

Responding to Drought

Water is central to the world's development challenges. Whether it is food security, poverty reduction, economic growth, energy production, human health—water is the common denominator. Climate change is the spoiler. The increase in catastrophic events such as droughts and floods will impact lives, livelihoods, land values, and investment incentives, especially in vulnerable areas inhabited by poorer populations.

Whether because of climate variability or climate change, droughts have a severe impact on water availability and quality, agricultural and energy production, and ecosystem health. It is urgent to develop better drought monitoring and management systems, and for countries to have frameworks in place to manage drought risks through an integrated approach.

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is responding to the climate change challenge through a portfolio of programs and projects that aim to build climate resilience through better water management.

Portfolio of Climate Resilience Programmes

Four GWP Climate Resilience Programmes are the vehicles to implement a thematic strategy on climate change adaptation:

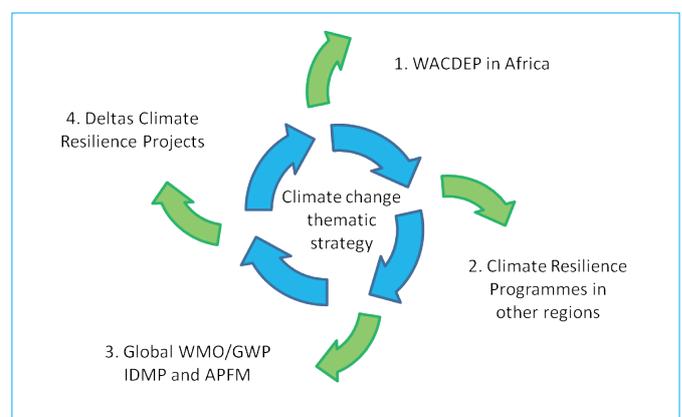
The Water, Climate and Development Programmes (WACDEP) in Africa and the Caribbean focus on putting in place investments for water security and climate resilience.

Regional water and climate resilience programmes modeled on the WACDEP but developed with regional context and ownership.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-GWP Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP) focusing on enhancing drought resilience (in collaboration with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and others). This programme builds on the success of the WMO-GWP Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM), and will establish a HelpDesk similar to that available for Integrated Flood Management.

The Deltas Climate Resilience Programmes for enhancing climate resilience of communities in delta regions.

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A Water Secure World

The Global Water Partnership is an intergovernmental organisation of 13 Regional Water Partnerships, 83 Country Water Partnerships and more than 2,800 Partner organisations in 167 countries. The GWP network is committed to building a water secure world.

These programmes constitute a cross-cutting strategy to enhance water security, building on GWP's mission of supporting countries to improve water governance. Incorporating an integrated approach to water resources management (IWRM) into national and regional economic development is critical to sustainable development.

The Integrated Drought Management Programme

The Integrated Drought Management Programme, launched at the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy in March 2013, contributes to national efforts for poverty alleviation in drought affected regions of the world through an integrated approach to drought management – cutting across sectoral, disciplinary, and institutional jurisdictions.

The IDMP contributes to global coordination of drought-related efforts through:

- Better scientific understanding of, and inputs for, drought management;
- Improved knowledge base, with better access to information and products;
- Drought risk assessment, monitoring, prediction and early warning;
- Policy and planning for drought preparedness and mitigation across sectors; and
- Drought risk reduction and response.

In the past, drought management has been reactive, with water authorities placing ad hoc restrictions on water use. This needs to be replaced by long-term responses to meteorological, agricultural, and hydrological droughts. A comprehensive drought monitoring and early warning system needs to provide a complete understanding of drought risks, early warning of a drought's onset and end, determine its severity, and deliver that information in a timely manner to stakeholders in many climate- and water-sensitive sectors. With such information and services, the impacts of droughts can be reduced. This will enable countries to enhance their capacities in climate-related risk management. Integrated drought management can be part of the tools for an adaptation strategy to climate change.

Critical components of integrated drought management strategies are:

- Comprehensive policy frameworks at national and regional levels to take preventive action;
- Multi-disciplinary and scientific inputs to policies and strategies whereby water, land, agriculture and ecosystem issues are tackled jointly;
- Legal and institutional frameworks defining responsibilities and facilitating cross-institutional coordination;
- National and regional frameworks for drought monitoring, early warning, and information delivery;
- Risk based approaches;

- Stakeholder participation in policy development and its implementation through advocacy, public awareness, and education.

Regional IDMP projects

The IDMP is underway in four regions (Central and Eastern Europe, South Asia, West Africa, and Eastern Africa) and some 35 countries.

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the IDMP promotes drought management to increase the capacity and ability of the region to adapt to climate variability and enhance drought resilience. In cooperation with national hydro-meteorological institutions, river basin authorities, ministries, and research institutions, the project will implement monitoring and risk assessments to share best practices at local, national, and regional levels.

In West Africa, GWP is developing a pilot project around the Liptako Gourma dry land area involving Niger and Burkina Faso. The project will contribute to capacity building of key stakeholders in the management of risks associated with drought, and improvement in agro-forestry and breeding activities in areas affected by drought.

Management and financing of the IDPM

At the global level the programme is managed jointly with WMO and supported by GWP's core donors and WMO funding partners. The initial phase of implementation will run from 2013-2015. At the regional level IDMP programmes will be led by GWP in collaboration with regional partners. In Africa, the projects will be implemented as part of the AMCOW-GWP Water, Climate and Development Programme, contributing to building Africa's climate resilience and achievement of climate change related commitments in the African Union's Heads of State and Government Sharm el Sheikh Declaration on water and sanitation.

