

Transformative Futures for Water Security

A dialogue co-convened by IWMI



A multi-stakeholder dialogue on science-based action for water security – beyond business as usual

1. Science for a Water-Secure World Beyond Business as Usual

The *Transformative Futures for Water Security* initiative will convene multi-stakeholder dialogues among the science, policy, business and development communities to create **mission-driven alliances** to catalyze and deliver high-ambition, future-ready innovation and inclusive, science-based action for water security.

The dialogues will identify **5-6 missions which will establish a set of high-ambition, transformative targets for science-based action on water security**. Missions aim to deliver impact at scale through applied research, policy change, inclusive development, private sector action, and investment. A mission-driven alliance aligns its activities to promote the mission, achieve results, and catalyze and deliver impacts.

Transformative Futures for Water Security aims to ensure that progress towards more urgent and coherent policies and action on water security is better supported by scientific progress. It will take 'science for a water-secure world' beyond business as usual to launch **ambitious, action-oriented, and concrete commitments** to accelerate United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and water security for all.

Mission-driven alliances will commit to the **Water Action Agenda of the UN 2023 Water Conference**. They will champion scalable and inclusive innovation for transforming future water security in the face of expanding uncertainties and climate shocks over the 21st century. In a rapidly-changing world for which the past is no longer a reliable guide to future water risks, missions will deliver science-based solutions for water insecurity driven by climate change, mounting water demand for food production, energy generation and economic development, deteriorating water quality, and degrading wetlands and ecosystem services. Missions will target the priorities of youth, equality between women and men, and communities and countries that are most vulnerable to water insecurity.

2. Objectives

The overall goal of the initiative is: *water research and innovation better serves acceleration of SDG 6 and progress towards water security for all that will be robust in the face of deepening water risks this century.*

Specific objectives are:

1. Build joint commitments to science-based action on water security across policy, development, business and science constituencies;
2. Amplify the effectiveness of water research and innovation for building water security;
3. Strengthen the innovation system for water security; and
4. Map stakeholder priorities for water systems science from across constituencies and sectors, to create co-ownership of the future agenda for water research and innovation.

3. Implementation Principles

The *Transformative Futures for Water Security* initiative will follow these implementation principles:

- Youth – who have the greatest stake in future water security – are co-guardians of the dialogues and are co-leaders of mission-driven alliances for water research and innovation;
- Contributions and participation are balanced between women and men; and
- Dialogue is grounded in inclusive partnerships, including among organizations in the Global South and North.

4. Activities

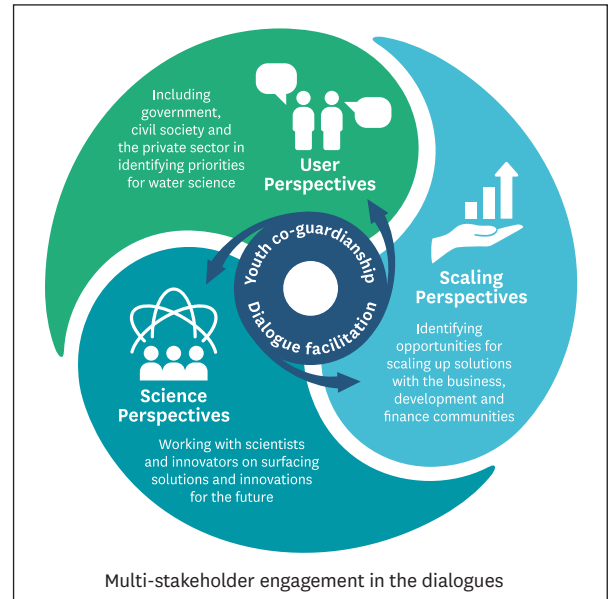
4.1 Regional dialogues

The initiative will convene online **regional dialogues** in late 2022/ early 2023 with participation from the science, policy, development and business communities. Dialogues will use scenario exploration to integrate user, science and scaling perspectives and identify regionally-differentiated and concrete, action-oriented and ambitious priorities for future, science-based action on water security (see figure on the right).

Sector dialogues will catalyze inclusion of priorities from sectors most exposed to future water risks.

4.2 Final conference

The **Transformative Futures for Water Security Conference** (~200 participants), scheduled to take place in South Africa in February 2023, will use outputs from the online dialogues to finalize the design of high-ambition missions for water research and innovation for development. Opt-in mission-driven alliances among participating constituencies from the science, policy, development and business communities will be formed with youth co-leadership to promote and catalyze missions, achieve results and deliver impacts.



4.3 Building an evidence base for water science priorities

Dialogues will be supported, if resources permit, by an assessment of alignment between needs from water systems science and past scientific focus, based on comparing results from a survey of stakeholder priorities with an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled literature analysis of water science efforts and outputs. This will build an evidence base for aligning water research to stakeholder priorities.

5. Partners

Co-convening partnerships from government and development, business and science communities will mobilize participation and contributions from regional and global stakeholder and cross-sector networks.

6. Outputs

Launch of 5-6 high-ambition missions, led by mission-driven alliances, at the UN 2023 Water Conference to deliver and catalyze future-ready innovation and inclusive, science-based action on water security.

Publications and data to guide and inspire focused, stakeholder-driven priority setting for water research and innovation. A journal special issue on the science base for the missions.

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