



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS | SDG 6

Protection and sustainable management of water resources

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Without water, there is no life. Yet around the world 2.2 billion people lack access to good drinking water, and 4.2 billion have no access to hygienic sanitation facilities. Water and the disposal of excreta are crucially important for human health. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can bring improvements in this area.

We drink water, wash the dishes with water, use it to clean our clothes and homes, and it is essential for agriculture and industry. Drinking water is a crucial and precious commodity. The United Nations formulated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 specifically to protect water. Access to drinking water varies greatly from one region to another. Whereas in Europe 92 per cent of people have [reliable access to sources of drinking water](#), the equivalent figure in Africa is just 29 per cent.

The same applies to access to sanitation. One person in eleven has no choice but to relieve themselves outdoors, and almost one in three has neither water, a washbasin or toilet at home. These precarious sanitary conditions play a part in the spread of diseases and epidemics. Access to sanitary facilities and water is not only important for health, it is also a prerequisite for a prosperous economy. In its World Water Development Report 2021, the United Nations warns that water scarcity could trigger cascading negative impacts. Despite this certainty, the international community is not drawing the necessary conclusions and is investing too little in water sector infrastructure, according to criticism from UNESCO.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) can play a vital role in speeding up investment, supplying drinking water to more people and managing resources more sustainably, especially when key stakeholders in government, business and civil society seek solutions together.

An MSP can be initiated by companies, associations, academic organisations, civil society organisations and public sector institutions. The added value is obtained from the partners pooling core competencies, experience and resources and thereby achieving greater impact in a particular field.



Partnerships2030 – the MSP platform

On behalf of the [German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development \(BMZ\)](#), the Partnerships2030 project promotes multistakeholder partnerships and thus contributes to implementing the 2030 Agenda. BMZ now promotes around 80 MSPs through the [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit \(GIZ\) GmbH](#) and [Engagement Global – bengo](#). GIZ implements the Partnerships2030 project, supports MSPs and stakeholders in many different ways, creates networks to link them to partners and provides information.



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The MSP methodology

MSPs are a form of cooperation in which stakeholders from at least three sectors among civil society, the public sector, the private sector and academia join forces as equals in order to contribute to the common good. An MSP can generate a transformative impact through cooperation geared to the long term.

Standards for good water stewardship

The Alliance for Water Stewardship advocates collaboration between water users and aims to contribute towards the sustainable management of resources by establishing its own standard. It is an example of how MSPs can play a part in the achievement of SDG 6.

When essential resources such as water run scarce, the risk of conflict is liable to rise, particularly if certain stakeholders consider themselves at a disadvantage. The **Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)** wants to prevent this type of conflict from arising in the first place by initiating a process among all interested parties, who jointly agree on a sustainable form of water management, commit themselves to adhering to the International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard) and implement the resultant measures.

AWS was formed in 2014 by a number of industrial enterprises, state institutions and environmental organisations such as WWF. It developed the AWS Standard in a four-year process involving various stakeholders. To date it is the only framework for actors in the water sector that is fully compliant with the principles laid down by ISEAL, the global alliance for credible standards systems. The AWS Standard requires users and stakeholders to gather water-related data, commit to water stewardship and pursue a relevant plan, and to regularly evaluate and disclose their results and share them with other stakeholders.

The AWS Standard provides major water users with a globally applicable framework to help them understand their own water use and its impacts and to work collaboratively with others to make their management of water more sustainable and conserve resources to a greater extent.

Non-governmental organisations, businesses and state institutions all work together in the Alliance for Water Stewardship. Its members in Germany include Aldi, BASF, Boehringer Ingelheim, EDEKA, Gerresheimer AG, Lidl,



Veolia, WWF, GIZ and the German development finance institution KfW DEG.

Everyone who uses the Alliance's standards and tools contributes to better water stewardship, a more sustainable water balance, good water quality, a healthy status for important water-related areas and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

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