



Water Forward

FOR PEOPLE FOR FOOD FOR PLANET

DRIVING JOBS AND PROSPERITY



Water: Opportunity and Growth Multiplier

Water underpins much of human existence. It supports an estimated 1.7 billion jobs worldwide across agriculture, industry, energy, and services. Water security is one of the most powerful tools we have against poverty as it helps:



Create jobs through infrastructure development



Enable jobs by boosting productivity



Protect jobs by reducing disease risk and building resilience to floods and droughts



Water Forward website

Yet for billions of people, failing water systems remain a barrier to growth. They limit productivity, weaken food and energy security, undermine public health, and hold back private investment.

The numbers tell an urgent story



2.1 billion people lack safe drinking water; **3.4 billion** lack safely managed sanitation



4 billion people face severe water stress for at least one month each year



Current agricultural water management practices **cannot sustainably feed the world's growing population**, let alone the 10 billion expected by 2050

Public investment alone is insufficient to meet the scale of these challenges, and badly needed private investment remains constrained by policy uncertainty and a lack of bankable projects.

A New Approach: Water Forward

Water Forward is a new global coalition that brings together governments, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and philanthropies around a shared goal: to deliver **water security for up to 1 billion people by 2030**. Working across three pillars—**Water for People, Water for Food, and Water for Planet**—it aims to make water systems investable, sustainable, and capable of supporting long-term growth and prosperity. Because when water is secure, **jobs are created, food is grown, and economies can flourish**.

What makes Water Forward different is how it works. Rather than isolated projects pursued by separate actors, it aligns all partners behind **government-led Water Compacts**—with each contributing its comparative advantage, whether reforms, financing, or delivery. This approach enables action and results **at a scale no single partner could achieve alone**.



▶ Water Compacts: Country-Led, Partner-Supported

At the heart of Water Forward are **Country Water Compacts**. These are government-owned action plans that connect **policy reform, institutional strengthening, and investment planning** in one coordinated framework.

Attracting investment to the water sector requires the right conditions: a stable policy environment, capable institutions, and projects that investors can back with confidence. Water Compacts represent a country's **commitment to building those conditions**—giving households, farmers, businesses, and investors the confidence to invest, plan, and grow.

Each Compact is tailored to national priorities, but all share the same goal: turning water into a foundation for growth.

► Scalable Solutions: Proven Approaches, Adapted to Every Context

The World Bank Group's [Water Strategy Implementation Plan](#) represents its contribution to **Water Forward**, committing to reaching **400 million people** with water security by 2030. It draws on proven models from around the world and sets out **seven scalable solutions** that can be adapted to work in any country context, from fragile states to fast-growing cities.



Water for People

Urban Water and Sanitation Service Optimization

— Improving utility performance, reducing non-revenue water, and building creditworthiness to access private financing.

Bankable Investments for Water, Wastewater, Reuse, and Desalination

— Making large-scale water infrastructure viable for investors through public-private Partnerships models, blended finance, and guarantees.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Provision

— Delivering sustainable water and sanitation to rural and underserved communities through decentralized, community-managed systems.



Water for Food

Farmer-Led Sustainable Irrigation: Decentralized Irrigation Services

— Giving smallholder farmers access to affordable irrigation equipment, solar pumps, and financing, to boost the productivity of rainfed and irrigated systems.

Increased Water and Energy Efficiency: Centralized Irrigation Services

— Modernizing irrigation systems to boost agricultural productivity while reducing operating costs.



Water for Planet

Reduction of Flood and Drought Risk

— Combining early warning systems, dam safety, nature-based solutions and infrastructure to protect communities from water-related disasters.

Restoration and Protection of Rivers and Aquifers

— Improving water quality and quantity through pollution reduction, water resources management and basin-level frameworks.

Delivered through the combined strengths of IBRD/IDA, IFC, and MIGA, these solutions are designed to build resilience to climate shocks while maintaining affordability for households and businesses.

► Financing and Capital Mobilization

Water Forward brings together the full spectrum of capital—public, private, and philanthropic—around government-led priorities.

Align

partners behind Country Water Compacts, so financing and reforms move together

Mobilize

investment through guarantees, blended finance, and risk-sharing tools that give private investors the confidence to enter the water sector

Scale

results by replicating what works across countries and regions

This approach delivers more water for the money and more money for water, closing the gap that public budgets alone cannot fill.

Join Water Forward

Partner Countries lead and implement Water Compacts—setting bold targets, driving the reforms needed to attract private capital, and convening partners around a shared national plan.

Financing Partners commit financing and measurable targets—providing grants, loans, and blended capital to de-risk investment and accelerate delivery, with transparent reporting on people reached and financing mobilized by 2030.

Enabling Partners bring technical expertise, analytics, and capacity building to support country programs—through platforms including the Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership, the 2030 Water Resources Group, and IFC's Technical Assistance Facility

The Time to Act is Now

Water Forward offers the framework, the partnerships, and the tools to move from ambition to results, at the scale the world needs.

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