

FINNISH WATER WAY



INTERNATIONAL WATER STRATEGY FINLAND

August 2018 Helsinki

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry | Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment |
Ministry of the Environment | Ministry for Foreign Affairs |
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

FOREWORD

This International Water Strategy of Finland acknowledges water as a critical element for sustainable development and an essential resource for all human activities. In Finland, we have invested over many decades in comprehensive water management and sustainable water use. Together with our innovation expertise and technological know-how, Finland is in a unique position to provide sustainable water solutions for our partners worldwide.

The United Nations' 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set a common vision for global development in 2015. The self-standing and interlinked water-specific SDG 6 aims to "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". This underlines the increased attention to water security and sanitation on the global political agenda. Water supply and sanitation are also critical prerequisites to achieving almost all other SDGs, such as poverty reduction, gender equality, food security and health.

Finland is committed to achieving all global water targets of the 2030 Agenda and to promoting policies and taking actions to reach the targets in time. Therefore, the international water strategy of Finland from the year 2009 has now been revised and enhanced to match the ambition and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. The updated Strategy focuses on Finland's international objectives and activities related to water.

Additionally, this Strategy introduces the concept of the *Finnish Water Way*. Finland is famous for its rivers, groundwater and over one hundred thousand lakes, all of which are sensitive to human activity. These waters provide some of the cleanest water on earth for human consumption. The Finnish Water Way is an approach where we all work together as a society – from the grass-roots level to the national level – towards sustainable water management. We have achieved good results due to long-term capacity building and good governance accompanied by cooperation between the public and private sectors and the active participation of the civil society and local stakeholders alike. The Finnish Water Way provides novel approaches for water-based solutions to ensuring a water-secure world by 2030.

This Strategy forms the framework for Finland's water-related ambitions and actions until the year 2030 and provides guidance on the implementation of SDG 6 through international collaboration.

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FINNISH WATER WAY

Finland and water.

Water is in Finland's DNA. We are one of the most water-rich countries in the world, and our waters are critical for our economy and wellbeing. Finland's water resources management works smoothly, with different actors working together and making use of cutting-edge technology. We provide affordable, high-quality drinking water and sanitation services for everyone. We also take care of nature, and maintain a balance between the needs of the people and the environment.

Our success has not come easily but has developed over time. We have invested in integrated water resources management, which has allowed us to enhance the efficiency of our water use and find a balance between different water uses. Our industrial water management and treatment processes are state of the art, and make use of closed systems building on the principles of the circular economy. Our water supply and sanitation systems consist of a variety of elements, from small-scale cooperatives to municipal-owned companies. We also cooperate closely with our neighbours in managing our shared waters, as well as internationally to promote equitable use of transboundary water resources.

In the future, the combination of smart metering and digitalisation will provide new opportunities for furthering the more efficient use of water in water-scarce areas. This combination also serves as a safety element, for example in housing. Data management and the use of artificial intelligence open a new window to manage and monitor our environment. The key elements of Finnish know-how come from systems-wide solutions and the creation of new applications, including the use of new technologies, for instance, in risk and resource management, flood prevention, utility modernisation, pollution prevention, and the recycling of water and nutrients in a safe manner. We are committed to providing solutions to global water needs with our partners and can utilise and share our experiences and expertise in this respect.

Strategy.

The International Strategy for Finland's Water Sector from 2009 brought together different ministries along with other actors to promote water security. This

updated Strategy outlines Finland's actions on water until the year 2030. At the core of this Strategy are three pillars that together with cross-cutting objectives provide a platform for cooperation and pave the way towards water security. The Strategy is complemented by an Action Plan that guides its implementation and that will be updated on a regular basis.

Concept. *Finnish Water Way*

The Finnish Water Way is a multi-stakeholder approach towards sustainable water management. We have exceptionally good cross-sectoral collaboration on water issues between our ministries, research institutes and civil society. One example of this is a national interministerial working group that discusses and coordinates Finland's international activities on water. In addition, the Finnish Water Forum brings together actors in both the public and private sectors. We believe that through the Finnish Water Way, we can offer innovative tools for water-based solutions with our partners to ensure a water-secure world by 2030.

Mission. *Together towards responsible and equitable water security*

In our mission statement, *together* emphasises the importance of partnerships and collaboration. We also emphasise the importance of collaboration between different sectors such as water, health, energy, food and forests. *Responsible* refers to governing water resources in a sustainable manner globally. *Equitable* means the equitable use of all water, while prioritising its use for safe drinking water and sanitation. It also refers to the equitable use of waters both within and between countries. This is not easy, and requires advanced knowledge and analysis systems, along with well-functioning legislation and governance frameworks. Lastly, *water security* underlines the importance of securing sufficient water for wellbeing and development, from the local level to the global level.

Vision. *Water-Secure World by 2030*

The vision of the Strategy describes Finland's commitment to do its part to reach Sustainable Development Goal 6 for water and sanitation.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Strategy are grouped under three pillars:

- I Water for Sustainable Development
- II Water for People
- III Water for Peace

Each pillar has specific objectives that contribute to selected SDG 6 targets. The objectives of each pillar are complemented by cross-cutting objectives.

I Water for Sustainable Development.

Finland promotes the management of water resources in an integrated and sustainable manner. Our aim is to secure sufficient availability of good quality water for all uses: human consumption, industry, energy, food, and fibre production. At the same time, substances posing an environmental risk such as nutrients and emerging pollutants, including micro-plastics and pharmaceutical

residuals, need to be taken into account. We promote and provide water-smart circular economy solutions, for example in industrial and agricultural settings. Finland also strives to maintain and protect water-related ecosystems and ecosystem services. In addition, we seek to increase the resilience of societies by maintaining the infrastructure needed for water supply and sanitation to reduce the risks of disasters and enhance adaptation to climate change. Lastly, we encourage water stewardship actions to ensure the sustainable use of water in production and throughout international value chains.

II Water for People.

Safe and sufficient drinking water and adequate sanitation are essential elements for a life of human dignity. Finland provides innovative and proven solutions for safe, sustainable and affordable water supply and sanitation services and promotes the equitable access



Cross-cutting Objectives

- Promoting water as a human right
- Good governance
- Equitable and sustainable water use
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Gender equality
- Policy coherence
- Responsible and rights-based use of water resources
- Enhancing international collaboration and business opportunities in the water sector
- Water, energy and food security nexus

SDGs 1–5, 6a, 6b and 7–17

to them. Moreover, circular solutions for industry and municipal wastewater treatment are covered. Further, Finland's aim is that water supply and sanitation services would be provided in areas affected by conflict and disaster. This means that preventive measures need to be adopted.

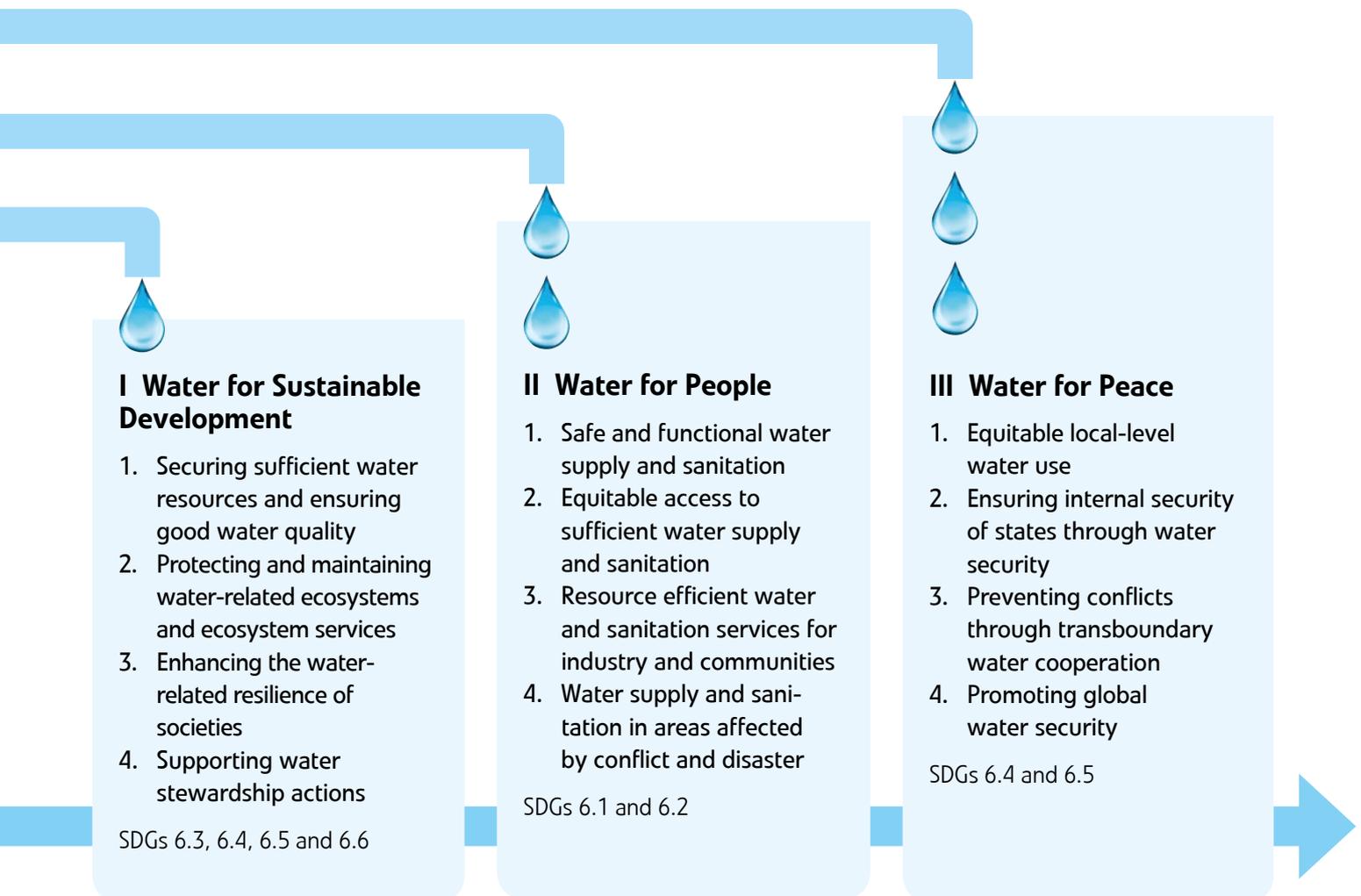
III Water for Peace.

The equitable and sustainable use of water is essential for sustaining peace and ensuring security. At the same time, such use can ease pressure on forced migrations. Finland supports water security actions from the local to the global level. At the local level, we support equal participation in the planning of and decision-making on the use of water resources to prevent conflicts. We enhance transboundary cooperation at all levels, for example by promoting the establishment and development of bilateral and multilateral arrangements

and agreements. Furthermore, we promote water security in global arenas through the exchange of knowledge and by emphasising the importance of water in mediation.

Cross-cutting Objectives.

The objectives set for each of the pillars are complemented by the following cross-cutting objectives: promoting water as a human right, good governance, the equitable and sustainable use of water, climate change mitigation and adaptation, gender equality, responsible and rights-based use of water resources, and policy coherence between sectors. We also promote the water, energy and food security nexus under all three pillars. Moreover, when we work towards these objectives, a wide range of business opportunities and prospects for international collaboration are available, and we wish to enhance these opportunities.



MEANS

The means are the policies, actions and tools required to achieve the objectives. Concrete policies and actions, along with responsible actors, are set out in the Action Plan, which is to be reviewed and updated periodically, based on reassessment. This will also allow for determining the relevant means for achieving the objectives.

I Water for Sustainable Development.

Integrated water resources management and understanding the interlinkages between and cross-dependence of water, energy, food and forests are key to securing the availability of water for all uses. Circular economy solutions and nature-based solutions are among the important means being pursued. Furthermore, a commitment to water stewardship and joint actions helps companies, the public sector and other stakeholders alike to develop sustainable water use and governance.

II Water for People.

Securing the availability and supply of clean drinking water and sanitation requires both technical and soft solutions that take into account local contexts. Precautionary measures, efficient water use and circular economy solutions are the key means here. The use of innovative approaches and digital technologies in infrastructure gets us closer to the objectives – even in situations related to a conflict, disaster or reconstruction.



Common means for implementing the Strategy

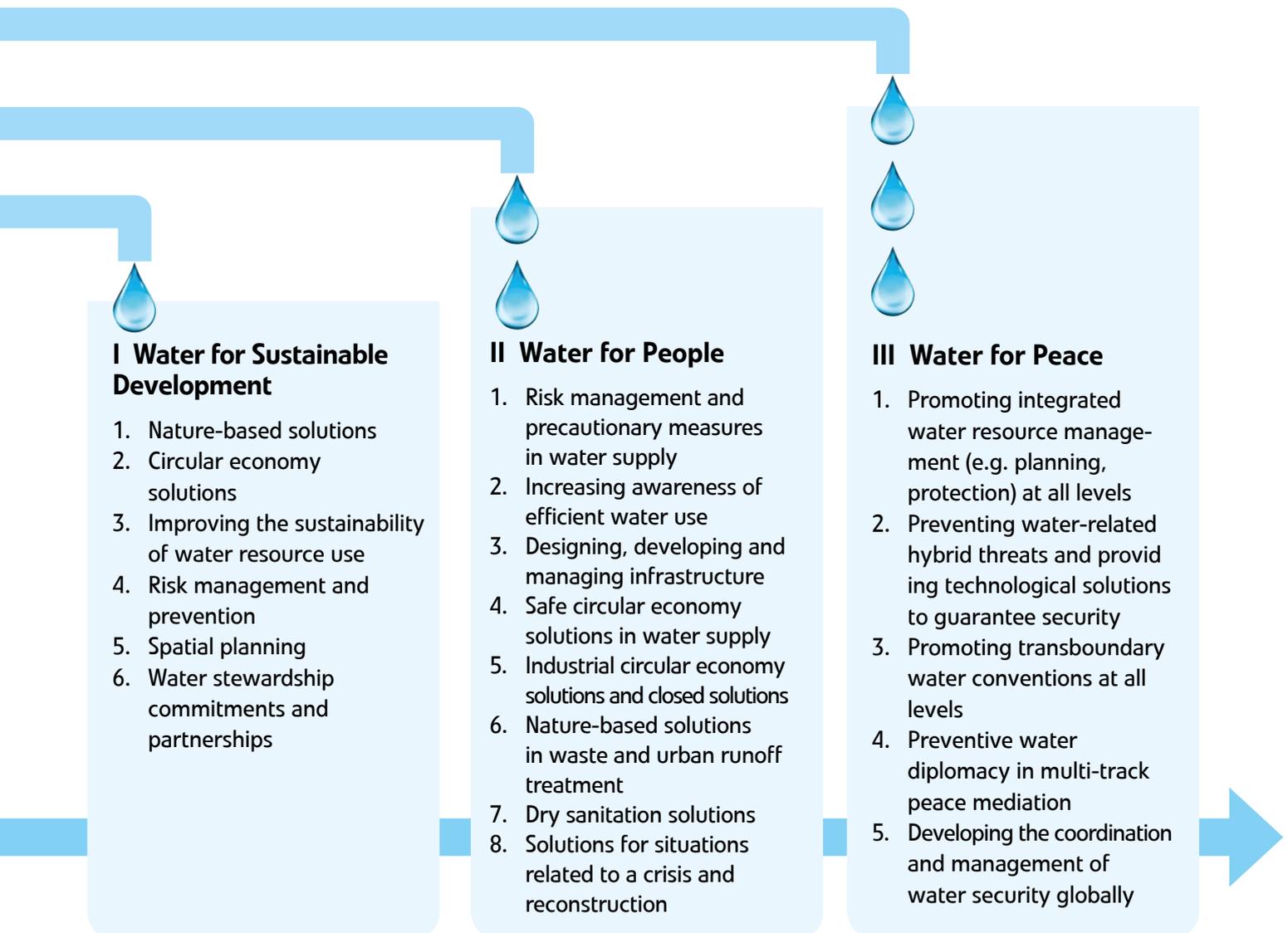
- Strengthening and enabling multi-stakeholder collaboration between the public and private sectors and the civil society
- Developing, packaging and commercialising water-sector innovations and solutions for global markets
- Influencing and enhancing international agreements and processes
- Developing legislation and institutions, and capacity building
- Enabling international education and work opportunities for water-sector professionals
- Supporting multi-disciplinary research collaboration and evidence-based decision-making
- Developing financing and procurement mechanisms

III Water for Peace.

Capacity building through community and transboundary cooperation helps ease tensions related to and disputes over water. Institutional arrangements, such as international water conventions and agreements, combined with very concrete measures, such as the regulation of water flows and the monitoring of water quality, are viable ways to manage transboundary waters and increase trust. Societal capacity development and technological solutions protect societies from water-related external threats, such as acts of terrorism. Further, promoting water diplomacy, for example in multi-track peace mediation, helps to prevent new conflicts from arising. At the global level, coordinated and joint actions are needed for enhancing water security.

Common means.

The common means support the achievement of the objectives of all three pillars. As an example, policy dialogues, innovative financing mechanisms, capacity building and multidisciplinary research collaboration and co-creation with stakeholders can be used to support all our objectives. At the same time, the strong involvement of the private sector, research institutes, education institutions and the civil society is essential for reaching all of the objectives. Open global markets facilitate exchange and advance opportunities for innovative partnerships providing technologies, services and digital solutions.





Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland