

# WHAT PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE

## KENYA – INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES

### MANAGEMENT (SDG TARGET 6.5)

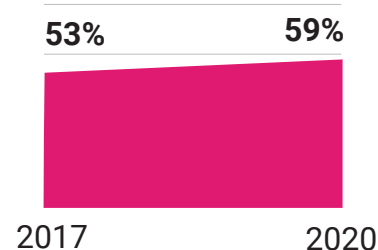


**Progress indicator:** SDG 6.5.1 Degree of integrated water resources management (IWRM)

**Level of impact:** National (569,140 km<sup>2</sup> land area, \$233.9 billion in gross domestic product and 53 million people)

**Result:** IWRM implementation increased by 6 percentage points and six concrete actions were identified and budgeted for, including ecosystem restoration in the Athi watershed.

**Progress 2017–2020:**



## SITUATION

Kenya's development agenda and the vision for 2030 is for the country to become a newly industrialized middle-income economy providing its citizens with a high quality of life as well as clean and safe water, while also meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

However, the country continues to face a number of water resources challenges, many of which are aggravated by climate change. Some of the national-level challenges identified by Kenyan stakeholders include rapid population growth, unplanned settlements in both urban areas and "water towers", and high poverty levels – all of which have implications for the water sector. At the regional level, Kenya faces challenges of a transboundary nature – it is both an upstream and a downstream country, sharing approximately 65 per cent of its water resources with its neighbours. Another key challenge identified by stakeholders was sufficient funding for strong water resources monitoring networks that are able to support the Water Resources Authority and other agencies with reliable data.

Various efforts have been made to address these challenges. The Constitution of Kenya recognizes water as a national resource, and the National Water Resources Management Strategy and National Water Master Plan 2030 have both been put in place. However, Kenya still lags behind in terms of implementing integrated measures that would coordinate efforts across sectors. Advancing IWRM has been identified as a means of fostering the water resources management improvements necessary to address clearly defined priority issues recognized across several SDG targets. Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that current funding for IWRM is insufficient, necessitating not only an increase in government spending on IWRM, but also exploration of private-sector financing options through public-private partnerships, donor funding and other innovative financing mechanisms for water resources management.

## PROGRESS MADE

Using the occasion of the SDG indicator 6.5.1 global reporting cycles (in 2017 and again in 2020), Kenyan stakeholders from various sectors convened to



discuss the most pressing challenges in advancing the implementation of IWRM and enabling sustainable water resources management more broadly. One of the key lessons resulting from the assessment process was the need for resource mobilization and linkages within the existing budgetary processes for water resources management. The 6.5.1 reporting results, as well as lessons learned from reporting process consultations, were used to identify and prioritize specific actions that can accelerate IWRM implementation.

Under the auspices of the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme, Kenyan stakeholders worked with the Global Water Partnership, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UNEP-DHI Centre to develop a 2021 National IWRM Action Plan. The process was conducted by the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, supported by the Kenya Water Partnership.

Broad stakeholder consultations – involving a combination of partners representing national and county-specific government agencies, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector – took reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.1 as a starting point, and discussed the actions and budgets needed to move the needle on IWRM implementation in the country. This process resulted in 40 potential actions being identified across the four IWRM dimensions, with six budgeted actions prioritized for implementation. The IWRM Action Plan also identified specific outputs, action steps, timeframes, lead agencies and potential sources of financing for each of these priority actions. Having this level of detail enables the institutions responsible to advocate for these actions with

the relevant financing institutions in the country, which is an important step up from identifying IWRM barriers to operationalizing action.

One of the success factors of this process was the country's leadership, aligning the actions proposed with national development plans, and budgeting from the outset. This included the medium-term priorities and corresponding resources in the Big Four Agenda, and the programmes included in the Third Medium Term Plan (2018–2022) of Vision 2030. The actions were also aligned with the broad development policies, plans and programmes for the financial year 2020/21–2022/23 Medium Term Expenditure Framework budget.

One of the six priority actions included in the Action Plan, the development of an incentive-based mechanism for private sector support for IWRM, was already assisted by the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme, with a specific focus on ecosystem conservation and restoration in the Athi watershed. Thanks to dedicated support, necessary future actions in the watershed were identified and pitched to the private sector, with the cost estimated at US\$ 15.45 million. The public sector offered to provide up to the same amount as the private sector in match funding, to increase private sector engagement. Over the coming months, further discussions with key private sector actors and potential donors are expected to take place to seek further buy-in to the actions pitched. This initiative, which is currently ongoing, should see progress not only in SDG indicator 6.5.1, but also in 6.6.1 and potentially others under SDG 15, as well as being in the spirit of SDG 17.

## KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- Country-led process with external support
- Alignment with national development plans and budgeting
- Broad involvement of stakeholders, including the private sector

## LEARN MORE

- [Kenya 2020 Stakeholder Consultation Report on SDG 6.5.1](#)
- [Kenya 2020 national reporting on SDG 6.5.1](#)
- [Kenya SDG6 IWRM Action Plan, April 2021](#)
- [SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme](#)
- [Overall progress on SDG 6 in Kenya](#)