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EU water initiative

Water for life

Clean drinking water and good sanitation facilities are largely taken for granted in the European Union. However, much of the developing world is not so fortunate. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in September 2002, the EU launched a

water initiative

The EU water initiative is designed as a catalyst and a foundation on which future action can be built to contribute to meeting the millennium development goals (MDGs) for drinking water and sanitation, within the context of an integrated approach to water resources management.

The EU water initiative:

the challenge



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Key facts of the global water situation

- Over 1.1 billion people worldwide have no access to safe drinking water.
- Over 2.4 billion people worldwide have no access to improved sanitation.
- More than five million people die each year from water-related diseases that are mostly preventable.
- Two billion people are affected by water shortages in over 40 countries.

This global water crisis threatens lives, sustainable development and even peace and security. Population growth and rapid urbanisation, changing lifestyles and economic development have led to increasing pressure on water resources everywhere. Without effective action, this situation will get worse.



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Addressing the water challenge is key to reducing poverty

- Water is central to sustainable development. **Freshwater is a finite and precious resource** essential for sustaining life and human development, for undertaking economically productive activity, and for the environment.
- No strategy for the reduction of poverty can ignore **people's vital requirements for water**, and sustainable development policies must address the need for equitable and sustainable management of water resources in the interests of society as a whole.
- A regular supply of drinking water is one of the most basic humanitarian needs. Inadequate water supplies are both a cause and an effect of poverty. Invariably those without adequate and affordable water supplies are the poorest in society. The effects of inadequate water supply — disease, time and energy expended in daily collection, etc. — exacerbate the poverty trap.



Water: a cross-sectoral challenge: health, livelihoods, economic development, peace and security

- Water provision, **sanitation and health** are closely interrelated. One of the primary causes of contamination of water is the inadequate or improper disposal of human (and animal) excreta. This often leads to a cycle of infection and contamination which remains one of the leading causes of illness and death in the developing world. Adequate supplies of clean water and sanitation could reduce cases of some diseases by as much as 75 % and could hence significantly contribute to reducing **infant mortality** in the developing world. A much greater emphasis on sanitation is required in order to gain ground in this often-neglected area. This implies improving hygienic behaviour and environmental sanitation alongside water supply as critical ingredients of programmes to promote public health.
- **The challenge of urbanisation:** Access to water and sanitation facilities in urban settlements is constrained by the inadequacy of the existing systems and managing structures to face a growing demand for freshwater and sanitation services. New settlers, often under an illegal status, are not served at all and considerable capital investment and innovative solutions are required to meet their needs.
- **The challenge in rural areas:** It is estimated that girls and women in Africa and Asia walk around six kilometres daily to collect water, diverting them from education and economic activity. The poorest and most vulnerable rural dwellers are particularly sensitive to lack of water of acceptable quality.
- In most developing countries rural economic growth is critical for overall economic growth. **Food production** remains the main activity, on which much of the economic growth, diversification and development relies, requiring the **sustainable management of water resources**, and improved water use efficiency particularly in agriculture, the largest user of freshwater.

The need for integrated water resources management at all levels: natural river, lake or groundwater basin

- Water management must ensure a balance between human water needs and those of the environment, as the health of ecosystems is key to human health, to sustainable development, and to poverty reduction and vice-versa. Improvements in efficiency and sustainability of water use, and river basin management, should contribute to the goals to halt or reverse the current loss of natural resources and biodiversity by 2015.
- Integrated water resources management also provides a framework to promote peace and security in transboundary water basins. As such the EU also confirms its support for initiatives that promote regional cooperation and economic development in transboundary water courses.
- Integrated water resources management with strong stakeholder participation, a pro-poor emphasis, and gender sensitivity is a key approach to ensure the integration of water services within an overall water management framework.
- With the recent reform of EU water policy and the new water framework directive, the EU has one of the most advanced water policies in the world and can provide significant experience and expertise.

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The EU water initiative:

international commitments



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Magnitude of the task

- Achieving the target on drinking water requires that, every day until 2015, an extra 120 000 people should receive drinking water.
- Achieving this target on sanitation requires that, every day until 2015, an extra 240 000 people should be provided with sanitation.

Millennium development goals and WSSD targets on water

- Halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.
- Halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.
- Develop integrated water resources management and efficiency plans by 2005.



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The EU water initiative:

general objectives and approach

Objectives

- Reinforce political commitment to action and raise the profile of water and sanitation issues in the context of poverty reduction efforts.
- Promote better water governance arrangements. This includes encouraging the public and private sectors and local stakeholders to work together better. It also includes efforts to strengthen institutional capacity at regional, national and local levels, by providing expertise and promoting good practice, improved partnerships for sharing technology, information, research and knowledge and awareness raising.
- Improve coordination and cooperation in the way that water-related interventions are developed and implemented. This includes a shift away from stand-alone projects towards sector-wide approaches. It also includes establishing multi-stakeholder processes to reinforce partnerships for action and promoting south-south collaboration and cooperation.
- Encourage regional and sub-regional cooperation on water management issues, using the integrated water resources management approach on a basin scale.
- Catalyse additional funding, through the development of new, flexible and innovative funding mechanisms to attract new partners, and through supporting the establishment of the enabling environment for increased investment.



A partnership approach

The water-related MDGs and WSSD targets cannot be achieved by conventional means. They require a great mobilisation of partners ranging from governments, IFIs and other donors, to civil society organisations, water users and the water industry, both in Europe and in partner countries. The EU water initiative is therefore designed to:

- bring, through a multi-stakeholder process, the Community and Member States together with the civil society and financial institutions, as well as the expertise and investment potential of the EU's water industry;
- generate scientific knowledge and translate it into innovation;
- raise public awareness on water issues.

Key principles

- **Ownership** of partner countries: political commitment from partners; prioritisation of water and sanitation in poverty reduction strategy papers; effective water governance, involving all stakeholders; national and regional water policies
- **Innovation:** leverage effect (optimal use of official development aid); new partnerships between communities, NGOs, public and private sector



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A modular approach

Based upon regional and cross-cutting components

A dedicated organisation

- The multi-stakeholder forum, open to all, with an advisory function
- The EUWI Steering Group, driver of the EUWI, with a coordination function
- The working groups, in charge of implementation at regional level



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The EU water initiative:

existing regional components

Africa

Signature of Africa–EU strategic partnership on water affairs and sanitation at WSSD (September 2002)

- Water supply and sanitation — Lead EU Member State: Denmark (2002–04); lead African partner: African Ministerial Council on Water — Lesotho representative
- Integrated water resources management including transboundary issues — Lead EU Member State: France; lead African partner: African Ministerial Council on Water — Tanzania representative

Eastern Europe — Caucasus — Central Asia (EECCA)

Launch of strategic partnership on water for sustainable development at WSSD (September 2002)

Lead EU Member State (until October 2004): Denmark; lead EECCA partner: Russia

- Water supply and sanitation, including financing of water infrastructure
- Integrated water resources management, including transboundary river basin management





Mediterranean

Lead EU Member State: Greece

- Water supply and sanitation
- Integrated water resources management, including transboundary river basin management
- Water, food and environmental interaction
- Non-conventional water resources

Latin America

Lead EU Member States: Spain, Portugal; lead partner country: Mexico

- Water supply and sanitation
- Integrated water resources management, including transboundary river basin management
- Water and agriculture
- Prevention and mitigation of situations resulting from extreme events

The EU water initiative:

existing cross-cutting components

Finance

- More resources needed to achieve the water-related MDGs — Need for a financial strategy
- Need to increase ODA as a catalyst
- Develop innovative financial mechanisms to leverage additional financial resources

Lead country: United Kingdom

Research

- Need for underpinning the EUWI with indispensable scientific knowledge
- Strengthen coordination, coherence and complementarity of EU and developing countries' efforts in water research

Lead institution: European Commission (Research DG)





Monitoring/reporting and communication — information system

- Need to monitor and report progress on EUWT's contribution to the MDGs and WSSD targets
- Need to monitor and report progress towards implementation of the EUWT's set objectives
- Need to integrate monitoring and reporting into a proper information system

Lead country information system:

Monitoring/reporting: Italy and European Commission

The EU water initiative: *information sources*

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