



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# ENHANCING GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

Groundwater provides a large portion of the increasing demand for water in all sectors. It also constitutes the main source of water in water-scarce regions, acts as a buffer against climatic extremes, and sustains crucial ecosystems services. The objective of the project was to embed a process of improved groundwater governance, to halt the current trend of resource depletion and degradation, and lead to positive environmental, social and economic benefits. In so doing, the project aimed to accelerate the adoption of improved groundwater resource governance, from resource management institutions, to millions of individual users.



## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project succeeded in greatly raising groundwater stakeholders' and policy-makers' awareness of the threats facing groundwater resources and aquifers, at a global level. Discussions and consultations, and the development of thematic papers and global and regional diagnostics produced a very rich knowledge base on groundwater governance dimension, culminating in the agreement of a Shared Global Vision for groundwater governance. A Global Framework for Action was also developed, containing the most relevant issues that needed addressing. These outputs served to enhance the knowledge of groundwater stakeholders, and increase their capacities. In addition, several countries followed up on the project recommendations, and are currently revising their groundwater policies, reforming the related institutional set-ups, and strengthening governance capacities, particularly in Latin America; while FAO has been implementing the Global Framework for Action in pilot aquifers in three countries since January 2015. Improved management at the aquifer level was also promoted through the sharing of lessons from other comparable groundwater management cases, helping to substantially reduce the time required to identify optimal solutions.

## KEY FACTS

**Contribution**  
USD1 750 000

**Duration**  
January 2011 - December 2016

**Resource Partners**  
Global Environment Facility (GEF)

**Partners**  
United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP), International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), World Bank (WB) and Global Environment Facility (GEF)

**Beneficiaries**  
Municipalities, rural development agencies, water resources managers, environmental regulators, planners, diverse groups of rural and urban communities that depend upon groundwater

## IMPACT

The development of a groundwater governance diagnostic, and establishment of a relevant framework helped to achieve sound groundwater governance, leading to the effective management and conservation of resources. Improved groundwater governance contributes to increasing water and food security, and boosting sustainable development and climate change adaptation, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals concerning clean water and sanitation, climate action, food security and land conservation.

## ACTIVITIES

- Case studies and thematic papers reviewing the global situation of groundwater governance produced; as well as a synthesis report on the main findings of these studies and papers.
- Five regional consultations, and a private sector round table organized for around 500 participants from over 90 countries, for the development of a Global Groundwater Diagnostic report.
- Shared Global Vision for groundwater governance defined; as well as a Global Framework for Action to achieve the Vision.
- Project presented at more than 25 events and forums of international dimension, to raise awareness and sensitize groundwater stakeholders and policy-makers.
- Final evaluation of the project outputs completed.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### Project Code

GEF ID: 3726

FAO: GCP/GLO/277/GEF

### Project Title

Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Action

### Contact

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