



# SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report

## Viet Nam

September 30, 2023

# Stakeholder Consultation Report

## Executive Summary

The Department of Water Resources Management organized an in-person and online meeting with relevant agencies to consult and get opinions on the Draft Survey on Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Vietnam (SDG 6.5.1 Program).

Continuing the process of evaluating Sustainable Development Goal 6.5.1 in 2020 on assessing the level of integrated water resources management, the Department of Water Resources Management - the agency assigned as the national focal point for this goal has reviewed and updated the Draft Survey on Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Vietnam.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are universal goals designed to address the major challenges facing humanity, leading to a better and sustainable future for everyone by 2030.

On September 26, 2023, the consultation meeting on Integrated Water Resources Management in Vietnam was organized at the Head office of Department of Water Resources Management. At the meeting, participants also listened to the representative of the Department of Water Resources Management present the contents in the survey survey of SDG 6.5.1 on the level of integrated management of Vietnam's water resources based on the assessment method developed by UNEP, including 32 questions divided into 04 main components: (1) Environment for implementing Integrated Water Resources Management: current status of policies, laws and plans to support integrated water resources management that affect central and local levels; (2) Institutions and participation: Current status of implementation of institutions implementing Integrated Water Resources Management that affects water resources at central and local levels; (3) Management tools: current status of management tools to support the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management at central and local levels; and (4) Finance: financial status for water resources development and management at central and local levels.

Based on the presented content, participants attending the Consultation meeting contributed ideas to improve the contents for the SDG 6.5.1 survey conducted by the Department of Water Resources Management.

The indicator 6.5.1 score is calculated by averaging all question scores in each section, rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, The indicator 6.5.1 score of Vietnam is **56**.

Section	Average Scores (all values rounded to nearest whole number)
Section 1 Enabling environment	69
Section 2 Institutions and participation	56

<b>Section</b>	<b>Average Scores</b> (all values rounded to nearest whole number)
Section 3 Management instruments	50
Section 4 Financing	50
<b>Indicator 6.5.1 score</b> <b>= Degree of IWRM* implementation (0-</b>	<b>56</b>

## 1. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 1: 'Enabling Environment'**

### *a. Current status*

At the Central level, a system of Laws includes Law on Water resources 2012, Planning Law, Irrigation Law and other related laws; system of by-law documents (including: Decrees, circulars, decisions...), National water resources planning, integrated planning of inter-provincial river basins... to implement integrated water resources management.

At the Local level, according to data reported by 63 provinces and cities, in the period of 2013-2018, 52/63 provinces have issued water resources planning. After the Law on Planning takes effect, the provincial water resources planning will be changed to a plan for exploiting, using, protecting water resources, preventing and overcoming consequences and harmful effects caused by water. In addition, there have been 445 documents guiding the implementation of the Law on Water Resources and regulations in Decrees and Decisions of the Prime Minister, focusing on the following contents: regulations on water resources management at the local level, water source protection corridor, limiting groundwater exploitation, list of inter-provincial and intra-provincial water sources...

### *b. Challenges*

The Law on Water resources 2012 stipulates the scope, management objectives and assignment of responsibilities between ministries, sectors and levels for water resources management and water exploitation and use activities. However, in recent times, with the adjustment, amendment, supplementation, and replacement of many laws directly related to water resources, leading to interference, overlap, and uncertainty between the provisions of the Law on Water Resources 2012 and a number of related laws, causing confusion, difficulties, problems, not being consistent, effective, and wasting resources of both the State and water users during Law implementation.

In principle, to ensure efficiency and consistency in the state management, the Law on Water Resources 2012 also has a clear distinction between water resources management and management of water exploitation and use activities.

Other ministries and sectors are responsible for managing water exploitation and use activities according to their functions and tasks of managing exploitation structures and water use activities of their respective sectors when exploiting water resources, specifically:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development manages irrigation works, including: lakes, dams, pumping stations, culverts, irrigation canals, water supply for irrigation, agricultural production and agricultural hygiene rural areas, clean water; livestock farming activities...;

- Ministry of Industry and Trade is responsible for managing hydroelectric reservoirs, thermal power plants, water exploitation and use for industrial production;

- The Ministry of Construction manages exploitation works for urban water supply and waste management, urban sanitation...

However, the management and operation of irrigation works and systems according to the Law on Irrigation in many cases has unified the concept of irrigation systems including water sources and rivers, leading to the principle of The above mentioned items are not guaranteed, causing overlap in the implementation process, unclear management objects, leading to many ministries, sectors and localities managing the same object or unclear responsibilities in the management of water exploitation structures, water users and water resources management.

*c. Way forward:*

Orientations to perfect institutions and policies to implement integrated water resources management are

- To concretize IWRM principles in the draft Law on Water Resources (amended) through the clear assignment and decentralization of responsibilities for water resource management with the exploitation of water resources as well as amendments and supplements of policies on regulation, distribution of water resources, and restoration of degraded and polluted water sources;

- To supplement regulations on water resources management associated with other resources (including: forests, land, minerals,...) to ensure water source security, towards sustainable exploitation of water resources.

- To continue to improve specific regulations and mechanisms (Circulars, Technical Instructions...) guiding contents related to IWRM in related laws.

- To enhance the capacity of provinces in developing provincial-level legal documents on integrated water resources management;

- To strengthen close and synchronous coordination between central and local water resources management agencies, relevant agencies and sectors at the provincial level.

## **2. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 2: 'Institutions and Participation'**

*a. Current Status:*

At the central level, the Department of Water Resources Management under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has a clear mandate in directing the implementation of IWRM. DWRM's leadership capacity to implement the IWRM plan has been significantly improved compared to the 2020 period, demonstrated by better advising the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in developing documents amending the Law on Water Resources and other by-law documents, national water resources planning and integrated inter-provincial river basin planning. In addition, they also organize many workshops to guide, propagate, and disseminate relevant regulations and policies on IWRM and regularly monitor the implementation of WRM at the local level.

At the local level, currently, there is only one river basin organization in the whole country. On May 8, 2020, the Government issued Decision No. 619/QĐ-TTg on regulating the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Vietnam Mekong River Basin Committee (VNMC), which includes the Sesan - Srepok river basin and is under the management of VNMC. This can be a new step and a basis for developing RBO for other river basins.

#### b. Challenges

The mechanisms for private sector participation in water resources development have been issued and implemented since the 1st decade of the 21st Century such as hydropower development and drinking water supply. In practice, private sector participation in investment and management of hydropower development, drinking water supply, and small irrigation systems is more popular. Mobilizing the private sector participation in water resources development, management, and use has been promoted widely by the government. However, private participation has not reached its potential due to unclear mechanisms, low awareness of social responsibilities, and financial limitations.

#### c. Way forward

- Developing and encouraging policies to mobilize the participation of the private sector in water resources development, protection, and management and using as the vulnerable sector to weather and climate change;
- Raising public awareness on IWRM and water security;
- Encouraging private sector to participate in activities related to IWRM;
- Developing consultation dialogues with private sectors legal documents on water resources, river basin development, and water exploitation and use projects;
- Applying online tools such as websites, social networks to collect feedbacks from private sectors;
- Establishing specific regulations on the order to implement consultation process with the public participation.

### 3. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 3: 'Management Instruments'**

#### *a. Current status*

The current status of management tools to support the implementation of integrated water resources management at the central and local levels includes water resources monitoring systems, activities of water exploitation and use, managing water use effectively (through activities to regulate and distribute water resources such as: regulating the operating procedure of reservoirs, weirs, water resource exploitation structures, coordinating activities of water resources exploitation and use in river basins), controlling polluted water sources, managing water-related ecosystems and biodiversity, applying management tools to minimize the impact of water-related disasters, applying tools for managing basins and aquifers, sharing information and data on transboundary water sources,...

At the central level, The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment manages and protects water resources, controls water pollution, promulgates and controls the implementation of technical regulations on the water resources, and is the national focal point agency on international treaties on water resources and national water resources.

At the local level, currently, responsibility for water resources management is divided between ministries and localities. In localities, there is a water resources management agency under the Department of Natural Resources and Environment at the local level.

#### *b. Challenges*

There is no comprehensive, accurate data on national water resources because a national water resources monitoring system has not been conducted. Basic investigation, protection of water resources, prevention of pollution, degradation, and depletion of water resources have not achieved the set goals. The national water resources monitoring system has been implemented slowly and has not met the requirements for water resources management. Besides, the database on water resources is still scattered and does not meet the requirements of assessing quantity, quality and forecasting water resources development at both central and local levels.

Regulations on information and database system in the Law on Water Resources 2012 are also relatively vague and scattered, not clarifying the responsibilities of all relevant parties in developing, connecting, and completing in improvement of the information and database system to support the policy making process and protect water resources.

In addition, a database system on water exploitation and use activities is also one of the basic requirements for water resources management. To date, there have been more than 2,400 water exploitation and use projects that have been licensed and regularly or periodically managed and monitored. However, the rate of irrigation works exploiting and using water for agricultural purposes - which is one of the main types of water exploitation and use - is currently very low. (The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has only

issued nearly 40 licenses for irrigation reservoir projects out of a total of more than 7,000 reservoirs and 10 of thousands of culverts, dams, and pumping stations). This leads to many difficulties in managing water exploitation and use activities as well as distributing and regulating water sources.

*b. Way forward*

- The monitoring system needs to regularly update licenses, fees for granting rights to exploit and use water resources, and use the correct type of license so that businesses can link new licenses and old licenses as well as information related to the process of complying with license regulations of businesses on the license database system. Reviewing and fully supplementing additional information in the water resources license system are necessary.

- The monitoring system needs to upgrade continuously the software to meet the adjusted content in Circular 17/2021/TT-BTNMT, the license database software for common use across the country.

- Developing the National water resources monitoring system: hydro-meteorological and water resources monitoring stations, stations using remote sensing technology to monitor water level changes, water user; sensor system to monitor riverbank erosion and flooding; early warning system for droughts, floods...

- Building and piloting a decision-making support system for regulating and distributing water resources in several river basins.

**4. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 4: 'Financing'**

*a. Current status*

The Law on Water Resources 2012 stipulates the financial content of water resources in Chapter VI including 02 articles (Article 64 and Article 65) of which Article 65 regulates a number of cases of water resources exploitation and use must pay water resources tax and other taxes according to tax laws.

Fees and charges according to the law on fees and charges must also be paid for granting the right to exploit water resources. This regulation aims to consider water as a national asset, ensure the interests of the state as the representative of the owner of water resources, and raise awareness and responsibility of organizations and individuals in the exploitation and use of water resources in order to use water economically and effectively.

However, state budget reinvestment in water resources management activities at both the central and local levels has not been prioritized, focused, and not commensurate with the value that water resources bring. Therefore, although the Law on Water Resources 2012 stipulates many activities to implement water resources management, due to lack of funding for implementation, the achieved results are not effective.

*b. Challenges*

The assignment of state management tasks on water resources and the allocation of resources are still inadequate and unbalanced between sectors. In particular, funding investment for basic investigation and assessment activities of water resources, water resources protection activities, prevention and control of degradation and depletion of water resources is not commensurate with the responsibilities and requirements to support management as well as to deploy and enforce the provisions of the Law on Water Resources 2012.

Finance for water is still limited, currently only collected from natural resources taxes, granting exploitation rights, and fees for appraisal and licensing of water resources. Besides, water prices have not been calculated correctly and attracted private sector investment in this field.

Water use is still not economical. In fact, revenue from the above revenue categories only reaches nearly 10 trillion VND/year, including natural resources tax of about 8.5 trillion VND/year, and water resource exploitation rights fees of about 1.5 trillion VND/year. Nevertheless, in some provinces, the contribution rate to provincial GRDP from this source is quite good, accounting for nearly 6% in Lai Chau, nearly 3% in Kon Tum and Son La.

Revenue from water supply services is still low. The current price of rural domestic water is very low-priced, ranging from 5,000-6,000 VND/m<sup>3</sup>. In particular, the situation of not collecting water prices for agriculture, considering water as a "godsend" causes great loss and waste, using water inefficiently, eliminating internal resources and lacking motivation for development to socialize water supply for agriculture.

Besides, the legal system still lacks mechanisms and policies to attract the participation of the private sector. There are no transparent and clear mechanisms and policies to create favorable and attractive conditions to encourage social resources (financial, human, technological resources) of economic sectors and organizations in implementing activities within the scope of responsibility of ministries, sectors and localities such as water resources monitoring activities, appraisal of public services, activities to protect river beds, banks, and beaches, activities to restore landscape, and develop aquatic resources. This leads to the implementation of policies and laws being slow, ineffective, inconsistent and puts great pressure on the State budget.

*c. Orientation:*

- Encouraging social resources (financial, human, technological resources) of economic sectors and socio-political organizations to participate in implementing activities within the scope of responsibility of the Ministry, sectors and localities such as water resource monitoring activities, water resource restoration, water resource protection...

- Raising the awareness of people/water users in complying with payment of water resource tax and other taxes in accordance with tax laws;

- Strengthening mechanisms and policies to attract maximum socialized resources to participate in water resource management and restoration activities...
- Mobilizing international funding sources, promoting participation of the private sectors;
- Correctly estimating water value;
- Reinvesting in water;
- Increasing effective and economical use of water to avoid water loss;
- Focusing on mobilizing other resources to develop water resource infrastructure such as private budget;

## 5. **Next steps**

In the IWRM process, developing laws, policies and strategies formulated is only a preliminary outcome. Vietnam is facing with major challenges in implementing and improving these, which need strong political will and continuing efforts of all stakeholders. In order to promote the implementation of policies, it is necessary to review and revise the overlaps and inconsistencies of current policies. In addition, the amendment of water management policies must be in the direction of ensuring water security, sustainable water resource management with multiple goals to ensure sustainable water supply, natural resources and environmental protection, and achieve the goals of socio-economic development and adapt to climate change, towards water governance on the basis of digital technology.

Therefore, The draft Law on Water Resources (amended) aims to concretize the principles of IWRM through clearly assigning and decentralizing responsibilities for water resources management with water resources exploitation as well as amending and supplementing policies on water economy, regulation and distribution of water sources, restoration of degraded and polluted water sources; supplementing regulations on management of water resources associated with other resources (including: forests, land, minerals, ...), preventing and overcoming harmful effects caused by water to ensure water source security, towards sustainable exploitation of water resources.

- Regulating, distributing water resources equally among industries, localities, water users based on the integrated planning of inter-provincial river basins to ensure the economic development and social security.

- By 2025, 100% of enormous and vital river basins shall publish integrated plannings of inter-provincial river basins.

- Ensuring water resources for domestic uses with high rate of clean water to achieve 95% - 100% of urban population and 65% of rural one having access to clean water.

- Basically controlling 90% of activities of water exploitation and utilization; improving effectiveness of water exploitation and use, minimizing the rate of water loss in activities of water supply to 10%.

- Effectively controlling drought and water shortage in dry season in river basins, areas that are difficult to assess water resources, especially in the South Central Region, Central Highlands, Mekong River Delta, remote areas and islands.

- Protecting, controlling, preventing and minimizing the increase in degradation, depletion and pollution of water resources; by 2030, activities of wastewater collection and treatments shall be qualified based on technical standards and regulations before discharging into environment; the quality of wastewater treatment reaches at least 30% of total water localities in level-II urban areas and 10% of total wastewater in level-V urban areas.

- Improving, recovering degraded, depleted and polluted water sources; focusing on river sections flowing through residence areas, water sources which are important in domestic water supply, activities of socio-economic development, especially on the main streams of Red River, Ca River, Vu Gia –Thu Bon Rivers and Ba River.

- Completing delineation and announcement of areas that restrict activities of groundwater exploitation; ponds, lakes and lagoons must not be backfilled; preventing land subsidence caused by groundwater exploitation.

- Completing the publication and announcement of protection corridors for water resources; ensuring flow, preventing landslides, riverbank erosion and minimizing harmful effects caused by water.

- Protecting water resources related to activities of religion, beliefs, high values of biodiversity, cultural preservation;

- Improving the assurance level of national water security in countries to ensure the effective water security in Southeast Asia.

- Governing the water field on the basis of digital technology, achieving requirements of integrated management of water resources by river basins and adaptation to climate change.

## 6. Annexes

### Annex 1: List of participants

#### Workshop participants

Name	Organisation	Position	Email address
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## Annex 2: Agenda

Time allocation	Workshop items
<i>Facilitator: Department of Water Resources Management (DWRM)</i>	
8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:10	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <i>DWRM</i>
9:10 – 9:20	<b>Introduction to objectives and content of the Workshop</b> <i>DWRM</i>
9:20 – 10:00	<b>Overview of the Sustainable Development Goals in Integrated Water Resources Management and the SDG 6 Support Program</b> <i>DWRM</i> <i>Q&amp;A</i>
10:00 – 10:15	<b>Coffee break</b>
10:15 – 11:00	<b>Main components in the Survey on Degree of integrated water resources management (IWRM) implementation</b> <i>DWRM</i> <i>Q&amp;A</i>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Plenary discussion:</b> <b>Survey on the Enabling environment</b>
11:30 – 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30-14:00	<b>Plenary discussion:</b> <b>Survey on Institutions and participation</b>
14:00 – 14:30	<b>Plenary discussion:</b> <b>Survey on Management instruments</b>
14:30 – 15:00	<b>Plenary discussion:</b> <b>Survey on Financing</b>

Time allocation	Workshop items
15:00 – 15:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15:15 – 15:45	<b>Feedback from participants</b>
15:45 – 16:25	<b>Summary</b> Q&A
16:25 – 16:30	<b>Closing</b>

### Annex 3: Facilitator’s Comments

The Consultation Meeting on Integrated Water Resources Management in Viet Nam has received attention of agencies related to water resources. During the meeting organization, Department of Water Resources Management sent invitation letters to each agency and received many registrations to attend. DWRM hopes that, in the next round, DWRM will expand the meeting scale to increase the number of participants, so that, the survey on Degree of integrated water resources management (IWRM) implementation has more feedbacks and comments from experts, participants and representatives of relevant agencies, stakeholders.

### Annex 4: Photo of the Consultation meeting.

