparatory process leading up to the **10th World Water** are the following:

- *the Kick-off and 1st Stakeholder consultation meeting, 15-16 February 2023*
- *the 2nd Stakeholder consultation meeting in autumn 2023*

WWC members and stakeholders are strongly encouraged to take part in this preparatory process, either by getting involved in one or each of the following segments:

- *the thematical segment*
- *the political segment*

Indeed, each of these stages provides an **opportunity to promote permanent dialogue with relevant stakeholders, creating communities of practice and catalyzing collective action towards common objectives**, both inside and outside the “water box”.

The **preparation, unfolding, and follow-up of each Forum are an ongoing activity** of the Secretariat that mobilizes all staff and requires the active participation of and **constant interaction with government representatives of the host country**.

Perspectives

This Triennial Strategic Framework 2023-2025 is meant to be a **guide for the future work of the World Water Council members**, gathered in working groups, task-forces, programmes and member initiatives. It is therefore **designed to be flexible, to be adapted to upcoming events and challenges**.

It is also a **concrete reference to the thematic priorities** of the World Water Council, and a base for its mission of international advocacy for water.

The World Water Council members are invited to **make this Strategic Framework their own and propose improvements and solutions** to further contribute to useful innovation and progress for **the future of our planet and the right to access to water and sanitation for all**.



WORLD
WATER
COUNCIL

Espace Gaymard
2-4 Place d'Arvieux
13002 Marseille - France

Phone : +33 (0)4 91 99 41 00

Fax : +33 (0)4 91 99 41 01

wwc@worldwatercouncil.org

worldwatercouncil.org

facebook.com/worldwatercouncil 

twitter.com/wwatercouncil 

linkedin.com/company/world-water-council 