



## VISUAL SUMMARY

# Progress on implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management

Mid-term status of SDG Indicator 6.5.1  
and acceleration needs, with a special  
focus on Climate Change

2024



# Introduction

Implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM) is critical to achieve sustainable development.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

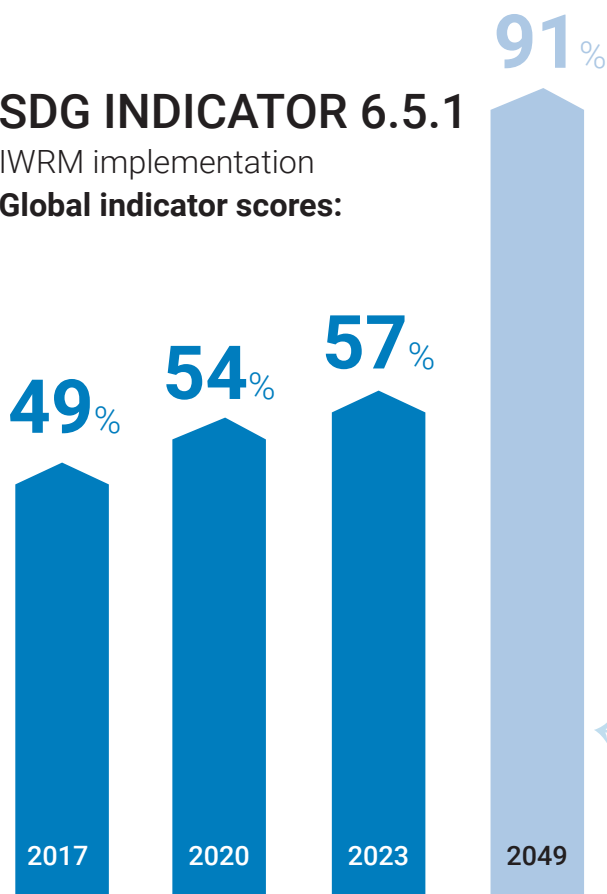
Ensure availability and **sustainable management of water** and sanitation for all.

### TARGET 6.5

By 2030, implement IWRM at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

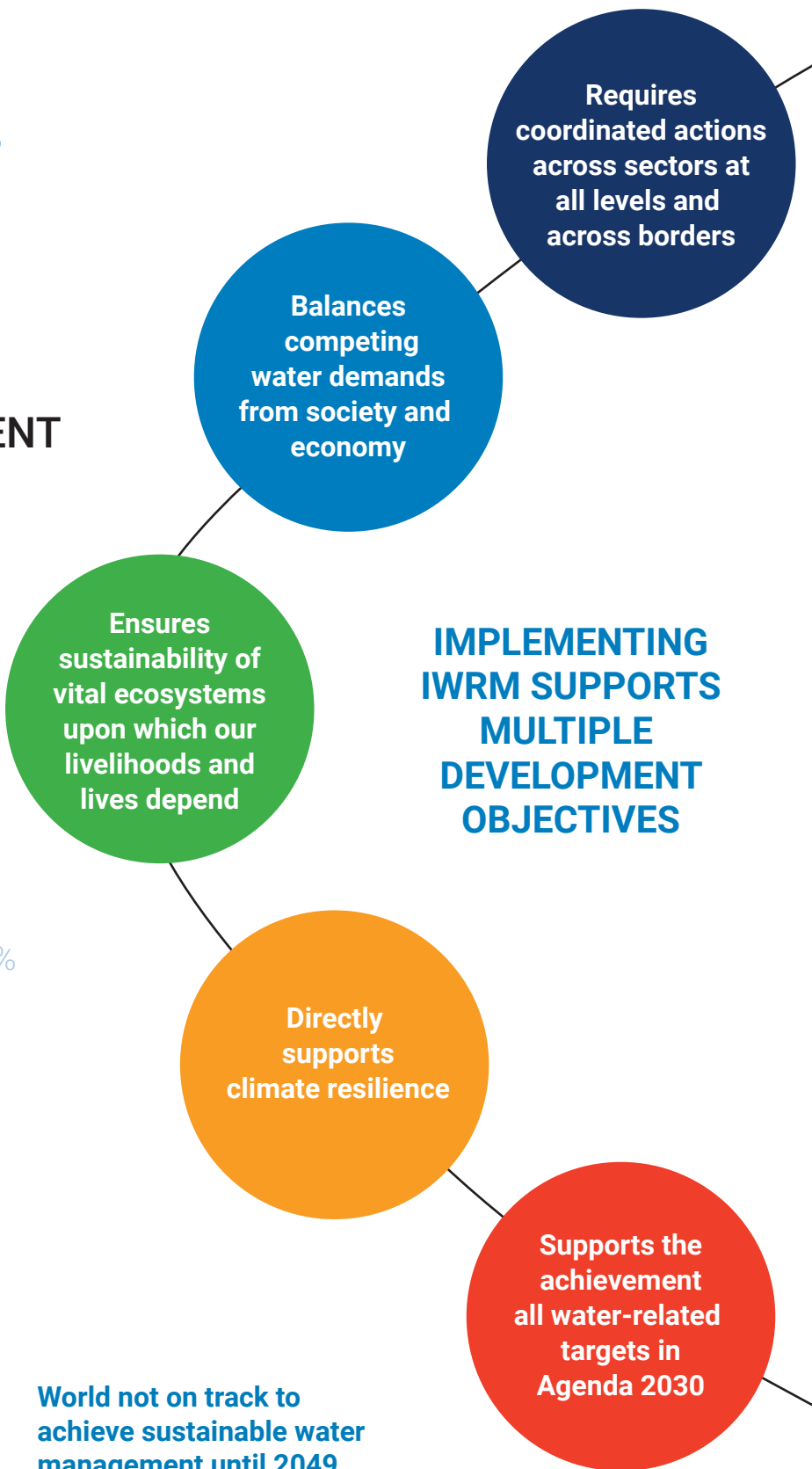
### SDG INDICATOR 6.5.1

IWRM implementation  
Global indicator scores:



World not on track to achieve sustainable water management until 2049.

## IMPLEMENTING IWRM SUPPORTS MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

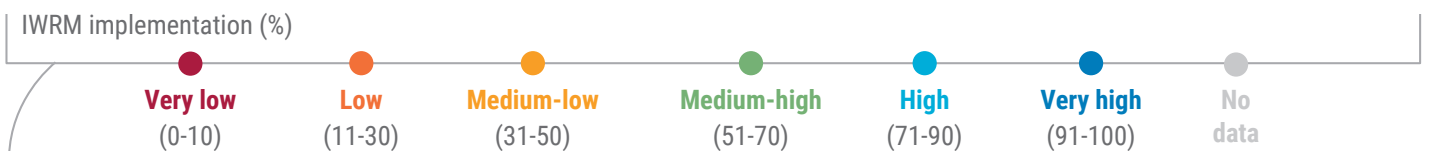
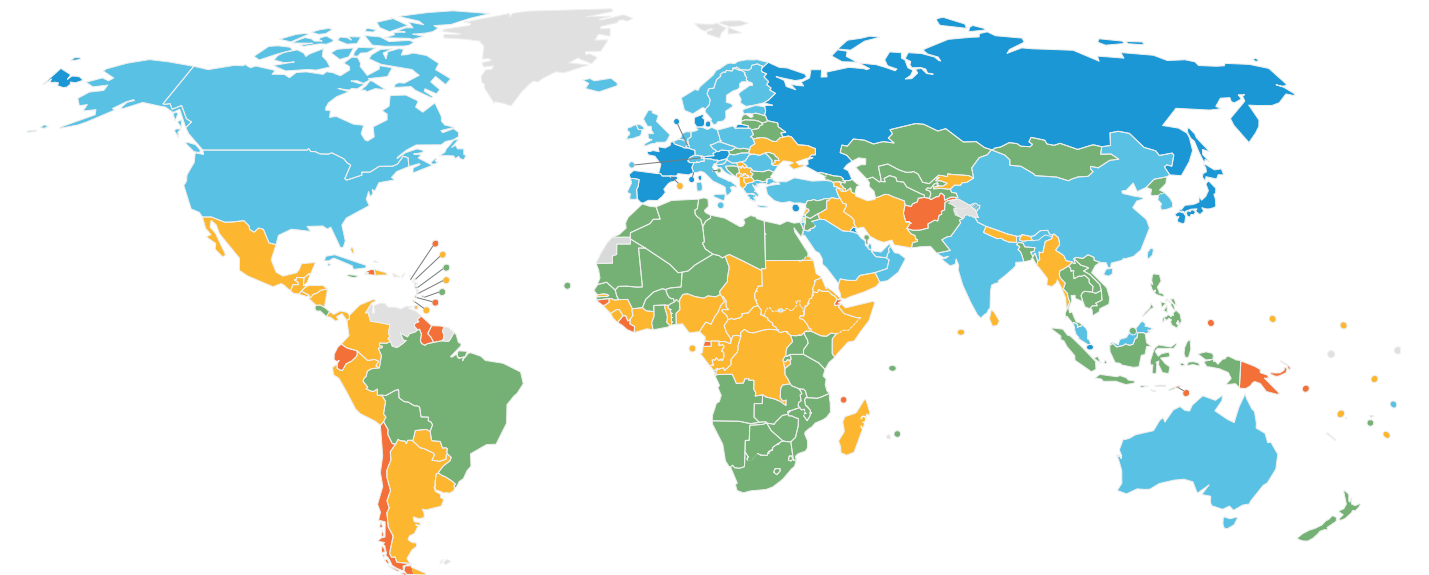


### SDG INDICATOR 6.5.2

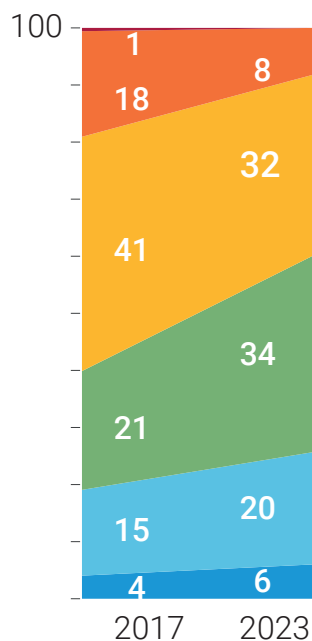
Measures transboundary cooperation

Coordinated planning, management and financing needs to be prioritised in **40% of countries** which still have **limited capacity to balance competing demands** across sectors and cope with **increasing pressures**, including **climate change**.

FIGURE 1: IWRM IMPLEMENTATION PER COUNTRY, 2023 OR MOST RECENT (SDG INDICATOR 6.5.1)



**PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRIES PER IWRM IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**



**REPORTING PROCESS**

○ Indicator data based on **stakeholder** consultations

○ **IWRM survey** with **33 questions** on:

- Enabling environment
- Institutions and participation
- Management instruments
- Financing



○ **191 countries** reported across **three rounds**

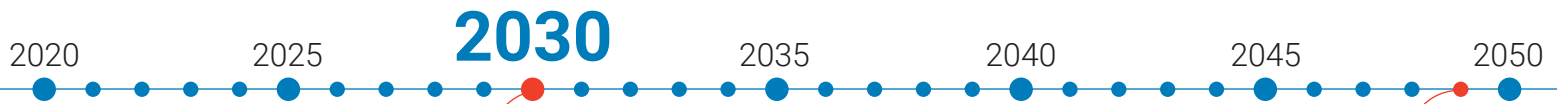
- 2017
- 2020
- 2023

At least **170** countries per round

**137** countries reported in all three rounds

See more: [IWRM Data Portal](#)

# Key Message 1: Priority Countries



**3.3 billion people** and the economies of **100 countries** will have **low resilience** to cope with **increasing pressures**, including from **climate change**.

At the current rate, the world will **not achieve sustainable water management until 2049**—  
25 years from now.

**47 countries** are close to, or have reached, the target of 'very high' IWRM implementation.

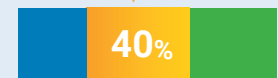
The populations and economies of **73 countries** are being left behind ('low' and 'medium-low' countries in Figure 1).



**63 countries** are in a less acute situation, but still need to accelerate implementation ('medium-high' countries in Figure 1).

## Actions needed on Key Message 1: Priorities

- 1. Action needs to be prioritised in the 40% of countries with 'low' and 'medium-low' IWRM implementation.**  
Build on experiences from more advanced countries or from those making good progress.

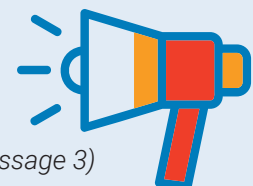


- 2. Coordinated planning and management is needed, in partnerships, at all levels.**



- 3. Actions needed vary between countries. Some of the most commonly reported priority areas include:**

- Financing gap (see Key Message 2)
- Better coordination between climate and water authorities (see Key Message 3)
- Raising political commitments for IWRM at the highest level (see Key Message 4)



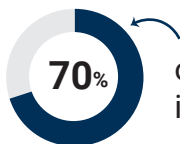
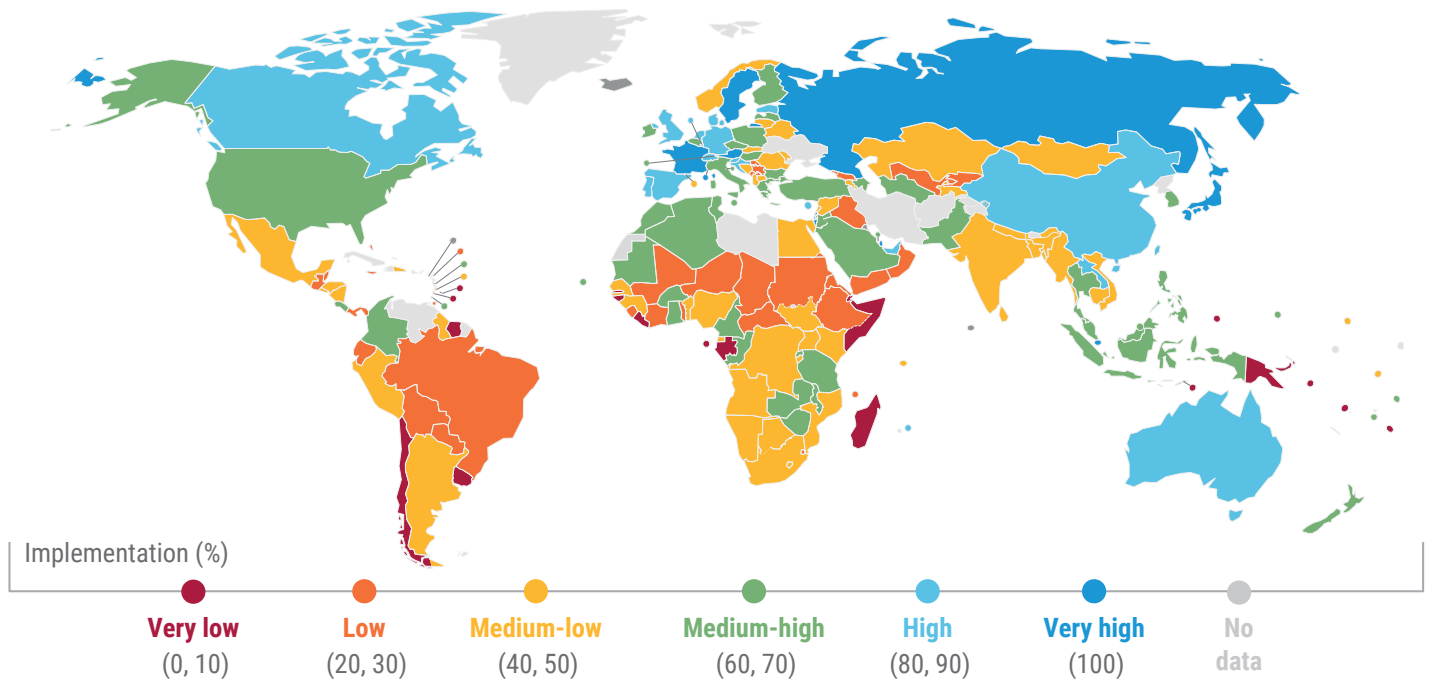
# Key Message 2: Insufficient Financing

**Insufficient finance** constrains the implementation of integrated water resources management, **limiting institutional capacity, monitoring networks,** and the application of **management instruments.**

**60%** of countries report ineffective revenue raising to turn water laws, policies and plans into practice

↳ 'Very low' to 'medium low' countries in Figure 2

FIGURE 2: REVENUE RAISING MECHANISMS FOR WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



of countries report insufficient funding to cover their IWRM implementation needs at **basin, aquifer, or sub-national levels.**

## Actions needed on Key Message 2: Financing

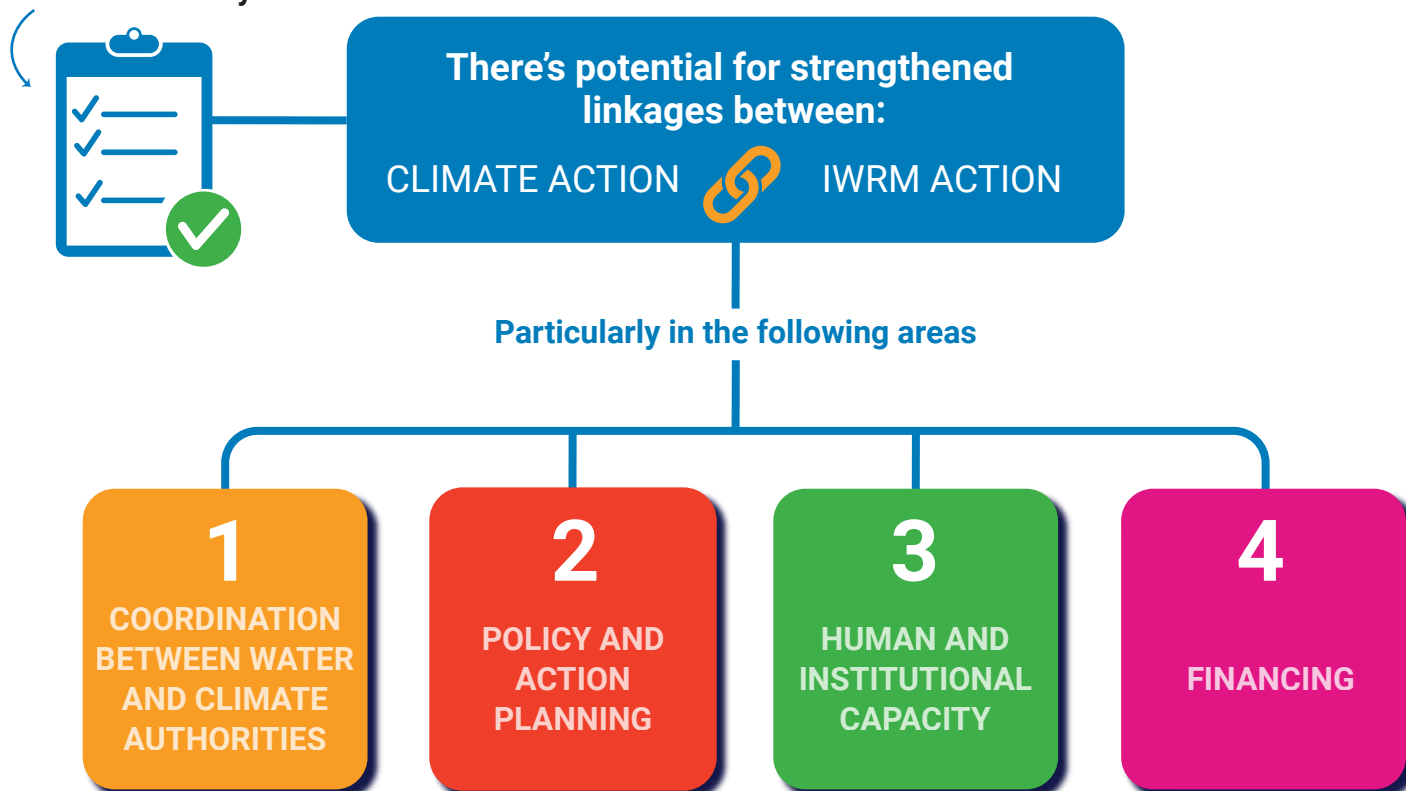
1. Develop and implement revenue raising and cost recovery arrangements.
2. Investments in water management and infrastructure support other economic sectors.
3. Coordinated actions will have greater impact than if they are undertaken separately.
4. Governments should consider financing systems appropriate to their national circumstances.



# Key Message 3: Coordinate on Climate

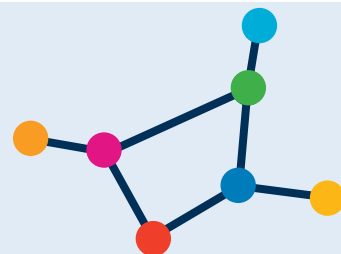
Using IWRM approaches – cross-sector, participatory management at the basin scale – in climate change adaptation efforts, **presents a great opportunity to build resilience to climate change impacts.**

New data from  
2023 651 survey



## Actions needed on Key Message 3: Climate

1. Coordinate planning and management between sectors, through an IWRM approach, to better adapt to the impacts of climate change.



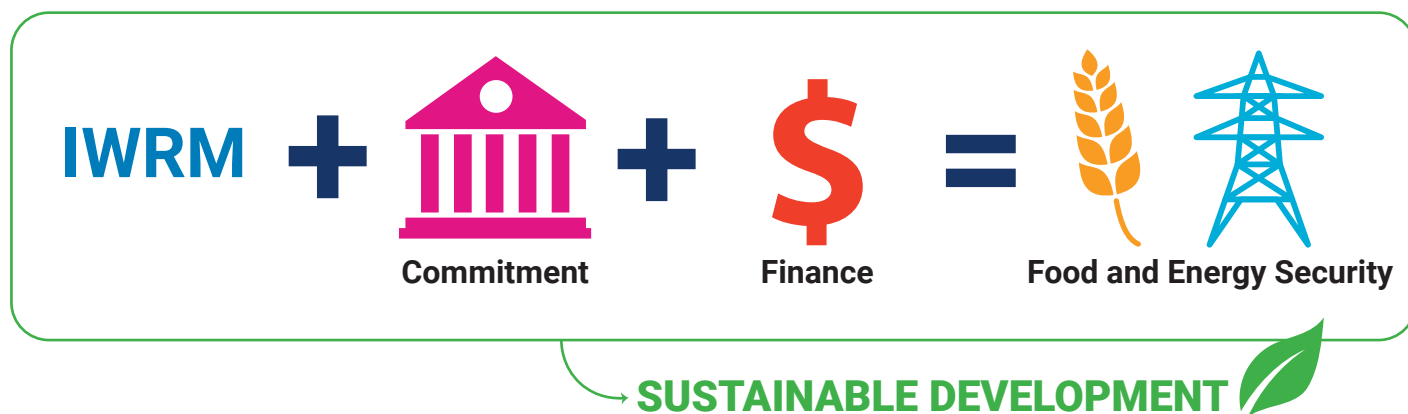
2. Use climate financing for implementing coordinated water management and cross-sector climate resilience projects.



# Key Message 4: Political Commitments

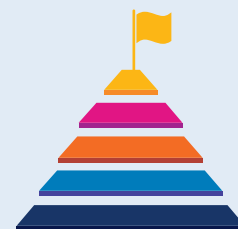
**Political commitments** at the global level for sustainable water management have **never been higher**, but they have **not been matched** by the required **finance or action** on the ground.

Recognizing **IWRM** approaches as being relevant to **achieving other development objectives**, including **energy and food security**, is **critical to accelerating progress on sustainable development**.



## Actions needed on Key Message 4: Mainstream

1. **Make the case for, and advocate, the value of implementing IWRM at the highest national level, to achieve multiple development objectives.**



2. **Mainstream IWRM into other sector actions, such as those to secure food and energy security, climate resilience and water supply and sanitation.**



**Ultimately, it is up to each country to determine what their main barriers are to achieving sustainable water management, building on SDG 6.5.1 reporting and other sources, and explore the most effective ways of overcoming them, in the national context.**

We hope that the findings and recommendations made in the [2024 SDG 6.5.1 global progress report](#) will help to galvanise action to encourage and support countries in advancing implementation of integrated water resources management, and in turn accelerate broader progress on sustainable development, particularly where it is needed most.

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## SDG 6 Progress Update Series, by SDG 6 global indicator

This Visual Summary is part of a series of reports providing an in-depth update and analysis of progress towards the different SDG 6 targets and identifies priority areas for acceleration: Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (SDG indicators 6.1.1, 6.2.1), Progress on wastewater treatment (6.3.1), Progress on ambient water quality (6.3.2), Progress on water-use efficiency (6.4.1), Progress on level of water stress (6.4.2), Progress on integrated water resources management (6.5.1), Progress on transboundary water cooperation (6.5.2), Progress on water-related ecosystems (6.6.1) and Progress on international cooperation and local participation (6.a.1, 6.b.1).

The reports are produced by the responsible custodian agencies, coordinated by UN-Water through the Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 ([IMI-SDG6](#)). They present the latest available country, region and global data on the SDG 6 global indicators, and are published every two to three years.

See the full collection of reports and associated products at [www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-progress-reports](http://www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-progress-reports) or scan the QR code below.

