

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)



FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO aims to provide food security, ensuring that people have access to enough high quality food to live a healthy and decent life. FAO is the custodian agency to monitor SDG 6.4 on water stress and efficiency.

WHAT IS FAO?

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FAO?

The member nations of FAO have pledged themselves to three main aims:

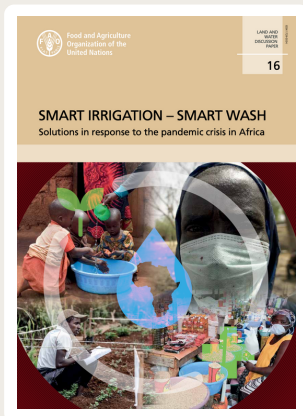
to raise the levels of nutrition and the standards of living of their peoples;

to improve the sustainable production and distribution of all food and agricultural products;

to improve the condition of the rural population.

FAO provides policy and technical advice to member countries in the fields of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry and nutrition. Through the Field Programme, it assists developing countries in their efforts to promote rural development and strengthen food security, raise agricultural production, improve efficiency in land and water use, and achieve optimum utilization of forestry and fisheries resources.

FAO AND WASH

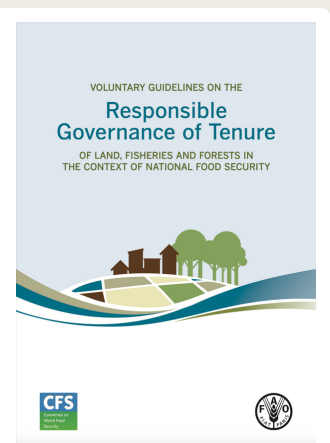
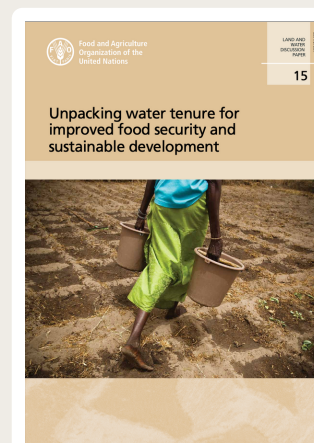


Relationship between water for irrigation and drinking water

Access to water is key to meeting both the right to food and the right to drinking water and sanitation and we cannot separate drinking water from water for production. Therefore, FAO is advocating multiple use system from an integrated approach encompassing both irrigation water structure and drinking water. Likewise, FAO is looking at multiple uses of water from the perspective of responding to the COVID19 crisis.

Water tenure

Water tenure is both a social and a legal construct. It comprises the diverse legislative and customary systems that shape how various stakeholders – whether as individuals or groups – relate to one another in their use of and impacts on water resources. In doing so, water tenure captures how water is actually allocated and used at multiple scales. While as the Voluntary guidelines excluded water, FAO has started to discuss defining water tenure, and produced a report on unpacking water tenure for food security.



FAO is the custodian agency for the SDG indicators

6.4.1 on water use efficiency, and 6.4.2 on level of water stress. Two indicators will be used to monitor this target:

- 6.4.1: Change in water-use efficiency over time
- 6.4.2: Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal in percentage of available freshwater resources

FAO is engaged in sustainable agriculture production by improving and advancing sustainable use of water, land and natural resources through efficiency, productivity, and equitable access to natural resources with a view to enhancing productivity, supporting livelihoods and resilience, and providing ecosystem services.

DATABASES

FAO has created a **FAOLEX** database, which collects policies and laws put into force in all countries on food, agriculture and natural resources management. On this platform, one can find **AQUALEX**, the database which an overview of national legal and policy frameworks related to water resources.

The monitoring of SDG Target 6.4 relies to a large extent on the data, the guidelines and the methodologies developed and provided by **AQUASTAT**, a global information system on water resources and agriculture water management which includes a global water database, country reports and associated tools for global analysis of water issues.

FAO facilitates monitoring water productivity through the open access, remote sensed **WaPOR platform** and supports countries in monitoring the progress on SDG6 on efficiency and addresses water scarcity.

THE WAY FORWARD

The function of water is multifaceted - from drinking water, water used for irrigation, to water that fish calls home. FAO's integrated approach that we cannot separate drinking water from water for agriculture and irrigation is also relevant when it comes to the freshwater aquatic ecosystems that water relies on. For a system aimed at multiple use of water to function, we must address water vulnerability from a holistic approach starting from ensuring the sustainability of aquatic ecosystems, particularly freshwater.



Pedro Arrojo-Agudo,
UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

*The Special Rapporteur held a meeting with FAO representatives on 18 January 2021