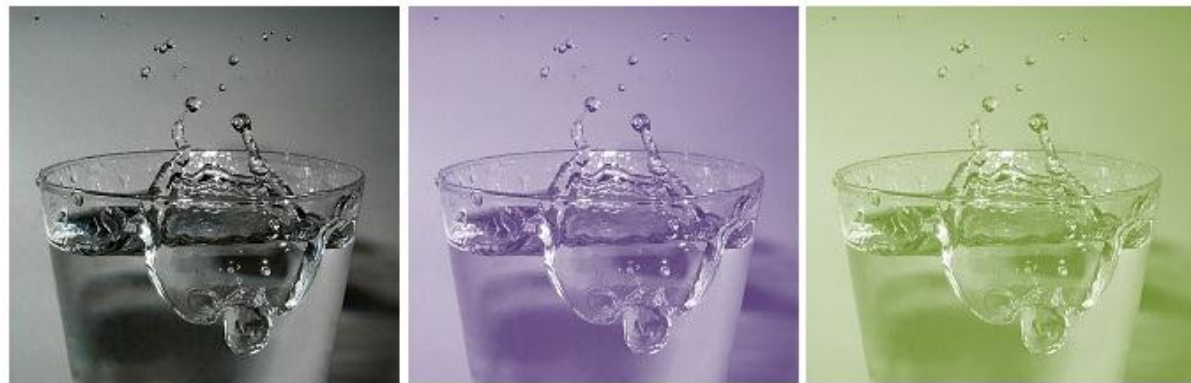


# Rough Guide

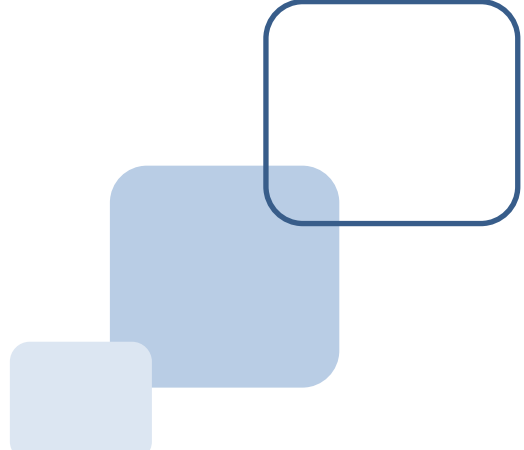
August 2011



## Water Policy



Network of Regional Governments  
for Sustainable Development



The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD is an international organisation representing namely federated states and regional governments, at the global level. The network promotes understanding, collaboration and partnerships in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of subnational government's important contribution towards sustainable development. A member of the Organisations des Nations Unies-Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (ORU-FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of ORU-FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.

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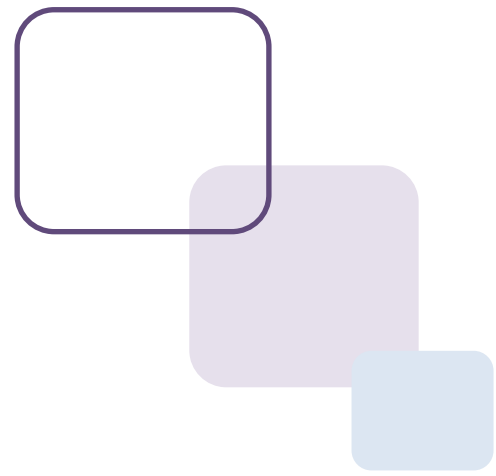


nrg4SD members interested in Water Policy, may also find the following nrg4SD products useful:

- Water Policy Work Programme
- Water Policy Working Group

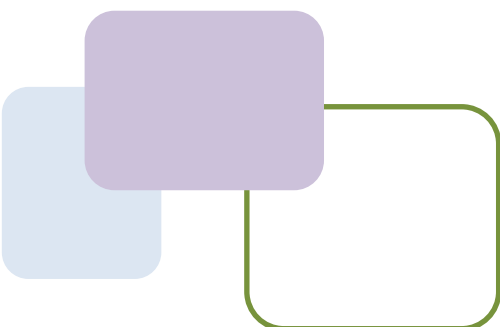
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## I. Introduction

Water is essential for human life. To ensure the basic needs of everyone, each individual should have access to 20 – 25 litres of drinking water per day. Today 1 billion people in the world have no access to improved water supply, while 2.6 billion people have no access to adequate sanitation, mainly in Asia and Africa. The lack of drinking water supply and adequate sanitation is a serious threat to human health. Climate change, environmental pollution, increasing population, economic development and rapid urban growth are influencing water supply in both developed and developing worlds. Droughts are becoming more frequent due to climate change which leads to water scarcity. Industrialisation, intensive agriculture and livestock farming are the main causes of increasingly polluted water, while population and economic growth put pressure on water supplies but in developed and developing countries.

The challenge is twofold: on the one hand, ensuring a wider access to water resources and sanitation in developing countries in order to promote public health and tackle inequalities; on the other hand, preventing the side effects on water resources of climate change, population growth and economic development.

This nrg4SD Rough Guide presents in a quick and reader-friendly manner some basic information on the role of subnational governments in Forest Policy, the main international bodies, instruments and working methods of the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). nrg4SD members may be interested in completing this background information with the Forest Policy Work Programme and Forest Policy Working Group.



## II. Role of subnational governments in Water Policy

Subnational governments are strategically positioned in the management and supply of water and sanitation. Due to their proximity to citizens, they are well placed for identifying the needs and the strengths of their societies in achieving sustainable water management and supplies. Either through drafting strategies for sustainable water use, ensuring that water use is consistent and complies with existing legislation, monitoring the ecological status of water bodies, subnational governments are in the position to adopt legislation and regulation on sustainable water use and conservation at subnational level. Subnational

governments are key actors in raising awareness of sustainable water use and management by acting as an 'interface' with citizens, business sector, civil society, etc. on water-related issues.

### **nrg4SD activities in the field of Water Policy**

nrg4SD activities in the field of water resources and sanitation mainly focus on strengthening capacity-building and collaboration among its members, as well as lobbying at international level towards the recognition of subnational governments as key actors in water and sanitation policies.

In 2010, nrg4SD organised its fourth meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean focusing on water, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, giving the opportunity for members from Latin America and the Caribbean to share experiences on water related issues, particularly through a technical exchange on Water Resource Management. The conference followed the adoption of a **2010-2014 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a cooperation framework on water issues in Latin America and the Caribbean**, signed at the World Summit of Regions co-organised by nrg4SD and the Congress of Intendentes from Uruguay in April 2010 in Montevideo.

Developed by the Basque Country Government and the Basque Water Agency within nrg4SD, the MoU involves an extensive list of Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Peninsula partners willing to establish long-term collaboration on water issues also related to sustainable development. The MoU aims to (i) provide education, training and awareness on water issues, with an emphasis on women participation; (ii) exchange advice on hydrological planning; (iii) collaborate on research, innovation and development projects related to hydrology; (iv) monitor the sound environmental and ecological status of water bodies, and (v) implement the International Decade Water for Life 2005-2015. In the framework of this MoU, nrg4SD co-organised a 30 hour-long **Online Course on Awareness Raising and Capacity Building on Water Issues**, held between November 2010 and January 2011.

nrg4SD has established the **Working Group on Water Resources and Sanitation coordinated by the Basque Country to develop technical expertise concerning water management and the sustainable use of water**. The Working Group will be launched jointly with the Working Group on the Rio +20 process on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at the nrg4SD General Assembly in Québec City, Canada. During the meeting, the working group will pay particular attention to the development of the **nrg4SD Memorandum of Understanding for Latin America and the Caribbean** on

mutual collaboration on water issues. It will also concentrate on joint initiatives between nrg4SD and ORU/FOGAR in the framework of **the World Water Forum taking place in Marseille (PACA) in March 2012**. The activities of nrg4SD incorporate a territorial dimension into the World Water Forum.



### III. International panorama

#### Timeline

##### 1977 **United Nations Conference on Water**

The UN Conference on Water was held in Mar del Plata in 1977 which was the first and only intergovernmental conference devoted exclusively to water. Water resources and sanitation have been put at the top of the global development agenda.

##### 1993 **World Water Day (WWD)**

Following the UN Conference on Environment and Development also known as the Rio Earth Summit, which took place in Rio, Brazil in 1992, the UN General Assembly declared the 22 March of each year as the **World Water Day (WWD)**. Since 1993, states have been invited to celebrate this occasion by implementing UN recommendations and organising concrete activities on water. Each year the WWD is devoted to a different theme: in 2011 this was 'Water for cities'.

##### 1992 **The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development**

The **Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development**, stressing that (i) fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment; (ii) water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels; (iii) women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water, and that (iv) water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good.

##### 1996 **World Water Council (WWC)**

The **World Water Council (WWC)** is an international multi-stakeholder platform on water-related issues established to raise awareness and promote action at all levels towards a sustainable use and management of water. The WWC has acknowledged

the major role of subnational governments in achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals and has developed a Local and Regional Authorities Process in the framework of the past editions of the World Water Forum aiming to strengthen their capacity to better develop and manage water resources and services.

### 1997 **World Water Forum (WWF)**

Since 1997 the WWC has organised the **World Water Forum (WWF)**, the most significant event in the field of water, taking place every three years. For more information, see the next session of this Quick Guide.

### 2000 **UN Millennium Development Goals (UN Millennium Declaration)**

The **UN Development Goals** adopted in 2000 aim “to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water” *and* “to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.” *At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the international community also committed “to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation”.*

### 2003 **UN inter-agency mechanism UN-Water**

**The UN inter-agency mechanism UN-Water is based in Zaragoza, Aragon which is a member of nrg4SD.** The mechanism was established to disseminate information, build the knowledge base, provide a platform on water issues and coordinate the water-related activities of the different UN agencies. One of its main tasks is to monitor and report on the international progress made to achieve water and sanitation targets. The **UN World Water Development Report (WWDR)** is the UN flagship report on water, published every three years following the WWF.

### 2005 – 2015 **International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’**

The UN has proclaimed the period 2005-2015 **International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’**, aiming to promote efforts to meet international commitments made on water-related issues by 2015. It focuses on action-oriented activities and policies ensuring long-term sustainable water management and improved access to sanitation through greater cooperation at global level.

June 2011 **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

At the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate talks in Bonn, Germany, in June 2011, **the issue of water was included in international negotiations on climate change.** The impacts of climate change on water and integrated water resources management under the **Nairobi Work Programme** at its next session.



#### **IV. World Water Forum (WWF)**

Since 1997 the World Water Council (WWC) has organised the **World Water Forum (WWF)**, the most significant event in the field of water, taking place every three years and aiming to:

- Raise the importance of water on the political agenda
- Support the deepening of discussions towards the solution of international water issues in the 21st Century
- Formulate concrete proposals and bring their importance to the world's attention
- Generate political commitment

The five WWFs organised since 1997 have placed **water on the international political agenda.** They have certainly contributed to a global awareness of the water issues and the WWF remains the largest international event in the field of water. With a unifying and open-minded image, the WWF strives to open its activities to the entire water stakeholders of the political arena and of the civil society. The WWC, the host city and the host country promote interactions and partnerships at all geographic scales and between all actors, with a special focus on developing countries.

One of the major accomplishments of the Council is its contribution to increasing the awareness of global water issues and the political mobilisation it has reached through the WWF. Serving as stepping-stones towards global collaboration on water problems, the **Forum is a unique platform where the water community and the policy and decision makers from all regions of the world can link together, debate and attempt to find solutions to achieve water security.**

Over the years, the Forum has led the movement from the **World Water Vision**, a unique prospective exercise on the future state of global water resources whose results were presented at the 2nd Forum, to the establishment of concrete actions and commitments derived from the 3rd Forum.

Since the last edition of the World Water Forum in Istanbul, local and regional authorities have been invited to sign the [Istanbul Water Consensus \(IWC\)](#), calling on subnational governments to adapt their water infrastructures and services to the emerging challenges they are facing, such as climate change, rapid urban growth, depletion and pollution of water resources. nrg4SD and Organisations des Nations Unies-Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (ORU-FOGAR) are collaborating on the input of subnational governments to the Regional and Local Authorities process of the WWF.

The next edition of the [World Water Forum will take place in Marseille, France, on 12-17 March 2011. Marseille is in the region of PACA \(Provence Alpes Cote Azur\) which is a member region of nrg4SD.](#) nrg4SD is fully engaged in the preparation of the World Water Forum with a focus on enhancing the territorial dimension of the different processes of the Forum. The work of nrg4SD is focusing on the European and the Regional and Local Authorities Processes of the WWF.

In order to do so nrg4SD has established partnerships with the European Commission Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO) and Organisations des Nations Unies-Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (ORU-FOGAR). [nrg4SD is currently working with its partners to further advocate the role of subnational governments in both sustainable water governance and management and in decentralised cooperation on water issues.](#) nrg4SD and the European Commission (DG DEVCO) are co-leading the working group on European cooperation with third countries in the water sector within the European Process of the Forum.



## V. European Union (EU) Water policy

The EU has adopted legislation on water since the second half of the 1970s, setting standards and targets for water quality and use, water pollution and wastewater management aiming to protect both human health and the environment.

In 2000 the EU adopted its most coherent and comprehensive piece of legislation on water policy, the [Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#), which is built on four main pillars:

- (i) coordinated action to achieve 'good status' for all EU waters, including surface and groundwater, by 2015;

- (ii) setting up a water management system based on natural river basin districts, crossing regional and national boundaries;
- (iii) integrated water management, bringing different water management issues into one framework;
- (iv) active involvement of interested parties and consultation of the public

The WFD stresses the importance of constant water monitoring and calls for integrated river basin management as the best and most cost-effective approach to water governance. Member States are requested to identify the authorities responsible for water management, to implement river basin management plans (RBMPs) and water pricing policies, providing incentives for sustainable water use and mainstreaming the 'polluter pays' principle.

In 2002, at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the EU launched an international political initiative called [European Union Water Initiative \(EUWI\) – Water for Life](#) with the goal to create the conditions for mobilising all available EU human and financial resources, and to coordinate them to achieve the water-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in partner countries. National Policy Dialogues on integrated water resource management (IWRI) as well as water supply and sanitation (WSS) have been developed under the EUWI. These dialogues are based on consultations with relevant ministries, agencies and NGOs from third countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Africa, and they address several issues such as the preparation of strategic water management and drinking water quality plans, the management of transboundary waters, and the adaptation of the water sector to climate change. The EUWI is currently undergoing review and the second phase of this umbrella initiative is expected for 2012.

The EU announced that a '[Blueprint to safeguard Europe's Water Resources](#)' will be released in 2012, aiming to be a long-term strategy, beyond the current EU Water Framework Directive targets and in the context of a more resource-efficient Europe. The Blueprint will contain policy recommendations based on on-going assessments, as well as water efficiency targets adapted to different national and regional circumstances. It will also aim to overcome the lack of integration with other policy areas, such as land use and management, forest and agricultural policies, and to develop an EU demand-based water policy.



## V. Some key water related events in 2011

1 July 2011 – **Kick-off of the working group on European cooperation with third countries under the European regional process of the World Water Forum**, Co-led by European Commission DG DEVCO and nrg4SD, Brussels Belgium

21-27 August 2011– **2011 World Water Week: ‘Responding to Global Changes - Water in an Urbanising World’**, Stockholm, Sweden

21 August 2011 - **6th World Water Forum Solutions Fair**, Stockholm, Sweden

29-31 August 2011 – **nrg4SD 2011 General Assembly – Meeting of nrg4SD Working Group on Water Resources**

6 September 2011 – **Bonn Water Dialogues towards Rio + 20**, Bonn, Germany

16-18 November 2011 – **International Bonn 2011 Conference: ‘The Water Energy and Food Security Nexus – Solutions for the Green Economy’**, Bonn, Germany

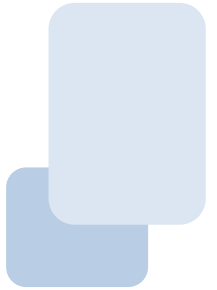
December 2011 (date tbc),– **Synthesis meeting of European process of World Water Forum 2012**, Nice – Sophia Antipolis, France

12-17 March 2012– **6th World Water Forum**, Marseille, France

22 March 2012– **World Water Day**



## VII. Sources for more information



**United Nations UN**

United Nations World Water Council  
United Nations World Water Forum 2012, Marseille France

**European Union EU**

DG Environment – water policy



# North and South Subnational Governments committed to Sustainable Development

The **Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, nrg4SD** works tirelessly to champion the work of subnational governments on sustainable development, including climate action. International organisation (namely federated states and regional governments) at the global level; nrg4SD promotes understanding, partnerships and projects in sustainable development and seeks greater international recognition of the important contribution of subnational governments towards sustainable development. Member of the Organisation des Nations Unies-Forum Global d'Associations de Régions (ORU-FOGAR), nrg4SD is the voice of ORU-FOGAR in the field of sustainable development.



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