

Annex 12

Global Programme Water Initiatives (GPWI)



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1. Introduction

For decades, SDC's technical service "water and infrastructure" had been a pillar of Swiss development cooperation. Its main focus was on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Together with the water team of the SDC Natural Resource and Environment Division (NRE) which implemented projects in Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and for the protection of watersheds, it established in 2005 a focal point for water¹.

When the Global Programmes (GP) were established, the water sector could build on a strong lobby in the NGO and research scene in Switzerland as well as in SDC. The role of water for human and social development was well recognized. Though water was not among the four topics originally selected as themes for GP, the water team continued to run a program. But it was not until 2012, that the small SDC water team achieved recognition as a GP².

The evaluation reviewed documents, analysed a number of specific projects, had interviews with staff and partners of the GP Water Initiatives (GPWI), and made comparisons to water programs of other donors³. The evaluation also made an analysis of the experiences of five projects which had been proposed by the GPWI for a portfolio review. Four of them the GPWI considered as successful, and one as less successful.

2. Development and relevance of the GPWI

After the reorganization (REO) of SDC in 2008, the SDC water team started with a small budget of around CHF 4 million⁴ at the basis of the portfolio of the earlier SDC focal point for water. It rapidly embarked on a new strategy, leaving behind the old paradigm of being a technical service, with engagement in new topics. In 2014 the Global Program Water Initiatives (GPWI) had an annual budget of CHF 34 million.

Regarding coordination of policies at the federal level, the context for the GPWI had always been favourable. Since many years, SDC chairs the working group on water of the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC) of the Swiss Government, which coordinates Swiss policies as related to sustainable development. This platform was always a valuable entry point for coordinating policies and for exchanging views and activities among Swiss government actors on water issues and priorities for action.

There had never been apparent conflicts of interests between a global (Swiss policy) and the development perspective. The only debate referred to the ideological question whether and how to collaborate with the private sector (e.g. Nestlé).

2.1 Policy context

In the past decade, the debate in the development scene about water mainly circled around the question how to achieve the targets in water and sanitation (WASH) of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. The debate was enriched by references to the Human Right to Water and Sanitation (HRWS). It was widely recognized that progress in sanitation was lagging behind significantly. This also defined an agenda for the GPWI in its first years.

The debate about water security and a global water crisis got a significant push in the preparation for three major international conferences in 2012: the World Water Forum 6 in Marseille; the Bonn + 10 conference; and the Rio+20 conference in Rio de Janeiro. There was large consensus among all global actors that the water crisis needs to be addressed with a trans-disciplinary, a nexus approach (water, energy, agriculture).

From a funding perspective, the context for the GPWI was also favourable. The GPWI had the financial resources to gradually develop into a portfolio of 2014, 53 projects with a

¹ SDC, 2005: SDC Water 2015

² Message to the Parliament

³ e.g. GIZ, DFID

⁴ much smaller than the budgets of the other GP

large number of highly important partners, from different sectors. In 2011, the Swiss Parliament approved an additional credit to reach the 0.5% target. A large part of this budget went also to the water sector.

Regarding the international water policy context, there had been changes in the past six years. This can be showcased giving three examples:

1. UN WATER emerged as a network of the UN high-level committee on programs and as a coordination space for the 31 UN agencies dealing with water issues. UN WATER reports directly to the highest strategic level in the UN. It should ensure that the UN speaks with one voice in all water-related issues.
2. A number of new development actors (e.g. China, India) do not work through the UN system. Thus, alternative platforms for policy influencing like the WEF are gaining influence, for coordination and for the launching of policy initiatives.
3. Interviewed persons also note that the context will further move towards more earmarked funding (soft ear-marking), e.g. through the establishment of global thematic funds. This is also visible in the water sector. These bodies become important spaces for global policy dialogues.

The GPWI is at the forefront of reflecting on such changes in the context for Overseas Development Agencies (ODA).

2.2 Development of the portfolio from 2008 to 2014

In 2008, the GPWI started with a portfolio, which was focused to a large extent on water supply, sanitation and hygiene (today: equitable access). It had some engagement for integrated water resource management (IWRM). But already in its first strategy⁵ the team took the initiative to initiate a massive shift, towards putting water in its diverse uses and the role of water security for human and economic development at the centre of the program.

The GPWI had the means and was also under a certain pressure to develop new global water projects. It used its relative autonomy to establish collaboration with a large number of partners. It monitors the water sector and selects the partners who have the capacity to make a difference on the global agenda. Personal preferences and contacts also played a role. Sometimes, it defined new paths for collaboration with these partners, to leverage resources and effects. Consequently, many new partners came on board in the past 6 years. Only in a few areas mentioned in the Strategy 2013-2017, it was not yet possible to select suitable partners⁶.

The evaluation finds a lot of evidence from documents and interviews that funding decisions were only made after careful assessment of the project proposals and with a great sense of strategic vision and thinking. GPWI-internal analysis and the vision of the GPWI team and its team-leader played a key role in identifying new fields of action with a potential. Projects were grouped in thematic clusters.

The MDG continued to be a solid basis for continued efforts in WASH at the global level, building on long-term partners from the WHO, the World Bank, or NGOs. But also here, the GPWI was keen to define new niches, which sharpened its profile. It decided to give special emphasis on (a) sanitation, (b) the human right's approach (HR) and (c) achieving equitable access to water and sanitation. In these areas it excelled and drove the international agenda.

In its strategy 2013-2017⁷, the GPWI has further developed the concept of a water secure world, putting the global water crisis and water security fully at the centre of its program. It sees its core mission in "how to balance the supply and sharing of the benefits of water for people, for food, for ecosystems and for industrial and productive uses, while securing

⁵ SDC Water Initiatives Division (WI) Strategic Framework 2010-2015

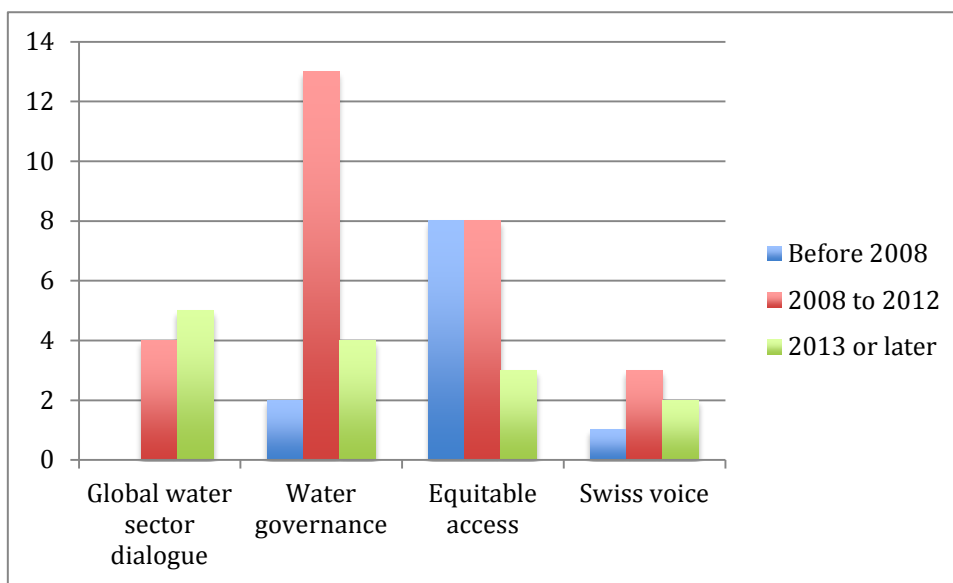
⁶ e.g. economics; water and mining

⁷ Strategy 2013-2017 of the GPWI

social equity, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability”⁸. Water is seen as one of the mayor crisis of the future.

The shifting in priorities between 2008 and 2012 is reflected also in Figure 29 which shows when new projects were started in the four strategic areas of the GPWI (global water sector dialogue, water governance, equitable access, and Swiss voice). Till 2008, the majority of the projects were in WASH. After 2008, new projects with new partners were launched in the new thematic clusters. The number of partners developed rapidly.

Figure 1 Strategic areas of the GPWI: Number of projects and period in which they were launched



In 2011, the Swiss Parliament approved an additional credit to achieve the 0.5% target for ODA. The credit went mainly to water and climate. This was, again, a proof of the strong political support for the water sector. This additional credit was a great opportunity for the GPWI to further consolidate the portfolio and the partnerships, also with SDC Regional Cooperation.

2.3 Structure of the portfolio 2014

The consultant screened programs of other donors⁹ or organizations¹⁰. Based on this assessment he concludes that the GPWI is involved in a large range of topics considered relevant by development agencies, ranging from rural water supply, sanitation and hygiene (e.g. hand washing), to integrated water resource management, water diplomacy, or water footprint.

Looking at the present portfolio (2014), the following can be concluded (see also Figure 30 and Figure 31).

1. Projects with UN organizations and globally operating NGOs account for around 75% of the portfolio (disbursements).
2. The vast majority of disbursements (89%) is related to projects which have been started after 2008. This is evidence of a highly dynamic management of the program, taking also the risk to enter into new partnerships.
3. The private sector has gained importance over the past years. These are sometimes relatively small projects, with impact. Examples are the water resource platform with the WEF (around 1 Mio per year) or the new project “more coffee for less water”

⁸ page 7 of the Strategy 2013-2017

⁹ e.g. websites of GIZ, DFID, Dutch

¹⁰ e.g. website of the GWP, of the WSP

(130,000 per year). In these type of projects, counterpart contributions are significant.

Figure 2 Percentage on the total of disbursement, by stakeholder groups

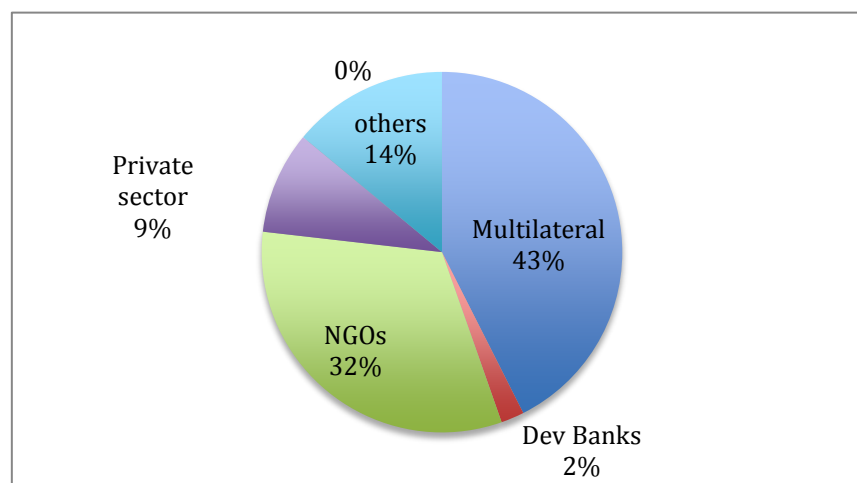
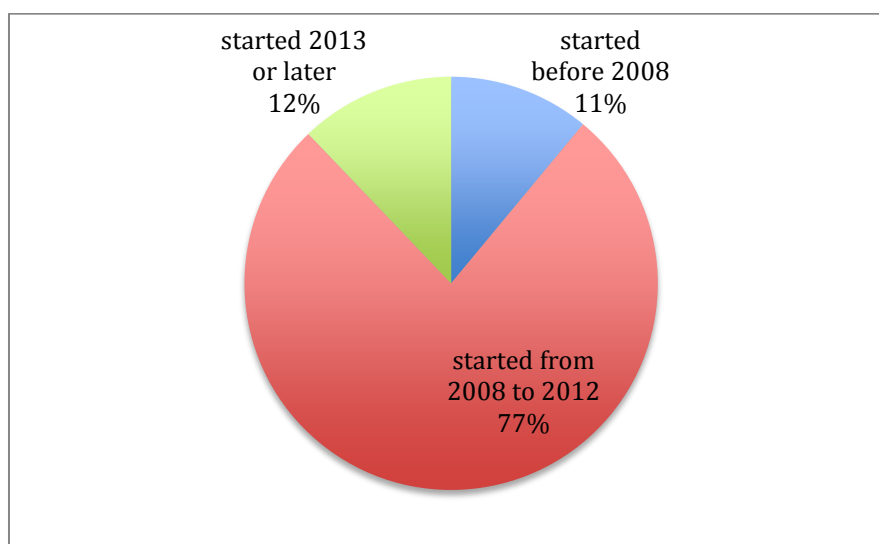


Figure 3 Composition of the project portfolio, at the basis of disbursements 2014



Compared with other ODA water sector programs, the main differences are:

1. Activities on climate change are not in the scope of the GPWI. They are largely delegated to the GPCC.
2. The GPWI does also not yet contain projects in the economics of water.
3. Also the urban sector is largely excluded, with the exception of promising activities in payment for watershed services which are most relevant to secure water and to reduce water conflicts in megacities which suffer from water scarcity.

Annual (or half-yearly) peer review meetings bring all the partners together. This helps to share knowledge and to build coherence in the GPWI. One of the participants summarizes the rapid expansion of the GPWI as follows: “When we started with these peer reviews, we were only three partners in the GPWI. We could meet in a small meeting room. Today, there are 27 partners. We can hardly fit into the big meeting room.”

The GPWI is aware that some consolidation of the portfolio might be needed in the forthcoming years. The challenge is to consolidate without losing the innovative power of the program.

3. Presence of Switzerland in global policy discussions

Practically all persons interviewed state (a) that Switzerland was the only donor which increased its allocations for water in the past years, and (b) that Switzerland is present in global policy discussions in the water sector.

The GPWI has a high discipline to engage only in partnerships and processes which can make a difference at the global level¹¹. Good partners provide Switzerland with an entry point for participation in global discussion fora, e.g. at the World Water Fora (WWF) which are organized every three years. The benefit is on both sides: The partners of the GPWI can profit from a donor (GPWI) which treats implementing agencies as partners¹², and the GPWI can profit from the know-how and the networks of its partner organizations. The latter is, however, only possible if the GPWI has sufficient capacity (in particular: staff) to engage in high-level and sometimes quite technical thematic discussions¹³.

The "old partnerships"¹⁴ continue and give the GPWI a solid place in policy dialogues: e.g. with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) of the WHO, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), or the Water and Sanitation (WSP) program of the Worldbank (WB). In the past years, the level of SDC funding for some of these long-term partners was substantially increased¹⁵. Today, most of the GPWI program funding is quite substantial, in the order of CHF 1 Mio per year. This gives GPWI a voice on the boards, but could also give the impression that the GPWI is not short of funds¹⁶.

Since 2008, the number of global partners of the GPWI has more than doubled. Examples of new partners are NGOs like Forest Trend, the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), the Water Integrity Network (WIN), or UN partners like UNESCO or the FAO. Swiss research institutes having a voice in global policy dialogues continue to be partners of the program (e.g. EAWAG, CDE). What is relatively new and truly made possible by creating the GPWI, is the collaboration with the private sector. An example is the collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Beside that, the GPWI made an effort to strengthen Swiss partners to take a stronger stand in the water sector, also regarding policy making. The GPWI provided seed money for the establishment of a Swiss Water Partnership (SWP) or the development of innovative technologies, benefitting from the fact that Switzerland is a technology country. However, and this is more a negative point, some of these programs – e.g. Solidarit'eau, Swiss Bluetec bridge – still largely depend on the GPWI.

4. Relevance and Coherence

All interviewed partners (20) provided top ratings for the relevance of these contributions of the GPWI to global policy dialogues¹⁷. They see SDC as the most innovative and important donor in the water sector, having a strong influence on global policies and the development of innovative approaches. This goes also to the credit of the partners of the GPWI.

The GPWI works practically only with prime partners. Some examples: the Worldbank WSP has a leadership in national water sector reforms; the WSSCC is the key institution in sanitation and hosts the Global Sanitation Fund (GSF); the Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) is the global collaborative network of professionals working to raise standards and exchange of knowledge in rural water supply; the US NGO Forest Trend is the world

¹¹ Around 72% of the projects are of this type.

¹² highly estimated by virtually all interviewed partners of the GPWI

¹³ It was mentioned several times in the interviews that it is key that the GPWI can maintain this capacity with a body of water specialists.

¹⁴ established before 2008, sometimes in the 1990ties

¹⁵ e.g. the annual contribution to the GWP the global action network and carrier of the concept of Integrated Water Resource Management, was till 2011 in the order of CHF 300,000.- Today it is around CHF 1 Mio per year.

¹⁶ Partners might have further benefitted from changes in the exchange rates (CHF) in the past years.

¹⁷ 90% gave the maximum rating (6).

leader in the promotion of Payment for Ecological Services. Swiss partners have not always this profile, with exceptions (e.g. the RWSN).

Thanks to the GPWI, new topics are on the agenda in which Switzerland makes a difference. Examples are: technology, water diplomacy, initiatives of the WEF, experiments with the concept of the water footprint. These new engagements are all in line with priorities of the ISDC working group on water. The present portfolio is also largely coherent with the priorities defined in the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) water.

On the negative side, the assessment shows little efforts to seek coherence and synergies with other SDC divisions. An estimated 30% of the projects of the GPWI are working in multiple - eventually too many - regions, not priority countries of SDC, sometimes with short interventions of a few years¹⁸. Here a geographic focus on regions where SDC Regional Cooperation or SDC Cooperation with Eastern Europe is present and could leverage resources, could make sense. The evaluation has also not yet identified good examples in which these SDC divisions have developed new projects at the basis of innovations developed by the GPWI.

5. Results regarding policy influencing

General

Practically all programs of the GPWI, aimed at policy influencing and running over > 6 years, had policy effects > level 2. The level of co-financing of the initiatives by the partners is high, what is a good sign of ownership. All interviewed partners (20) see Switzerland at the forefront in water policy discussions. Key factors, regularly mentioned by interview partners, were: no ideological barriers to work also with the private sector; professionalism of the staff; financial means to become involved.

The GPWI can benefit from excellent relationships to the political wing of the FDFA. Interview partners from these departments report that the GPWI is a significant resource in their work. This can reach a point in which the political wing takes the lead in policy-related initiatives and treats the staff of the GPWI as topic experts only. This was seen as a problem by one of the interview partners working on water diplomacy.

The GPWI has contributed to broaden the development paradigm in the water sector beyond WASH. It succeeded to open windows for a South-south dialogue. Examples are the dialog between Peru and Colombia on intervention strategies in rural water supply and sanitation (SABA) or the support to the launching of a blue peace process between Iraq and Turkey in the water diplomacy cluster. A mission composed of experts from Senegal to Turkey was the turning point to convince Turkey to embark on a blue peace dialogue. The interview partners argue that such initiatives would not have been possible with the instrument of regional cooperation.

Interviewed partners see the staff of GPWI as active members in boards of international organizations. The representative of the GPWI now coordinates the donor group of the GWP. This coordination mechanism is important as the donors do not have a voice in the Steering Board of the GWP. In the WSP, the situation is apparently different. The WB is not that much interested in donor coordination.

All interview partners from the private sector see the GPWI as a door opener for the private sector to the negotiation tables where policies are shaped. Interviewed representatives of the private sector highly appreciate the constructive approach of the GPWI, and the absence of ideological barriers towards the private sector. Experiences of the different stakeholders, including the private sector and global NGOs, are taken serious. This leads to a real sense of collaboration.

¹⁸ E.g. the FAO project on water efficiency in agriculture

Certainly, more could be done in agricultural water efficiency, promotion of new technologies, or economic studies how to optimize the value of water in products¹⁹. Here, the GPWI is relatively weak. These are topics of interests for the private sector.

5.1 Global Water Sector Dialogue

In 2012, when the GPWI discovered that water was not an issue in the global thematic dialogues for the SDG, it had the capacity to react immediately. The SDG for water is now a concrete proposal, subject to final endorsement in mid 2015.

The key problem to be resolved was that countries could host only one of the global thematic dialogues for the SDGs²⁰. Switzerland was already engaged in migration. The Netherlands were pre-selected for water, but with a narrow focus on WASH. The GPWI mobilized its whole network to convince the Netherlands that Switzerland could co-host the process; with success.

The GPWI opted for a broad water goal. Through lobbying and mobilization of the network, it succeeded. Most important was the role of the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, representing the position of Switzerland as a UN member state. Thanks to his support, Switzerland was the first country to officially declare its support for this water goal. The Foreign Minister re-confirmed this engagement a second time, at the Annual Conference of the UN Assembly in New York. These were important steps.

The SDG will have direct impacts. For example, the fact that also trans-boundary water management will be included in the new SDG, could allow Switzerland to bring water diplomacy as an issue to the UN in New York. Or the WB will invest in a global platform water, likely to become an important partner and actor in the sector, with 400 staff and 200 billion USD investments for water projects.

The process of the SDG water is on board, and it is expected that a broadly defined SDG on water will be endorsed in autumn 2015. The majority of work is now at the technical level, e.g. around the issue how to monitor progress in the achievement of the goal. Switzerland supports corresponding projects with UNWATER.

A small minority of interviewed persons expressed concern that the SDG could also create confusion in the sector, increasing transaction costs and discouraging donors and partners, traditionally more inclined to WASH. "Switzerland has caused an earthquake in the UN water sector. But this also creates smoke in the beginning"²¹.

The GPWI will need to maintain a high level of presence in these discussions and take the leadership also in implementation of the SDG, to maintain the current level of credibility. All this is very time consuming for the staff of the GPWI. A lot of communication is needed. It is important to work in networks and to bring the right people on board. Roles and responsibilities between the GPWI and the Swiss delegation in New York need to be clearly defined.

The diplomats in FDFA highly appreciate that the GPWI has technical competence and helps to fill political concepts and proposals with concrete examples. Here it helps, that the GPWI and its partners have a diversity of projects (from all over the world) in the portfolio. To have the right example in the pocket can be decisive to win credibility in a policy dialogue.

5.2 Water governance

Around 40% of the projects started after 2008 went into this second component. Here are some examples of policy results, which were recently achieved. They also show the diversity of approaches and results in this component of the GPWI.

WEF working group: Together with the GPWI, the WEF has established a working group on water resource management. Global players participate. There is growing awareness, also in the private sector, that water problems need to be addressed in the context of

¹⁹ Proposed by Nestlé and other interview partners from the private sector

²⁰ The GPMD was already selected to lead a thematic dialogue on migration and development.

²¹ Comment of one of the interviewed partners.

watersheds. GPWI is here contributing significantly to raise awareness and to enhance the capacity of National Governments to embark on PPP platforms for strengthening Water Management in watersheds.

Water Footprint: The process of achieving recognition and standards for measuring water footprints took 6-8 years. Due to initiative of the GPWI, companies from different economic sectors were working together on water issues, for the first time. They also co-financed a large part of this program. The GPWI used a program approach, with different component: (a) field projects in Colombia and Vietnam were pilot to learn and to demonstrate that the concept works. (b) the ISO norms show how to measure and how to compensate.

In Colombia, the project started with a small budget frame²², with a consortium of five large Swiss enterprises²³, each of them contributing with significant resources. The pilot furnished the process of drafting the ISO standard 14046 with field evidence²⁴. In 2015, 120 persons paying entry fee, attended a workshop in Colombia to learn more about how to measure water footprints (2015). The water footprint is for the first time mentioned in an official policy of Colombia for water resource assessment. This means that it will become an element of IWRM in water basin management in Colombia. Such positive examples can spread over the world or regions (e.g. Latin America).

The GPWI succeeded to open spaces for lively multi-stakeholder debates. Sometimes²⁵ there is also scepticism about the relevance of some of the concepts promoted by the GPWI²⁶. For example, the Water Footprint is not always seen as a good tool to improve environmental performance of companies²⁷. Rather, the Swiss initiative is seen as a methodological contribution, useful for analysis and for marketing, documenting progress on the environment agenda.

5.3 Water diplomacy and blue peace initiatives

The blue peace (water diplomacy) initiative started with a study on the costs of water conflicts by the political division of the FDFA. The GPWI became involved because of three reasons: technical knowhow in the water sector; capacity to finance activities; being part of the FDFA.

Today, blue peace is well established in the Middle East. The topic fits also the security agenda. Therefore, it receives broad support in the FDFA, leading also to a certain risk that the political agenda (FDFA) dominates the development agenda (GPWI). To ensure coherence, a blue peace task force has been established in the FDFA. It is headed by the State Secretary of the FDFA and involves all relevant divisions of the FDFA²⁸. The fact that this task force meets every three months shows that the topic is taken up by Swiss diplomacy.

Again, this is a space for debates. The Swiss delegation at the UN is not yet convinced that water diplomacy can help to establish peace as there are many more aspects involved in trans-boundary negotiations between countries. This makes it questionable whether water diplomacy can be launched at the UN level. It argues that the lead in this initiative should remain with Berne.

Payment for watershed services: The main partner of the GPWI is the US NGO Forest Trend. The program is working all over the world, e.g. also in Beijing. In early 2015, there was a break through in Peru: the national water regulator (SUNASS) reserved USD 125 million in the national budget for green infrastructure (e.g. plantation of forests). Green infrastructure is seen as more effective than investments into water treatment plants. In

²² CHF 670,000.- from 2009 till 2013

²³ Holcim, Nestle, Alpina, Syngenta, Novartis, SIKA

²⁴ "Water Footprint: requirements and guidelines"; a low cost project of CHF 496,000.-

²⁵ two of the interviewed representatives of the private sector

²⁶ Water credit project of GPWI

²⁷ Apparently, companies are discussing this internally.

²⁸ Geographic, multi-lateral, human security, SDC GPWI

2015, SUNASS also has the chair of the Latin America Association of water regulators. This is likely to give the initiative visibility beyond Peru.

5.4 Equitable access

There is a large potential that the new global approach - the GPWI - can add value to other SDC departments: SDC Regional Cooperation, SDC Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Humanitarian Aid. Programs of the GPWI also lead to direct outcomes and impacts at the level of poverty alleviation. Examples are listed below.

JMP, GLASS, SWA: The Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) of WHO and UNICEF is the official UN mechanism, monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), relating to drinking water and sanitation. Data from JMP are the basis for bi-annually Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLASS). These reports form the basis for bi-annual high-level meetings in Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), a global partnership between developing countries, donors, multi-lateral agencies, civil society and other development partners working together to achieve universal and sustainable access to sanitation and drinking water.

The GPWI was instrumental for the development of this architecture (JMP, GLASS, SWA) and for its branding - "triple A: acquisition, analysis, advocacy". Till now, three SWA conferences were held. In the last conference, the Secretary General of the UN and the director of the WB participated. The commitments of all participating countries are documented and monitored by UNICEF.

The many debates on monitoring might appear to be technical, but they are of high political relevance for shaping global policy. For example, the private sector urged JMP to make a clear distinction between "safe water" and "improved water sources" in its reporting on achievements of the MDGs. Though the JMP report 2012 was cautious and talked only about "improved water sources", UN communication apparently hijacked the data, communicating boldly to the world that the MDG in water supply had been achieved. Many considered this as a clear distortion of the reality²⁹. The GPWI is engaging in these debates.

SABA: The GPWI saw an excellent opportunity to capitalize on 20 years of experience of SDC in rural water and sanitation in Peru, exerting important leverage effects, by national and international scaling-up of operations. Replication of the intervention model in Colombia is likely. Looking at the websites of regional players and investment banks, the evaluation does not yet note a larger policy effect on the large financing organizations in rural water and sanitation in Latin America. The IADB or national programs in Peru like FONCODES have not yet taken up the SABA model in their operations, at least not in a prominent place³⁰.

Geogenic Contaminants: GPWI regularly supports Swiss research teams to become in topics where Switzerland can offer large knowhow, potentially important for global or regional policy dialogues. Geogenic contaminants like Arsenic are an example. The GPWI supports EAWAG/SANDEC in this work, to establish a global Groundwater Assessment Platform (GAP). SDC Regional Cooperation can benefit from this research. Detailed maps for Bangladesh and China are available. This research received high recognition in the scientific journal "Nature" what is considered a big success, with potential policy effects in terms of agenda setting.

Access for the poor: The GPWI also helped to achieve impressive results on the ground, by promoting global and innovative projects, targeted at scaling-up. Examples are: Global Sanitation Fund (GSF)³¹, SABA, Safe Water Asia³², the NGO program, or the Rural Water Supply network (RWSN). All of them have a global or a regional scope. Many interview

²⁹ 3 billion people have not yet access to „safe drinking water“

³⁰ Result of specific searches on the websites

³¹ 7 million people access to sanitation

³² 150,000 persons with access to safer water, with an investment of CHF 4,880,000.-, according to evaluation in 2012

partners argue that a certain volume of field projects and experiences is needed to be a credible partner in policy discussions.

5.5 Swiss voice

Recognizing that many countries had established partnerships among water actors, the GPWI took the lead to establish the Swiss Water Partnership. The platform helps to mobilize Swiss knowhow in the water sector. At present, it has around 75 paying members. It contributes to harmonize policies (NGOs, private sector, academia, Government), and it represents the civil society of Switzerland at Global Water Conferences. It is a resource and sounding board for the GPWI.

The smaller program “Swiss Bluetec Bridge” supports Swiss small and medium enterprises to make their water know-how available for the poor. This is a pilot which needs to be assessed in the broader context.

6. Lessons from a more detailed analysis of projects

In all of the five projects which the evaluation analysed in a more detailed way in a portfolio analysis³³, the GPWI played a key role, not only at the financing but also at the conceptual level. Three of them - SDG Water, replication of the SABA model, water diplomacy in the Nile Basin – provide full evidence that the management of such projects and policy influencing need a lot of resources (manpower, time, continuity over > 6 years)³⁴. The complexity of these projects is significant, also in terms of political management.

A good example is the **Nile Basin project**, quite typical for water diplomacy:

1. While the GPWI has a regional and trans-boundary water management approach, Swiss Embassies have more a country focus³⁵. This can lead to disputes and conflicts within the FDFA on priorities for action.
2. A recommendation in a report published by the SFG in the SDC funded project was strongly opposed by the Government of Ethiopia, putting finally the good relationship of SDC and Switzerland with the Ethiopia at stake. The dispute had to be settled at highest political level³⁶. This was also time consuming.
3. Implementation of the project was for a long time blocked because of political disagreements between the involved countries (mainly Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt). This is a severe challenge for the planning and budgeting in the GPWI.

The fact that Switzerland could credibly demonstrate with evidence from the field the importance of issues at the negotiation table and the capacity to be present in all key events were key for the success in the **SDG water project**.

In general, the mix of field and policy-related projects is the magical formula to achieve results on the political agenda. Examples are found in the **Suizagua project**. To fully consolidate the ISO norms 14046, there is a need of a technical document which should present concrete examples. Here, the pilots from Colombia and Vietnam are of direct value to keep the ball rolling. Moreover, investments into communication and publicity will be needed. GPWI will have to decide how long it wants to be involved.

To be successful in such processes (**Nile Basin, Water SDG**) it was key that the SDC GPWI has the flexibility to react to opportunities and to handle difficult situations. This need for flexibility appears to be a characteristic of such projects working at the level of policy influencing. Budgets have to be constantly changed and adapted, staff delegated, or seed money rapidly organized if opportunities turn up or if the political context changes.

³³ SDG water, SABA, water diplomacy in the Nile basin, JMP, Suizagua

³⁴ Estimated expert input of SDC: 50-100%

³⁵ One of the goals of the Swiss Embassies is to facilitate access of Swiss firms to markets in the respective country. There can be a conflict of interest between programs working on trans-boundary water management and interests of a Swiss firm to construct a dam.

³⁶ The head of SDC GP had to travel to Ethiopia to calm down the situation.

7. Level of policy influencing

In an estimated 50% of the projects³⁷, the GPWI achieved results higher level 4 (e.g. policy documents, change in legislation). The others were at least framing debates or getting new issues at the table (level 1).

The GPWI can create momentum at the international and trans-boundary level, beyond of what is possible for other divisions of SDC. In the water sector, this is particularly relevant in water diplomacy and trans-boundary water management. Interviewed persons report that technical ministries (e.g. water), the main counterparts of SDC Regional Cooperation, are often the ones blocking progress in trans-boundary water management. Participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main counterparts of GPWI and its allies in the FDFA, can de-block situations.

Policy makers in UN NY see the GPWI as an important and credible resource from which they can take material in policy processes. Policy partners also see the limits of what a small country like Switzerland can achieve. The SDG water was probably the maximum what could be achieved without running into a risk to be isolated by countries which had different agendas in mind. Important meetings are still on the agenda³⁸.

8. Key factors

Together with the interview partners, the evaluation identified a large number of key factors which are important to achieve success at the level of policy making in such a global program:

1. Experiences show that to have policy effects is a very time-consuming work³⁹. It needs full engagement by highly professional staff, not only from partner organizations, but also GPWI staff. The project partners need committed and competent counterparts in SDC.
2. In all cases, a careful situation analysis at the beginning of the intervention and a step-wise, phased approach were key to achieve results. The selection of the partners was decisive.
3. It is good to be always a step ahead, to be able to take risks, and to be not dogmatic when it comes to selection of partners (e.g. the private sector). Here, administrative flexibility and communication⁴⁰ are key assets to respond to opportunities. Sometimes, it was difficult to plan interventions because they were politically blocked or difficult to plan.
4. Credibility is a key factor. In highly conflictive contexts (e.g. Nile Basin), credibility can be lost easily, not only with the partner countries but also FDFA internally (embassies, SDC). The GPWI has to adapt its strategies to the context: (a) sometimes, only the FDFA is considered a credible partner for negotiation; (b) working with a Technical Assistance (TA) approach and delegating key tasks to implementation partners is not always feasible; (c) physical presence in the region is required (regional advisor).
5. Switzerland, the GPWI, are seen as a reliable, trusted partner, with no hidden agenda. The GPWI also has fast access to financing. Staff is competent and can show practical examples from the field. They have a certain volume of presence in the field. All interviewed persons see this as key assets of the GPWI.
6. Regular consultation with networks like AGUASAN or the Swiss Water Partnership (SWP) helped that Switzerland speaks with one voice. This is important to be credible in international fora.

³⁷ Analysis of the whole portfolio by the consultant

³⁸ Addis Addeba, September 2015

³⁹ Achieving the water goal used >50% of the working time of one of the senior staff in GPWI. Apart of that, a whole team of backstoppers and consultants were involved. Policy influencing on the Nile Basin requires the entire time of the Regional Advisor.

⁴⁰ GPWI has continued to communicate with brochures, videos despite the fact that communication was centralized in the FDFA. This had a positive agenda, e.g. in the case of the SDG.

7. Working with a partnership and multi-stakeholder approach leads to results. Partners of the GPWI feel as taken serious. This involves also policy divisions in the FDFA. Global programs are an important resource for the FDFA. Permanent presence in policy fora is required, what can be very time consuming.
8. Switzerland can also use its weight as “Member state of the UN”. In the case of the SDG on water, this was probably more important than its role as a donor.

The evaluation also identified areas, where improvements could be considered to further increase the effectiveness of the GPWI:

1. Considering the number of initiatives in which the GPWI is involved, the number of professionals working in this program is relatively small. This could hamper the capacity to make follow-up in all areas.
2. There are annual peer review meetings (positive), but the partners have no budgets to capitalize with concrete actions after the meetings on opportunities for synergies. It would be good to have such budgets for learning exchanges, eventually at the level of the Department Global Cooperation or of the GPWI.
3. A few partners mentioned that the GPWI initiates ideas but has, afterwards, not sufficient resources to make concrete things happen in the field. The GPWI needs to carefully monitor where this can make it difficult to keep momentum. Eventually, leveraging with SDC Regional Cooperation could be a way out of this dilemma.
4. Virtually all of the interviewed partners had little information about other GPWI initiatives which would, potentially, be relevant for their work. The assumption stays in the room that the GPWI could further increase its impact if it would communicate and mobilize its network more effectively for activities.
5. Interview partners say that the global network, ResEau, does not play the role which it could, particularly in the scaling-up of policy initiatives.

9. Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that the GPWI has achieved remarkable and highly relevant results in terms of influencing global policy and promoting innovations in the water sector. Together with its partners it co-shaped the global water agenda. Thanks to the GPWI and its partners, the influence of Switzerland in global water policy debates is beyond what could be expected in 2008.

The turn-around from a technical service “water and infrastructure” to a GP has been successfully achieved. The SDC water team succeeded to demonstrate with examples (MDG, water diplomacy, private sector, SDG) that water needs not only a local and regional, but also a global approach. Interview partners see the GPWI as highly innovative, taking risks, and adding value to global debates. Here, the GPWI was able to fill gaps.

The GPWI participated actively and at the forefront of policy processes in a large range of relevant themes (clusters). Beside that, it explored new and innovative approaches which were beyond mainstream and not taken-up by other donors or international organizations. Examples are: the dialogue with the private sector at the World Economic Forum (WEF), the building of an international alliance for incorporating the water footprint in business decision making⁴¹, or the exploration of the concept of water credits. Beside policy effects and innovative approaches, a number of projects also were highly effective in reaching poor people.

The GPWI functions like a global network, with regular peer reviews. These partners see the GPWI as highly effective. Peer Review also noted, however, a tendency to invest in too many initiatives, with little capacity to make proper follow-up on policy related processes. This has to be kept in mind, though it needs to be said that the GPWI masters the art of policy influencing well. It identifies relevant themes, selects the best partners. achieves leverage of resources, and maintains good relationship to the policy actors in the

⁴¹ e.g. ISO norm on how to measure the water footprint

FDFA and the Federal Administration⁴² to bring the issues at the negotiation table. Diversity in projects is certainly an asset, to be always present with relevant field experience.

The challenge is now to keep momentum. The analysis shows that this could be very time consuming. Though it is true that some of the policy-related tasks can be delegated to partners, senior level inputs from SDC staff with water expertise are permanently required to keep the many balls rolling. Many of the initiatives need in fact 50% working time at least to be kept alive. Taking into account that the GPWI manages its 53 projects with only 5 tasks managers, there is consensus that some consolidation is needed in the forthcoming months. To keep international recognition, it will be crucial to maintain a high level of qualification in the team itself. This includes not only water sector knowhow but also experience in management of policy related processes.

The future for the GPWI is bright and with perspectives. The four components of the GPWI are already quite conform with the four axes of the SDG on water⁴³. UNWATER is likely to grow in importance. The WB will be launching a Global Water Platform with 400 staff and USD 200 billion investment. The SDG on water will oblige Switzerland to make its contribution to reach the targets. The global network ResEau is established and can become a vehicle for further anchoring initiatives of the GPWI with SDC other SDC divisions.

10. Recommendations

The recommendations listed in Part C, section 3 of this evaluation report are reiterated in the following table.

⁴² GPWI chairs for many years the working group on water of the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC) of Switzerland

⁴³ Exception: water resilience

Table 1 GPWI: Key findings, conclusions and recommendations

Key findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Success factors		
With its water know-how, capacity to make close follow-up on policy processes, and being part of the FDFA, the GPWI has succeeded in being a highly-attractive partner in a large number of relevant policy processes in the water sector. Examples are the SDG, the engagement in UNWATER, the WEF platform for water resource management, and water diplomacy.	Many doors are now open and the targets defined for a SDG water goal. The challenge is now to keep the momentum going, which can be time-consuming and demanding. It also requires a lot of know-how at the technical level (e.g. monitoring of the SDG). This is a challenge as the number of staff in the GPWI is relatively small and as a number of key staff are rotating in 2015.	GPWI R.1: Department Global Cooperation: The GPWI needs sufficient senior staff with water know-how who are capable of leading demanding policy processes at the highest levels. GPWI R.2: Personnel Division: There is a need for a thematic career in the water sector. This could be looked at not only within the SDC but also with partners from the ISDC working group on water.
Working with a partnership and multi-stakeholder approach contributed to policy impacts. The GPWI can build on the experiences and networks of its partners. There are high leverage effects for SDC that could be even further developed.	The GPWI works with prime partners (e.g. Forest Trends, IUCN, WEF, the WB, UNWATER). All express satisfaction with the partnership approach applied by the GPWI. Unfortunately, RésEAU does not play a prominent role in the promotion of innovative approaches developed by the GPWI and its partners in SDC priority countries. It should be more involved.	GPWI R.3: Department Global Cooperation: Methodologies for stakeholder management and running global programs in partnerships need to be further rationalized. GPWI R.4: GPWI Management: There should be some budget for learning and to capitalize on opportunities for synergies that emerge in the peer-review meetings organized by the GPWI for its partners. GPWI R.5: SDC Board of Directors: Options regarding how the SDC Regional Cooperation Department and the SDC Cooperation with the East can capitalize on innovative approaches developed by the GPWI and its partners should be further explored. RésEAU should play here a more active role..
Due to careful analysis of the context, a good selection of partners, and clustering of projects, the GPWI was able to boost innovations where other donors were not yet involved. There was a high level of strategic thinking involved that enabled the GPWI to contribute to topics that are likely to be relevant in the future.	Experience shows that for an initiative to lead to results, engagement over a longer period of time (6-10 years) is necessary. There is now a need for some consolidation to allow GPWI to face upcoming challenges (e.g. global water platform of the WB).	GPWI R.6: GPWI management: The number of projects should be consolidated. In this process, the strategic focus on thematic clusters in the GPWI should be maintained. GPWI R.7: GPWI management: Progress in thematic clusters should be more actively reviewed or evaluated by external experts. Where initiatives are unlikely to lead to policy results in realistic time frames (6-10 years), they should be re-considered for phasing-out. GPWI R.8: GPWI management: The WB Global Water Platform is likely to be a important partner in the future. This will require new resources.

<p>Through evidence-based policy dialogue and leveraging of resources of partners, the GPWI has led not only to policy changes but also to significant results in terms of poverty alleviation. Examples include the Global Sanitation Fund, scaling-up of micro-irrigation and safe water, reducing water risks through new regulations, and compensation of water footprints by firms.</p>	<p>Effects of evidence-based policy dialogue and leveraging of resources of partners are not systematically documented. They are potentially largely under-estimated.</p>	<p>GPWI R.9: GPWI management: The effects of the GPWI at the field level should be more systematically monitored and documented in reports as a basis for the balanced assessment of the value added by this global program.</p>
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