

# Why good water governance matters

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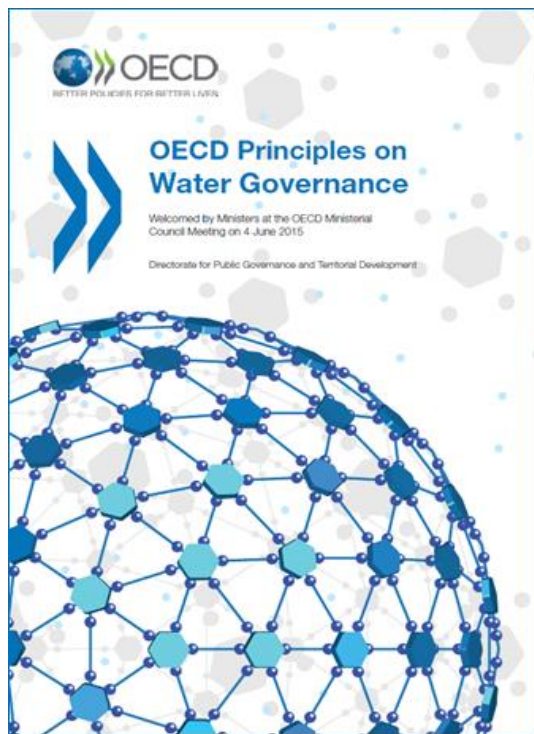


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# OECD Principles on Water Governance



Water crises are often primarily governance crises because of a lack of:

1. Specified outcomes: need clear policy objectives, legislation, roles and responsibilities
2. Enough resources: skilled people and finance
3. Review and scrutiny: regulation, monitoring
4. Trust and engagement: debate, evaluate, manage trade-offs

# **1. What outcomes are you aiming to achieve?**

- Reliable supplies of clean water for people
- Enough water of the right quality to support a flourishing economy
- A healthy water environment

## **And with clear roles and responsibilities across:**

- Policy making and legislation
- Policy implementation
- Operational management and delivery
- Regulation and enforcement

## **2. What resources do you need?**

### **Enough skilled people who:**

- Know how to operate and maintain the systems for water supply and sanitation
- Keep their knowledge up to date with regular training
- Act professionally and are valued for their vital work

### **And enough money to:**

- Deliver a reliable and equitable service across all customers
- Maintain current assets and invest for future generations

## **Cont'd 2. 'Cheap water hurts the poor'**

We should be aiming to provide universal access to water and sanitation, but how to finance?

- Funding through taxation hides the true cost of delivery and means that the service is not valued
- Charging is never popular, and can be emotive, but shows that the service is not 'free'
- The Dilemma: charge at a rate that all can afford – which won't yield enough income to provide the service objective – or charge the true total cost and provide support to those for whom it's unaffordable

### **3. Review and report on how you are doing**

**Independent regulation can inspire trust and confidence in the service, and protect the interests of customers, other water users and the environment:**

- Trust in drinking water quality is paramount, and scrutiny needs to be independent of the supplier
- Monitor costs and efficiency of delivery to ensure that charges are fair, and that there is a progressively better service at lower cost
- Set environmental standards – for a sustainable flow regime and water quality – and monitor compliance with regulated abstraction limits and effluent discharge standards
- Regulators need to be adequately resourced to do the job that the public and government expect by cost recovery through charges
- Ensure transparency and accountability to build trust

## **4. Dynamic systems require dynamic assessment: engagement, evaluation and reform**

Introduce review processes to monitor and evaluate whether:

- Policy and legislation is still fit for purpose in the context of changing water availability and demand, more stringent standards, different priorities...
- Resources and funding are adequate and are being used effectively and efficiently
- Innovation could deliver a better service
- Trade-offs are identified and are being managed fairly over time
- Customers' and stakeholders' views and expectations are being listened to and acted upon

# **Achieving good water governance is a journey**

- Every nation has inherited systems for managing water which are not fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Modernising them takes time, public engagement and political will
- Need to respect tradition, culture, hydrology, environment, place
- Joining up water policy with agriculture, energy, housing, industry, economic ambition... needs to consider conflicts and trade-offs, and develop mechanisms for achieving sustainable and fair water management
- Be clear about the drivers for change, and ask: 'If we carry on as we are, what will happen?'

**Don't let the best be the enemy of the good**