

Bridging the water divides:

Addressing missed opportunities to capitalize on investments in water for agriculture, livelihoods and domestic use

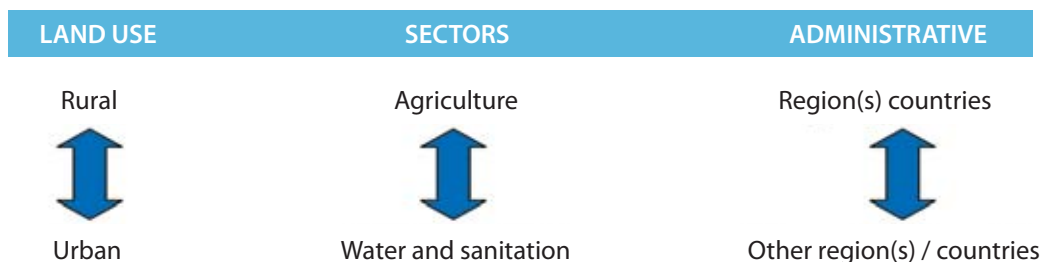
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The water divides

Water is fluid and without boundaries, but we have divided it through culture, politics and governance. Countries, towns and villages compete with each other for the larger share of available water. Planners are constantly in conflict over water allocation between domestic and agricultural uses in a game where one sector's gain is another's loss. By looking at water from a sectoral rather than a holistic perspective, we miss valuable opportunities to maximize on the linkages between water for food, agriculture and domestic use.

WATER DIVIDES



Challenges

The divisions in the water world throw up challenges that water managers, planners and professionals have been grappling with for ages. Limited water resources mean increased competition between different users vying for their share of water. But it is not just the volume of available water that leads to conflicts. In an increasingly populated world, the struggle for water quality is also emerging, whether it is for drinking and domestic uses or for agriculture. Governance is a challenge when decisions have to be made on water allocation between competing uses and regions, between different sectors and institutions.

Bridging the divides

What can research do to bridge the divides, harmonize allocations and increase water productivity? IWMI's research in recent years has shown many positive examples of dealing with the conflict of interests in the water world. With a little ingenuity and innovativeness, substantial synergies may be found among the water divides that may be used for providing solutions to what appear to be conflicting requirements of various water sub-sectors and uses. The result is a win-win situation for all concerned.

Contact:

Dr. Pay Drechsel
p.drechsel@cgiar.org

Dr. Barbara van Koppen
b.vankoppen@cgiar.org

www.iwmi.org

Dialogue and dissemination



IWMI has been a pioneer in facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms, learning alliances and dialogue across the rural-urban divide, across various institutional and political boundaries and across the different water sectors. These platforms not only bridge divides but also facilitate linkages between research and policy-makers, thus leading to mutual learning. They have helped IWMI disseminate its innovative studies on safe wastewater irrigation and link the domestic, sanitation and agricultural sectors.

for details, visit

www.iwmi.cgiar.org/WASPA

www.iwmi.cgiar.org/southasia/ruaf/about.html

www.iwmi.cgiar.org/africa/West/projects/RUAFII-CFF.htm

Making an asset out of wastewater, which means making it an available and safe resource for agricultural use, is reducing much pressure on limited water resources not only in dry areas but also in the urban-rural interface. Wastewater has linkages with the health and sanitation sectors as well as the agricultural and environmental sectors. IWMI's long-standing research on options to enhance water productivity further support this effort. Apart from working with farmers on safer irrigation practices, IWMI's research looks at decision support for authorities by modeling upstream and downstream impacts of urban growth and predicting the effects of different public investment scenarios on water demand, wastewater generation and agriculture in rapidly urbanizing countries.

for details, visit www.iwmi.cgiar.org/health/wastew

http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/Publications/Water_Policy_Briefs/PDF/wpb17.pdf

To foster synergies between domestic and productive water uses, IWMI and its partners are generating and synthesizing knowledge on "multiple-use water services" (MUS) for rural and peri-urban water users into models, guidelines, and tools. A key element of these MUS activities is to build capacity across project partners - including policymakers from the domestic and productive water sectors. In this way, MUS has the potential to bring out and leverage the fundamental unity in the diversity of the different water sectors, uses and governance.

for details, visit www.musproject.net

www.iwmi.cgiar.org/Publications/Water_Policy_Briefs/PDF/wpb18.pdf

