



Water

Water Supply Sanitation Water Resources

Policy document



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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe
AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
AWF	African Water Facility
BMaA	Austrian Foreign Ministry (before 2006, Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten)
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
CAP-NET	Network for Capacity Building in Integrated Water Resources Management (UNDP)
CEECs/NIS	Central and Eastern European Countries/New Independent States
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (UN)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EUWI	EU Water Initiative
EUWF	EU Water Facility
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
GWP	Global Water Partnership
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre, Delft
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIDG	Private Infrastructure Development Group
POVNET	Network on Poverty Reduction (OECD-DAC)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program (World Bank)





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Summary

For years water supply and sanitation¹ have constituted a special-focus area of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). The present policy document, that is to replace the water sector policy of 2001, describes the self-understanding of the ADC water sector against the backdrop of the recent developments in international development cooperation, in particular the trend towards harmonization and integration into coordinated sector programmes. For the first time, the new policy also covers Austrian development cooperation with Eastern Europe. It is supposed to serve as a framework not just for programming the bilateral water sector programme but also, in a more general sense, for all interventions financed by Austrian public funds in relation to the water sector, and as a reference basis for the sector dialogue both in the partner countries and at the international level.

The new water policy

Scope of application

Given the manifold role played by water – in human consumption, as a prerequisite for hygiene, as a production means and component of the eco-systems – water is a key factor for socio-economic development as well as for the preservation of natural resources. The water sector is therefore a complex system with manifold interfaces and interplay. It is for these reasons that water is a public good whose availability and protection has to do with public concerns and basic rights. ADC gives priority to ensuring basic water supply for all and supports a legal approach according to which it is a human right to have affordable access to water in sufficient quantity and quality.

Significance and complexity of the water sector

Water as a public good and human right

Worldwide there are more than a billion people without access to safe drinking water supply. The Millennium Development Goal to reduce by half the proportion of unserved people cannot be reached without a substantial reinforcement of efforts. To an even much larger degree this applies to sanitation, an area which has been strongly neglected in the past. Moreover, due to the growing use of water resources, the management and protection of water resources are becoming ever more important. In the focal region of South Eastern Europe the challenges lie mainly in the areas of operation, maintenance and renovation of the existing infrastructure as well as in bringing these countries closer to EU standards.

Challenges and need for action in the water sector

Special desiderata in sanitation

ADC sees it as its function to promote an autonomous and sustainable development of the water sector in the partner countries so that all user groups have adequate and affordable access to drinking water supply and basic sanitation; the availability of adequate water resources for all types of uses is ensured; and sound resources management contributes to the conservation of the natural resources and eco-systems and helps to avoid conflicts. To achieve this ADC orients itself on objectives agreed on the international level and on the national goals and development strategies of the partner countries.

Development goals for the water sector

These development objectives can only be reached if, in addition to the necessary infrastructure the institutional, organizational and financial conditions for its sustainable operation and maintenance can be created. In addition, measures are required to raise awareness and to promote hygiene; to set up an adequate legal framework; to improve capacities and the educational level; and to increase knowledge (through applied research and innovation). A single donor can neither cope with all and these aspects of sector development, nor is it possible to implement such a comprehensive sectoral approach from the outside, without the ownership of the partner country. For these reasons extensive cooperation and

Need for an integrated sectoral approach

¹ The concept “sanitation” refers to “facilities, hygiene principles and practices related to the safe collection, reuse and/or disposal of human excreta and domestic wastewater”: Definition based on IRC 2003 – Sanitation Policies [17].



Implications of the Paris Declaration principles for the water sector	coordination with other donors (harmonisation) on the one hand and integration into national strategies, programmes and structures (alignment) on the other are imperative if success is not to be measured only on the basis of short-term implementation efficiency but in terms of a holistic and sustainable effect of development.
Fundamental policy principles	This policy paper provides a number of fundamental principles, statements and quality criteria that have long-term validity and can also be applied to projects/programmes that do not stem from bilateral water sector programming (e.g., NGO co-financing projects). These principles include orientation towards poverty reduction and basic needs; a holistic, systemic view of the water sector; sustainability; adaptation to the socio-cultural and socio-economic context; participation and demand orientation; as well as the integrated consideration of cross-cutting issues (in particular environment, gender equality, good governance and conflict prevention).
Instruments and levels of cooperation	ADC's involvement in the water sector relies on the interplay of various instruments and intervention levels and attaches importance to the coherence of activities from the local implementation level to international networking. The main form of intervention is the long-term participation in coordinated sectoral programs in a few priority countries and regions, taking into account the international division of labour agreements. The conception and integration of ADC's intervention takes place on the highest possible level, according to the development level of the institutions, capacities and coordination mechanisms in the partner country, including
Participation in SWAps	participation in SWAps and joint financing arrangements (e.g., sectoral budget support, basket funding). Where this is not possible yet, programmes that have been closely coordinated with the government and with other donors shall be supported –
Project aid	programmes that refer to contiguous regions of the partner country or to specific aspects of the water sector. Projects shall be used as a complementary instrument in a strategic way, especially to test innovative or cross-sectoral approaches (pilot projects) or for targeted support of non-state actors.
International level	On the international level, ADC is seeking to create long-term strategic partnerships with other donors and international organizations, actively participating in selected international initiatives and programmes (such as the EU Water Initiative and EUWF ² , AMCOW ³ , WSP ⁴ , ICPDR ⁵ , AWF ⁶ , EU-TF ⁷ , PIDG ⁸) and in the international sector dialogue. In connection with ADC's regional cooperation programmes in particular regional networks, forums and thematic programmes will be supported.
Building strategic partnerships	
Regional programmes	
Focal area of work: Water supply and sanitation in rural areas	What has been ADC's focal working area for many years – water supply and sanitation in rural areas – will basically be retained. Priority is given to the support of programmes that contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, with Austria's contribution focusing on reaching the goals in the rural areas. Proceeding from this focus, ADC participates in the programming processes in the partner country and orients itself after this country's priorities. In keeping with an integrated approach, this includes greater involvement in the area of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).
IWRM	

² EU Water Facility.
³ African Minister's Council on Water.
⁴ Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank.
⁵ International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.
⁶ African Water Facility.
⁷ EU Africa Trust Fund on Infrastructure.
⁸ Private Infrastructure Development Group.



ADC will give particular attention to areas that have been often neglected in the water sector and/or in which ADC has specific experience or comparative advantages. These include sanitation; the development of specific solutions for small rural agglomerations; the creation of suitable financing instruments for water sector investments; and, for the cooperation with Eastern Europe, the promotion of adapted technologies. Thus, in selected thematic “niches” a consistent commitment will range from identifying the need for innovation and research and the testing of innovative concepts and technologies on a pilot scale to the systematic introduction of innovation in the development of the water sector (scaling up).	Areas of particular attention
	Promotion of innovation
For systematic, results-oriented management of the ADC water sector programmes, and for better quantitative documentation of their effectiveness, ADC strives to strengthen its monitoring activities. In the focal countries this means specifically support of the creation of national systems for reliable tracking of programme progress and impact monitoring.	Monitoring
Finally, ADC is committed to ensuring the coherence of the development cooperation activities and promoting trans-sectoral cooperation. At the end of this policy paper there is thus a description of the interfaces and the possible synergies with other sectors and intervention types.	Coherence Interfaces with other sectors



1. Introduction

Joint framework for development cooperation including cooperation with Eastern Europe

The water sector policy from 2001 will, as a result of new requirements, be replaced by the present more succinct policy document, which is to be complemented by issue papers on specific thematic or strategic aspects. Through the inclusion of cooperation with Eastern Europe there will, for the first time, be a joint framework for Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC) in the water sector. This can also be seen as a contribution to bringing together and harmonizing both working areas.

New International Requirements and Developments

The content of the policy has been thoroughly reworked and updated. The changed international environment and requirements, in particular the development towards harmonization and alignment to national and internationally coordinated programmes were to be interpreted and integrated as for their effects on the ADC water sector. At the same time the recommendations from the external sector evaluation of 2003 [22] were to be taken into account.

A policy resulting from a comprehensive discussion and coordination process

The new policy paper is the result of an extensive discussion process. In addition to close coordination between ADC's technical advisers, the Austrian Development Agency (theme experts and desk officers) and the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs an international workshop⁹ was held that allowed for coordination with other donor organizations.

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Policy

A framework for programming and for the sector dialogue

The policy for the water sector is to be understood as a normative framework for interventions in the water sector financed by means of Austrian public funds. It serves to guide and support systematic programming processes in the context of bilateral aid programmes and projects and forms a reference basis for the sector dialogue in partner countries and at the international level.

Further development of the ADC water sector

In the mid-term it is to be expected that increased expenditures in official development assistance (ODA) to which Austria has committed itself in the context of the EU¹⁰, will also result in an increase in the means available for the water sector, one of ADC's focus sectors. One goal of the policy is thus also to give direction for the further development and expansion of the activities in the water sector.

Coherence

Since development cooperation through classical projects is becoming ever less common, the new policy should also contribute to making different aid modalities coherent. These include:

Scope of the policy

- Sector programmes coordinated with other donors and aligned with the strategies of the partner country;
- Multilateral and delegated cooperation (UN, EU, IFIs, etc.);
- Interventions assigned to other sectors but having an effect in the water sector (e.g., rural development, energy, health, education/ science, private sector development);
- Activities initiated by civil society (NGO co-financing projects);
- Humanitarian interventions and crisis management (emergency aid and reconstruction projects), as soon as these have lasting effects (which is generally the case for water sector interventions);

⁹ Water Sector Policy Workshop, Vienna June 15-16 2006, with high-ranking international participants.

¹⁰ See footnote 18 for obligations resulting from the Barcelona Commitments.

- Interventions initiated by other ministries (e.g., education and research programmes) to the extent that they affect the water sector.

Since uniform program planning is not possible for these different lines of action, it is all the more important to provide criteria and guidelines for their appraisal and coordination.

Criteria and guidelines for all aid modalities

1.2 Delineation of the “Water Sector”

The term “water sector”, as used in the present policy paper, refers to both water supply / sanitation and water resources management (including the provision of water for other uses and resource protection).

Comprehensive definition of the “water sector”

ADC’s thematic focal area is water supply and sanitation in rural areas. The present policy is, however, not limited to this working focus, since an integrated approach is being pursued and in the context of national sector programmes a strict delineation of the working area does not make sense and cannot be sustained. Moreover, the policy should also provide criteria for interventions that were conceived in other sectors (e.g., rural development) or were initiated by other actors (e.g., NGOs) and thus do not necessarily comply with the thematic focus of the bilateral water sector programme.

Focal area water supply and sanitation, but as part of an integrated approach

2. The Water Sector in the Context of Development

2.1 Water and Development

Thanks to the manifold role of water – in human consumption, as a prerequisite for hygiene, means of production and integral part of the eco-systems – the water sector is closely linked to many other development sectors, in particular to the realms of health, food security and energy. The water sector also plays a significant role with regard to the overarching goals and cross-cutting issues of development cooperation – poverty reduction, gender, conflict prevention, good governance, environmental protection – as well as in emergency humanitarian aid and in disaster prevention.

A pivotal role of water in many areas of development

Water is thus a key factor for socio-economic development as well as for the preservation of natural resources. This is reflected in the high priority given to the water sector in the development strategies of the partner countries. As a limited resource water can become both, a limiting factor and a trigger of conflicts, a development that is bound to become more explosive with population growth and climate change.

Water as a key factor of sustainable development

Investments in the water sector thus contribute significantly to reaching overarching development goals, which have, for instance, been defined in the Austrian Development Cooperation Act and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and can be described as highly efficient thanks to a wide range of – direct or indirect – positive effects [33]. At least indirectly almost all the Millennium Development Goals are linked to either the improvement of water supply and sanitary conditions or to the sound management of water resources¹¹.

Most Millennium Development Goals are linked to water sector issues

¹¹ Cf. [25]; extensive accounts of the links between water/sanitation and the individual MDGs can be found in [8], [29] und [31].



2.2 Challenges Facing the Water Sector

Drinking water supply as an MDG target	More than a billion people worldwide are without access to safe drinking water supply. From a global perspective, the prospects are good for reaching the relevant MDG target (Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe ¹² drinking water by 2015, in relation to the basis year 1990) [29]. This, however, does not apply for Africa south of the Sahara (coverage in 2006: ca. 61 % ¹³) and generally also not for the rural areas (coverage globally: 75 %, in Africa only 48 %).
Greatest challenges in rural areas of Africa	
Races against population growth and against the deterioration of the existing infrastructure	A special challenge is the race against population growth. In Africa, an additional 150 million people were supplied with drinking water in the period 1990-2002, but the number of people without water supply only declined by 10 million. In addition there is a second race – the race against the deterioration of the existing infrastructure. Many of the investments made in past decades have proven to be non-sustainable, since the creation of efficient operation and maintenance structures often failed. The MDG targets should thus not be seen as a one-off target line to be reached, but rather as an indicator for a level of development to be sustainably achieved.
Sanitation neglected	In all likelihood the MDG target of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation will not be reached. In spite of its great importance for a sustainable improvement of public health sanitation always tends to be overshadowed by drinking water supply – in the eyes of the governments and of the population, but also in the actions of international donors. Should the sanitation MDG target still be reached, efforts would have to be increased by 90% in comparison to the past 15 years [17]. Moreover basic sanitation as defined for the MDG target does not necessarily imply an acceptable solution from the point of view of environmental and resource protection, since waste water from sewage systems is often discharged into watercourses without treatment.
Lacking investments	International investments in the water sector have stagnated since the mid-1990s ¹⁴ . Hopes for massive investments of the private sector did not materialize, since the latter finds unfavourable conditions in the water sector and in particular in rural areas (high, long-term investments with little prospects for profits). The water sector is thus essentially dependent on public investments. An additional challenge results from the need to provide all groups of the population access to drinking water supply, even those in periurban and rural areas who are difficult to supply and who because of poverty are hardly able to pay for the maintenance of the infrastructure.
Affordable access for poor population groups	
Challenges in South Eastern Europe	In the ADC focal region of South-Eastern Europe, public drinking water supply facilities are generally available, at least in towns and larger villages. Since the political turnaround and the concomitant collapse of centralist administrative structures, the belligerent conflicts of the 1990s and the resulting economic breakdown, lacking maintenance of the facilities and the absence of maintenance investments led to big problems in the previously functioning water supply systems. Along with the challenges of restoring this infrastructure and creating efficient operating structures, big investments are needed in sewage systems and to come closer to European (EU) standards.

¹² Sources of “safe” drinking water are defined as “improved” sources such as household connections, public standpipes, boreholes, protected wells, protected springs and rainwater collection; Unprotected wells and springs, surface water bodies and water sources that are not constantly available (water vendors, tanker trucks) are not considered as safe; cf. I. Unicef/WHO 2004 [29].

¹³ Source: UN Statistics Division (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp) based on data from WHO/Unicef, extrapolated for 2006.

¹⁴ According to statistics of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (www.oecd.org/dac/idsonline).

In general pressure on water resources is rising. The main factors include population growth, pollution, industrialization, land use change in the catchment areas (deforestation, erosion, intensification of cultivation) and the likely effects of climate change. Particularly affected are the semi-arid and arid regions on the one hand and areas with rapid economic and demographic development on the other.

Growing pressure on water resources

Competent institutions and legal instruments are required to cope with comprehensive planning and regulation of resource use. The internationally accepted approach for meeting the cited challenges is Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM¹⁵). This approach, however, faces great difficulties in the practical implementation [28]. There are only few countries that have yet submitted Integrated Water Resources Management plans as had been scheduled in the “Johannesburg Plan of Implementation” from 2002 to target year 2005. A special challenge lies in trans-boundary river basins where conflicts over water assume an international dimension.

IWRM

Trans-boundary water conflicts

2.3 Water as a Public Good and Human Right

Water is a public good. It is in the public interest to ensure an adequate basic supply and to protect and manage water resources, for a number of reasons:

- The supply of drinking water being one of the essential services of general interest basic access assumes the status of a human right (see below).
- Safe water supply and hygiene play a crucial role in preventive health care and in containing communicable diseases.
- In many regions water is a factor of food security by way of irrigated agriculture.
- Water must be protected as a resource. Competing demands for usage must be coordinated and the conservation of vital eco-systems is to be ensured.

Water in the public interest

ADC supports a human rights approach according to which access to affordable water supply in sufficient quantity and quality is considered a human right¹⁶. In practical implementation this means that special efforts must be made to secure basic supply for everyone, to give this task priority and to ensure that the affordability of access to water for all parts of the population is an indispensable criterion.

Human right to water

Water should thus not just be seen as an economic good. Water supply affects basic rights and interests more than other infrastructural interventions. The planning, regulation and financing of the water sector are thus all tasks of public import.

A “special” infrastructure sector

2.4 Complexity of Water Sector

It is decisive for a successful programme in the water sector that it be perceived as a system with manifold interrelationships. The water sector is located at the interface between social needs and economic demands on the one hand and the natural resources basis on the other. Technical infrastructure creates the connections between these various subsystems by means of water withdrawals and wastewater discharge. Since the interests of various sectors and many stakeholders are affected, this results in conflicting goals and usages. The following diagram provides an overview of the sectoral links and requirements.

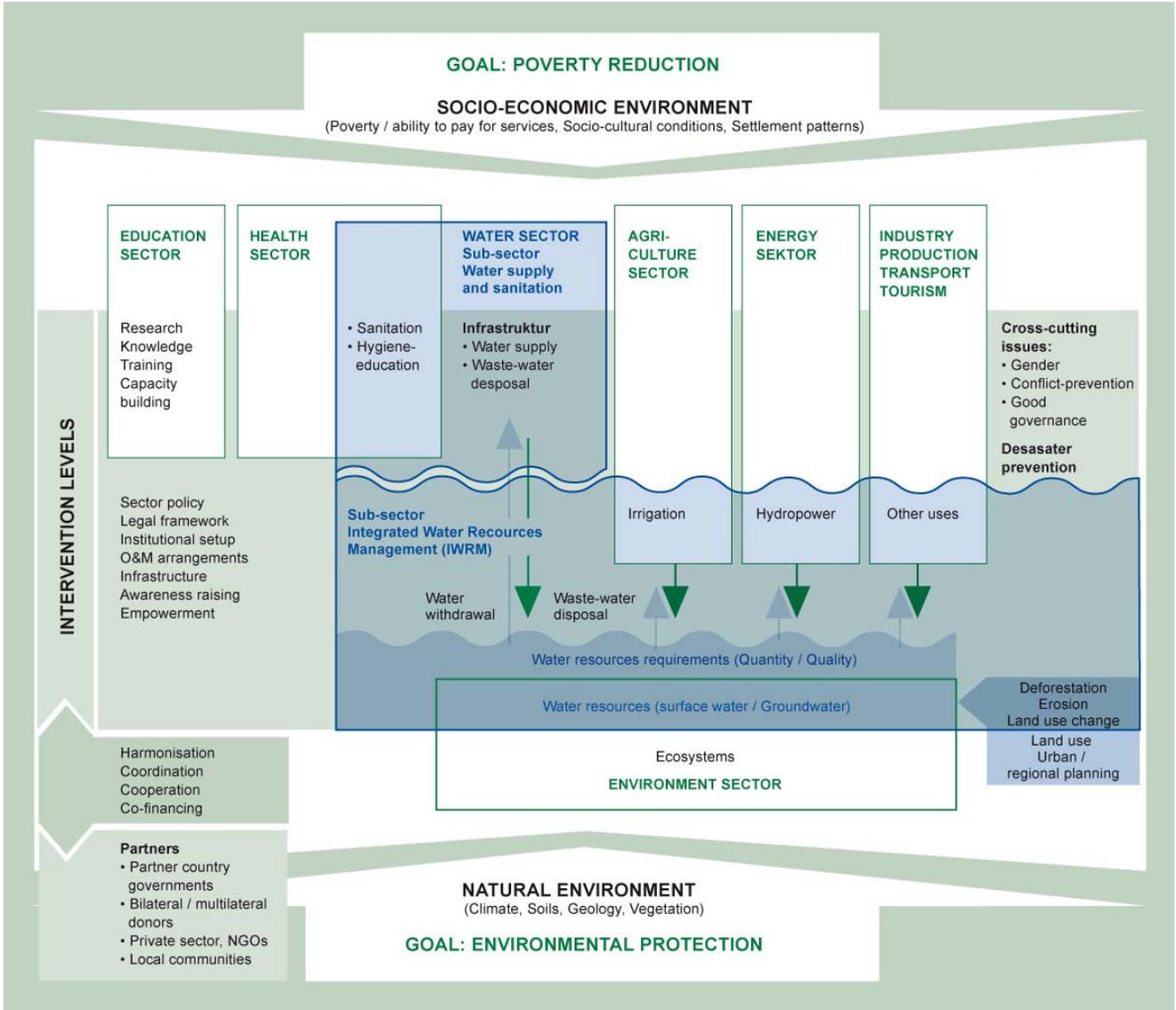
A system with manifold interrelationships

¹⁵ “IWRM is a process which promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.” Cited from: Global Water Partnership (GWP): Integrated Water Resources Management, 2000 [15].

¹⁶ This was explicitly formulated in: General Comment 15, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002). The human right to water is in many cases implicitly or explicitly recognized as an intrinsic right but it has yet to be anchored in international law; see on this [20], [34] as well as (www.righttowater.org.uk).



Water Sector System Overview



It is important to take into consideration the depicted interfaces and interlinkages in order to use synergies, avoid conflicts and in general to be able to pursue a coherent development approach.

Interfaces and interlinkages

A further challenge of the water sector is the fact that the technical and organizational demands in constructing, operating and maintaining the water infrastructure are high and often exceed the capacities of local stakeholders (such as decentralized local governments, companies, and communities).

High technical and organizational demands

For all these reasons interventions in the water sector should always support the entire system and not just isolated elements of it. Generally speaking, a holistic, integrative approach is necessary to keep the various effects under control and to avoid social disparities and incoherent approaches within a region. To develop promising sector programmes it is thus necessary to carefully analyze the relevant interrelationships on all functional levels, to ensure good integration in the national strategic, programmatic and institutional framework, and to provide for an adequate timeframe

Holistic, systemic approach

2.5 Positioning of ADC in the Water Sector

In order to make its contribution to water sector development in the partner countries effective, ADC focuses on selected thematic and geographical areas. The specific foci result from the historical evolution of ADC's profile and existing comparative advantages, from international coordination (division of labour) and from the requirement to focus on the priority countries and regions defined by ADC.

Positioning of ADC

Focal Points of Competence and Comparative Advantages of ADC

Generally speaking, a clear focus resulting from previous work lies in the development of adapted, integrated approaches for improving water supply and sanitation in rural areas, including the development of the necessary decentralized institutions and the creation of capacities in a weak environment as well as involvement of the local private sector. Where there are resistances against outsourcing of service provision to the private sector ("privatisation"), Austria can contribute to the sector dialogue based on its ample experience with communal and cooperative management of water supply systems. As to the cooperation with Eastern Europe, one of the comparative advantages of ADC is Austria's traditional competence in South-Eastern Europe.

Existing competences

According to the findings of the external evaluation of ADC's water sector of 2003 [22] one of the central "lessons learned" is that ADC is particularly able to achieve visible results when it sets initiatives that "when combined with the piloting of innovative and enlightened approaches, draw on the comparative advantages of partners in niches of high need" Further strengths of ADC's water sector programme to date were a clear focus on water supply and sanitation, "understanding and flexibility to respect (and to respond to) the demands of the users as well as to the existing context" as well as high importance given to measures for strengthening the partner institutions.

External sectoral evaluation of 2003

Profile in the International Context

In order to (re-)define the position of ADC in the context of harmonization and alignment, a comprehensive discussion and coordination process was carried out with international participation¹⁷. Accordingly, ADC can play an important role by acting in a flexible way, by piloting innovations and establishing cross-connections between sectors and players. Continuous involvement over longer periods of time can – as the example of Austria's involvement in Uganda shows – make a

Role and opportunities of ADC

¹⁷ Water Sector Policy Workshop, Vienna June 15–16, 2006.



qualitative contribution to sector development that goes far beyond the financial share of sector investments. Leeway for action also results from the fact that ADC tends to be less affected by political considerations, economic interests or historical burdens.

Risks The key risks are to remain below the “critical mass” for a sustainable development impact because the available resources are not employed in a sufficiently focused way, or failure to bring innovative, locally successful approaches to scale because of lacking funds. It is thus decisive to strive for a focused use of the resources, to build strategic partnerships and to ensure full integration in the sector programmes of the partner countries.

Good integration is essential

3. Objectives

3.1 Superordinate Policy Goals

Interventions supported by ADC in the water sector are oriented after three sets of policy goals:

1. Development goals that have been agreed upon at the international level, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
2. National goals and development strategies in the partner countries;
3. Objectives set by ADC (Federal Development Cooperation Act, Three-year-programme of ADC [1]).

Especially in countries with a well-organized water sector the focus should be orienting interventions according to national objectives in connection with the country’s poverty reduction strategy.

Internationally Agreed Goals

International agreements on goals for the water sector

ADC embraces the objectives agreed upon in the following international forums and processes:

- Millennium Development Goals, in particular target 10 (“Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”) in connection with goal 7 (“Ensure environmental sustainability”);
- World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
- CSD Process (cycle “Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements” 2004/2005);
- Agenda 21 (Rio de Janeiro 1992; in particular chapter 18) and “Dublin Principles”;
- World Water Forums of the World Water Council;
- “Water for Life” decade 2005–2015 proclaimed by the United Nations;
- OECD-DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET): InfraPoor;
- The European Consensus on Development [11] of 2006 (especially para. 80);
- Goals of the EU Water Initiative (EUWI);
- EU guidelines: Towards sustainable water resources management – a strategic approach [12];
- EU Water Framework Directive (2000) focusing on integrated river basin management, of particular relevance for Cooperation with Eastern Europe.

Water Framework Directive

Over and beyond the sector-specific agreements, the following international documents are particularly relevant for the further development of ADC’s involvement in the water sector:

Paris Declaration

- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) [10], in which the basic strategy of “Harmonisation and Alignment” (harmonisation of donor interventions and alignment with the structures and programmes of the partner countries) were agreed upon;



- Barcelona Commitments¹⁸ of the EU (2002);
- Recommendations of the DAC Peer Review of ADC (OECD2004).

Objectives set by ADC

The overall goals of ADC as defined in the Development Cooperation Act are poverty reduction, securing peace and human security as well as preservation of the environment and protection of natural resources. Interventions in the water sector make a direct contribution to the first and third and an indirect contribution to the second of these overall objectives.

Development
Cooperation Act

Further guidance by ADC is provided in its Policy Documents and Focus Papers on overarching issues such as poverty, human rights, good governance, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, budget support/SWAPs, gender equality and empowerment of women, persons with disabilities, private sector & development, education, energy, humanitarian aid and NGO cooperation.

Other guidance provided
by ADC

Goals and Development Strategies of the Partner Countries

The definition of goals and programming in the partner countries takes place in close cooperation with the development partners and adheres, provided these do not contradict the principles and objectives of ADC, the national development strategies and programmes. These include in particular the national poverty reduction strategies (PRS) and the relevant sector strategies. To ensure good coordination ADC on principle participates in the sector dialogue in the partner countries, orients itself after national priorities and avoids an a priori focus on concepts established in Europe or on specific problem solution strategies.

Alignment with sector
goals and strategies of
the partner countries

3.2 Specific Objectives for the Water Sector

The water sector programme of ADC sees itself as a contribution to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, in particular target 10 (access to drinking water and basic sanitation). However the attained supply coverage (in terms of MDG indicators) is not to be seen as the sole criterion or a target line to be exceeded for a short time but as a concrete indicator of the progress of a sustainable development process.

Contribution to the
MDGs

ADC sees its function as being the support of an autonomous and sustainable development process of the water sector in the partner countries which will fulfil the following:

Vision for the
development of the
water sector

- Ensure that all user groups, including in particular the economically and socially marginalized groups of the population, have adequate and affordable access to drinking water and basic sanitation;
- Ensure the availability of sufficient water resources for all types of uses and for further economic development;
- Guarantee the long-term conservation of the natural resources basis and the eco-systems;
- Contribute to conflict prevention by promoting equitable distribution (within a catchment area, between social groups).

¹⁸ According to the agreement of Barcelona the 15 "old" EU countries have committed themselves to increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) according to the international target value to 0.7% of the GNI; an interim target for 2010 was later set down as 0.51% of the GNI.



Four separate sector objectives can be derived from the above:

Improvement of basic services and health	1. Improvement of basic services and public health, thereby freeing up human potential which is limited by the burden of fetching water and by periods of illness, by means of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable and affordable access to safe drinking water supply for all, in sufficient quantity, at acceptable distances and at all times; - Access to adequate basic sanitation for all to improve hygienic conditions and to prevent the transmission of diseases as a contribution to reaching the MDG sub-goal 10;
Securing livelihood and economic development	2. Securing livelihood and economic development by providing water for productive purposes, in particular for agricultural production (food security);
Protection of water resources	3. Protecting water resources (preventing pollution and overexploitation, efficient use of resources);
Structured and equitable management of water resources	4. Holistic, orderly, equitable and sustainable management of water resources (as a requirement for coordinating the three other goals as well as a contribution to conflict prevention and good governance).
Minimization of risks	One overarching goal should also be to minimize risks (by disaster prevention, ensuring livelihoods for the poor population, mitigating the consequences of climate change, developing adaptation strategies).
Cross-cutting issues	The target system also includes cross-cutting issues that are to be treated as integral elements and quality criteria of the development process in the water sector. These include in particular the promotion of gender equality; special consideration of groups at a disadvantage; promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance; conflict prevention and the conservation of the environment (in particular the aquatic eco-systems).
Sector objectives cannot be reached by creating infrastructure measures alone	The above development goals can only be reached if in addition to the necessary infrastructure the following factors are given: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The technical, financial and organizational conditions and competences are created for the sustainable operation and maintenance of the infrastructure; ■ Competent, well-cooperating institutions and regulatory mechanisms are developed on all levels (local to national); ■ An adequate legal framework is created; ■ The development process is owned by the decision-makers, administrative offices and water sector stakeholders in the partner country; ■ A participatory sector dialogue including non-government and decentralized stakeholders can be initiated, and coordination with other sectors succeeds; ■ The necessary knowledge basis and educational level can be created to be able to assess the consequences of action in the water sector and to identify innovative solutions; ■ Awareness is created among the population for the interrelationships, rights and duties in the water sector.

3.3 Target Groups and Partners

Target group	The target group of the interventions supported by ADC in the water sector is the population of the target regions to be supplied. In keeping with the primacy of poverty reduction the measures are primarily geared to improving the situation of the poor groups of the population, taking into special account the interests and needs of women and of population groups that are at a disadvantage.
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In pursuing the programme objectives ADC works together with all partners that contribute to the development potential, can assume a role as a catalyst or are affected by the intervention. Supporting these partners (e.g., administrative offices, the private sector, NGOs, research institutions) is not an end in itself but should be viewed and designed in relation to their role in the development process. ADC prefers to seek out cooperation with those partners that support the target group in a lasting and efficient way. Here it gives priority to the sustainability criterion and not to short-term implementation efficiency. The goal is to promote the competence and autonomy of the partners so that they can assume their specific role in the development of the water sector on a long-term basis.

Partners

4. Policy Guidelines

The policy guidelines in this section contain fundamental statements and quality criteria that have long-term validity and are also applicable to projects/programmes that do not stem from bilateral water sector programming (e.g., NGO co-financing projects, programmes originating from other sectors). Where ADC is involved in SWApS, national sector programmes and financing instruments, the policy guidelines are used as a reference to evaluate the orientation and development status of a given sector policy, to assess the adequacy of existing programme documents and instruments for implementing sector policy and, if necessary, to suggest amendments.

Policy guidelines as generic quality criteria that have long-term validity

4.1 General Policy Principles

Poverty and Basic Need Orientation

Interventions supported by ADC in the water sector are primarily understood to be a contribution to the overarching goal of poverty reduction, in particular with regard to meeting basic human needs and developing economic skills. These measures are geared to the basic needs of the poor population and support the poverty reduction strategies employed by the partner countries.

Contribution to poverty reduction

Basic supply of water, in particular drinking water, is considered a human right. Securing basic water supply for all groups of the population thus has first priority. Affordability is an important criterion in the selection of technologies, the level of services and the operating models in the water sector.

Priority for basic water supply as a human right

The effects of any supported project on population groups that are at a disadvantage – ethnic minorities, socio-culturally marginalized groups, children, older people, persons with special needs or with diseases (e.g., suffering from HIV/AIDS) – must be checked and their needs and interests must be adequately taken into account so as to counter discrimination. In water supply this means in concrete terms to support social mechanisms in favour of groups that are at a disadvantage and to secure barrier-free access to water.

Population groups that are at a disadvantage

Avoiding discrimination

Holistic, systemic view of the water sector

It is imperative that interventions in the water sector be planned as part of a holistic, strategic, well-coordinated approach based on a detailed analysis of the sector environment. This has to do with the character of water as a limited and potentially endangered resource, with the need to take into account the diverse interrelationships of the water sector, and with the fact that sustainability that can only be achieved by building the necessary institutions and competences.

A holistic perspective is essential



Connection of “hardware” and “software” Crucial principles here are the connection of “hardware” (infra-structural improvements) and “software” measures (e.g., creating of institutions, awareness raising, training, legal framework) as well as taking into account the causal connections (no water supply without considering the wastewater issue, no use of water resources without taking into account resources availability and the demands of other users.)

IWRM This is only possible in the context of a programmatic approach that is well integrated into the national structures and that covers at least a larger contiguous region, and not by local solutions of individual problems. The basis for sound water resources development is provided by the principles of Integrated Water Resource Management.

Sustainability

Sustainability as a key criterion of success Sustainability is a crucial principle for all measures taken in the water sector. As the goal of support offered by ADC is to facilitate a sustainable, high-quality development process it is necessary to allow for sufficient time for water sector interventions. It is not justifiable to assess the success of these interventions on the basis of output, the short-term attainment of coverage targets or economic implementation efficiency alone.

Dimensions of sustainability In particular the following dimensions of sustainability must be taken into account:

- Financial: affordability, cost recovery (at least to cover the running operation and maintenance costs) by means of adequate revenues, financing of solutions that are adapted to the economic realities;
- Technological: selection of appropriate and adaptive technologies (security of supply, local availability of adequate competences), technical training, securing the supply of spare parts;
- Institutional: parallel creation of sustainable and efficient operating structures as well as regulating institutions;
- Social: strengthening of self-responsibility and awareness-raising among the population, establishment of transparent and integrative decision-making processes;
- Ecological: protection of resources against pollution and overexploitation.

Principles for promoting sustainability Important elements of a sustainable approach are the use and strengthening of local institutions (instead of building parallel structures) as well as clear concepts for the gradual transfer of responsibilities (phasing out) and follow-up support (backstopping). Existing infrastructure will only be rehabilitated or replaced in connection with a solution of the problems that have led to their decline.

Adapting to the Socio-cultural and Socio-economic Context

All measures in the water sector must be geared to the given social, cultural and political context. ADC feels particularly committed to the “sustainable livelihoods approach”, which is based on the perspective of the population and their strategies for securing their livelihoods and integrates the existing skills, resources and patterns of action.

Adapted technologies Technologies and plans can be seen as adapted if they correspond to the demand, the socio-cultural needs and the ability to pay of the population as well as to the available organizational and technical capacities and if they offer flexible expansion and adaptation possibilities (“affordable, manageable and adaptable”). Consideration must be given to traditional forms of distribution and management of water resources while developing these further in consideration of poverty reduction and equitable distribution.



Participation, Self-responsibility and Demand Orientation

ADC supports a demand-led, participative approach that aims to maximize local involvement, acceptance, ownership and self-responsibility as well as the mobilization of local potentials.

Demand-led approach

Through participative planning, mobilization and sensitization, the local population is empowered to make a well-founded selection from the available technical and institutional options, based on its own needs. Here care must be taken to ensure that socially marginalized groups are adequately integrated in this process. In sanitation it is particularly important to adopt a participative approach, since hygienic improvements on a household level can by no means be achieved through a top-down approach.

Participation

Beneficiaries are expected to make a contribution, in keeping with their financial possibilities, to the implementation of any infrastructure project, and to assume responsibility for its maintenance. The local communities should be represented in the institutions that are created and will take on an important control function towards them.

Self-responsibility and control function of the population

4.2 Consideration of Cross-Cutting Issues

Protection of the Environment and of Water Resources

The protection of water resources – surface water and ground water, in terms of quality and quantity – is an integral part of the water sector programme. But also beyond this, the goals of the water sector often converge with those of the cross-cutting issue of environmental protection, since every serious environmental change (e.g., as a result of changes in land use) potentially endangers water resources and their potential use. Basic principles such as a prudent, economic and sustainable use of natural resources and the comprehensive consideration of ecological aspects and environmental impacts should be set down in a binding way in the water sector programmes.

Resource protection

Environmental impact

Important principles in the actual implementation are to give priority to avoiding pollution over purification and treatment; to promote the implementation of the “polluter-pays principle”; to take the interrelationships between land use and water management into account; to minimize environmental risks for the population; as well as to consider awareness raising for ecological concerns and resource protection requirements.

Concrete principles for the water sector

Good Governance, Development of Democracy and Conflict Prevention

ADC sets value upon contributing to the development of democracy, legality, responsible governance and conflict prevention in the context of its water sector interventions.

Programmes in the water sector can have a positive effect on the development of democratic structures and set an example by promoting participative decision-making processes, by organizing and mobilizing the population and integrating civil society. Specifically, this takes place by setting up elected committees and boards, by introducing transparent procedures, regulations and accountability, as well as through an equitable reconciliation of user interests. The creation of a regulated water sector is thus in itself a contribution to constitutional development and can be seen as an instrument of conflict prevention and conflict management.

Contribution to promoting democracy and good governance



Fight against corruption As in all infrastructure sectors, prevention and the fight against corruption plays an important role in the water sector. The development of control mechanisms and authorities as well as the application of transparent procurement and auditing procedures is thus decisive for efficient programme implementation. The control function of civil society, including the NGOs, is explicitly acknowledged and promoted.

Conflict prevention For preventing conflicts in the water sector it is important to conduct conflict analyses. The existing conflict potential – between various social groups and water sector stakeholders, between the requirements of different sectors and ministries, between upstream and downstream riparians in a catchment area, between centralized and decentralized institutions and interests, between various policy approaches co-existing in the same region – are to be analysed already in the conceptual phase of the water sector intervention. The creation of the necessary mitigation mechanisms - institutions, regulations, consultation processes, and negotiations – thus becomes an important part of the programming process.

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

Gender equality ADC supports approaches that contribute to an equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities and promotes the full participation of women in programme implementation, with the goal of ensuring that their rights, interests and needs are taken into account when it comes to resource allocation and project planning.

Pivotal role of women in water supply and hygiene The social, legal and economic equality of the genders is generally an important requirement for sustainable development [30]. In the water sector a gender-conscious approach assumes special significance because in most partner countries, according to the traditional division of labour, women are in charge of providing water in the household, hygiene and caring of the sick. They are thus most directly affected by the workload related to fetching water as well as by the consequences of inadequate water supply and sanitation. However, it is seldom the case that this central role of women is reflected by an adequate representation in the decision-making structures, a fact that makes it difficult for them to obtain equitable access to water for productive activities (agriculture, livestock farming and small business). A water sector programme can thus make an important contribution to improving the quality of life and reducing the workload of women, but also to empowerment by strengthening the role of women in decision-making processes. The latter is also a strategy for improving the sustainability and efficiency of a water sector programme, since for the cited reasons women have a strong and immediate interest in a safe and reliably functioning water supply [3].

Contribution to reducing the burden on women and empowering women

Gender mainstreaming All measures taken within a water sector programme should thus be examined as to their effects on gender equality. The strategies of gender mainstreaming will be applied and measures contributing to overcome the usually unbalanced division of roles will be promoted (see gender policy paper). The corresponding principles should be adhered to from the local to the national level and their adherence should be promoted, also and in particular in the context of harmonised sector programmes.

Concrete aspects of gender equality

- The following should specifically be taken into special account:
- Women and men should be equally represented in the relevant processes and committees as well as in training programmes on all levels, including in high-level positions;
 - The gender equality issue and aspects related specifically to women should be given adequate consideration in all planning processes, implementation strategies, training materials, etc.;
 - Local implementation partners should be trained accordingly;

- The needs and constraints of households headed by women, which are often among the poorest, should be given special consideration;
- Monitoring systems should provide gender-specific information and contain corresponding indicators.

5. ADC's Involvement in the Water Sector

5.1 Harmonisation and Alignment in the Water Sector

As a signatory of the Paris Declaration, ADC has committed itself to the principles of harmonisation and alignment and thus to supporting national development programmes in cooperation with other donors and using joint mechanisms as soon as these are available.

As stated earlier, the development objectives in the water sector can only be reached through the combination of coherent measures in various areas, from improving infrastructure and creating operating structures via hygiene education and training to the creation of an effective institutional and regulatory framework. It is not possible for one donor alone to cover all of these aspects, and it is also impossible for such a sectoral approach to be implemented from the outside without the ownership of the partner country. For these reasons extensive cooperation and coordination with other donors (harmonisation) on the one hand and integration into national strategies, programmes and structures (alignment) on the other hand are imperative in the water sector if the measure for success is not short-term implementation efficiency but rather achievement of a holistic and sustainable developmental effect.

A coherent sectoral approach can only be implemented through harmonisation and alignment

In the context of harmonisation and alignment ADC promotes the development of a consistent set of strategies, approaches (best practices), standards, procedures and monitoring instruments within the partner country. Moreover, following an initial phase where additional effort is needed for increased coordination, the joint use of structures means that synergies, professionalism and an overall reduction of transaction costs (economies of scale) can be expected. The participation in joint sectoral programmes thus allows for efficient use of funds available for the water sector and also to significantly broaden the scope of investment, without the administrative coordination and implementation costs rising proportionately.

Building consistent water sector structures in the partner country

5.2 Geographical Focus

In the interest of effectively using the available means and personnel resources the water sector involvement of the ADC is concentrated on a few priority countries¹⁹ and regions in which field offices are available for the ongoing coordination of the interventions. ADC's involvement concentrates on specific regions within a focal country where this is necessary to ensure effectiveness or if a partner country explicitly wishes this.

Concentration on a few priority countries

ADC supports the approach of international division of labour which aims to reduce the number of donors present in the water sector of a country, to decrease the coordination effort and transaction costs and to avoid overburdening the institutions and decision makers of the partner country through too many contact partners. Therefore the decision in which of the priority countries ADC is to be active is taken in coordination with the other donors and the government of the partner country.

International division of labour

¹⁹ Currently Nicaragua, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Bhutan, Palestinian Territories and the region of East Africa as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Moldova in the focal region of South-Eastern Europe. Countries/regions with water sector activities are underlined in this list.



Involvement in other countries ADC is also involved in other countries through humanitarian programmes, by supporting initiatives of non-governmental bodies (NGO co-financing) or else by delegated cooperation through other donors or organisations and by participating in international programmes.

5.3 Instruments and Levels of Cooperation

A complementary “mix” of different instruments and levels of intervention ADC relies on the interplay of various complementary instruments and levels of intervention. In addition to participation in national sectoral programmes this also includes deploying experts (technical assistance), the realization of pilot projects and studies, the promotion of civil society structures as well as support of networking and regional or international initiatives.

Anchoring interventions at the highest possible level

Anchoring interventions at the highest possible level The conception and the alignment of an ADC country sector programme (not its implementation) take place at the highest possible level, depending on the status of development of the institutions, capacities and coordination mechanisms in the partner country:

- SWAp ■ Where the conditions are given, joint sector programmes and SWAp²⁰ are supported (see below).
- Programmes concentrated in sub-regions ■ Where a national sectoral approach is not (yet) established the main form of cooperation are programmes focusing on specific sub-regions of the partner country and implemented in close coordination with the government and other donors.
- Projects are supported where a programme approach is not possible (e.g., in unstable regions) and as a complementary instrument to promote in a targeted way certain aspects that are not covered by a sector programme (see below for more detail); supporting parallel individual projects in working areas that are covered by sector programmes is ruled out.

Participation in joint sector programmes and SWAp

Integrated participation in joint sector programmes In countries where an adequate level of development has been attained in the water sector and in coordinated cooperation, ADC strives for integrated participation in joint sector programmes. Existing bilateral water sector programmes will be further developed with the goal of full integration in the national water sector. Specifically, this means:

- Participation in the sector dialogue, in sectoral reform processes and SWAp as well as in joint financing, implementation and monitoring mechanisms in the partner countries – mechanisms that are emerging as part of sector development;
- Avoiding the creation of parallel structures;
- Flexibility in adapting the intervention strategy, but also the thematic focus, to the existing structures, strategies and priorities of the partner countries as long as these are in keeping with ADC’s policy guidelines.

Longer-term involvement ADC aims to be involved for longer periods in a continuous way, including an active role in the donor and sector coordination where this is requested by the development partners. To cope with the additional coordination effort that results from participation in national sector programmes, ADC’s local structures (coordination offices) in the priority countries will be provided with sufficient personnel and funding.

Capacities for coordination

²⁰ There is no single, internationally agreed definition of a SWAp (Sector Wide Approach). Its core elements are: support of joint sector policies and strategies by all the major sector donors together with the government; Implementation of an investment programme based on these and using joint implementation and monitoring mechanisms; and development of joint financing mechanisms, which can however take different forms.

<p>A SWAp is the result of an ambitious, multi-year process of diagnostic analysis, participatory strategy development, confidence building and the creation of joint implementation mechanisms. ADC takes an active part in this process in a flexible way, assuming responsibility and playing a facilitative role where this is requested, insofar as the available competences and capacities allow.</p>	Participation in SWAps
<p>Participation in SWAps includes participation in joint financing arrangements and mechanisms (e.g., sector budget support, basket funding). The conditions for these funding modalities are the subject of a separate ADC policy paper.</p>	Participation in joint financing arrangements and mechanisms
<p>ADC attaches importance to involve non-government players (NGOs, private sector) and decentralized structures adequately in sector development and in the sector dialogue and to develop their potentials.</p>	Involvement of non-government players
Projects	
<p>Individual projects are only supported in specific cases and only if this takes place in a strategic and coordinated way. This applies in particular for pilot projects (testing innovative approaches on a pilot scale before they can be incorporated in a sector programme), for specific support in areas that are not adequately covered by existing support arrangements (this is often the case in the area of sanitation), for cross-sectoral projects, or for targeted support of non-governmental structures (NGOs, local private sector).</p>	Under which conditions will there continue to be projects?
<p>The role of NGOs in sector development is not limited to an implementing role. NGOs set their own accents (for instance, in direct grass-roots work with local communities, which is often neglected by government programmes) and assume a monitoring function, the latter being called into question if NGO work directly depends on government programmes.</p>	Role of NGOs
Coherence of the Intervention Levels	
<p>It is important to ADC to ensure coherence between all intervention levels – from local implementation to international networking.</p>	Coherence
<p>The actual implementation of sector programmes, which as mentioned are agreed upon on the highest possible level, takes place on the lowest possible level so as to respond as closely as possible to the needs of the beneficiaries, to allow for maximum transparency and participation and to promote strong local ownership and self-responsibility. It is thus advisable to have decision-making, responsibilities, operating structures, etc. established on the lowest appropriate level on which the issue in question can be resolved.</p>	Implementation on the lowest appropriate level (subsidiarity principle)
<p>The link to this local level of implementation should be maintained through regular monitoring and evaluation so that not just monetary efficiency but also the overall quality of the financed projects may be assessed, and thematic competence and capability to be innovative can be maintained.</p>	Quality assurance Capability to be innovative
<p>Experiences gained and approaches developed on the implementation level are systematically evaluated and incorporated on higher levels – at the national, regional, international level. This is done through ADC's involvement in national sector development, but also through cooperation with research institutions, through regional networking and through participation in international initiatives and programmes.</p>	Systematic integration of lessons learned in sector development



Building Strategic Partnerships, Participation in International Initiatives

Strategic partnerships ADC will further strengthen its participation in international initiatives and programmes. It aims in particular at creating long-term strategic partnerships with international organizations and other donors.

Objectives of international involvement

The goals are the:

- Coordination and harmonisation of the activities, including international division of labour in the water sector;
- Promotion of exchange about successful approaches (best practices) in the water sector and its dissemination (scaling up);

Leverage effect

- Increasing the effectiveness of ADC's involvement by means of cooperation with powerful partners (leverage);
- Exploitation of synergies and joint resources (e. g. competence centres);
- Quality assurance, continuous critical review and updating of ADC's approaches by means of participation in the international sector dialogue.

International initiatives and programmes

In practice this means:

- Active participation in international initiatives and programmes (e.g., EU Water Initiative, African Water Facility, Private Infrastructure Development Group, EU-Africa Trust Fund on Infrastructure);
- Support of sector programmes of international and regional organisations (e.g. WSP²¹);
- Support of regional forums, networks and competence centers in the south (e.g. AMCOW²²) and/or in Eastern Europe;
- Secondment of experts to these institutions;
- Participation in the international sector dialogue (forums).

Support of regional networks and forums

Active participation in a limited number of initiatives

Given the large number of initiatives, forums and programmes in the water sector ADC concentrates, in the interest of optimum use of the available resources, on a small number, seeking an active role and continuous involvement there.

Regional Programmes

Regional support

As to regional programming for ADC's priority regions, support in the water sector is typically provided to regional networks, forums and programmes that promote regional sector dialogue, focus on specific thematic issues on a regional level (e.g., by developing, testing and disseminating appropriate technologies and approaches including knowledge management) or develop capacities (e.g., through regional education and research programmes). Institutions and instruments for the management of trans-boundary river basins can also benefit from regional support.

Coordination with ADC's involvement in the priority countries

Due to the synergies to be expected an effort should be made to coordinate regional support with ADC's involvement on the national level in the priority countries within the region. An added value of the activities at the regional level can in particular be expected when there is experience and credibility thanks to the concrete involvement on the ground.

²¹ Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank.

²² African Ministers' Council on Water.



5.4 Thematic Focus

General Orientation

The working area that has been the focus of ADC in the water sector for many years, i.e., water supply and sanitation in rural areas, will basically be retained. It reflects the special need for action in these regions with a view to reducing poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals and is in line with the experience background and the goals set by ADC.

Focal working area:
water supply and
sanitation in rural areas

Priority is given to supporting programmes that contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, with Austria's contribution to reaching the goals being focused on rural areas and seeing that the sanitation goal receives the same attention as drinking water supply.

Contribution to reaching
the Millennium
Development Goals

Proceeding from this focal working area, the specific definition of interventions results from a coordination process in the given partner country or focal region. In keeping with an integrated approach this can include the support of programme components in the areas of Integrated Water Resources Management, the provision of water for productive purposes and disaster prevention.

Expanding the focus
reflecting an integrated
approach

ADC will give particular attention to areas that until now have often been neglected in the water sector and/or in which ADC has specific experience or comparative advantages. These include sanitation as well as the development of specific solutions and institutional models for small rural agglomerations (see below.)

Areas of particular
attention

ADC also sees a special task in supporting cross-sector cooperation (e.g., water and health in the area of hygiene; water and rural development in IWRM; water and energy in the area of hydropower; water and education/science in the fields of capacity building and applied research.).

Promoting cross-
sectoral approaches

Sanitation

ADC places special emphasis on sanitation being given adequate consideration within the water sector. The sanitation sub-sector has often been neglected since both the population and government authorities typically see it as having lower priority than the supply of drinking water. However, a significant decline in water related diseases cannot be expected from the improvement of drinking water supply alone, if no hygienic improvements are achieved at the household level.

Special focus: sanitation

The principles and thematic foci of ADC in the field of sanitation are:

- No interventions in water supply without a sanitation component (at least on a conceptual level);
- Direct connection of water supply and sanitation: use of the incentive and of revenues from water supply for improvements in sanitation;
- Promotion of innovative technologies suitable for rural areas for avoiding, treating and recycling waste water (e. g., ecological sanitation concept, reed-bed filters);
- Promotion of a cross-sectoral approach (involving water, health and education) as well as comprehensive sanitation solutions (including solid waste management and stormwater drainage);
- Linking sanitation to hygiene and environmental education, mobilization and social marketing strategies;
- Priority interventions in schools where education effects are particularly easy to attain;
- Supporter of the "polluter-pays principle" to counteract the contamination of resources.

Principles in the field of
sanitation

Promoting innovative
and adapted
technologies



Rural Agglomerations, Financing Models, Decentralization

One special working area of ADC is promoting the development of water supply and sanitation in rural areas, including, in particular, the small rural agglomerations, in the context of decentralisation. This is pursued by creating suitable financing instruments and institutional structures as well as by promoting appropriate technologies.

Rural agglomerations and small towns

Rural areas, as understood in this policy paper, include rural agglomerations and small towns. It is especially for these rural centres of settlement – where the urban and rural water sectors overlap – that suitable instruments are often lacking. The technical and organisational requirements are more demanding and the need for investments is higher than in purely rural areas, but at the same time the local institutions are weak, the financial resources of the population are very limited, and the private sector is not interested in investing in this sub-sector. For these reasons, special instruments – funding facilities, operating models, umbrella organisations, technologies – are needed, the development of which ADC supports in a targeted way.

Specific financing instruments

Since investments in the water sector – even in rural areas – are considerable, often extending over a period of several fiscal years, specific financing instruments may be required. ADC supports in particular the development of funding models that serve the demand-led financing of projects that have been identified in a participative way and that are implemented in a decentralized fashion. This is not just a matter of financial management but also a way to create capacities for appraising the quality and sustainability of the proposed projects, and establishing control mechanisms that ensure implementation efficiency and value for money.

Building decentralised capacities

The implications of decentralization in the water sector are a closely related issue. Decentralization of competences and responsibilities in the water sector (which is desirable for a number of reasons) bears the risk of a loss of expertise and capacities: decentralization of responsibilities without adequate resources being provided. ADC thus especially supports the strengthening and networking of decentralized institutions and stakeholders as well as the necessary capacity building to ensure coherent planning in the water sector.

Stronger Involvement in the Areas of IWRM, Water for Productive Purposes and Disaster Prevention

ADC is committed to the principles of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). An IWRM-approach is promoted in all water sector projects. Based on this logic it can, for instance, be necessary to also promote measures for improving water retention and ground water recharge as part of a water supply programme.

IWRM: Involvement based on need for concrete action and regulation

Dedicated programme components in the area of IWRM are supported in particular where there is urgent need for concrete action and regulation, be it because of existing conflicts over water usage, the necessity of resource protection, to mitigate the effects of climate change or in the context of disaster prevention. Action in the field of IWRM is not necessarily triggered by the water sector²³.

Careful fine-tuning to issue at hand

IWRM interventions generally apply to a river basin. The level and the type of measures are to be carefully fine-tuned depending on the problem at hand. Generally the solution of problems on the lowest appropriate level is supported. For trans-boundary programmes and the regional exchange of experience ADC's regional programmes provide a suitable framework. In any case the sustainable

²³ For example, an intervention in the hydropower sector could create the need to use an IWRM approach to reconcile the interests of maximization of energy production, the protection of river eco-systems as well as other user interests.

creation of dedicated IWRM structures (institutions, information systems ...) represents a special challenge for the existing resources and capacities and must thus be fine-tuned to the requirements and decision-making processes.

As to the use of water for productive purposes, ADC is active mainly in connection with rural development programmes (small-scale irrigation, water for farm animals). Special support is given to testing and disseminating water-saving and water-harvesting technologies, demand management as well as adapted wastewater solutions.

Water for productive purposes

In the interplay of humanitarian aid and development cooperation ADC places special emphasis on disaster prevention and risk management. The goal of prevention is to minimize the risk for the affected groups, i.e., their vulnerability towards extreme events. ADC thus seeks to systematically incorporate the idea of prevention in programming. It supports the development of disaster prevention strategies and mitigation plans, preparedness at the institutional level, the development of early-warning systems for disaster-prone areas as well as applied research in this area (for instance, research regarding the consequences of climate change on the ground).

Disaster prevention

Specific Foci of Austrian Cooperation with Eastern Europe

In general, the objectives and principles described in this policy paper are fully applicable for Austrian cooperation with Eastern Europe.

Priorities

In addition to a stronger focus on programmatic approaches the country programmes set priorities in the following areas:

- Rehabilitation of existing water supply systems and construction of new ones;
- Institutional strengthening and improvement of the operating structures; focus on well-regulated fee collection systems and thus indirectly increased credit worthiness for the expansion of facilities;
- Support in bringing countries closer to European standards, including in particular the EU Water Framework Directive;
- Involvement of the population through public relations work, participatory planning, mobilisation and awareness raising, financial contribution, demand orientation and co-determination, resulting in improved ownership;
- Development of adequate solutions for wastewater management as part of the implementation of drinking water projects, with emphasis on the use of adapted, affordable technologies;
- Knowledge management through stronger exchange of experience during and after implementation;
- Coordination with other donors so as to increase the efficiency of the use of funds and to be able to cover larger regions (river basin management);
- Development and promotion of awareness for environmental issues among the local population.

ADC is thus reacting to the following trends observed in the water sector of Eastern and South Eastern Europe:

- In recent years a reduction of emissions into water bodies has been observed as a result of production sites being closed down due to the difficult economic situation. With the economic upswing to be expected in the mid term there will be a sudden increase in emissions and a "westernization" (higher polluting load) of pollution profiles.
- In the 1990s international donors concentrated mainly on cost-intensive infrastructure projects using state-of-the-art technologies, in order to bring the countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe up to the level of the EU. Only in recent years, partly in relation with the increase of debt, a trend toward low cost solutions (adapted technologies) incorporating local expertise can be noted.

Trends in the water sector of Eastern and South-eastern Europe



5.5 Innovation, Knowledge Management and Monitoring

Innovation and Applied Research

Selected “niches”	For years ADC has been supporting innovative concepts and technologies in selected “niches” of the water sector ²⁴ . This involvement, seen as a quality feature, will be maintained and expanded.
Innovation and applied research in the water sector	Technology and expertise requirements are relatively high in the water sector. The physical and socio-economic conditions found in each case vary so much that innovative adaptation of the technologies and approaches to be used is indispensable. Development cooperation should thus not be limited to providing financial means, management and monitoring capacities, but should also contribute to the adaptation and further development of technologies and approaches and to increasing the knowledge base. This also includes applied research in the fields of resource availability and resource protection (e.g., hydrogeological conditions, consequences of climate change).
Testing on a pilot scale, scaling up	ADC seeks consistent involvement in this area, ranging from identifying existing knowledge gaps and the realization of studies (applied research) via the development of innovative approaches and their testing on a pilot scale (pilot projects) to the systematic integration of innovation in sector development as well as in international forums (scaling up). More emphasis will be given to systematizing, documenting and publishing the results and experiences.
Documentation and knowledge management	
Added value from the development perspective	In cooperating with research institutions attention must be given to ensure a tangible added value in development policy and the scientific problem formulation should be based on the research need defined from the perspective of development policy (“ownership of questions”).
Community of practice	In order to create a platform for discussion, exchange of ideas, further development and propagation of knowledge, innovations and experiences, it is intended to create a “community of practice” with the participation of scientific institutions, NGOs and the private sector.

Monitoring

Results-oriented programme steering, more quantitative documentation of results/impact	A stronger focus on monitoring is planned to enhance the systematic, results-oriented steering of the ADC water sector programmes and for a better quantitative assessment of their effectiveness (on the level of results and impact, not just direct output). The goal is to initiate an institutional learning process that goes beyond the level of the individual programme.
Support of the monitoring systems of the partner countries	In the priority countries the necessary creation of monitoring and performance measurement systems will be based as much as possible – in keeping with the stipulations of the Paris Declaration – on the national reporting systems and indicators, whose creation will be supported as required. Generally this support takes place in connection with the participation in a coordinated sector programme.
Monitoring on an international level	The provision of reliable data and information is also an important issue on the international level. Here ADC contributes to meeting the challenge of linking local level (data collection), national level (sector monitoring) and international level (MDG indicators) activities. The development of communication and information systems for networked cooperation is also supported.

²⁴ Examples: funding of innovative concepts in energy supply (use of photovoltaic energy) and in sanitation (EcoSan, reed-bed filters); creation of new organizational forms for the operation and maintenance of water infrastructure (communal, but autonomous water supply utilities, umbrella organizations supporting small rural water suppliers).



6. Coherence and Synergies with Other Sectors

The water sector has manifold interrelationships and interfaces with other sectors and working areas of ADC. The following compilation of these references should help to use synergies, avoid conflicts and contribute to the coherence of interventions, including those in the areas of humanitarian aid and private sector development.

Emergency situations

Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Prevention

The provision of drinking water and sanitary facilities is one of the most important issues in emergency situations. However, emergency measures in the water sector rarely remain without longer-term effects. Therefore, as far as possible, the implications with regard to water resources and water rights must be taken into consideration already at the planning stage of such emergency measures; the same applies to ensuring coherence of emergency interventions with development cooperation in the same region. The goal is to create a continuum from quick, flexible emergency aid via measures supporting reconstruction and the reorganization of structures all the way to more long-term development cooperation activities. In this sense ADC makes its know-how available to the competent authorities in cases of emergency and disaster.

Continuum from humanitarian emergency aid to sustainable development

An important aspect is disaster prevention which aims to minimize the risks related to natural phenomena and environmental catastrophes (drought, flooding, etc.) as well as the consequences and losses to be expected²⁵. Mitigation of damage after the event entails incomparably higher social and financial costs than its prevention.

Disaster prevention

Health

There are close links between the water and health sector. In the realm of sanitation there is an area of overlap which also entails interfering institutional competences so that it is essential to ensure coordination of the sector programmes in question.

Water – hygiene – health

Contaminated drinking water and lack of hygiene are among the most important factors in the transmission of diseases. The provision of clean water and the improvement of the sanitary situation are thus the most important preventive measures that can be taken to prevent and contain diseases. The water sector thereby makes an important contribution to several Millennium Development Goals in the health sector²⁶. On the other hand, improvement of the water supply and sanitation infrastructure will only result in significant improvements of public health if a change in hygienic behaviour is also achieved.

Rural Development/Agriculture

Possible conflicts between agriculture and the water sector mainly consist in the high water consumption of irrigated agriculture²⁷, in the emission of agricultural pollutants as well as in land use changes (expansion of cultivated areas, unfavourable soil cultivation techniques, overgrazing) that have a direct impact on the hydrological cycle²⁸. In the context of its involvement in the Rural Development sector ADC has issued clear guidelines as to the mitigation of this conflict potential. In conflicts over resource usage it is important to follow decentralized and

Usage requirements and conflicts

²⁵ Cf. United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (www.unisdr.org).

²⁶ Specifically, on goals 4 (reducing child mortality), 5 (improving maternal health) und 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases).

²⁷ In irrigation regions the share of agriculture in total water consumption can amount to more than 90 %.

²⁸ The hydrological consequences include higher runoff peaks, reduced infiltration / groundwater recharge, and higher loads of suspended sediments in the watercourses.



participative approaches to protect the interests of the poor population and to prevent conflicts [19]. The proper strategy for a structured reconciliation of interests and for coordinating approaches for joint action is Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) or watershed management on the basis of area river basin/watershed.

Synergies Possible synergies thus exist primarily in the cross-sectoral planning and realization of such integrated approaches. These include in particular measures in the realm of reforestation, soil protection, erosion control, artificial groundwater recharge, introduction of water-saving irrigation technologies, recycling (of sewage water and nutrients), protection of eco-systems as well as disaster prevention (protection against extreme events such as floods and droughts).

Private Sector Development

Economic value of water From the perspective of the water sector the private sector is a water user on the one hand and a contractor and partner of public authorities in developing infrastructure and related services on the other. Water has an economic value, as a means of production and as a recipient for sewage disposal. This value cannot be the only criterion for the allocation of water but it needs to be taken into account in the interest of an efficient use. One example of this is the “polluter-pays principle” in dealing with pollution.

Private sector as a stakeholder in the water sector As a player in the water sector the private sector assumes a number of roles, as a contractor for the design and construction of infrastructure, as utility operator and as a potential investor. It is essentially in the interest of the water sector to have a competent private sector – construction firms, consultants, operators of water infrastructure facilities – as its partner.

“Privatisation”? Private sector involvement in water infrastructure and service delivery needs to be seen in a nuanced light since there are a large variety of different models and experiences, including sometimes massive resistance and problems in connection with ‘privatisation’ in the water sector. Outsourcing of specific services to the private sector should not be confused with the privatization of decision-making competences or even of water resources. Basically a compromise must be found between the interests of sustainable and efficient operations on the one hand and social distribution equity and affordability on the other hand. ADC supports only those models that ensure and enhance access to basic, affordable water supply for all parts of the population and ensure the sustainability of resource use. The operation of water supply facilities in rural areas by local private companies has generally proven its worth – provided that contracts are well formulated and that parallel adequate administrative capacities of the public counterparts are created – and contributes to maintaining the functionality of these facilities.

Private operators in rural areas

Private investment in water infrastructure The role of the private sector as an investor is limited in the water sector, since here high initial investments face limited potential profits which (in an uncertain environment) can only be achieved in the long term. This is particularly true for the rural areas in developing countries, where ADC concentrates its efforts, where given the low financial power of the population it is already a challenge to cover the running costs of operation. Notwithstanding ADA has, through its membership in the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), the necessary instruments to make best use of the existing potential.

Synergies: Development of the regional economy Possible synergies with development programmes in the area of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises mainly consist in including water supply and sanitary infrastructure in decentralized financing mechanisms (small loans) as well as in providing water for small businesses. Water sector programmes can induce significant investments, and by introducing innovative technologies (for instance in

energy supply, cf. Energy Policy) markets for specialized businesses can be created.

Energy

An important direct connection between the energy and the water sector exists through the use of hydropower, the most commonly used form of renewable energy. Africa uses only 7 % of its hydropower potential [28] (Europe: 75 %) so that here there is still considerable potential to be tapped. In the energy sector the effects of the expansion of hydropower on the water sector and on eco-systems²⁹ must be taken into account; on the other hand integrated water resources management must consider the interests of the energy sector where conflicts over usage with other sectors arise³⁰.

Hydropower

Synergies are possible in the promotion of renewable and resource-saving forms of energy production. For instance the replacement of firewood or charcoal as a source of energy can contribute to reducing deforestation and erosion and the related effects on the water balance. In drinking water supply it is important to provide affordable, reliable energy supply for the sustainable operation of the infrastructure (in particular pumping and desalination systems).

Energy supply of water infrastructure

Education and Research

Training, education and research are indispensable elements for a sustainable development of the water sector. Without an adequate level of education and knowledge it is impossible for partners to manage the infrastructure on their own and to adjust it to the requirements of the future.

Opportunities for cooperation with the education sector lie in the fields of human resources development and training programmes (capacity building). In working together with universities and research institutions the following can be cited: the establishment of relevant study courses, cooperation in designing curricula, the participation of students and doctoral candidates in water sector programmes, the identification of research needs from concrete issues encountered in the water sector programmes as well as the initiation of specific studies accompanying project implementation (action research). The creation of regional research capacities and networks is particularly important to promote the development of autonomous expertise in the partner countries.

Cooperation with the educational sector
Universities and research

Creation of regional expertise through networking

Synergies also exist with the school education system. For instance, the improvement of water supply and of sanitary facilities in schools has empirically led to higher school attendance (especially among girls) – as a result of decreased work load and improved health of the children – while teachers are more willing to work in well-served rural areas. On the other hand, schools can make an important contribution to hygiene education and to creating awareness for the sustainable use of water.

Schools, water supply and hygiene

²⁹ Examples: negative impacts on and fragmentation of natural habitats, changes in water quality, retention of suspended sediments resulting from storage.

³⁰ Example: reduction of the water quantity available for producing energy due to the expansion of irrigation in the same catchment area.



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