



Water security for all



Who we are

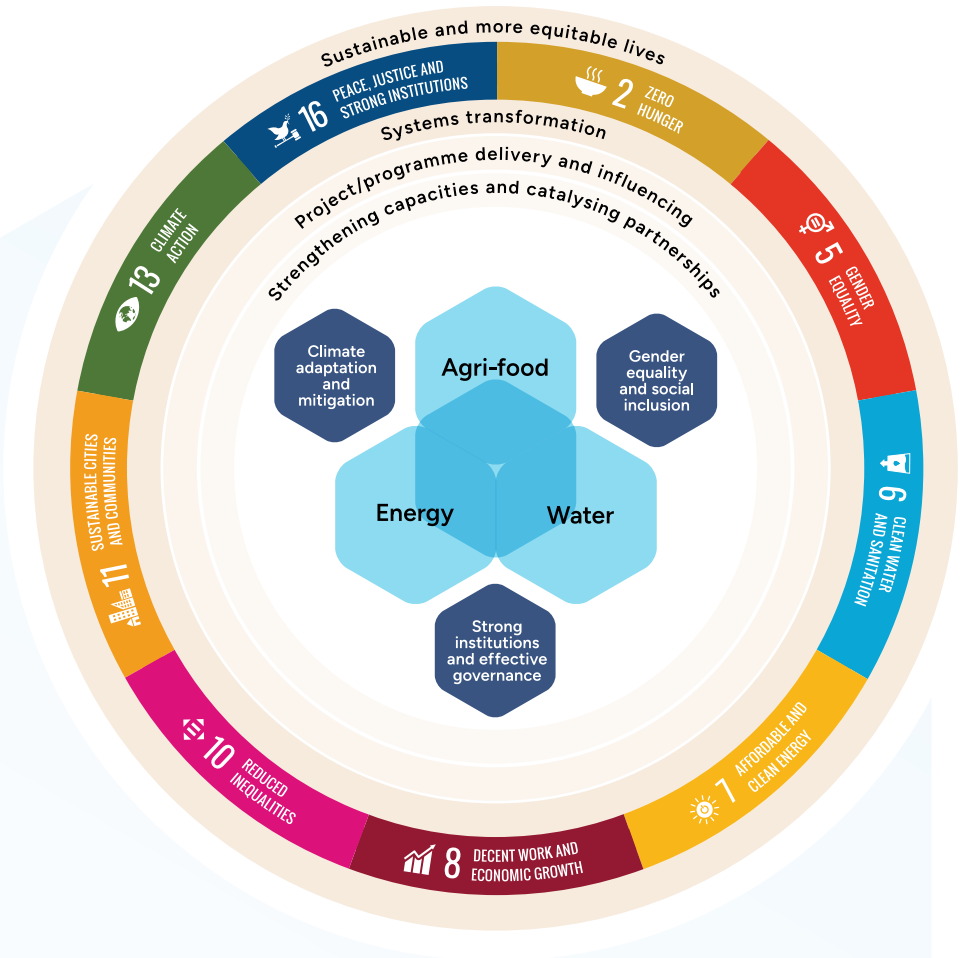
SNV is a global development partner, deeply rooted in the countries where we operate. We are driven by a vision of a better world: A world where across every society, all people live with dignity and have equitable opportunities to thrive sustainably.

To make this vision a reality, we need transformations in vital agri-food, energy, and water systems. SNV contributes by strengthening capacities and catalysing partnerships in these sectors. We help strengthen institutions and effective governance, reduce gender inequalities and barriers to social inclusion, and enable adaptation and mitigation to the climate and biodiversity crises.

Building on 60 years of experience we support our partners with our technical and process expertise and methodological rigour. We do this in more than 20 countries in Africa and Asia with a team of approximately 1,600 colleagues. By being adaptable and tailoring our approaches to these different contexts, we can contribute to impact at scale, resulting in more equitable lives for all.



Our vision for impact



Our goal, through our work across the water sector, is to contribute to the water security of all people and the natural world. Guided by SDG 6, our focus on water seeks improvements in its use and management, prevention of pollution, mitigation of risks and hazards, and development of water resource security.



Water is not only an ecological and economic crisis. For SNV, it is also a crisis of governance and equity.

Why a focus on water

Access to water, sanitation, and a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment are human rights, presently under threat.

Demand for water resources has increased eightfold [over the past century](#), due to economic development, population growth, and rising living standards. Climate change, ecosystem degradation, and pollution are changing the water cycle and modifying freshwater availability at global and local levels.

Already, 2.3 billion people live in [water-stressed countries](#). Over the past five decades, [disasters involving water](#) have contributed to 70% of all fatalities linked to natural calamities. Nearly half the population – 3.5 billion people – lack access to [safely managed sanitation](#) services. Only 56% of the world's [domestic wastewater](#) was safely treated in 2020 before being released into water bodies, and 38% of all municipal solid waste is

uncontrolled, severely affecting biodiversity and our environment.

Climate change, growing water demands, and increasing pollution are compelling countries worldwide to adapt their water management, both locally and nationally, and often transboundary. Their challenge is to balance effective and financially viable strategies with ecologically sound and equitable goals.

The adaptation and transformation of the water sector are colossal, long-term efforts of high urgency. Without improved performance and equity in all areas of the broader water sector, these will become barriers to all other avenues for development.

For SNV, water security is not only an ecological and economic crisis but also a crisis of governance and equity. Hence, we consider four dimensions of water security in our work.

How can we contribute

SNV takes a holistic and inclusive approach to water.

We consider nine strategies for transforming water systems that apply to all sub-sectors: (i) water resource management; (ii) irrigation; (iii) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); and (iv) the urban water cycle.

1. Driving professionalisation and performance of national and sub-national stakeholders in the water sector.
2. Deepening understanding of inequality and processes of marginalisation in the water sector, and building more inclusive practices.
3. Strengthening the institutional fabric of water governance and management at all levels.
4. Facilitating a better understanding of the nexuses in water governance, particularly with our two other sectors, Energy and Agriculture.

5. Enhancing sectoral accountability and improving demand management beyond water stewardship.

6. Promoting and supporting a greater focus on water storage (natural and built) and water quality.

7. Promoting and supporting better maintenance systems, the continuous functionality of services, and grey and green infrastructure.

8. Increasing financial health of water management and services, moving towards sustainable cost recovery and increased investment.

9. Facilitating and endorsing collective informed choice around water investment decisions.

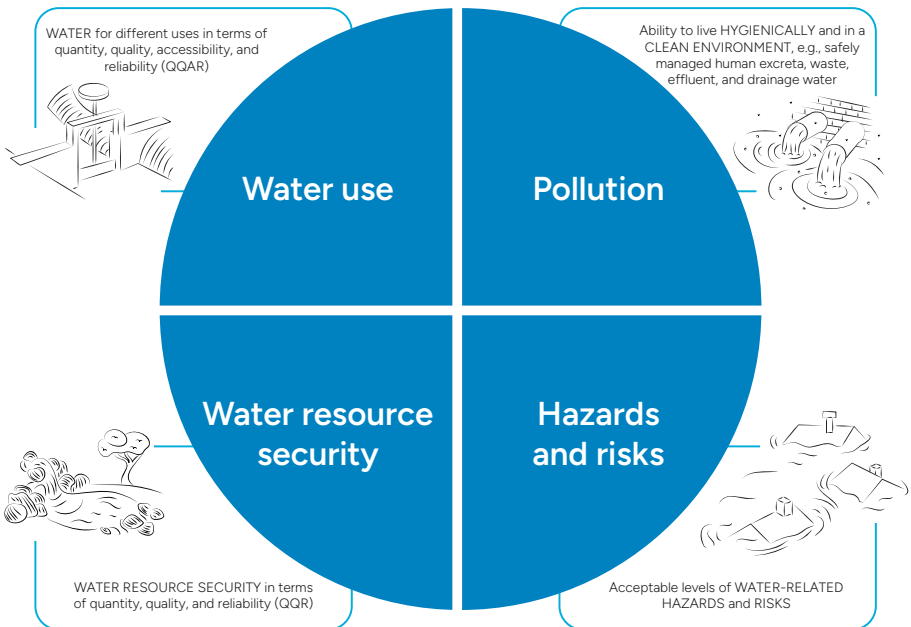


Figure 1. The four dimensions of water security that SNV works on

Our approaches

Equitable Water Resource Management (EWRM)

Water resource management is central to balancing water needs for different uses, conserving the resource base, and managing floods and droughts. For many years, the emphasis has been on Integrated Water Resource Management, but integration is not an end in itself. SNV sees integration as a means and emphasises the need for equitable water resource management between people, generations, and nature.

To move towards more equitable water resource management, SNV strengthens multi-level water governance, improves the availability and use of global and local data, calls for greater accountability for water use, extraction, and pollution, and introduces improved financing and investment models for water resource management, nature-based solutions, and works towards improved maintenance models of grey and green investments.



Climate Resilient Rural WASH Services (CRRWASH)

The relatively small climate footprint and low political weight of rural populations appear to have contributed to a decline in the political prioritisation of rural water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) over the past decade. Yet, rural WASH is essential for healthy populations and sustained economic development in rural areas.

SNV's approach is area-wide, supporting local governments in realising the human rights to water (supply) and sanitation, improving the climate resilience of services, and reducing vulnerabilities of rural populations to water-related risks. We strengthen WASH governance, rural service providers' performance, and the quality of infrastructure construction and rehabilitation. By strengthening consumer supply chains and financing, we develop rural WASH markets and support evidence-based behavioural change.



Our approaches



Sustainable Urban Water Cycles (SUWC)

Next to climate change, urbanisation is a dominant global trend and creates enormous pressure for water and waste services. Urbanisation alters the natural water cycle towards an 'urban water cycle,' increasing the risk of floods, droughts, and heat stress in cities.

SNV uses a holistic approach to improve water security in urban contexts, integrating water supply, sanitation, solid waste, grey water, and drainage. We work with stakeholders to strengthen governance and regulation, services, finance and investment, effective behavioural change interventions, treatment, circularity, and city-wide flood and drought management. For SNV, achieving city-wide water security requires increased attention and investment in low-income areas.

Sustainable Inclusive Irrigation (SII)

Irrigation is a core climate change adaptation strategy for countries and will continue to expand as part of the world's renewed commitment to achieving food security. The challenge lies in ensuring this does not become climate adaptation for some at the expense of other groups or the sustainability of the resource. For SNV, sustainable and inclusive irrigation development concerns user practices, their productive and domestic water needs, and those of surrounding populations and the environment.

SNV's Sustainable Inclusive Irrigation approach is a holistic multi-scale approach for groundwater and surface water irrigation applied at different scales: Large, medium, small-scale irrigation, and individual extraction. It addresses irrigation governance, the performance of scheme management, services for farmers for field-level irrigation, and the quality and transparent construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure.





Impact
that matters



For more information contact:
SNV Water Team
water@snv.org

snv.org/sector/water

© 2024 - SNV.
Photo credits: SNV.