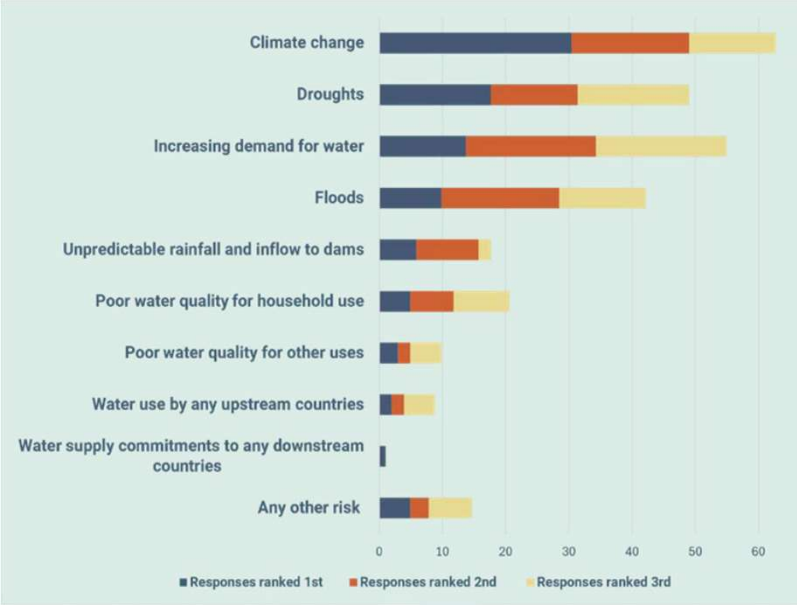
Partnership and Cooperation for inclusive Water Management: Institutional and Policy Framework



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IIWW-26, Delhi
23-09-2026

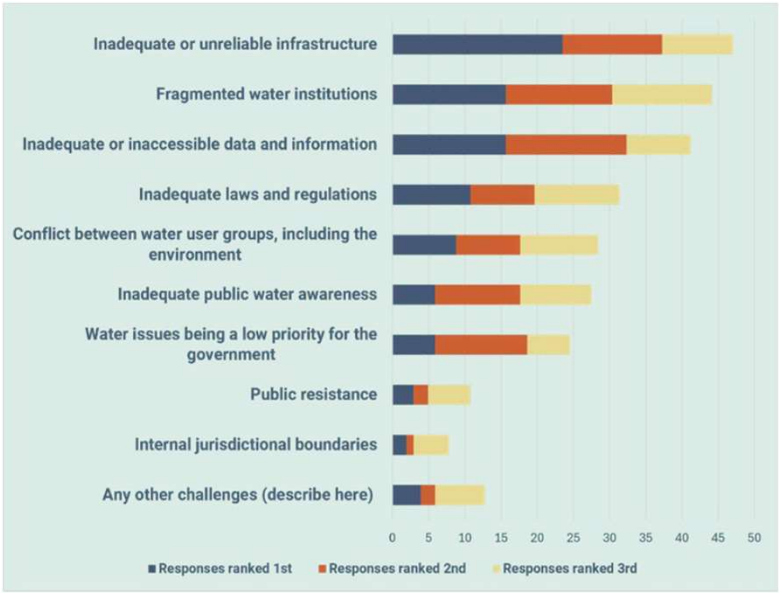
Key Water Management Challenges



Risks to achieving good water management (**Opinion of 102 National Water leaders**) 2026 GLOBAL Water Policy Report

- Over-exploitation of groundwater
- Low water use efficiencies
- Water quality degradation
- Fragmented water institutions
- Competing inter-sectoral water demands
- Overlapping mandates and governance
- Lack of policy coherence

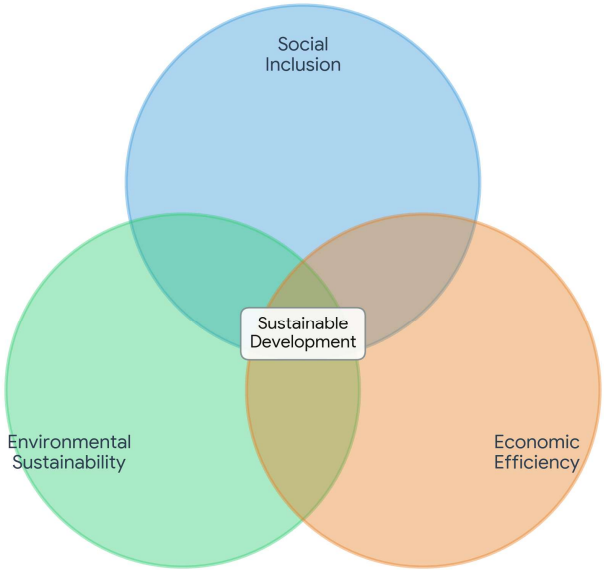
Few specific to India, SA and Africa



Challenges to achieving good water management (**Opinion of 102 National Water leaders**) 2026 GLOBAL Water Policy Report

Partnerships & Cooperation for Shared Water Resources

1. Almost every water management endeavour has some kind of partnership and cooperation
2. Water management operates at the intersection of water, energy, food & environment – it cannot be looked at in isolation
3. Sustainable water management must address all pieces of the complex puzzle of the interconnected WEFE system
4. Only through partnerships and cooperation across sectors and actors can these pieces come together for inclusive water management



Shared responsibilities, partnerships and cooperation for managing shared water resources • ***Continuing water sector policy & institutional reforms as enablers***

Partnerships & Cooperation ? Harnessing the Benefits

Partnerships:

- **voluntary and collaborative** between various parties, both **public and non-public**
- All partners agree to work together to achieve a **common purpose** or undertake a specific task
- Share **risks and responsibilities,** resources and benefits
- Often formal or informal agreements

Partnerships and cooperation for inclusive water management bring together diverse stakeholders across local, state, and national levels to share responsibilities, resources, and benefits.

Continuing water sector **policies & institutional** reforms as enablers

- **Intra-sectoral partnerships** and cooperation among stakeholders with a common water-related objective(s), shared irrigation system
- **Cross-sectoral** (or inter-sectoral)- actors with different or even competing water-related objectives
- **Extra-sectoral**- actors from 'outside the water domain', where the primary ter-



Who are the Key Partners?

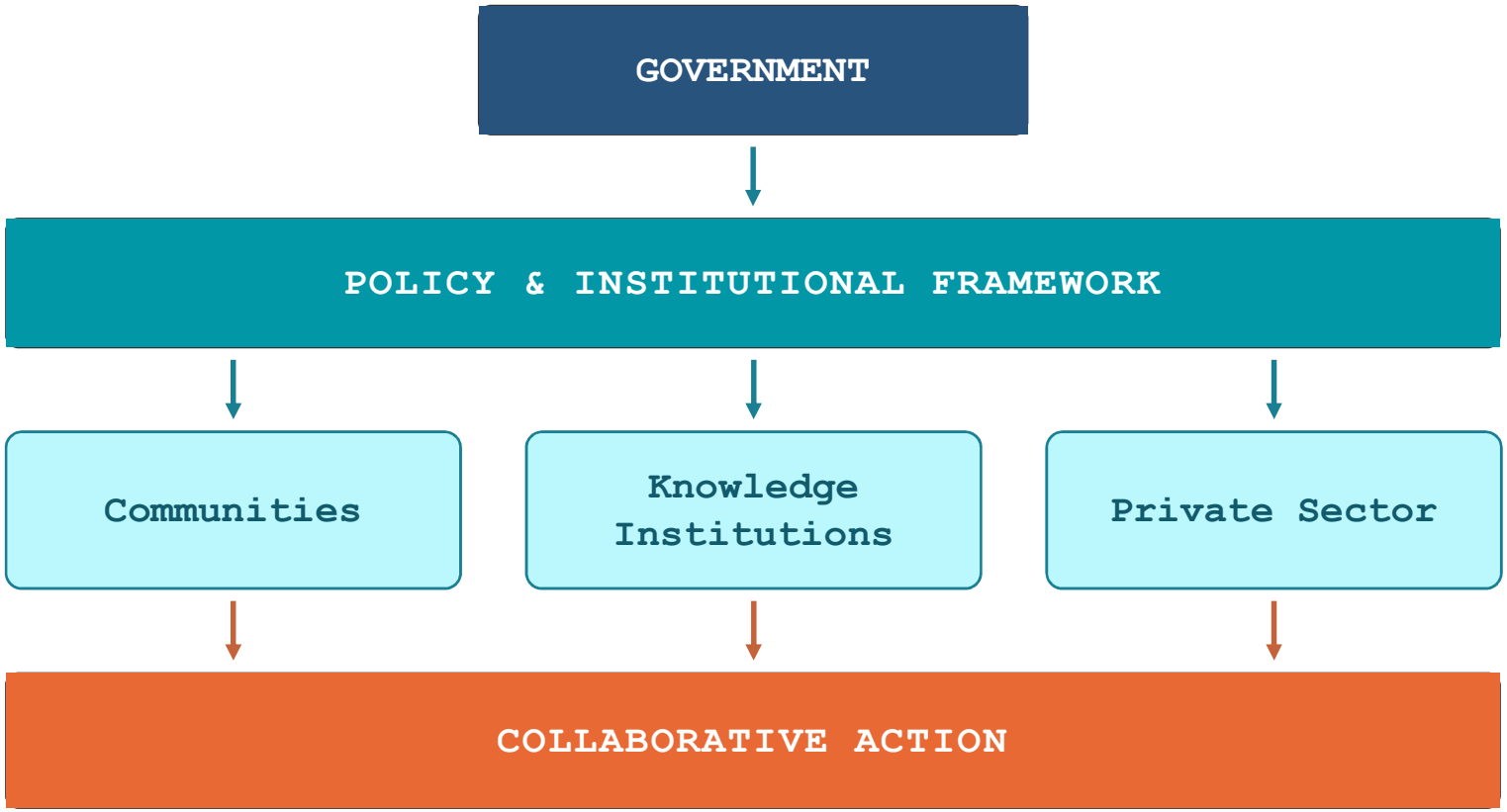
KEY PARTNERS

Government	Local Institutions	Communities	Private Sector
Civil Society	Academia	Development Partners	Financial Institutions

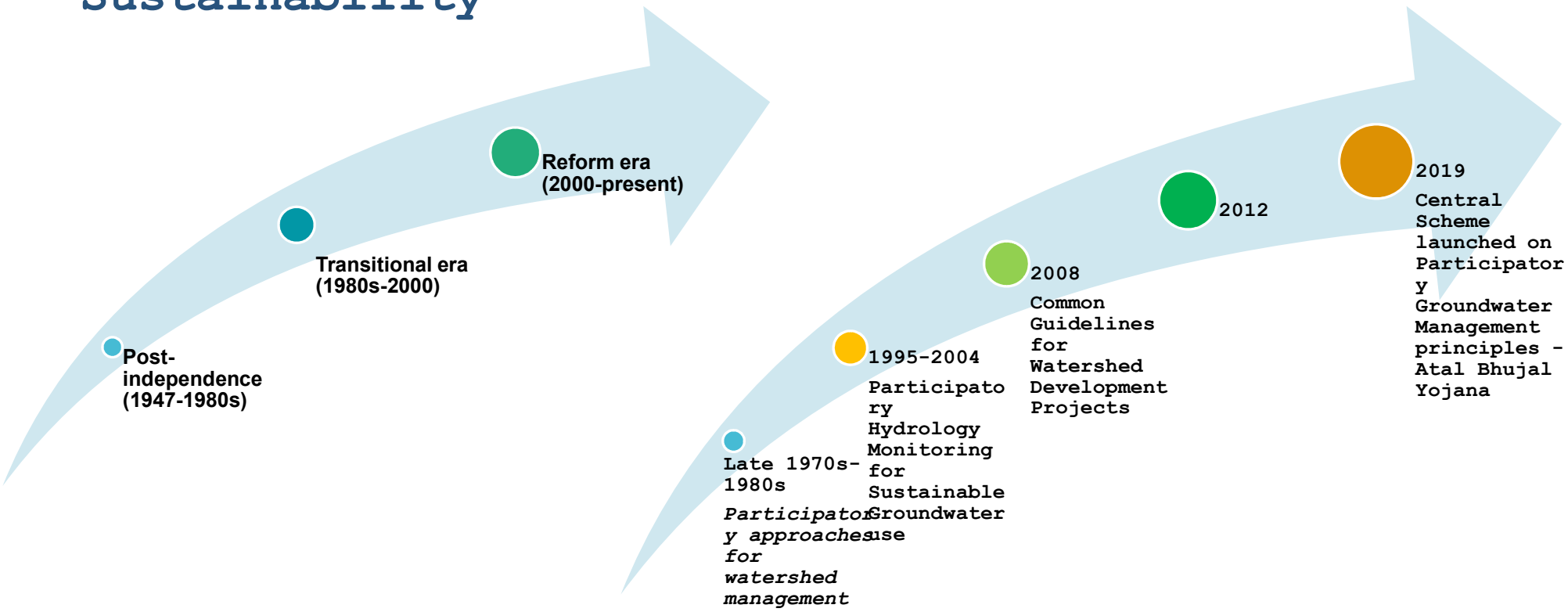
THE DESIRED SHIFT

Fragmented approaches	Sectoral planning	Consultation	Individual projects
↓	↓	↓	↓
Collaborative governance	Integrated water systems	Meaningful participation	Long-term partnerships

Partnership & Cooperation Model



Evolution of Water Sector Reforms towards Sustainability



A shift from centralized, supply-driven management towards decentralized, demand-led

Evolution of Water Sector Reforms towards Sustainability

Pre-Independence era	• Canal irrigation expansion • State-controlled legislation (e.g. Northern India Canal and Drainage Act, 1873) • Indian Easements Act (1882)
Post-Independence era (1947–1980s)	• Multi-purpose river valley projects (e.g. Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley Corporation) • Institutional foundation (CGWB, CWC) • Green Revolution — investment in surface irrigation, electricity subsidies for tube wells
Transition era (1980–2000)	• First National Water Policy (1987), followed by subsequent ones • Decentralization (73rd Amendment): powers to Panchayats, operation and maintenance of local water assets • Mission approach (e.g. Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission)
Modern era (21st century)	• From access to service delivery (Jal Jeevan Mission), PGWM (Atal Bhujal Yojana), integrated river rejuvenation (Namami Gange), JSJB — Catch the Rain • Precision irrigation push (Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana), modernization of Command Area Development (MCAD) • Digital water governance: National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) • MGNREGA › Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025

Institutional and Policy Framework

1 Strengthening Institutional Coordination

- Stronger coordination among actors for cross-sectoral water governance
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms across sectors

2 Enabling Policy Environment

- Promote coherent / harmonised water policies
- Policy for integrated, participatory water management
- Align water policies and development

3 Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

- Platforms that bring partners together
- Move from project-based collaboration to long-term institutional partnerships

4 Inclusive Water Governance

- Ensure participation of women, marginalised communities and vulnerable populations
- Strengthen community institutions, access and ownership

5 Decentralisation & Local Governance

- Strengthened role of PRIs & ULBs
- Enable local institutions in planning & management
- Link national / state priorities with local realities

6 Knowledge, Data & Evidence

- Strengthen data sharing, water information systems and knowledge exchange
- Promote evidence-based policy and decision-making
- Build institutional capacity in new areas

7 Financing & Resource Mobilisation

- Innovative financing and blended funding
- Improved convergence of public investments
- Encourage private-sector and development-partner engagement

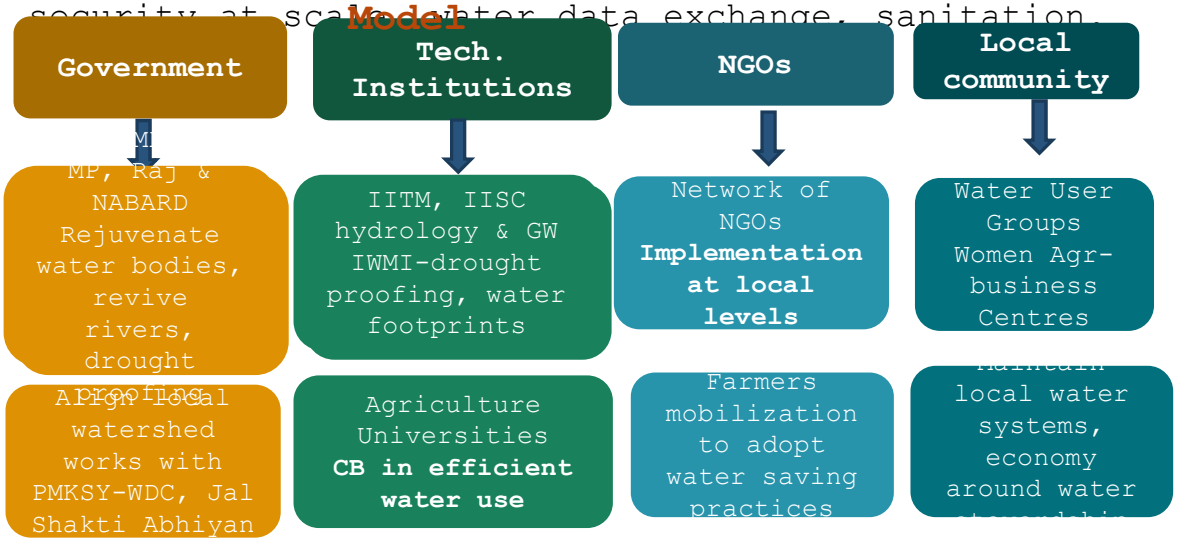
Shared responsibilities, partnerships and cooperation — enabled by continuing policy and institutional reform.

Public-Private-People Partnerships: Few Examples

ITC's Water Example

In integrated approach, ITC under its **Mission Sunehra Kal** initiative, works on water management, around a **"Public-Private-People Partnership" (PPPP) model.**

ITC has about **100 partnerships (**including with government bodies, research/technical institutions, NGOs and local communities to scale up water security at scale, water data exchange, sanitation,



Namami Gange

- Namami Gange program to **conserve and rejuvenate the Ganga** and its tributaries.
- Has structured framework to partner and coordinate with the **central government, state agencies, local districts and multi-stakeholders.**
- Demonstrates how **integrated governance, evidence-based planning,** and multi-stakeholder participation can improve river basin management.
- Successful **Hybrid Annuity Model** (HAM) of blended finance and PPPs implemented under

Jal Jeevan Mission- Community-Led Governance

- Decentralized Management: Gram Panchayats and Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSC/Paani Samiti)
- Support Agencies: SHGs, NGOs, and CBOs handhold communities in technical and

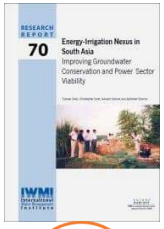
Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain

- Promote water conservation and groundwater recharge through active partnerships of public participation in collaboration with states and local communities

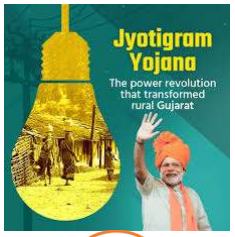
25 Years of IWMI-Tata Water Policy Program

An example of partnerships with Research Institutions, NGOs/CSOs, Think Tanks, Corporates, CSR, international institutions

ITP Led to many policies
Ex: Co-Management of Water-Energy-Food



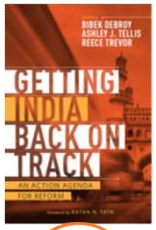
2004



2006



2012



2014



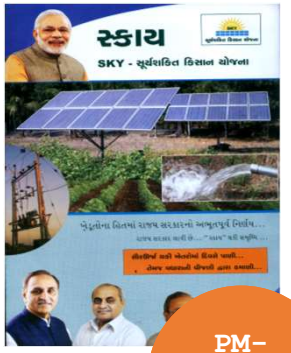
2015



2016

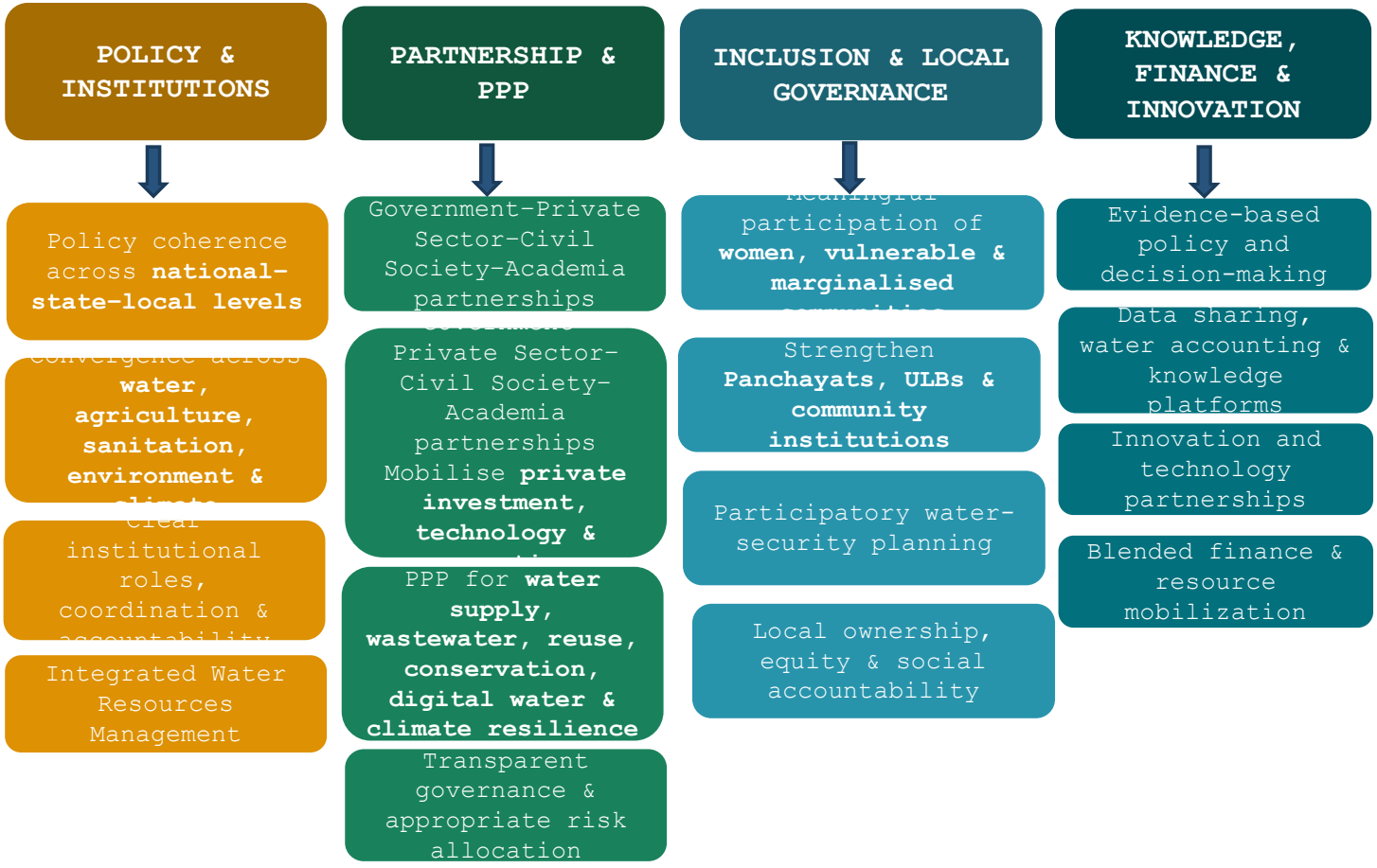


2017



PM-KUSUM 2.0

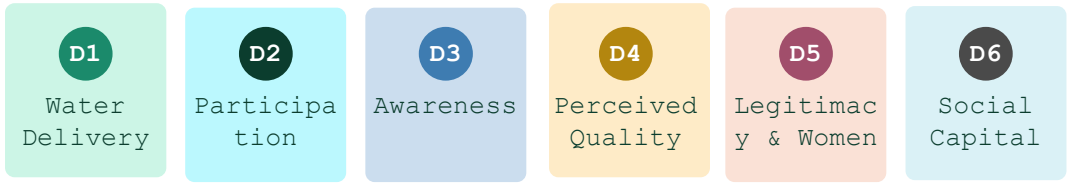
Creating an Enabling Ecosystem of Partnerships for Inclusive Water Management



WUAGI: making local water governance measurable

An irrigation system can be technically sound and deliver water exactly as designed — yet still perform poorly as a social institution. Weak or inequitable governance leads to exclusion, disputes over allocation, and eroded trust. WUAGI measures this missing dimension directly, alongside conventional system performance indicators.

SIX DIMENSIONS, ONE COMPARABLE SCORE



It draws on the Alkire-Foster method (used in the WEAI and other poverty indices): members deprived in ≥3 of 6 dimensions are "governance-deprived" — revealing not just whether governance is weak, but how widespread and severe the exclusion is.

The Odisha pilot

800+ members surveyed across 4 Water User Associations in 17 villages (Cuttack, Khordha, Nayagarh).

The governance paradox:

Members were generally informed and reasonably satisfied with how their WUA functions — yet had limited real opportunity to participate meaningfully in decisions.

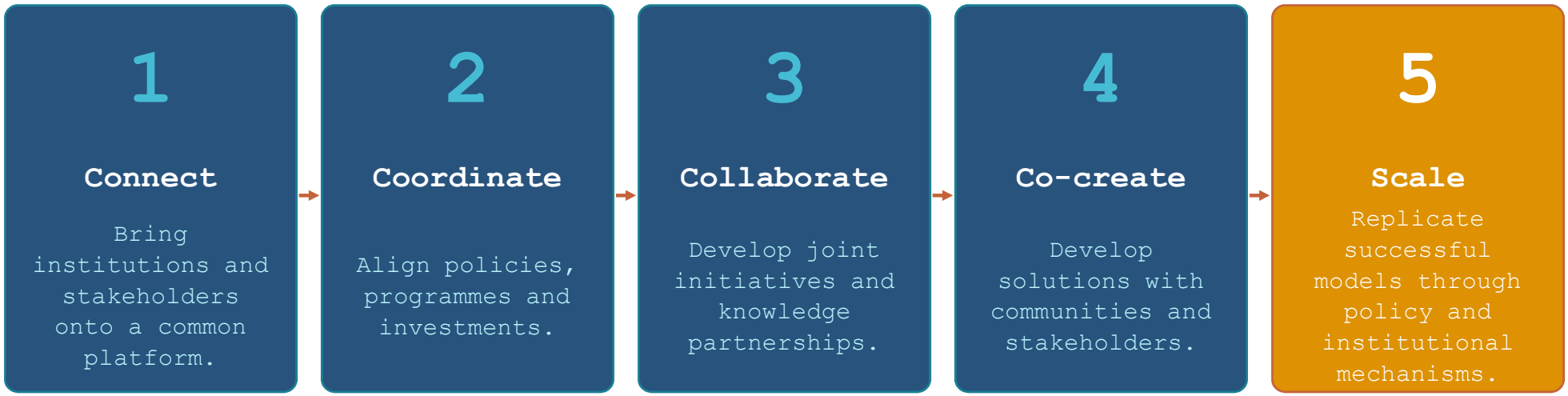
Participation & Collective Action and Institutional Legitimacy & Women's Participation were the weakest dimensions across all four WUAs — the challenge is less about information, more about creating real incentives for participation and accountable, inclusive leadership.

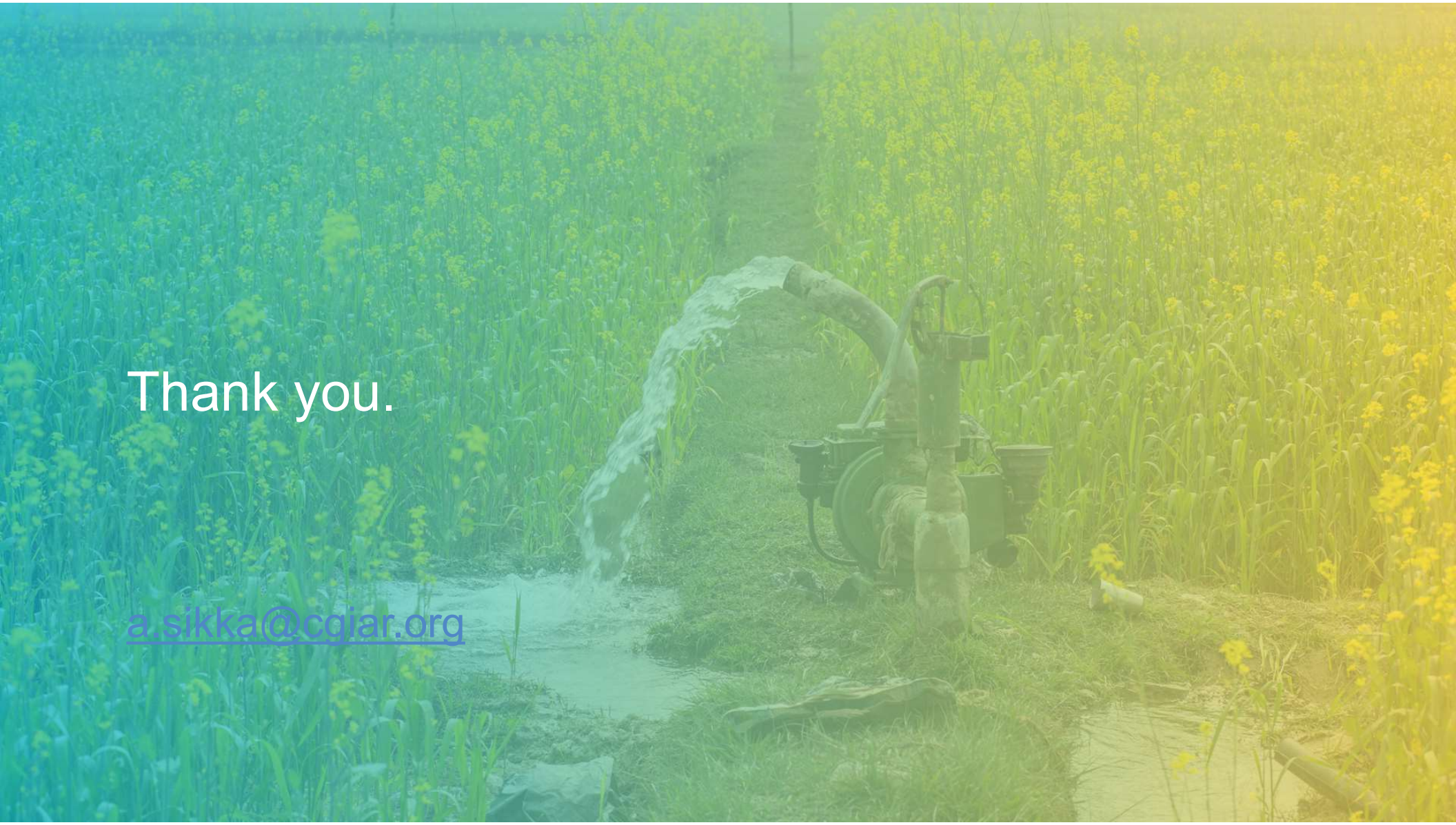
As climate change intensifies pressure on shared water, measuring governance alongside delivery and efficiency will only matter more.

Key to Successful Policy and Institutional Governance

- Successive National Water Policies and **reforms have highlighted role of wider partnerships and cooperation**
- **Learnings** from many successful and not so successful use cases provide useful insights
- Institutional responsibilities **often are poorly defined**, and cooperation often depends on informal relationships while **this demands clear mandates.**
- Partnerships through the creation of **communities of practice** for knowledge co-creation & innovation
- **Business incubators and accelerators** to facilitate partnerships between universities, budding entrepreneurs and venture capital providers.
- **Citizen science** can act as an agent of social inclusion and local-level participation in shaping evidence-based policies
- **Trust is the** fundamental building block and 'lubricant' to partnerships and cooperation. **Transparency in data and information** sharing strengthens trust.
- Governance' – beyond 'government' – involves not only relevant government departments and agencies, but also the private sector and civil society, **'whole-of-**

Way Forward: Towards a Collaborative Water Governance Framework





Thank you.

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