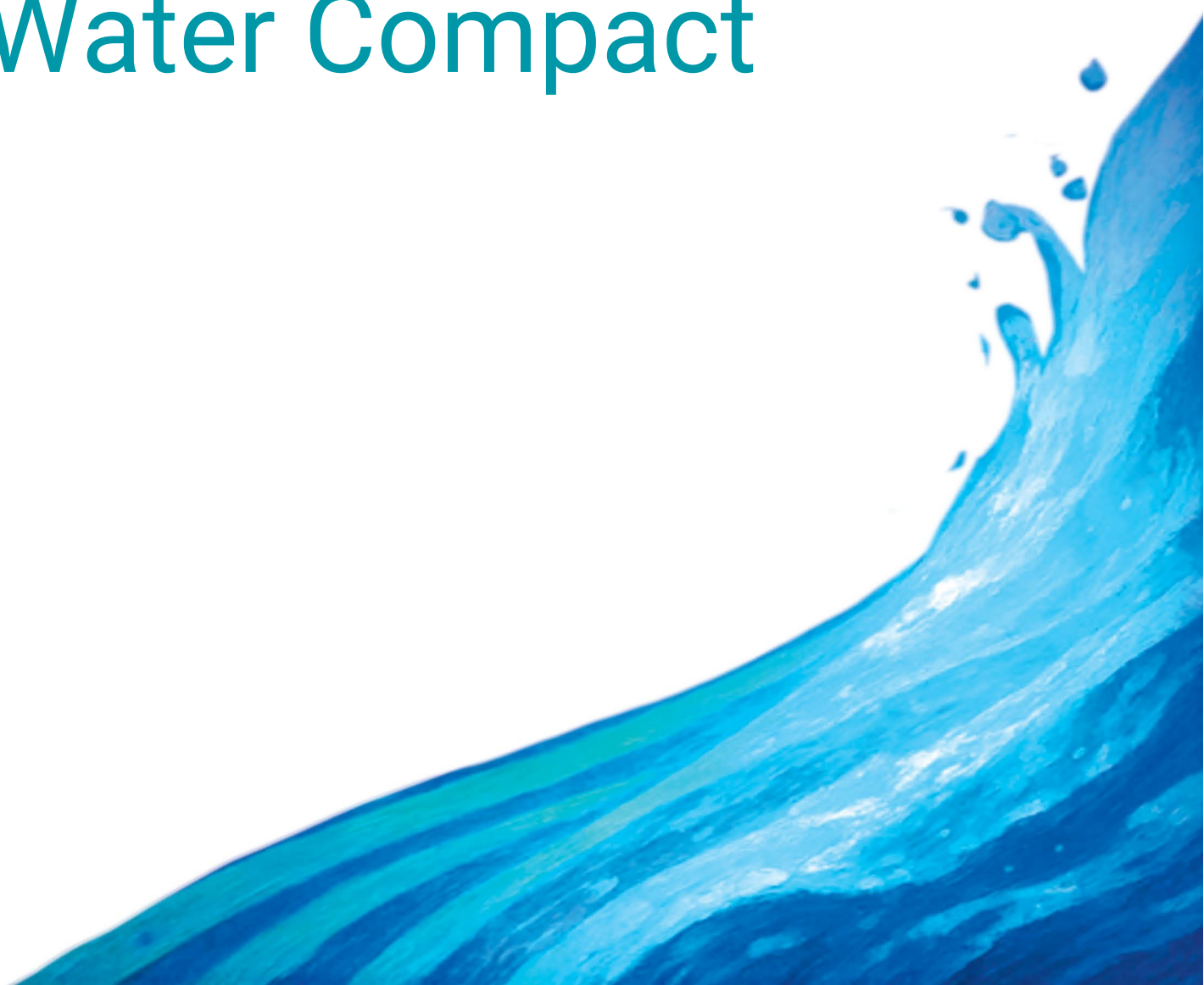


**WATER FORWARD**  
Jamaica  
Water Compact





## MINISTRY OF WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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ANY REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE TO THIS COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

April 8, 2026

Dear Water Sector Stakeholders,

**Re: National Commitments for Water Security Reform in Jamaica by 2030 – Water Compact 2030**

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The Government of Jamaica (GOJ), through the Ministry of Water, Environment and Climate Change, presents this 'Water Compact 2030' as a national commitment to strengthen water security, ensure universal access to potable water and improved sanitation, and enhance resilience to climate change.

This Compact translates the strategic objectives of the 2019 National Water Sector Policy (2019 Water Policy) and the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan (Vision 2030) into a focused, implementable agenda. It is intended to guide coordinated action among government institutions, private sector partners, international development agencies, and local communities to ensure Jamaica becomes "the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business".

### **1 Overall Target Statement**

As stated in the 2019 Water Policy, GOJ aims to achieve universal access to safe, reliable, and affordable potable water and adequate sanitation by 2030. Through the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), Jamaica will ensure its water resources are effectively managed to provide for the nation's social, economic, and environmental well-being.

GOJ will ensure the sustainable use of water resources and the preservation of ecosystems and the aquatic environment through the implementation of measures to restore and enhance the quality and quantity of usable water. This will include protecting aquifers, watersheds and other sources of water from point source pollution (e.g. factories, wastewater plants) and non-point sources (e.g. agricultural run-offs).

We commit to delivering measurable improvements in service quality through the reduction of Non-Revenue Water (NRW), increased energy efficiency, and the expansion of infrastructure in both Utility Service Areas (USAs) and Non-Utility Service Areas (NUSAs). The provision of adequate water supply and sanitation is also critical in supporting Jamaica's economic development.

Our actions will be guided by climate change adaptation strategies to protect our 26 Watershed Management Units and ensure that water is available for all Jamaicans and all Jamaica's development.

## **2 Targets for the Water Sector**

### **2.1 Development of Targets**

The key targets and timelines for Jamaica's water sector are primarily based on Vision 2030, which aims to achieve developed country status by 2030 and are guided by the 2019 Water Policy, which sets specific goals for potable water access, sanitation, and resource efficiency.

### **2.2 Targets for Water Resources Management**

Jamaica's Water Resources Authority (WRA) was established by the Water Resources Act of 1995 to regulate, allocate, conserve, and manage the country's water resources. The primary goal of WRA is to ensure sustainable, safe, and equitable water use, which includes licensing water abstraction, mapping floodplains, and monitoring water quality and quantity.

The WRA prepared the National Water Resources Master Plan for Jamaica in 2022 (Water Resources Master Plan), designed to meet the mandates of the Water Resources Act and align with Vision 2030 and the 2019 Water Policy. It serves as a strategic plan to guide the country's water resources development activities to meet current and future demands and provides an inventory of surface and groundwater resources.

The key targets for water resources management are the following:

- (a) *Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)* - The Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) will be established. It is the body that will be responsible for policy coordination across the sectors to ensure the IWRM goals are met.
- (b) *Universal Access and Demand Management*
  - i) **Universal Access by 2030:** Support providers of water supply and related agencies to meet GOJs target of achieving universal access by 2030.
  - ii) **Sectoral Development Support:** Provide a framework to meet the demands of expanding sectors, including housing, tourism, and industry.
  - iii) **Agricultural Water Security:** Support the provision of irrigation services to achieve food security and meet irrigation requirements through to 2080.
- (c) *Infrastructure and Monitoring Enhancements*
  - i) **Hydrological Network Expansion:** The WRA will strengthen and expand the water resources monitoring networks over the next 5 years to better monitor water

quality and abstraction and facilitate enforcement. This will be done by installing new monitoring stations and rehabilitating old ones. This will be done to ensure accurate assessment of safe yield and climate change impacts

- ii) Data Automation: It is planned to transition data collection from remote devices to more labor-efficient, automated hydrological data collection systems using radar gauges and real-time monitoring.
- iii) Water Quality Analysis: WRA establish its own Water Quality Analysis Laboratory and a water collection network and commence operating them by 2030.

(d) Climate Resilience and Environmental Protection

- i) Climate Mainstreaming: Integrate climate change adaptation into all IWRM objectives, specifically forecasting impacts on water quality and quantity to guide infrastructure design.
- ii) Watershed Protection: Establish protective measures for the 26 Watershed Management Units (WMUs) and identify high-priority, sensitive water bodies for enhanced conservation.

### 2.3 *Targets for Water Supply and Sanitation*

The GOJ is committed to the water supply target set in the 2019 Water Policy, that all Jamaican households are to have universal access to potable water supply by 2030. This means that water supply will be:

**Safe** - Potable water will conform to the quality standards set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

**Convenient** - Water supply will be delivered to the home, or as close as possible. Water supply should be no more than 500 metres from a home.

**Quantity sufficiency** - Each person will have access to at least 50 litres per day.

**Reliable** - Water supply will be available 24 hours per day, or otherwise on a predictable schedule.

**Affordable** - Pricing for water will continue to be arrived at by consultation with stakeholders. No one will be denied access to potable water because of an inability to pay.

The 2019 Water Policy delineates the provision of water supply into Utility Service Areas (USAs), where piped water supply is the least-cost way of providing this service, and Non-Utility Service Areas (NUSAs), where alternative supply modalities to piped water are considered more economical. It is estimated that 85% of the population reside in the USAs and 15% in the NUSAs.

To provide quality and reliable water services universally in the Country, the GOJ through its agencies, such as the National Water Commission and Rural Water Supply Limited, will carry

out activities that include improving operational efficiencies and expanding service coverage. Some key targets set include:

- (a) Reducing NWC's non-revenue water (NRW) levels from its current 75% of water production to at most 65% by 2030, through proactive and sustained NRW activities. By 2040, the target is to reduce NRW to at most 30% throughout NWC's operations. This will maximize the distribution of existing water production and realize cost savings that could in turn be invested in projects to improve its operations.
- (b) Improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems, to contribute to the alignment of the water sector with the targets agreed for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for this sector (Water Sector NAMAs), which are the following:
  - i) By 2030, to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by 20% of the emission level at 2019, through energy efficiency improvement measures.
  - ii) Increasing the share of renewable energy generation to 10% of the energy mix by 2030.
- (c) Expanding sewerage coverage to increase persons connected to the sewer connection from 23% of the population to 30% by 2030, and to 40% by 2040, with all major towns seweraged by 2040.
- (d) Ensuring that all households have access to improved sanitation facilities that protect public health and the environment by 2030, with a focus on providing the remaining 0.2% of the population that are without adequate facilities.
- (e) Strengthen the management of septage to reduce environmental harm and risks to public health.

## **2.4 Targets for Irrigation**

The GOJ's overarching objective for irrigation is to provide sufficient water for achieving food security by improving and expanding irrigation services. This includes a target to irrigate all lands where it is economically viable to do so. The GOJ is committed to the following targets:

- (a) Demand and Growth Targets - realize an agricultural water demand of 1 billion cubic metres (BCM) per year by 2030. About 205,000 hectares of land have been identified as suitable for irrigation.
- (b) Efficiency and Technology Targets
  - i) GOJ is committed to transition from traditional surface furrow irrigation (which currently accounts for 75–80% of systems) to more efficient sprinkler and drip irrigation.
  - ii) While gross surface irrigation efficiencies are currently near 30%, we intend to promote investments that can reach efficiency levels of 70%, like those already achieved on some sprinkler-equipped sugar estates.
  - iii) Steps will be taken to Increase the use of hydroponics to reduce the overall need for new irrigation abstraction while expanding production yield.

(c) Resource Augmentation and Sustainability

- i) It is planned to further explore the reuse of treated wastewater effluent for irrigation, particularly from facilities like the Soapberry Treatment Plant, which could serve as a source for the Lower Rio Cobre region.
- ii) Implementing Managed Artificial Recharge (MAR) to store excess irrigation water or treated effluent in stressed aquifers, such as the Lower Rio Cobre Alluvium and Rio Minhó Limestone, will be pursued to ensure long-term supply.
- iii) GOJ undertakes to further explore the implementation of cost-recovery tariffs to reduce the National Irrigation Commission's (NIC) dependence on government subsidies (which currently cover a significant portion of National Irrigation Commission revenue).
- iv) Expand the use of renewable energy solutions to lower high pumping costs.

### **3 Roadmap to Achieve the Targets**

To achieve the targets set out in this Water Compact, coordinated action across infrastructure development, institutional reform, and financing will be required to focus on the next 4 years through to 2030, as well as for at least a further ten years through to 2040.

#### **3.1 National Objectives for Infrastructure Development**

The Government will prioritize investments in:

- (a) *NRW Reduction*: Carrying out activities to aggressively reduce the unacceptably high level of NRW, by implementing performance-based contracts that leverage private sector expertise and link funds to actual gains on the ground will be maximized; as well as capital-intensive main replacement projects. Key steps to ensure knowledge transfer to NWC staff and the institutionalizing of world class NRW management practices in NWC's operation.
- (b) *Energy Efficiency Improvement*: Implementing projects that have been developed to improve NWC's energy efficiency levels and reduce energy cost (now about 30% of NWC's operating cost). This will be done through the replacement of inefficient pumping units with more efficient ones and the incorporation of variable speed drives at specific stations.
- (c) *Expand Sewerage Coverage*: Expand the Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant by 2030 to accommodate the additional sewage flows from the continued extension of the sewer network in Kingston and St. Andrew (KSA); target increasing sewerage coverage in KSA from 30% to 45% by 2040.
- (d) *Renewable Energy Systems* – Installation of photovoltaic systems at selected pump stations and office buildings, as well as at other locations such as the Mona Reservoir where the use of a floating solar system is being investigated.

- (e) *Rural Water Master Plan*: Developing technical solutions to provide water supply to households in the NUSAs, such as rainwater harvesting, spring entombments, and solar-powered gravity systems.

### 3.2 *National Objectives for Water Sector Institutional Reform*

GOJ will pursue institutional reforms to strengthen policy implementation, regulation, and coordination, including:

- (a) Strengthening water sector governance and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.
- (b) Strengthening and operationalizing basin-level water resources management institutions and planning arrangements across Jamaica's 26 Watershed Management Areas.
- (c) GOJ will focus on enhancing institutional, financing and policy measures for the long-term transition of the sector to be more resilient and sustainable, as well as undertaking pressing investments and modernization actions (eg. digitalization) to improve NWC's and NIC's operational efficiency, financial health and creditworthiness. We note that NWC is faced with negative equity and insufficient cost-recovery from operations to be financially viable and attractive to potential investors and partners.
- (d) Enhancing the regulatory capacity of the institutions responsible for the sector. These include:
  - i) Office of Utility Regulation (OUR), the economic and service regulator, to improve tariff methodology, financial sustainability oversight, and regulation of water supply, sewerage and irrigation services.
  - ii) National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), the environment regulator, to strengthen oversight of the operations of wastewater treatment facilities and the quality of the effluent discharges from these facilities.
  - iii) Water Resources Authority (WRA), the water abstraction regulator, to ensure the optimal use of the country's water resources.
  - iv) Ministry of Health, to provide effective oversight of drinking water quality and the use of sanitation facilities.
- (e) Strengthening data systems, monitoring, and analytical capacity to support evidence-based water management.

### 3.3 *National Investment Needs*

To achieve these targets, Jamaica requires a mobilization of significant capital. It is estimated that some US\$5 billion is required to be invested in the sector to realize the objectives of the 2019 Water Policy.

- **Water Supply Rehabilitation & Expansion:** An estimated US\$3.2 billion is needed for the rehabilitation and expansion of water supply network, as well as NRW reduction activities islandwide.
- **Expansion of Sewerage & Wastewater Treatment:** An estimated US\$1 billion is required to extend the sewer network, rehabilitate dysfunctional wastewater

treatment plants, expand the Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant, and construct new wastewater plants.

- **Energy Efficiency Improvement** : An estimated US\$360 million for NWC to implement energy efficiency improvement measures and install renewable energy systems.
- **Non-Utility Service Improvements**: Approximately US\$170 million is required for water supply and sanitation solutions in NUSAs.
- **Irrigation System Improvements**: An estimated US\$250 million to rehabilitate existing irrigation infrastructure and the extension of modern irrigation systems, as well as install renewable energy systems.
- **Other Interventions** :An estimated US\$20 million for water supply and sanitation planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, water resource management, monitoring and evaluation.

Financing of the investments in the water sector will be realized through different financing modalities. These will include funds from NWC's tariff (e.g. K-Factor Fund), GOJ's budget, multi-lateral and bilateral funding sources, and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The NIC is currently implementing the US\$160 million Pedro Plains Irrigation Expansion Project, largely financed from public funds. It will bring 4,000 hectares of some of Jamaica's most fertile land under irrigation and benefit up to 6,000 farmers and households in St. Elizabeth.

The GOJ is keen to have some of its investment done through PPP arrangements. Jamaica's PPP policy provides the framework to standardize implementation, attract investment, increase productivity, and limit fiscal risks for PPP arrangements pursued by GOJ. The Development Bank of Jamaica is GOJ's central implementing agency for Jamaica's PPP and Privatization programme and will work with NWC to pursue realizing some of its service improvements through PPP arrangements. NWC has experience in PPPs and have recently entered one for the provision of some 70,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day water to KSA and south-east St. Catherine and is about to take steps to expand the Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant through the divestment of its subsidiary, the Central Wastewater Treatment Plant.

### **3.4 Policy, Institutional, and Governance Reforms**

Although the governance of IWRM is well developed in Jamaica, the GOJ recognizes that there are still gaps that must be addressed to provide the basis for the better management of the water sector. The GOJ will therefore be taking steps to address these gaps to strengthen policy implementation, regulation and coordination. These will include:

- Legislation that defines the policy and regulatory framework for the entire water sector as first postulated in the 2004 Water Policy, to address the changing nature of the Jamaican water industry.
- The establishment of an institution that is responsible for the provision of weather, climate, and agro-meteorological services to support areas such as

sustainable water resource development, agricultural production, ecological protection, disaster, preparedness and mitigation.

- Amendments to the Office of Utilities Regulation Act and the Irrigation Amendment Act (1998) to transfer the regulation of irrigation services from NIC to OUR, and to provide for operational management of irrigation systems by Water User Associations.
- Amendments to the Floodwater Control Act (1958) and Water Resources Act (1995), to define the role of the Water Resources Authority (WRA) and the National Works Agency (NWA) in flood water management.
- Establishing legislation that recognizes the role of the Ministry of Health in regulating drinking, and addresses surveillance and monitoring of drinking water supplies.

#### 4 Implementation Monitoring

The Ministry of Water, Environment and Climate Change will monitor the progress of implementing the Water Compact, largely based on the monitoring and evaluation framework (M&E Framework) that was developed following the promulgation of the 2019 Water Policy. This M&E Framework will be refined to further allow policy learning and mid-course correction.

Key elements of the monitoring approach will include:

- **Results and indicators:** A set of indicators aligned, with the Compact targets, will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders. These would include NRW levels, water and wastewater performance levels, irrigation performance, efficiency levels, service coverage (in USAs and NUSAs) .
- **Biannual progress reporting:** Progress reports will be prepared by the MWECC for review by the Integrated Water Resource Management Council (IWRMC) that was established by Cabinet in July 2020. The IWRMC provides a forum for key stakeholders to participate water planning and management.
- **Data and verification:** Use of administrative data, sector monitoring systems, and targeted surveys/assessments, with periodic validation of key indicators as appropriate.
- **Institutional responsibilities:** Designation of responsible entities for data collection, consolidation, and reporting, under overall coordination led by the IWRMC.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Regular information-sharing with development partners and key stakeholders to support coordination and mobilization of financing for the Compact agenda.

It is planned to enhance data integration among key Ministries, Department and Agencies such as MWECC, MSETT, MoFP, NWC, RWSL, WRA, NEPA, MHW and NIC, to facilitate data sharing to support evidence-based decision-making.

## **5 Government Commitment**

The Government of Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to water security as a pillar of national prosperity. We will foster an environment of stakeholder participation, ensuring that women, youth, and vulnerable groups have a voice in water management. We commit to transparency and accountability in the execution of the Implementation Plan and the sustainable management of Jamaica's water resources

## **6 Implementation and Contact Point**

Overall coordination of the Water Compact 2030 will be led by the Ministry of Water Environment and Climate Change, through its Water Policy and Monitoring Branch. There will be active collaboration with the IWRMC and key sector agencies.

Main Contact: The Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Water, Environment and Climate Change

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MSamuda'.

Hon. Matthew Samuda, MP

**Minister of Water, Environment and Climate Change**



