

Integrity in Water Stewardship Initiatives

CEO Water Mandate Working Conference

Lima, Peru
10 April 2014

Improving the impacts and effectiveness of water stewardship initiatives



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water witness
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Project objectives and outputs

- establish a **practical framework for ensuring high levels of integrity** in watershed level, multi-stakeholder water stewardship initiatives (WSIs)
- develop **management/assurance processes to improve the impacts and effectiveness** of such water stewardship initiatives
- OUTPUTS: Good practice guidelines (inclusive of an integrity framework) and supporting tools



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Definition Water Stewardship

- “The use of water that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site and catchment-based actions” [AWS website]
- Water stewardship involves organisations taking shared responsibility to pursue meaningful individual and collective actions that benefit people and nature.



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Definition Water Stewardship Initiative

- Coordinated engagement among interested parties (generally involving businesses) to address specific shared water challenge(s).
- WSIs reflect structured forms of collective action, typically consisting of joint decision making, implementation, and accountability mechanisms.



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Definition Integrity

WSIs with integrity ideally have:

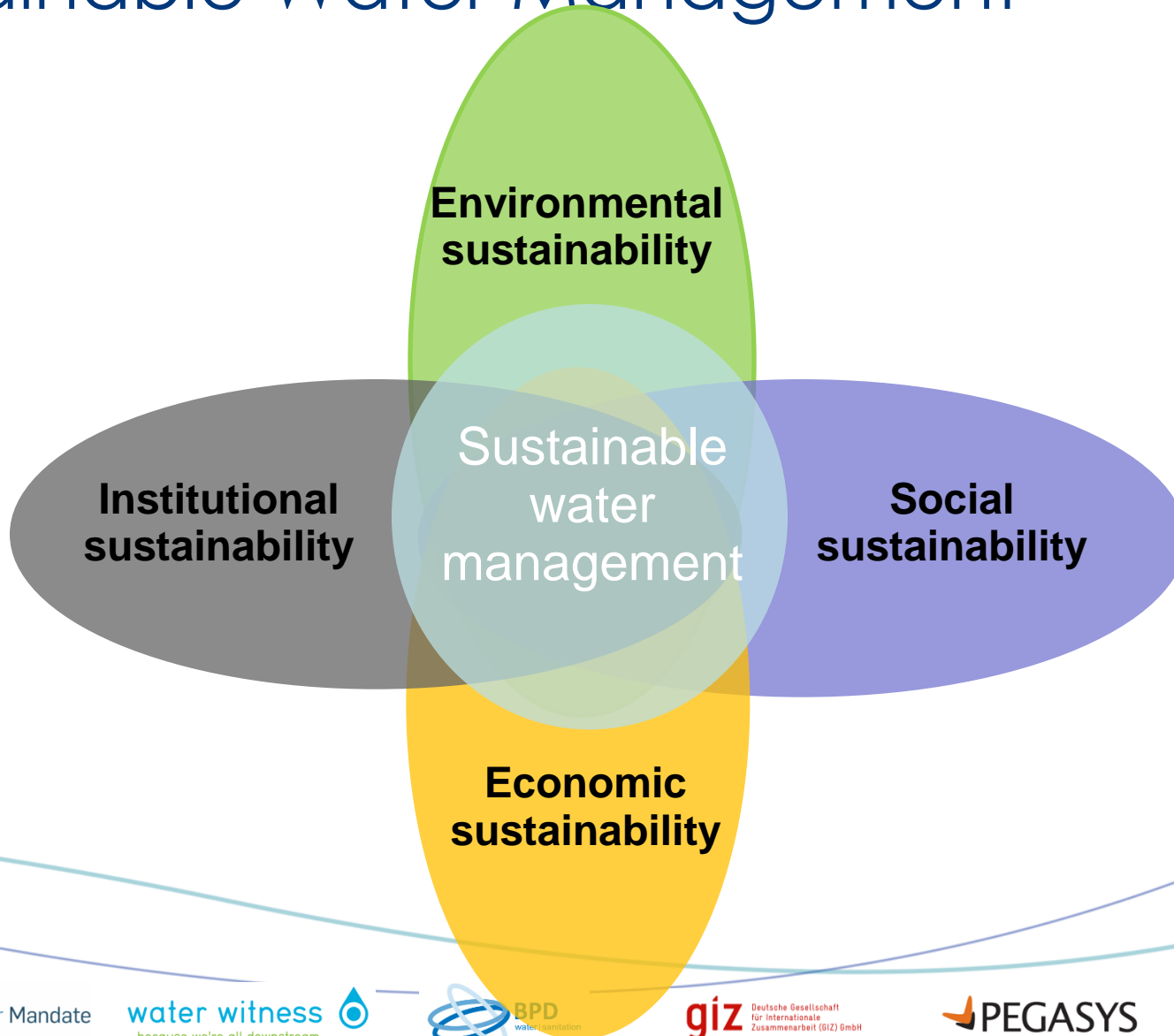
1. Trustworthy, credible, and accountable partners;
2. Inclusive, transparent, and responsive processes that lead to informed and balanced decision-making;
3. Clear objectives and demonstrable outcomes that advance sustainable water management.



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Sustainable Water Management



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Methodology

A 5 country study:

Phase 1 – Desk review

Phase 2 – Data collection

- Case study analysis
- Expert group discussion/Semi-structured interviews
- Triangulation between multiple perspectives

Phase 3 – Framework development and validation workshops



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Approach

- Sensitive and respectful to evolving partnerships
- Anonymity and confidentiality
- Focus on constructive outputs and viable tools for practitioners

To strengthen the societal benefit of water stewardship initiatives and make them 'safer' for all partners



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Partners

a. Reputational risks / track record

"They cause pollution, there is the tax issue and they have a bad human rights record. That is a problem for any partnership". (NGO)

"Not all NGOs are straight."(Government)

b. Capabilities

"X have a big role but don't have resources, or staff and need financial assistance."(Business)

c. Intent and incentives

"They just go where the money comes from. If it's not personally profitable or politically useful they're not interested."(NGO)

"The most important thing is the will to deliver."(Business)



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Partners

d. Representation

"Using ward councillors as community representatives is not appropriate – they are highly politicised, may just use it for their own benefit" (NGO) vs. "Elected councillors and ward councillors represent poor communities, you shouldn't neglect democratically elected people" (Donor)

"The number of NGOs in the room is not a guarantee that public interest is being heard" (Business)

e. Continuity

"it was a pet project of the Director and when he changed jobs the commitment collapsed" (Business)

"they have a big problem with staff turnover" (Government)

f. Behaviours and conduct

"they never show up for meetings so what is the point?" (Business)

"if you promise something and raise expectations you need to deliver" (Government)

"some partners claim the achievement as theirs alone" (NGO)



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Process

a. Design: Problem, option and feasibility analysis

"It's taken 1.5 years to get to a problem analysis properly done. Otherwise these things are politically lead. It's been mixed up and scope was wrong." (Business)

"Paying X to continue being unaccountable is a waste of time and money - where is the theory of change? They've been focusing on the wrong things, in the wrong places with the wrong people." (NGO)

b. Stakeholder analysis and engagement

"There is nobody involved in the project who speaks on behalf of the poor and that is a mistake. It would be very beneficial to have someone who understands those realities. I guess no analysis was done." (NGO)

"We are not linked to decision makers so how can we influence decisions?" (Business)

"There is control and gatekeeping and we've been side-lined – the way they do things is not fair or neutral" (Business)

c. Coordination and communication

"Having a full-time project manager reduces many risks" (Business)



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Process

d. Fiduciary risk and financial management

"X took responsibility for all the funding, ...there is risk in capital letters – Y is not going to pay." (Gov/Donor)

"As soon as they started paying people it became just another donor lead programme rather than owned by partners. That weakens it significantly – no one takes it as seriously now." (Business)

e. M&E and learning

"M&E is not built into the project...there are no baselines or indicators, or formal targets. Of course it is a risk – how can we learn or show evidence of progress without it? " (NGO)

f. Whistleblowing

"There is no system for reporting incidences of corruption no whistleblowing. There's a lot of giggling about it but nothing serious is agreed." (Business)



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Outcomes

a. Demonstrable contributions to SWM?

"The big problem is that it wasn't demand driven and so impacts beyond capacity building will be difficult to show." (NGO)

"M&E was not robust so we couldn't show benefits" (Gov)

b. Institutional and policy alignment

"They are setting up a multi-stakeholder group to do the same job, which will leave the [mandated national multi-stakeholder water committee] dead in the water." (NGO)

"The thing failed – it wasn't aligned with policy." (Gov)

c. Sustainability and strategic relevance

"There's no commitment for strategic take up of lessons learnt here." (NGO)

"Once the funding ends that will be it – it's frustrating but difficult to see the legacy" (Business)



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Outcomes

d.Capture:

Organisational resources and investment priorities

"It's a massive drain on their staff resources" (NGO)

"We have many rivers with problems and I don't think XXX is our preference. We don't have interest there. They need to think about the impacts on our resources." (Gov)

"Those areas are my cash cow, there is a risk of priority shifting but we have flexible priorities!" (Gov)

"If we're channelling public funds to this work - it's subsidies for the rich." (NGO).

Regulatory action

"[Our] role is enforcement – when we need funds they will provide." (Gov)

"I'm not sure it's right for XXX to direct them, as it is [enforcement of] the law." (NGO)

"Yes we have the enforcement policy...This is essential to show we are being even handed in enforcement and not swayed or biased, but consistent." (Gov)



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Outcomes

d.Capture:

Policy

"We have to constantly ask ourselves, whether we've done any policy capture. It's actually not good to any of the parties." (Private Sector)

The X has appointed Y [business grouping] to draft new regulations – yes, it's risky" (Business)

People

"XXX is investing in educating the brightest kids on water. There is risk that they will grab them." (Gov)

"There is a high risk of companies establishing community organisations which rival and disturb genuine community organisations and activism, or employing those people in companies CSR departments." (NGO)



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Outcomes

d. Capture:

Water

"We want to create our own future and make sure they can't take the water away" (Business)

"They will say 'now we have saved this much water, we want to raise production' " (Gov)

"Promoting offsets is seeding a licence to pollute or accumulate resources – it's abhorrent" (NGO)

c. Value for money



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Emerging integrity risks and challenges

Two guiding questions:

- a. Are the risks identified real – is anything missing?
- b. What responses or strategies are available to mitigate or manage these risks?



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