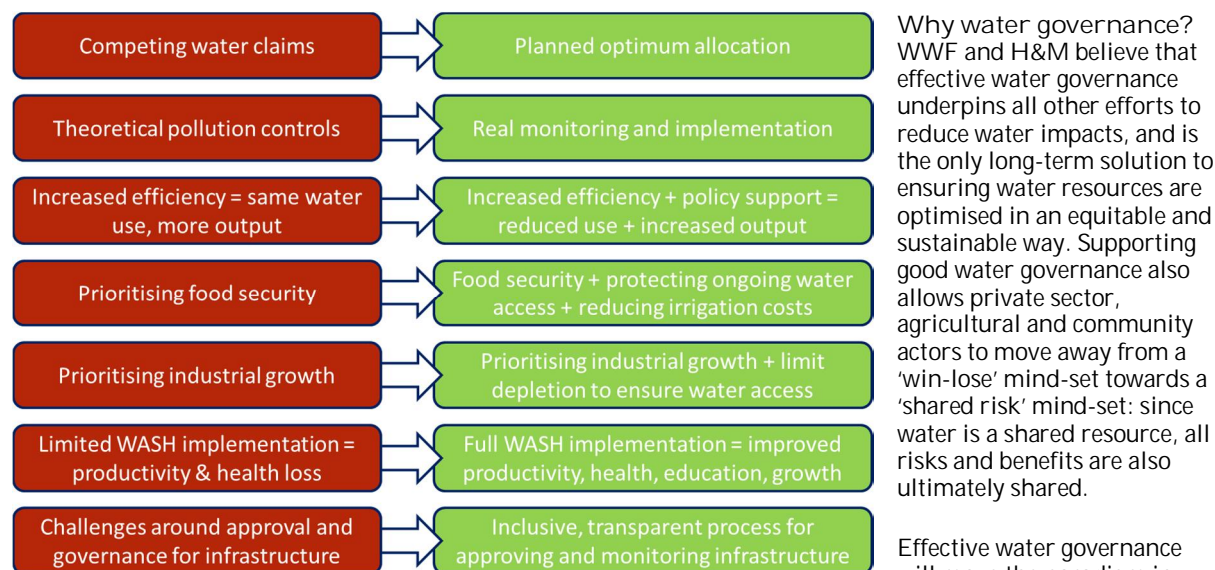


WATER GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH

WHY GOVERNANCE IS VITAL FOR REDUCING WATER RISK

WWF and H&M have worked with local delivery partner CRDS to investigate challenges around water governance in Bangladesh. The findings paint a clear picture of a country with a high potential for growth and development but some major challenges in *implementing* its ambitious policies and plans.



Why water governance? WWF and H&M believe that effective water governance underpins all other efforts to reduce water impacts, and is the only long-term solution to ensuring water resources are optimised in an equitable and sustainable way. Supporting good water governance also allows private sector, agricultural and community actors to move away from a 'win-lose' mind-set towards a 'shared risk' mind-set: since water is a shared resource, all risks and benefits are also ultimately shared.

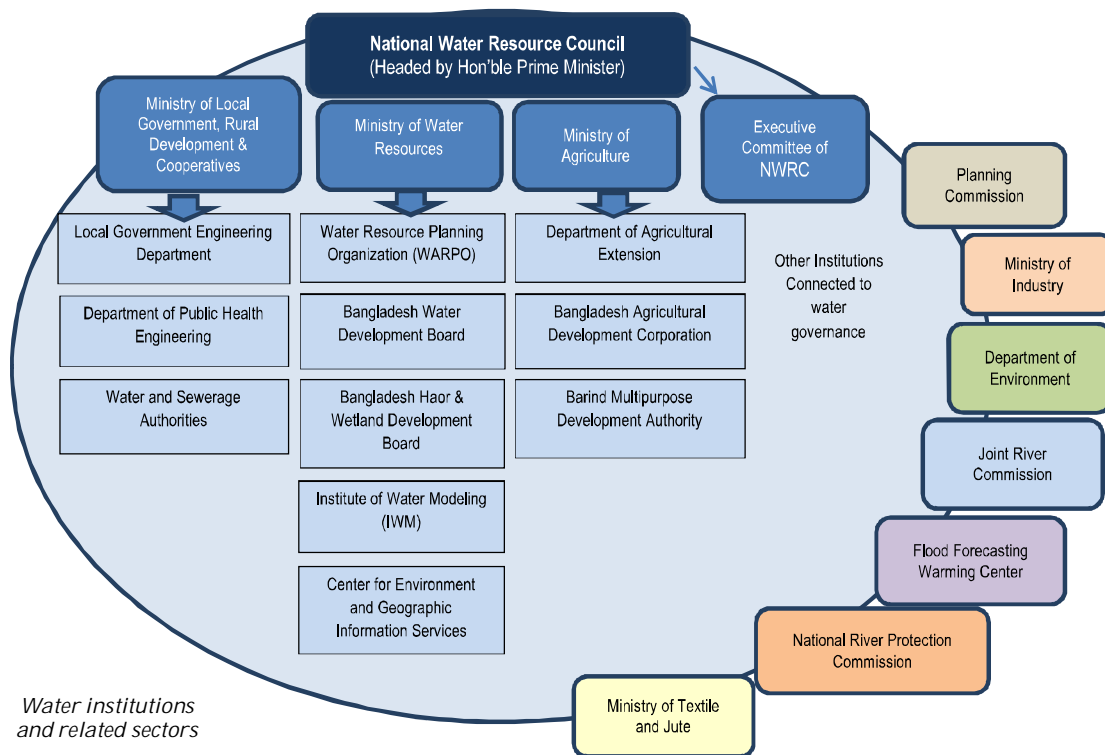
Effective water governance will move the paradigm in

Bangladesh away from pure growth and food security agendas towards a more integrated approach to development – where food production can still be maintained while reducing irrigation demand, and industry can continue to grow whilst ensuring discharge quality and groundwater use are sustainable.

The report uses desktop review of policy alongside consultation with technical experts, government leaders, industry, communities and NGOs to reflect the realities of water governance implementation opportunities and challenges. It covers policy, institutions, mechanisms and stakeholder participation, and makes detailed recommendations on how water governance can be optimised within Bangladesh.

KEY FINDINGS

- Water policy in Bangladesh is broadly sufficient, and the 2013 Water Act is ambitious in its scope. However, there are certain issues to address around document translation, consistency between policy documents, contradictions with judicial rulings, and lack of clear specifications on implementation processes.
- Institutional mandate and resources are vital to delivery of effective governance. Currently there is a great need for co-ordination and clarification of institution roles for implementing water policy, and a lack of resources for key functions such as on-ground monitoring.
- WARPO is the nominated institution for delivery of the 2013 Water Act – but it has major challenges around mandate and resources. WARPO needs to be reinforced as an institution OR responsibility for implementation moved elsewhere.
- Monitoring and penalty systems are not functioning well as there is a large challenge of scale and resource gaps. Penalties are not high enough to motivate water users to comply in the face of competitive market - e.g. high costs of running ETPs (effluent treatment plants) are an incentive to disobey the law.
- Communities, farming and industry groups should be integrated into national level and local water governance bodies – e.g. the MoI should be part of the NWRC whilst local communities should be part of decentralised local governance mechanisms to ensure they have a voice in decision-making.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO ADDRESS RISK IN WATER GOVERNANCE

Priority quick wins are the first step in addressing governance issues and will deliver results with low time and financial investment:

- Updating policy documents to address key discrepancies, translation issues, conflict with judicial rulings and specifications of delivery mechanisms.
- Exploring which stakeholders can be better represented in water governance bodies- e.g. the MoI could be included into the National Water Resource Council to ensure buy-in from the sector and inclusion of sector-specific challenges in national policy on water
- Assessing the specific institutional needs and delivery functions for the 2013 Water Act and reviewing against water related institutions

Priority long term changes will require co-ordinated focus from all relevant stakeholders:

- Clarifying institutional mandates and resources for implementing the 2013 Water act (with process grounded in the PM's office) – and implementing a rationalised approach for governing water
- Exploring potential for decentralised regulation and community involvement in water decision-making, ideally through local water user groups

ABOUT WWF AND H&M:

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. As part of its long-term conservation strategy, WWF has partnered with many national and international organisations on Water Stewardship. Water stewardship focusses on the role of private sector and other actors working together to create shared solutions to shared water risks, with a focus on strengthening water governance.

H&M was founded in Sweden in 1947, with a business concept to offer fashion and quality at the best price. The H&M Group has around 2,700 stores in 48 markets including franchise markets. This includes Europe, Asia, Middle East, North Africa, North America and South America. WWF and H&M have been working in partnership on water stewardship since 2012, and have a comprehensive programme of activities across the WWF water stewardship ladder. The partnership has focused efforts on collective action and water governance in two priority places – China and Bangladesh. This report is a key part of WWF and H&M's work in Bangladesh.

For full details on WWF's work in Bangladesh and access to the report, please go to panda.org/bangladesh