

# Evaluation of the Water Peace Security (WPS) Partnership

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FINAL REPORT

Client: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

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## GLOSSARY

ABM	Agent-Based Model
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
BLISS	Blue Lifeline Initiative for a Secure Sahel
BMU	Beach-Management Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
4D	Development, Disaster relief, Diplomacy and Defence
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DGIS	Directorate-General International Cooperation
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EQ	Evaluation Question
HCSS	The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies
IA	International Alert
IGG	Inclusive Green Growth
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Energy (Ethiopia)
NCEA	Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment
OGB	Omo Gibe Basin
OH	Outcome Harvesting
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
WI	Wetlands International
WISO	Wetlands International Sahel Office
WPS	Water Peace Security
WPSI	Water Peace Security Initiative
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSU	Wolayita Sodo Uni

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final report of the evaluation of the Water Peace Security (WPS) partnership for the period November 2020-April 2025, prepared for the Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), DGIS IGG. The evaluation looks at the programme, using four DAC-related questions and some specific questions about institutional and organizational development. The Terms of Reference (see Annex 3) also include forward-looking questions regarding a continuation of (parts of) the activity.

### A STRATEGIC OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WPS

The purposes of the current evaluation were to assess the performance of the WPS and to help DGIS IGG to come to a decision regarding a possible continuation of funding the WPS partnership.

WPS is an experimental activity that was created with a lot of input from the ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is experimental because of the confluence of the combination of issues, skills, institutions and domains. It started with an idea about predicting conflict in relation to water, was extended with “we should link it to result on the ground” and was then widened to “the 4D community”.

That is a very ambitious goal.

The project in this phase had three main areas of work:

- The global tool,
- The interventions at country level
- Creating an organizational basis for a continued WPS

The evaluators conclude that the combined activity “WPS” is an innovation, that is starting to yield results. The current cases, the Global Tool and the combined operation benefit from in-depth analysis to increase the understanding of the three main questions it has tried to address:

- What predicts water related conflict?
- What are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level as 4D community?
- What would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership and a sustained and organized WPS platform?

It’s important to see these questions together. Deconstructing this innovation doesn’t recognise the potential of WPS. It can be an important support to the (fast) emerging domain water and conflict, situations that can quickly become highly disruptive.

The project, per April 2025, has the following outputs:

- A global tool that is functional and has been extended during this programme phase.
- A structure for running and maintaining the global tool.
- An emerging approach for working at country level with water- and peace & security expertise.
- An emerging structure for operationalizing this approach and repeating it elsewhere.
- An emerging governance structure.
- Four different country cases where results of the approach can be identified and where meaningful lessons on the potential of the interventions can be drawn.
- Global visibility of the topic WPS and global recognition of the brand WPS.

The benefits are:

- Results on the ground that were achieved based on interventions by WPS members, using the global approach as a basis, allowing a further development.
- One case (Kenya) that seems to show the full 4D spectrum realized within the timeframe of this phase. As such an important proof of concept.
- Results with the global tool that is still unique in its capacity, allowing a next step forward.
- Results in the joint recognition of the consortium members that WPS has a future and that WPS is theirs.

The challenges are:

- Securing informed adaptation of the theories of change.
- Working in relation to conflict, security and diplomacy reduces the possibilities of transparency and demands confidentiality.
- Deeper understanding of the interventions at country level.
- Deciding whether or not (and how) to develop (and invest in) the global tool.
- Clarify both the entrance-strategy and the exit-strategy in country cases.
- Creating WPS as a structured organization.
- Creating a sustained funding facility.
- Organizing WPS for implementing and continuous learning.
- Organising WPS for working with clients.
- Being understood as a service-delivering facility.

The relation with NL MFA has been important, both at the department level and at the level of embassies. MFA itself has not always been consistent, and the strategic potential has not been exploited to the max. The annual expert meeting at MFA (*terugkomdagen*) was not used for convening around WPS. However, there were initiatives on the back of WPS to strategize the collaboration with WPS, recognizing the link with both ODA and the political part of the ministry (MENA meeting). As a 4D facility the WPS as a service has an important potential to inform and operationalize at this level.

The statistics of water-related conflict make clear that the incidence and the number of studies on the topic are showing a dramatic increase over the last 20 years, making clear that there is a growing need for understanding and effective intervention. In other words, unfortunately the market for the services of WPS is growing fast.

In the period since the start of WPS, the context of support for water governance has changed a lot. Climate change is increasingly showing its face, the global security is rapidly degrading, funding for development is more difficult to find, and conditions regarding relevance of initiatives become more strict and more based on self-interest.

The 2025 policy of the NL MFA focuses on the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the MENA region, with a focus on water management, specifically with Dutch water expertise, an active water diplomacy and an increased disaster preparedness. All elements that the WPS partnership seeks to address.

A next iteration of WPS could be of major importance if it would include a true “mission control”, a professional core in a secretariat that manages the global tool as a basis for the periodic predictions, but also as an instrument for advice in specific regions and domains. The same secretariat would also be the platform for strategic advice in relation to specific (potential) conflicts, with options for supporting, through its own resources or those of others. With a collegial decision model, much like similar organisations like NCEA are having.

It is important to make a choice regarding the economics of a future WPS. Having the goal of making it a platform for the topic “water/climate and conflict”, it should be a place where all actors feel welcome and can come for inspiration and support. A low threshold will strengthen that position, but it also will mean that sponsors are needed. It is suggested that in the next phase of WPS, the tools of WPS (including the global tool) are publicly accessible and free. All publications are free. Digital training is free. The logo of WPS is a sign of quality, not of ownership.

The secretariat could be a virtual organization, to increase the flexibility and the global character. Funding would be through a trust-fund, operation based on solid governance and a strong system of quality assurance.

The evaluators see enough result in the combined outcomes of the current WPS to continue supporting the initiative, provided it completes its’ workstream “institutional” and creates the committed and competent organizational frame that is required for advancing WPS.

## THE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVALUATION

### **Relevance**

*EQ A1 & EQ A2 – relevance for SDGs & relevance to NL policies, both in 2020 and in 2025.* The project was relevant in relation to the SDGs, as well as to the Dutch policies at the time of the start of the project. The project is still relevant to the Dutch policies at the time of the evaluation: it covers the priority regions and three of the four key topics in water management (Dutch water expertise, active water diplomacy and strengthening the preparedness to disasters).

The project was also relevant for the countries where it operated and for the populations living in the areas where it is active. There is also a recognition of its relevance in the sectors it is trying to inform globally.

*EQ A3 – were the identified activities, outputs and products appropriate to the objectives in each area of the proposal?* The original proposal had a clear link between activities and outputs in the text, but not in the logframe. This has confused the implementation.

*EQ A4 – adaptation of WPS to new challenges and policy priorities? Addressing new challenges in water diplomacy, and requests from NL MFA?* The project responded well to the Covid-19 crisis, improvising a transition in 2020. When Afghanistan fell away, alternative use was found for the funding. A creative solution was proposed for implementing a transboundary situation in East Africa. It was able to correct the initial error of not including groundwater (though the study for Ethiopia is still pending).

*EQ A5 – was there a ToC and intervention strategy? Was it appropriate and did it support WPS to pursue its objectives?* The Theory of Change has become a firmer point of attention in the project. The evaluators are of the opinion that the ToC is likely one of the important products of the WPS partnership: understanding the working of water (and climate)-related conflicts and the options for the 4D community to contribute to avoiding them as well as the (limitations in) options for intervening as outsiders.

*EQ A6 – how did WPS take into account aspects of ecological sustainability, climate change, gender and inclusiveness?* Trends in relation to climate change were not included in the policy analysis, resulting in a focus on drought responses. Similar attention to flooding would have increased the relevance for the users (and the

credibility of the advisors). The global tool has consistently included climate change in its analysis/quarterly updates. The relevance regarding a global trend in water related conflict is confirmed by various statistics. The obvious increase in water and conflict research also points at a potential for bringing together those researchers.

### **Effectiveness**

*EQ B1 – did WPS achieve the objectives of the programme from the proposal and annual plans?* From the contribution analysis it follows that the regional part of WPS (workstream 1) proves to be effective, with probably the clearest positive results in Kenya and Iraq, and less so in Mali and Ethiopia, due to a mix of external and internal factors. An example of a positive internal factor is the choice of the local organizations with which the country-level activities were implemented. An example of a (negative) external factor is that the situation in Mali resulted in a complication of working with the central government, even though the project managed to deal with this. Another is the large-scale internal conflict in Ethiopia, which may have been a reason of delays in implementation of WPS activities. Looking more closely, there are important differences in the actual implementation in the four countries. These differences are partially recognised in the cross-cutting work undertaken. The evaluators think more could have been achieved if a MEL system (see below) would have been operational.

Workstream 2, global was also effective. The main results are achieved. The project is realizing the goals as proposed in the log frame. The global tool 2.0 is working. There is documented use of the tool, although exact knowledge about the use is hard to obtain, in particular use by the security sector. The activities on awareness and training are taking place. Together this workstream results in a global presence of WPS.

Effectiveness of workstream 3, institutional strengthening of WPS, is more limited. The main result, an organized structure with organization, products and funding based on a MEL system, a knowledge base and good governance has not been achieved so far. The proposed MEL system, including “*Systematically document processes, outcomes and learnings from project implementation to support the feedback loop*” was only very partly effectuated. This affects the overall quality of the results. Governance for oversight of the project was not established until 2024, reducing the strategic potential of the project. The indicators in the log frame for this workstream suggest that virtually everything was achieved, but the evaluators observe that this part of the log frame does not represent the combined activities announced in the 2020 proposal.

The 2023-2024 strategic process has brought serious advances. The six partners have stepped up their efforts for creating this, showing initial, albeit belated results.

*EQ B2 – does the funding facilitate flexibility and effectiveness in programme planning and management?* The evaluation also concludes that the current funding structure is reducing the flexibility and through that also the effectiveness of WPS. An alternative funding structure as announced in the plan from 2020 has not been prepared yet.

*EQ B3 – what has been the impact of the activities? What are the benefits and challenges? Should WPS change the mix of activities?* The impact has not been part of the evaluation. This question can only be answered if “efficiency” can be evaluated up to the level of activity. That level of (financial) information was not available. This means that this evaluation cannot answer this question.

## **Efficiency**

*EQ C1 – has WPS good data for evaluating impact and progress?* The efficiency at the level of activities could not be analysed due to lack of sufficiently detailed data and a good M&E system. The level at which financial data are reported does not allow the evaluators to come to an opinion on the question whether the benefits arising from activities are in balance with the level of effort and resources spent. The evaluators note the decision by MFA to agree that the project would not report at activity level and to accept a summarized/simplified audit. This combination seriously affected the evaluation of efficiency (cost-effectiveness, *doelmatigheid*), even though the cost-effective operation is a responsibility of the WPS partnership. WPS could have put more effort in clarifying how the cost-efficiency of the programme was managed.

In the operational workstreams, the indicators were quite/too broadly defined. The Outcome indicator 1 should for example be the result of the four outcome indicators for the four pillars. That is not the case. The evaluators are of the opinion that both the indicators and the levels of ambition might have been different if there would have been an evaluating exchange on the monitoring system after a year of initial operation.

The following can be concluded for the other three evaluation questions related to efficiency:

*EQ C2 – are the results in balance with the effort and resources?* The evaluation does not cover impact. The level of data collection does not allow for an answer.

*EQ C3 – was there attention to operate in a cost-effective manner?* The WPS could have put more effort in clarifying how the cost-efficiency of the programme was managed.

*EQ C4 – are there regulations for maximum costs for budget items?* The evaluators did not find proof for regulations regarding maximum costs of budget items.

## **Sustainability**

*EQ D1 – how sustainable are WPS and its activities?* The sustainability was part of the design of the project. Budget and activities for creating a WPS organization to replace the project are in the proposal for the activity, as well as a planned approach. The sustainability plan announced in the project proposal from 2020 was not prepared. The rest was implemented partially. Probably the most crucial remaining step is finalizing the creation of a credible WPS organization.

Sustainability for the global workstream is based on permanent improvement and enhanced by a visible global presence. The quarterly publication is an important part of the visibility.

The institutional workstream is in fact a sustainability action. The 2023-2024 strategic process was an important step in this workstream. The subsequent activities (creating a formalised partnership, setting up oversight, develop a proposal for the next phase) are in various stages of finalization.

*EQ D2 – does WPS enhance local ownership?* Sustainability for the country activities was secured in various degrees and in various ways. In particular the link to existing CSOs seems important, with International Alert and Wetlands International securing that position in Mali. Linking to EKNs helps in linking to more sustained funding.

*EQ D3 – anticipated main future developments by WPS.* Cannot be answered. The evaluators are of the opinion that this is rather a direct question to the WPS partners, that they are in the best position to answer this question themselves.

*EQ D4 – how can the financial sustainability of WPS be improved?* The WPS funding strategy is basically a list of potential funders. It does not contain an organisational basis for receiving funding for WPS, as proposed in the 2020 proposal: a trust fund. Having these organizational elements (a financial structure and a reliable organization) are foundations for creating a more sustainable financial basis for WPS. A reliable plan for creating these elements should be formulated before starting a next phase.

### **Governance and organization**

*EQ E1 – Does WPS and its activities cooperate with the most important partners in the area of work?* The evaluators conclude “yes” regarding this question.

*EQ E2 – Is WPS able to involve other partners in its programmes? What are the results of this involvement so far?* The WPS has involved other partners, which resulted in support for five additional countries.

*EQ E3 – How appropriate and effective is WPS organizational structure and staffing profile in realizing a relevant, effective and efficient WPS programme of activities?* The structure as it has been operating from the start of this phase is not ideal. Missing oversight, no consortium agreement, too many functions concentrated in the coordinator position, a lack of time and capacity at the secretariat and a complicated system of budgeting and implementation made the overall operation difficult. Assigning the secretariat to the IHE was practical for contractual reasons but based on the observations during this evaluation and the comments from the consortium partners it appears that the management of WPS, being a complex programme, may not be its strength, although several contributing factors, e.g. under-staffing, should be considered.

*EQ E4 – Who is WPS accountable to and to what extent, and how is M&E built into programming and strategy to strengthen that accountability?* At the time of this evaluation the accountability for WPS would technically and financially be with the leadership of IHE Delft being accountable to IGG at MFA, combined with the country programmes that should be in closer contact with the NL embassies, for reasons of the technical cooperation, but also because of the formal legal responsibility of the NL MFA for the activities in the countries where WPS is active. The MEL was partly followed through, but disappeared from the logframe, which may explain a reduced attention. This in turn reduces the steering information regarding the effectiveness of the various interventions. Not implementing the strategic level (steering committee) in the project aggravated the situation. On paper, as proposed, the system in the text of the proposal was well thought through. In implementation, starting with the annex V of the proposal, the system was not realized as proposed, resulting in missed opportunities for learning, improving, adapting and an absence of informed strategic decisions.

*EQ E5 – How well does IGG interact with WPS?* The ministry has not followed through its initial role in the creation of the current grouping of institutions and their project. In IGG’s decisions regarding the administration it was less fortunate, allowing a less detailed reporting and auditing, resulting in a less transparent operation than would have been possible.

It is also concluded that the current implementation-model of the contractual link should be avoided if a future activity were to be funded. Operational flexibility is vital and is hampered by managing in detail, as it is the case today. This should be combined with transparency in reporting a proper auditing (at activity level), thus enabling management and oversight. Introducing a proper oversight within WPS would avoid problems. At the country-level the interaction WPS – EKN can be very effective and is a “conditio sine qua non” due to the character of the activity, and the explicitly formulated responsibility of EKN/Government of the Netherlands.

*EQ E6 – Are there examples of innovative approaches (partnership collaboration, achieving societal impact, sustainability, communication and dissemination)? What are the results and how do projects learn from others?* The combined WPS programme is an innovation, that is starting to yield results. The current cases, the Global Tool and the combined operation would benefit from in-depth analysis to increase the understanding of the three main questions it has tried to address:

- What predicts water related conflict?
- What are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level as 4D community?
- What would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership and a sustained and organized WPS platform?

It is important to address these questions together. Deconstructing this innovation does not recognise the potential of WPS. It can be an important support to the (fast) emerging domain of water and conflict, situations that can quickly become highly disruptive.

The evaluators see enough result in the combined outcomes of WPS to continue supporting the initiative, provided it completes its' workstream "institutional" and creates the committed and competent organizational frame that is required for advancing WPS.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The WPS project was still ongoing on 1 April 2025. The evaluation therefore also includes some suggestions for immediate action.

### *Recommendation on funding WPS:*

Continue the financing of WPS, with the condition that the partners will as soon as possible present an institutionalised partnership model that is credible and competent to act for the next phase.

### *Recommendation on an institutional structure:*

With the (still strengthening) status of WPS, and the increasing relevance due to the rising number of water and climate-related conflicts, being part of WPS is an institutional asset, as all current partners confirmed. A future structure should be open to others joining. It should also be underlined that the work on peace and security/governance requires neutrality and is at odds with specific advocacy. A future WPS would continue to have a hybrid organisation<sup>1</sup>, but it should be able to engage in financial agreements. There were several practical issues for creating such a structure, due to the specific characteristics of the current partners. A combination of possible forms of association (e.g. associate partner) should be considered for overcoming such issues.

### *Recommendation on the financial structure:*

The organization is a not-for-profit structure. The WPS partnership needs to have its own funds, secured in a trust fund, governed by a board, with a quality assurance system in the WPS operation to satisfy the requirements of contributors. There will be various ways for contributing, both at institutional level and for specific services.

### *Recommendation on organisation:*

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<sup>1</sup> We call organizations hybrid, when we can no longer describe them as public or private, as a state, market or civil society (from Brandsen and Karré, 2010: 2).

The current WPS has a very minimal organization, making it hard to actually coordinate, create, advise, organize. In a next phase, the WPS must start with a strong secretariat that is able to advise at various levels of scale, manage its own resources and mobilize resources of others. That would probably mean a group of 4-8 persons. The secretariat manages the global tool as a basis for the periodic predictions, but also as an instrument for advice in specific regions and domains. The secretariat would also be the platform for strategic advice in relation to specific (potential) conflicts. With a collegial decision model it will decide on options for supporting, through its own resources or those of others, much like similar organisations such as the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) are having. Next to this operational structure there also should be as soon as possible a functioning steering committee/board that secures oversight, with possibly an active role of the chairperson of that board in a more regular capacity.

*Recommendation on products and services:*

The WPS suite of activities and services can be more flexible and precise once the structure and organization are in place. The global tool will be more integrated in the overall operation; the services linked to (potential) conflict situations will be more diverse. Due to the capacity limitations of the organization, the main challenge will be to work as much as possible via others. Being a learning and service platform for this domain of expertise, especially the intervention part will be the core of WPS' activities.

*Recommendations for the coming months:*

As soon as possible, a meeting should take place between the strategic leadership of DGIS and WPS to discuss the current document, the future relationship and next steps.

One decision that should be agreed between all parties is mobilizing resources for creating the secretariat. This should include a quartermaster (*kwartiermaker*) that will organize this phase.

The WPS partnership should use the remainder of this phase to understand all the activities that have taken place, extracting elements for future cases and further refining the ToC.

*Recommendation on an alternative pathway:*

If the level of organization of WPS would not be satisfactory, the alternative option for a continued WPS could be with RVO. A delegated funding agreement would open the way for organizing a WPS-like structure, albeit less engaged, and perhaps more expensive. To avoid losing time, initial talks on this option should be initiated in parallel to the process with the WPS partnership.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the report of the external evaluation of the Water Peace Security (WPS) partnership for the period November 2020-April 2025, prepared for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DGIS IGG.

This evaluation takes place before the end of the activity. The work of WPS is still ongoing, based on a budget-neutral extension until the end of 2025. The partnership can realise further results in the remaining time of the current contract.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the WPS partnership until April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. The Terms of Reference (ToR) also include some forward-looking questions regarding a continuation of (parts of) the activity.

This evaluation looks at the programme, using the DAC-related questions and some specific attention for the institutional and organizational development (ref. Terms of Reference evaluation WPS).

The organization of the evaluation was as follows. The work of WPS in Kenya and Ethiopia was analysed by experts who are based in the respective countries. The other countries as well as the global activities and the institutional part were analysed using reporting and virtual interviews.

The evaluation team is composed as follows: George de Gooijer (team leader, analysis Mali and Iraq, Global Tool and Institutional section, overall reporting). Getnet Alemu (data-collection and analysis Ethiopia). Simon Thuo (data-collection and analysis Kenya). Niek de Jong (methodology)

Available time and the number of working days available for this evaluation were limited. Preparation by the WPS team to support the work of the evaluation mission was limited. A draft report on the preceding period only became available after 1 month. It was also crucial that the MEL plan, the organised oversight and the sustainability plan that were proposed in 2020 did not materialise. The work of the evaluation team became a lot more complicated because of this missing material. Documents were not readily available through the part time secretary for WPS. She had to refer to an ex-staff member, who himself was retired a few weeks into the work of the mission.

### Timeline of the evaluation

April 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025:	Start of the work, preparation of evaluation plan
April 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2025:	Evaluation plan accepted, start of data collection and
May 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2025:	0-Draft evaluation report submitted to WPS team and DGIS team
May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2025:	Feedback meeting/consultation WPS team
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025:	Feedback meeting DGIS team
June 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025:	Draft report submitted to DGIS
June 10 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2025:	Draft evaluation checked by WPS MT on factual errors
June 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2025:	Draft final report presented to DGIS.
June 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2025:	Final report submitted

This document is made up of three parts: evaluation of the design and performance, conclusions and assessments and recommendations.

## INTRODUCING WPS

The current evaluation covers the second phase of the Water Peace Security (WPS) Partnership, from its start in November 2020 until 1 April 2025.

### **WPS, what happened prior to the current second phase**

To understand what was done in the current period of WPS, here is a summary of what happened until November 2020.

The WPS started with a study done for the Netherlands Water Partnership (ref. NWP report, 2017<sup>2</sup>), that was presented in a meeting in 2017. This resulted in a pilot activity called the Water Peace Security Initiative 2017-2022 (WPSI) within an ongoing funding by MFA for IHE, DUPC2 (ref letter IHE to IGG February 2018 and WPS pilot proposal 2018<sup>3</sup>). The budget of WPSI was Euro 2,075,563.

The Pilot was making a start with developing a method, and made a start with initial work in Mali, and later also in Iraq. Initially the organizations involved in the consortium were IHE, WRI, Deltares and HCSS. Wetlands International and International Alert joined in 2018. The proposal for the pilot activity has some details on the governance and funding: partners will be charging but also contribute. The proposal for the pilot also mentions that 20% of the budget (total just over 2M€) will be used for others outside the consortium (including “southern parties”) for activities linked to pillars 1b, 2 and 4.

The pilot activity was evaluated in 2019 (ref. evaluation pilot phase water, peace and security partnership, November 2019) and resulted in a proposal for the current programme in 2020 (ref proposal WPS 2020-2024).

The programme proposal for phase 2, the project under evaluation, was analysed and discussed by a group of experts in a “Quality at Entry” process (REF *Minutes: Quality at Entry – Water, Peace and Security Partnership – 26 February 2020*) that discussed the proposal, and came with advice on the content, focus and verification. On the content it pointed at the limitations of support in countries with weak governance and the risk of entering in a conflict and not being considered impartial and creating danger for supported groups. Regarding “focus” it suggested that WPS would concentrate on developing its niche, as the proposal was going wide, and “lacks focus”. Regarding “verification” there were concerns about the validity of the predictions of the tool and the need for continuous improvement. As a conclusion the concerns, and responses were addressed in various ways, all requiring a constant dialogue based on annual reporting and the exchange between the MFA and the project: *The issues raised in the Quality at Entry will also periodically be discussed in the strategic policy dialogue with MFA. Especially with regard to the (sustainable) impact of the WPS partnership at local and international level, the role of MFA in the international discussions around conflict and natural resources, and the link with other MFA-funded programmes. Depending on the agenda, different departments of MFA will be involved in these discussions.*

The start of 2020 coincided with the outbreak of Covid19. This had serious effects on the financial decisions at DGIS. The ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to stop all funding decisions. The planned activities of WPS were forced to stop, and some of the work that had already put in motion was continued under the earlier

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<sup>2</sup> Watercrisis – Oorzaak van conflict of bijdrage aan stabiliteit Inventarisatie en agendering, NWP, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Proposal for a pilot project to develop an innovative interdisciplinary approach (2018-2019), WPS, 2018.

funding arrangement with IHE. Eventually the funding agreement for phase 2 was signed in August 2020, with the official start in November 2020.

### **WPS, phase 2**

The Water, Peace and Security (WPS) Partnership was launched to address water-related conflicts through a mix of data-driven tools, capacity building, and dialogue. Its core objective has been:

**to create a platform, WPS, that will develop and provide innovative tools and services that help local stakeholders identify, understand, and address water-related security risks.**

For this, the partnership worked on a global presence, making the brand known, getting organized as a group of institutions, developed a knowledge base, and further developed its approach.

From 2020 to 2025 (Phase II of the programme), WPS

- worked on regional engagements in Mali, Iraq, Kenya, and Ethiopia as well as cross-cutting regional issues (workstream 1).
- developed and implemented global early warning tools (workstream 2)
- started creating a more permanent organisational and funding basis for WPS (workstream 3).

WPS operates on an integrated theory of change with four pillars – **Understand, Mobilize, Learn, and Dialogue** – whereby improving risk analysis (Understand) and awareness (Mobilize) enables capacity building for action (Learn) and inclusive forums for conflict resolution (Dialogue).

The work in Mali was relatively easy to start, because two of the partnering institutions were already working there on similar activities, and were involved in the pilot phase of the project. In Mali the focus is on three small towns in the Niger basin, Mopti, Konna and Djenné. There were some limitations in the geographic choices due to the security situation.

In Iraq, the partnership was also already active in the pilot phase but not active on the ground (as was the case in Mali). The support in Iraq started at national level, but then also included local action through a cooperation with two NGOs that focus on the southern part of the country, as well as with other experts and international organisations. The area of WPS focus comprises four neighbouring provinces located in south Iraq: Basra, Dhi Qar, Missan and Wasit. The rationale for choosing this area was to investigate (inter-) provincial dynamics around water-related challenges and instability.

In East Africa, the focus was on the Turkana Basin of Kenya and the adjacent cross-border area in Ethiopia – a region plagued by chronic resource conflicts among communities like the Turkana, Dassanach, Toposa, and Nyangatom. There was also activity in the nearby border area with South Sudan by the authorities, based on the other activities taking place.

The WPS Phase II proposal envisioned a transboundary approach linking Turkana (Kenya) and the Omo-Gibe basin (Ethiopia) under one initiative. However, due to political sensitivities, the programme initially split its Kenya and Ethiopia interventions, focusing on Turkana County in Kenya and the Omo-Gibe basin in Ethiopia, separately.

The global workstream is creating, further developing and operating global early warning tools. In addition, there are activities for awareness creation and training. This has resulted in a first and a second version of a tool that predicts the possibility of a water related conflict breaking out in the coming year, which has been

the basis of a quarterly publication on that topic. Participating in a series of global and regional events under the WPS banner has contributed to the visibility of WPS as a brand and has further put water and conflict on the agenda of policy makers.

The WPS started as a loosely bound cooperating group of institutions. The workstream “institutional” was included in the project to secure an institutional basis for WPS. A secretariat plus coordination at IHE was a first step. End of 2023-beginning of 2024, the six WPS institutions undertook an internal process towards a more institutionalised WPS partnership. Based on a series of interviews and numerous meetings, a retreat was organized, resulting in steps towards an organization, organizing a better oversight and formulating a future way of working together.

## EVALUATION November 2020 - April 2025

In this section, the evaluators report on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and governance and organization.

### Approach and criteria

The ToR of the evaluation asked for:

- ‘Criteria and evaluation indicators for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of WPS operations, the institutional arrangements and sustainability of the programme.’
- ‘An assessment of performance against these evaluation indicators in the period 1 February 2020 – 1 April 2025.’
- ‘An assessment of the progress of WPS in the three intervention areas (regional, global, institutional), with emphasis on the achieved / anticipated impacts<sup>4</sup> on the ground.’

The design and performance section of the report provides the evaluation of the November 2020 – April 2025 period. November 2020 is the start of this phase of the programme. The programme is still ongoing, as the period of implementation was prolonged until the end of 2025.

The evaluation is theory-based. Figure 1 illustrates results chain of the WPS Partnership in a schematic way. The results chain is the basis of the Theory of Change (ToC).

The ToR contains 23 evaluation questions. These are all addressed in the document. The evaluators agreed with the MFA that “impact” is not within the scope of this evaluation. The (parts of the) questions that are in fact forward-looking were addressed in the assessment- and recommendations parts of the report.

#### Criteria

The evaluation questions are answered based on the agreed project proposal from 2020<sup>5</sup> and the conditions agreed between MFA and the WPS partnership. These are specified in the grant decision dated August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (ref. MFA Grant decision 20200812). They were complemented during the implementation of the project with additional reporting indicators requested by DGIS/IGG.

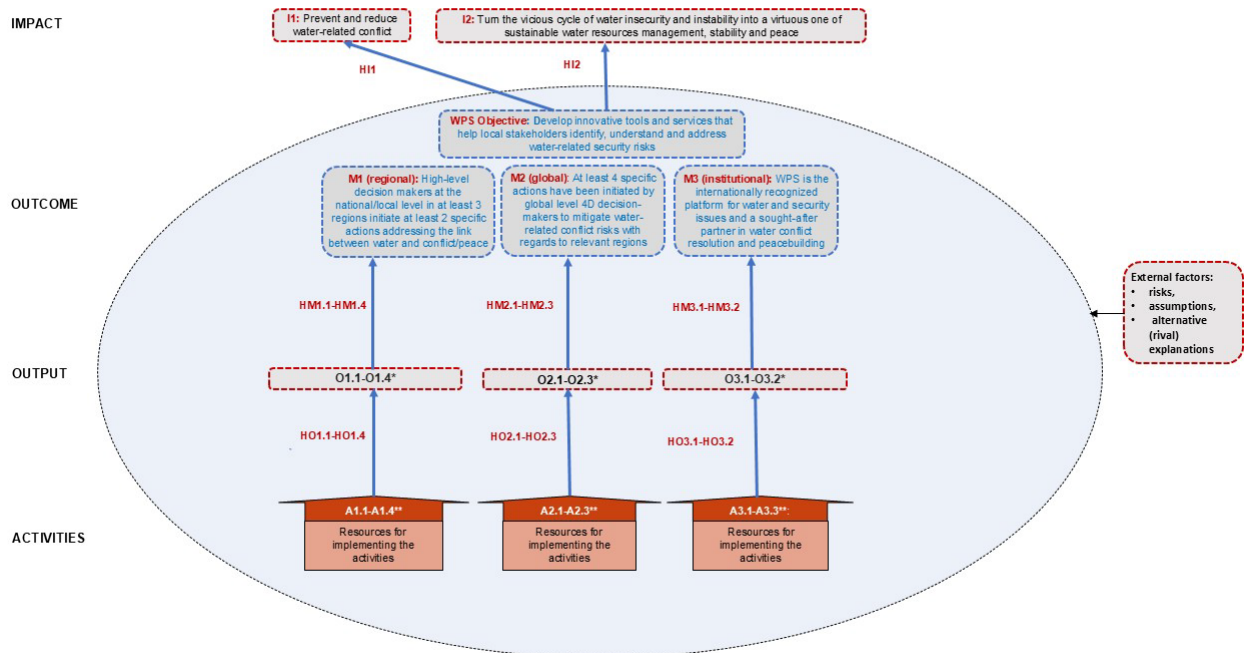
The evaluators observed that not all the targets were ambitious, which may affect the leverage of the grant decision: with more ambitious objectives, results could have been different. As argued later, an inception period might have been wise for fine-tuning what was to be achieved, and how to measure it.

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<sup>4</sup> As clarified by DGIS, the term “impact” is to be interpreted as results on output and outcome level.

<sup>5</sup> The evaluators used the document “2020 WPS\_Proposal\_Phase2020-2024\_Final\_20200324.pdf” (note: the date in the filename is different from the date in the text).

Figure 1: Results model of the WPS Partnership



**Legend:**

- System boundary, or WPS sphere of responsibility
- Results hypotheses
- 'HO' = hypothesis regarding contribution of an activity 'A' to output 'O'
- 'HM' = hypothesis regarding contribution of output to outcome 'M'
- 'HI' = hypothesis regarding contribution of outcome to impact 'I'

**Notes:**

'\*' = see <https://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?publisher=NL-KVK-41146484#view=act&aid=NL-KVK-41146484-XM-DAC-7-PPR-4000003751>;  
 '\*\*' = see activity appraisal document (BEMO)

## Relevance

The following questions were part of the ToR for the evaluation:

- EQ A1: How relevant is the programme with respect to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's?)
- EQ A2: To what extent does the WPS programme support the priorities of the Dutch government as written down in the policy letters "Water for development" (2012)", "Do what we do best (2022)", the "Netherlands International Water Ambition" (2019) and the new policy paper of the Ministry expected in March 2025.
- EQ A3: Were the identified activities, outputs and products appropriate to the objectives in each area of the proposal?
- EQ A4: To what extent has WPS been able to adjust its programme in the course of time to new challenges and policy priorities? Specifically, has the programme been able to address new challenges in the area of water diplomacy and respond to particular requests from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this respect?

- EQ A5: Did WPS have a theory of change and intervention strategy with clearly defined elements and assumptions? If yes, was this ToC appropriate and how did it support the programme to pursue its objectives?
- EQ A6: How did WPS take into account aspects of ecological sustainability, climate change, gender and inclusiveness?

**EQ A1: How relevant is the programme with respect to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's?)**

The relevance looks at the relevance regarding SDGs, the Netherlands' policies, partner-countries policies and the interests of the regions where the WPS partnership assisted.

The partnership was originally created as a response to the assumption that there would be an increase in migration due to conflict on water, caused by climate change. Also, in working out the overall idea, this logic was a main part of the justification for its funding.

The WPS programme clearly contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its core objective—to identify, understand, and address water-related security risks, thereby promoting equitable water sharing and preventing conflicts—specifically considers climate change impacts on water availability (both volume and patterns) and the gendered dimensions of water stress and related conflicts, recognizing their differential impacts on women and men.<sup>6</sup> Thus, WPS's objectives are in line with the SDGs 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), SDG13 (climate action), and SDG5 (gender). As clearly indicated in the WPS proposal (2020:34), the WPS partnership aims to support effective, timely action to break the vicious circle of water insecurity. The WPS works directly within the framework of SDGs.

Furthermore, WPS uses an integrated and multidisciplinary approach which leads to contribute directly or indirectly to the other SDGs, such as addressing issues of poverty (SDG1), hunger (SDG2), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), reduced inequality (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), responsible production and consumption (SDG 12), life below water (SDG14) and life on land (SDG 15).

**EQ A2: To what extent does the WPS programme support the priorities of the Dutch government as written down in the policy letters "Water for development" (2012)", "Do what we do best (2022) ", the "Netherlands International Water Ambition" (2019) and the new policy paper of the Ministry expected in March 2025**

The partnership was relevant for Dutch policies when it started. These policies were of a different nature then they were on 1 April 2025, as the NL coalition government was of a different composition. The parliamentary elections in 2023 resulted eventually in a government that strongly reformed the policies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the latest policy documents, there is a geographical concentration (Sahel, Horn of Africa and the MENA region) as well as a focus on migration, water and food security. The water focus is specified with a focus on four domains, three of them are in the WPS programme: Dutch water expertise, active water diplomacy and strengthening the preparedness to disasters<sup>7</sup>.

WPS objectives align with **Ethiopia's** water-related development policy priorities. This alignment is further demonstrated by WPS's support for Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and Wolaita Sodo University (WSU) in developing a management plan for the Omo-Gibe Basin (OGB) aimed at addressing

<sup>6</sup> See WPS proposal (2020:35-36), Version: 16.02.2020.

<sup>7</sup> Tweede Kamer, Doen waar Nederland goed in is Strategie voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking brief van de minister voor buitenlandse handel en ontwikkelingshulp, Feb 2025.

potential water-related conflicts (through support in making it climate sensitive, equitable, and inclusive through meaningful dialogue). With an initial lack of inclusion of groundwater, a key part of the resource was left out. This omission was corrected and groundwater was included in the 2024 and 2025 annual plans of WPS for Ethiopia.

The approach is in line with the water policies in **Mali**, as well as with the policies linked to the Niger river, which has its own statute as an international watercourse. For the communities involved: their livelihoods are affected by the water situation and the conflicts that may be linked to those. The technical issue that occurred is the focus on drought in the analysis. A comprehensive hydrological modelling framework was used for analysing the surface-water situation. An identified gap is the lack of inclusion of recently occurring flood events in the analysis and the lack of inclusion of groundwater modelling. With four out of the last six years showing excessive floods, and climate change predictions pointing towards an increase of precipitation, this reduced the relevance of the technical support. With an initial lack of inclusion of groundwater, a key part of the resource was left out.

The process in **Kenya** was embraced by the government and resulted in several spin-offs of activities, including in the security management of the border area. The technical issue that occurred is the focus on drought in the analysis. With climate change scenarios showing an increase in precipitation in the catchment, and with all lakes in the Rift showing increased water levels, the width of analysis should have widened. With an initial lack of inclusion of groundwater, a key part of the resource was left out. This was later corrected with a mapping of water points, that was done in 2023 and 2024.

The process in **Iraq** is conducted together with the national government from the start. Local relevance was strengthened by working with local CSOs. WPS also supported international organisations working at local/provincial level, such as Mercy Corps.

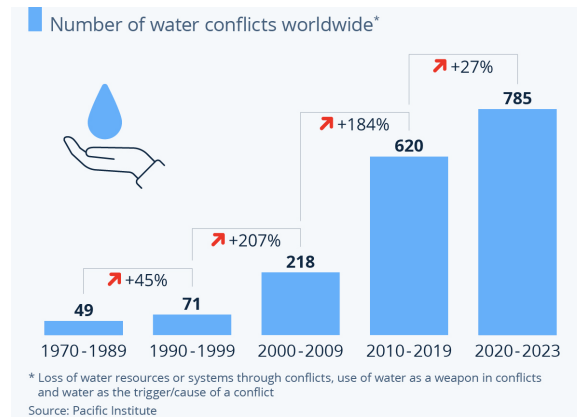
In all four countries, the initial water analysis focused on surface water. Ground water was not included, thus reducing the relevance. Apart from Iraq, where the groundwater in the project area is very salty, the groundwater turned up in the other three cases in possible solutions.

There is a focus issue with “drought”. Analysis for policy-measures in the country cases concentrated on the measures in relation to the absence of water. This even though the hydrological analysis (surface water) in the study sites in Mali, Ethiopia and Kenya include complete water balance simulated, both drought and floods: Omom-Gibe Basin (HEC-HMS model), IND (RIBASIM model) and Turkana (HEC-HMS and lake models”).

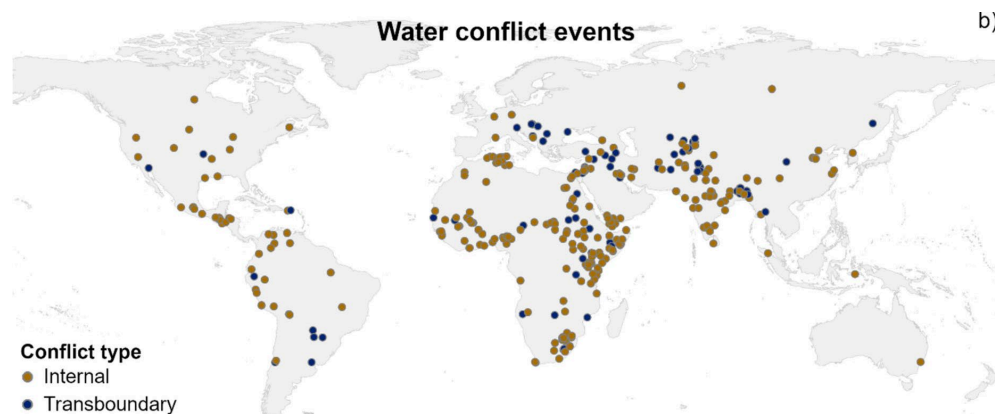
In addition to this, the studies at that moment already indicated that the water situation in the Sahel and Horn would be influenced by increased variability in precipitation, in combination with other climate phenomena. The lakes in the Rift were already showing a gradual rise. The predicted variability of rains in the Sahel was also increasing, and the floods in the Sahel are also the result of rain in the catchment of the Niger, in neighbouring Guinea. In fact, the 2020 annual flood in the Niger was an extremely high one, and four of the six last years were showing higher floods in the Niger. The 2023 IPCC report also shows an increase in rain for the Arab peninsula.

#### Relevance in the global context

For the global tool, there are several indications of relevance. The Pacific institute has been keeping records on the number of water related conflicts, and reports that the numbers are on the rise ([Pacific Institute annual chronology](#)).



The relevance is also underpinned by studies from Kåresdotter e.a., showing the distribution of conflicts as reported in studies, and indicating the increase in water & conflict studies over the last 20 years: from 1 in 2005 and 2 in 2006 to 208 in 2023 (Kåresdotter e.a., 2023<sup>8</sup> and 2025<sup>9</sup>)



Conflict events show approximate locations of internal (brown) and transboundary (dark blue) water conflicts between 1951 and 2019 from Kåresdotter et al. (2023)

**EQ A3: Were the identified activities, outputs and products appropriate to the objectives in each area of the proposal?**

The products or rather outputs were properly defined in the text of the proposal, with a logic that was coherent. As such there was an appropriate design (including an announced system for following and adapting that design, the MEL approach). However, the evaluators have noticed that an important part of this design was not repeated in the logical framework that was part of the same proposal. This has confused the implementation of the project, since the logical framework became the point of departure for monitoring the project, and with change of staff in the project as well as at MFA, the original outputs and activities disappeared.

**EQ A4: To what extent has WPS been able to adjust its programme in the course of time to new challenges and policy priorities? Specifically, has the programme been able to address new challenges in the area of**

<sup>8</sup> Kåresdotter, E., e.a. 2023. Water-related conflict and cooperation events worldwide: A new dataset on historical and change trends with potential drivers. *Science of the Total Environment* 868: 161555.

<sup>9</sup> Kåresdotter, E., e.a. 2025. Water conflicts under climate change: Research gaps and priorities, *Ambio*, Volume 54, pages 618–631.

**water diplomacy and respond to particular requests from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this respect?**

The period of review, end of 2020 until 2025 is not particularly long, but there was a number of major challenges occurring in the context of the project: Covid-19, US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Coup in Mali, Wagner in Mali, Large scale internal conflict in Ethiopia, Elections in Kenya, Regional unrest in the Middle East (Syria, Gaza, Yemen), Global crisis due to Ukraine, New NL government, New US government.

Taking into account the number of crises and the scale of disruption, the world is not the same as it was when the project was being formulated in 2019. The bonus from Covid-19 is the increase in competence globally to have online meetings. For a project with this wide an area of intervention that was a blessing.

Covid-19 resulted in a delay of starting the activity. The crisis in Afghanistan resulted in stopping the activities for the country, the situation in Mali resulted in a complication of working with the central government, which the project managed to handle. The consequences of the political situations in Kenya, Ethiopia, Iraq and Ukraine were managed too. The political situation in the Netherlands is changing again during the period of this evaluation. The project was lucky enough (or visionary enough) to fit the priorities of the latest policy from the ministry, meaning that there is a more than usual interest in the outcome of this evaluation. The new government in the US has major consequences for international cooperation, the stability in various parts of the world, but also for the availability of data for the tools that are used in this project or that were used for similar activities, but stopped being available for them, thus resulting in additional interest in WPS' activities and products.

There were several requests for support that may have resulted from a changing global situation. This resulted in cooperation with GIZ in the Sahel (Mali, Niger and Chad), with the IFRC in MENA (Yemen, Iran and Jordan) and requests from others to explore cooperation (Austria, Finland, UN organizations).

The 2023 6th report from the IPCC confirms this: for all four country cases the report states with high confidence that the annual precipitation will increase (ref. <https://interactive-atlas.ipcc.ch>). Studies also show an increase of the water levels in the Rift valley lakes (ref. Herrnegger, 2021<sup>10</sup>). It should be noted, however, that while annual mean precipitation is projected to increase in the Niger river basin, considerable seasonal variability can be observed. Increased precipitation is concentrated in the wet season, whereas precipitation during the dry season remains unchanged, and for the months of February and March, it is even projected to decrease. Apart from the fact that future precipitation changes are seasonally varying, it is also important to highlight that hydrological conditions in the inner Niger delta are not only influenced by precipitation. In terms of meteorology, temperature and evaporation also matter for the hydrological budget and temperature is clearly increasing in the region. Apart from meteorology, other important factors are irrigation practices, water intake increase due to population projections, and upstream dam operation practices. The used hydrological modelling system included these factors. The relevance in relation to climate change was correct in general but not correct in the chosen focus on drought. This was not adapted when the IPCC report in 2023 indicated the increase in rainfall-extremes for the four cases (ref. annual reports, interviews)

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<sup>10</sup> Mathew Herrnegger e.a., Hydroclimatic analysis of rising water levels in the Great rift Valley Lakes of Kenya, [Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies Volume 36](#), August 2021

**EQ A5: Did WPS have a theory of change and intervention strategy with clearly defined elements and assumptions? If yes, was this ToC appropriate and how did it support the programme to pursue its objectives?**

There is a basic ToC in the proposal of 2020. The proposal also includes a description of the intervention areas and an identification of key assumptions on the ToC and the WPS approach (WPS, 2020: 12-14, 29-30). There was a process on better understanding the ToC in 2023-2024 (during a WPS strategic retreat<sup>11</sup>). Important observations were brought up in this process that underline both the complexity of the work, the challenges in the combining of interventions, the need for flexibility when supporting conflict cases, and the awareness of your limitations as outsider.

The evaluators identified some elements that could be improved to explain the possible contributions of WPS. It was observed that the “in-move” of WPS is based on linking to existing social capital, either from a consortium member or via a CSO that is already invested in the region. It was also observed that there is not always a clear exit-strategy, creating unclarity about the expectations from others, sustainability of the activities and uncertainty.

The role of the Netherlands embassies was also not clearly defined in the ToC, whilst there is mentioning of this link in the proposal, and in the WPS approach: the linking with the 4D actors is mentioned there, at least in some iterations of the explanation of the 4 pillars. In operational sense there was a contact with the embassies in all four country cases (as well as with other embassies, like in Yemen and in South Sudan). There was however a misunderstanding, since embassies sometimes thought WPS had funds to engage in their (new) countries. The diplomatic link has an important potential in the approach when actively engaged: as a first step, to make sure there is no misunderstanding about the involvement in potential local conflict, avoiding embarrassment, and recognizing that the final responsibility for the activities of WPS lies with the Dutch government. But in addition to this there is a potential in mobilising authorities and there is the possibility of increased visibility towards other partners (as happened in both Kenya and Iraq).

In conclusion, the Theory of Change has become a firmer point of attention in the project. The evaluators are of the opinion that the ToC is likely one of the important products of the WPS partnership: understanding the working of water (and climate) related conflicts and the options for the 4D community to contribute to avoiding them as well as the (limitations in) options for intervening as outsiders.

(ref. proposal 2020-2024, interviews, Cascão Report, MT notes)

**EQ A6: How did WPS take into account aspects of ecological sustainability, climate change, gender and inclusiveness?**

The topics were all taken in consideration in the design and in the reporting. The proposal specifically mentions all these points and that ‘WPS will engage in developing and implementing a long-term sustainability plan’; this also concerns investigations regarding the establishment of a platform for ‘water, other natural resources, climate change and security’ (WPS 2020: 8, 29). Gender and climate change are also mentioned as cross-cutting issues in the proposal (WPS 2020: 35-37).

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<sup>11</sup> Dr Ana Cascão, Strategic assessment Water Peace and Security partnership 2020-2024, March 2024.

There are questions on the water-technical side regarding climate change, and the actual change as it is happening. Both in the Sahel<sup>12,13,14</sup> and in the Horn of Africa<sup>15</sup> there has been an increase in precipitation. For the West African Sahel this meant that 4 of the 6 years 2020-2025 have had (extreme) floods occurring. A more active response is needed to remain relevant.

Another aspect that should be included in future activities is groundwater, in relation to extremes occurring, being such an important refuge in case of extremes (ref. proposal 2020-2024, interviews, annual reports, MT notes, literature).

### **Conclusions on relevance:**

EQ A1 & A2: The project was relevant in relation to the SDGs as well as to the Dutch policies at the time of the start of the project. The project is still relevant to the Dutch policies at the time of the evaluation: it covers the priority regions and 3 of the 4 key topics in water management (Dutch water expertise, active water diplomacy and strengthening the preparedness to disasters).

The project was also relevant for the countries where it operated and for the populations living in the areas where it is active. There is also a recognition of its relevance in the sectors it is trying to inform globally.

EQ A3: The original proposal had a clear link between activities and outputs in the text, but not in the logframe. This has confused the implementation.

EQ A4: The project responded well to the Covid-19 crisis, improvising a transition in 2020. When Afghanistan fell away, alternative use was found for the funding. A creative solution was proposed for implementing a transboundary situation in East Africa. It was able to correct the initial error of not including groundwater (though the study for Ethiopia is still pending).

EQ A5: The Theory of Change has become a firmer point of attention in the project. The evaluators are of the opinion that the ToC is likely one of the important products of the WPS partnership: understanding the working of water (and climate) related conflicts and the options for the 4D community to contribute to avoiding them as well as the (limitations in) options for intervening as outsiders.

EQ A6: Trends in relation to climate change were not included in the policy analysis, resulting in a focus on drought responses. Similar attention to flooding would have increased the relevance for the users (and the credibility of the advisors). The global tool has consistently included climate change in its analysis/quarterly updates. The relevance regarding a global trend in water related conflict is confirmed by various statistics. The obvious increase in water and conflict research also points at a potential for bringing together those researchers.

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas, N.P. e.a. (2022). Evaluation of extreme soil moisture conditions during the 2020 Sahel floods and implications for disease outbreaks. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 49.

<sup>13</sup> Schewe, Jacob e.a. (2022) Sahel Rainfall Projections Constrained by Past Sensitivity to Global Warming, *Geophysical Research Letters*, 49

<sup>14</sup> IPCC, AR6 Synthesis report 2023

<sup>15</sup> Herrneger, M. e.a. (2021) Hydroclimatic analysis of rising water levels in the Great rift Valley Lakes of Kenya, *Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies* Volume 36

## Effectiveness

The following questions were part of the ToR for the evaluation:

- EQ B1: To what extent do the activities and results achieve the intended objectives of the programme as stated in the proposal and annual plans?
- EQ B2: To what extent does the funding facilitate flexibility and effectiveness in programme planning and management?
- EQ B3: What has been the impact of the activities? What are the benefits and challenges? Should WPS change the mix of activities?

### **EQ B1: To what extent do the activities and results achieve the intended objectives of the programme as stated in the proposal and annual plans?**

The evaluation of effectiveness adopts a theory-based mixed-methods approach to assess whether WPS has contributed to observed changes at output- and outcome-level. The WPS proposal describes in detail the planned activities and intended outputs and outcomes with related indicators. Departing from the (re)constructed ToC, the **Contribution Analysis** (CA) collects evidence and draws conclusions about existence (or lack) of a ‘plausible association’ between activities and observed *intended changes*.<sup>16</sup> One results hypothesis has been formulated for each part of WPS, which has been validated or rejected by using various sources of information (about activities, outputs and outcomes), to present credible evidence of contribution and of other factors’ influence on observed indicators. The CA has been complemented with **Outcome Harvesting** (OH), which does not depart from a ToC, but ‘harvests’ evidence of changes (including unintended ones) and ‘then, working backwards, determines whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes’.<sup>17</sup> The OH is specifically meant to identify and explain *unintended changes*, as CA will already cover intended changes.

### Effectiveness of intervention area “regional”

WPS has been active in five countries: Mali, Ethiopia, Kenya, Iraq and Afghanistan. However, in Afghanistan there was not much activity, and the country was largely left aside at the request of DGIS after the takeover by the Taliban. In the other four countries, there have been successful and somewhat less successful interventions. The evaluation finds that the cases in Kenya and in Iraq seem to indicate a successful approach that could be repeated in other countries.

### Contribution analysis “regional”

A results hypothesis **H1** has been formulated for the assessment of the effectiveness of the regional component of WPS. **H1** consists of the following parts:

- From activity to output: *If* detailed analyses on linkages between water, security and human responses (including the role of climate change where appropriate) are conducted with paying particular attention to gender aspects and particularly vulnerable groups [**Activity 1.1.2.a**], *then* this will contribute to the link between water and conflict/security in the context of climate change being further explored with relevant stakeholders [**Output 1.1.2**].

<sup>16</sup> Mayne (2001, 2012) <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cipe.016.001>; <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1356389012451663>).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/outcome-harvesting>.

- From output to outcome: *If* **Output 1.1.2** is achieved, *then* this will contribute to relevant actors in at least 4 target regions initiating informed and conflict-sensitive actions to mitigate or adapt to the threat of water-induced conflict and to increase water-related cooperation and peace [**Outcome 1**].

Key assumptions are:

- The analyses covers all relevant water sources.
- Adequate organisational structure and culture; partners collaborate well.
- Adequate monitoring, evaluation and quality of WPS partnership management.
- Water-related conflict/security in the context of climate change can be distinguished from other types of conflict/security and can be addressed more or less separately.

Key risks identified are:

- The security situation prevents WPS' experts from traveling or harms programme activities.
- Risk of endangering local civil society groups when providing them access to information that is not favourable to the local authorities.
- Relevant stakeholders do not take (sufficient) preventive action in response to the analysis and services of the WPS partnership.
- Risk of conflict, competition or loss of commitment within the partnership network.
- Risk that WPS partner organisations start to implement their own activities independently of the WPS partnership.

Alternative explanation:

- Actors initiate the informed and conflict-sensitive actions as part of another programme.

### **Achievement of the intended objectives**

Table 1 shows that the targets have been achieved for the Outcome indicator 1 and the specific Outcome indicators 1.1-1.4 related to, respectively, the pillars Understand, Mobilise, Learn and Dialogue of the WPS Integrated Approach. The April 2025 IATI values of the indicators in the Excel monitoring document are equal to the ones published on Internet.<sup>18</sup> It is assumed that these values relate to achievements until the end of 2024. Likewise, the October 2024 IATI values are assumed to correspond to the achievements until the end of 2023, etcetera.

The April 2025 IATI value of **Outcome Indicator 1** is equal to 13, which is the sum of values for this indicator in each of the four countries reported in the Excel monitoring document, being 4 in Mali, 4 in Iraq, 3 in Kenya and 2 in Ethiopia.

Regarding Outcome Indicator 1, field evidence from Turkana, **Kenya** indicates two specific actions. The first is that the Turkana County Government has finalised and is printing the "*Guide to the FCDC Conflict-Management and Peace-Building Policy and Act*", so that the county peace-building framework explicitly includes water-conflict provisions.<sup>19</sup> The second is that the Marsabit and Turkana County Executive Committees Agreed to establish a cross-county coordination platform on the water-conflict nexus for Lake Turkana. Hence, WPS-supported forums such as multi-sectoral platforms are now in place, bringing together stakeholders who rarely interacted constructively before.

<sup>18</sup> <https://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?publisher=NL-KVK-41146484#view=act&aid=NL-KVK-41146484-XM-DAC-7-PPR-4000003751>.

<sup>19</sup> FCDC is the *Frontier Counties Development Council*, that was created as a political pressure platform for the neglected, conflict ridden semi-arid regions of Kenya.

**Table 1: Outcome indicators ‘Regional’**

	2020 Baseline	2021 – In 2022 IATI	2022 – In 2023 IATI	2023 – In 2024 IATI (Oct)	2024 – In 2025 IATI (Apr)	Target
<b>Outcome Indicator 1: High-level decision makers at the national/local level in at least 3 regions initiate at least 2 specific actions addressing the link between water and conflict/peace.</b>	0	4	9	11	13	6
1.1 Relevant stakeholders in at least 3 regions use the WPS quick scan and zoom-in tools	0	2	3	3	4	3
1.2 Relevant stakeholders in at least 3 regions highlight the linkages between water and security, referencing WPS, in at least 4 instances	0	4	7	12	12	4
1.3 At least 60 training participants show increased understanding of the link between water and security across at least 3 regions	0	90	378	482	655	60
1.4 Relevant stakeholders in at least 3 regions have formulated responses to the water and security nexus through dialogue	0	5	13	18	23	3

Sources: Excel monitoring document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2024 (Apr2025).xlsx’. (related to Section 7 WPS Logframe in Draft 2024 Annual report); IATI (d-portal.org).

In **Ethiopia**, the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) identified the establishment of multistakeholder forums as a key success factor in all basin and sub-basin planning processes. This includes the Omo Gibe Basin (OGB), where WPS supported the development of an IWRM multistakeholder forum. This, however, could not be sustained after its establishment, as there was no institutionalisation effort by MoWE and a lack of support by WPS/WRI. MoWE’s trust in WPS led to sharing Gibe 3 dam data — a key shift from initial reluctance to active buy-in. WPS collaborated with MoWE and the Water and Land Resource Centre (WLRC) to integrate an earlier-developed OGB plan with the BRIGHT project.<sup>20</sup> This collaboration aimed to support the basin plan’s revision by incorporating datasets developed by WPS. The OGB plan is now under revision to address, among other issues, the concerns of the lower basin community.

In the case of **Mali**, it has been reported that, ‘in 2023, ‘in Djenné, advocacy efforts led to the inclusion of dialogue forums in the new five-year Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Policy for 2023-2027’. Similarly, in Konna, ‘advocacy efforts with city officials resulted in a commitment from the NGO partner NEF to dredge the river channel at the Fishing Port, addressing issues of river silting that impeded fishmongers’ access during certain seasons’ (Draft WPS Annual Report 2024).

One example of specific actions initiated by high-level decision makers in **Iraq** is that the Iraqi Ambassador to the Netherlands organised a high-level panel with the Iraq Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Presidents of 6 Iraqi universities to discuss water management and the importance of better understanding the relationship between water and instability. Another example is that the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment (MWRE) increasingly encourages organisations to act on the water-peace nexus (Draft Annual Report 2024).

Specifically for the pillar Understand, the April 2025 IATI value of **Outcome Indicator 1.1** is equal to 4, which is the sum of value 1 reported for this indicator in each of the four countries (see Excel monitoring document). These values suggest that all intended outcomes of the pillar Understand have been achieved.

<sup>20</sup> Basin Management Support for Resilient, Inclusive Growth and Harmonized Transformation for the National IWRMP of Ethiopia (BRIGHT) is a five-year project that is going to be implemented in five basins in Ethiopia including OGB.

Field evidence from Turkana, **Kenya** indicates development of nascent early warning systems – the use of which is likely to contribute to a measurable reduction in violent incidents. WPS introduced analytical Early Warning Tools and Data Systems for Prevention at the county level, such as a local water-conflict risk dashboard for Turkana.<sup>21</sup> Turkana County technical officers (Water & Peace Sector Forum) use a [Power-BI local dashboard](#) (quick-scan view). The Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) and Beach-Management Units (BMUs) use an Agent-Based Model zoom-in module for identifying conflict hot-spots. Community respondents mentioned concrete uses of data tools. For instance, members of a Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) in Kalokol praised GIS mapping of resources as a tool that helped mitigate water conflicts by clarifying resource availability and usage areas. Fisherfolk were trained in using the Kobo Toolbox (mobile data collection tool) to report incidents and resource conditions improving grassroots data gathering. WPS also updated Lake Turkana hydrological models with local data to predict lake level changes. The “Understand” pillar of WPS (data and analysis) has been localized in Turkana, providing a more informed basis for peace and security efforts.

In the case of **Ethiopia**, the value 1 of Outcome Indicator 1.1 reflects the fact that the development of some planned models was completed and the models were used. For example, hydrological and climate models for the OGB were developed using HEC-HMS, incorporating satellite data and enhanced with observational data provided by the Gibe III hydropower dam operators (AR2024: 24; Excel monitoring document; interviews). The models and their results were validated by technical experts, including representatives from the MoWE, Gibe III dam, and academic institutions such as WSU, Jimma university, and Arba Minch University. At the same time, however, the Causal Loop Diagram and the policy dashboard are not developed. Likewise, preliminary human response models and Agent-based models (ABM), initially planned for 2024 to address linkages between groundwater access/use and conflict in lower basin communities, could not be completed due to lack of information/data. The team engaged in the modelling exercise concluded that implementing the ABM would not be viable within the available project timeframe and budget’ . (AR2024: 25, interview with WRI).

In **Mali**, three tools have been developed, namely the Causal Loop Diagram (reviewed and validated by 40 local stakeholders), the policy dashboard and the Agent-based model (ABM).<sup>22</sup> The tools and dashboard have been validated by the stakeholders and are ready for use (Excel monitoring document). One example of use of WPS tools is that the chair of Mopti’s fishing council, Kalé Djenepo, stated that “*I use input from the causal loop diagram to prepare meetings of the fish management department*” (document ‘Highlights and Impacts in 2024’).

In **Iraq**, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Environment, provincial water authorities in Basra, Dhi-Qar, Missan and Wasit, universities, NGOs, local community leaders and key partners (notably Humat Dijlah and Al-Firdaws Society) have analytical materials and data tools available to assess water-related conflict risks and are able to use these for improved conflict-sensitive and sustainable planning. For example, Humat Dijlah used the Causal Loop Diagram and other WPS tools to facilitate dialogue among affected communities, leading to improved stakeholder understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of the water system with conflict (Mathai & Arellano, 2024). Likewise, twelve representatives from the ministries of Water Resources and Environment and the Iraq Embassy based in the Netherlands participated in a training about the WPS policy dashboard and have access to this tool to support their work and decision-making (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; Excel monitoring document). An Agent-Based Model (ABM) was developed in 2021 based on jointly defined relevant water-security links and obtained input from local

<sup>21</sup> See also <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/blog-20-12-2024-advancing-water-peace-security-field-mission-insights-kenya>.

<sup>22</sup> See also <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/files/407>.

partners. Baseline water-conflict analyses and hydrological models were completed. ABM analysis results were included in a policy dashboard. In 2023 a (preliminary) functioning version of the dashboard, connecting the hydrological and agent-based model, was finalized based on input from workshops mainly from national level. In 2024, the models were validated using survey data from farmers living in southern Iraq. The dashboard was finalized in 2024 and will be published in Q1 2025 (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; Excel monitoring document; interviews).

Table 2 provides an overview of the use of models and tools.

**Table 2: Overview of the use of models and tools developed by WPS in the four countries**

	Kenya	Ethiopia	Mali	Iraq
<b>Hydrological and climate models / Models for scenario-based analysis of competing water demand</b>	2022: Development of an initial version of a hydrological and lake level model, which will serve for analysing future scenarios that may affect Lake Turkana. 2024. The model will be improved by using remotely sensed data for validation [b] The officers from the Kenya Maritime appreciated the hydrological modelling which will be useful for Kenya Maritime and Fisheries Institute at the county level in understanding the lake water levels and the conflicts within the lake. [b]	Developed using HEC-HMS, incorporating satellite data and enhanced with observational data provided by the Gibe III hydropower dam operators. [a] Developed multi-objective reservoir operations and discharge optimization models for Gibe III using Evolutionary Direct Multi-objective Policy Search (EDMOPS) [a] The HEC-HMS hydrological tools, EDMOPS optimization tools, and CROPWAT and LEAP models for water-energy-food nexus modelling have been developed and validated by technical experts. The results from these models have been used to facilitate an informed dialogue among stakeholders. [b]	WPS pilot phase: For the case of the Upper Niger Basin in Mali, combined a hydrological model (wflow) with a water allocation model (RIBASIM). The wflow model was developed using watershed maps and rainfall and evaporation data, resulting in natural river flows. RIBASIM uses these flows as input data and calculates river regulation through dams and weirs and allocation to various water users, based on information on the presence of infrastructure, population, and irrigated areas. The combined model provides insight into how water is available to different water users in different parts of the basin and can be used to assess how these may evolve in light of possible future developments, such as climate change, population growth, etc.	Baseline water-conflict analyses and hydrological models completed [b]  In 2024, validated using survey data from farmers living in southern Iraq [b]
<b>Ground-water mapping</b>	from 2022 annual report: Given that the water conflict analysis has shown that most conflicts in Turkana County are related to availability and access to water points, most of which depend on groundwater, it was decided to focus further tools on developing suitable mapping tools that could support dealing with these conflicts.	This cannot be completed in 2024 due to mapping exercise required more time than anticipated, a shortage of essential data, and limited availability of experts.	No specific groundwater mapping	No specific groundwater mapping
<b>Agent-based modelling (ABM)</b>	2023: An initial ABM representing water conflicts in the area developed. 2024: Model improved using remote sensed data and now available in the dashboard. [b]	2023: ABM was initially developed. It showed the linkages between water security and human responses [b], but it could not be completed in 2024. In early 2025, IHE decided not to continue this instrument because of lack of data.	Developed and ready for use [b]. Started in 2020, the ABM, including the integrated water resources-human response model, was developed with a focus on gender and vulnerable populations, utilizing a causal loop diagram from data	ABM developed in 2021, based on jointly defined relevant water-security links and obtained input from local partners. [b]  In 2024, validated using survey data from farmers living in southern Iraq. [b]

	Kenya	Ethiopia	Mali	Iraq
		Could not be carried out [a] **	collected during workshops and meetings with stakeholders, including decision-makers and local communities. Finalized in 2022, the model simulates three climate scenarios, three demographic scenarios, and two interventions [b]. One video explained the Agent-Based Modelling of conflict risk in the Inner Niger Delta. [a] Used by various stakeholders/policy makers [b]	
<b>Causal Loop Diagram</b>	A causal loop diagram was developed with stakeholders in 2022 and validated by 30 stakeholders in Turkana. However, the causal loop diagram has not been used much in the programme.	Causal loop diagram not developed.	Developed and ready for use. Reviewed and validated by 40 local stakeholders [b] Used by various stakeholders / policy makers [b]	Developed [a]. Humat Dijlah used the Causal Loop Diagram and other WPS tools to facilitate dialogue among affected communities [b]
<b>Policy dashboard</b>	Completed late 2024 [a] November 2024: validation workshop in Turkana County with 24 representatives from the Water Department, Turkana County Department of Peace, Kenya Maritime and Fisheries Departments, and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). [a] The initial development of the dashboard shared to Turkana County stakeholders has been an eye opener to the stakeholders [b]. 2024 WPS has spoken with UNESCO and exchanged information on the dashboard in order to seek synergies in the lake Turkana fisheries programme including areas of complementarities. [b]	Not completed [a]	Developed and ready for use. Used by various stakeholders/policy makers [b] Detailed user manual available for new users. Dashboard is developed offline, but published on the web. Dashboard is interactive: The integrated data comes from numerical models (hydrological and climate data) and an ABM (human responses). The hydrological model includes aspects such as river flow simulation, water allocation, dam management, and calculates the flooded area in the DIN. The ABM is used to simulate the (simplified) behaviour of different agents in order to assess the impact of scenarios and interventions on the conflict risk scale. The scenarios page links changes in the flow of the Niger River with activities in the Inner Niger Delta and the probabilities of conflict related to competition between socio-economic groups.... we have selected 1984 (June 1984 - June 1985), a year of drought, as the reference year.	Completed in Q4 of 2024 [a]. In 2023 a functioning version of the dashboard, connecting the hydrological and agent based model, was finalized based on input from workshops mainly from national level. [b] This was finalized in 2024 and will be published in Q1 2025. [b] Shows different scenarios and interventions that can be implemented to improve indicators related to water security and migration. [a] Dissemination to Iraqi policymakers, the main target group, has started in 2024. WPS organized an online training session ... to showcase how to integrate the use of the dashboard into water-related decision-making. [a]. Representatives from Iraqi Ministries and the Iraq Embassy in the Netherlands, were trained [b]. It is now used by various stakeholders /policy makers [b]

Sources: [a] WPS (2025), Draft Annual Report 2024; [b] Excel document 'WPS Indicators 2020-2024 (Apr2025).

Notes: \*\* 'implementing the ABM would not be viable within the available project timeframe and budget' [AR24, p25]

\*\*\* 'To explore supplemental water sources, WPS will conduct a modelling exercise using geospatial analysis, remote sensing, and ground-level observations to assess groundwater potential in the Lower Omo in 2025.' [AR24, p23]

### Explanation of achievements

The activities 1.1.2.a-b that are expected to contribute to the Output 1.1.2 (“*Link between water and conflict/security in the context of climate change further explored with relevant stakeholders*”), that in turn is expected to contribute to achievement of Outcome Indicator 1 are:

- a. Conduct detailed analyses on linkages between water, security and human responses (including the role of climate change where appropriate), including particular attention to gender aspects and particularly vulnerable groups.
- b. Provide gender-sensitive stakeholders in each of the 4 regions with briefings on links between water and conflict.

The Contribution Analysis focuses on **activity 1.1.2.a**.

Within Turkana, **Kenya**, WPS partnered with local actors (the County Government Peace Directorate and NGOs like TUPADO) to pilot conflict-sensitive water management and peacebuilding activities. Key planned outputs in Turkana included training curricula on conflict resolution, multi-stakeholder dialogues (especially among pastoralists, fishers, and authorities), and policy inputs to integrate water-security into peace strategies. Especially concerning the WPS pillar Understand, the planned outputs were analytical tools (e.g. water point maps, hydrological models, and a conflict risk dashboard). In practice, WPS activities in Turkana translated broad plans into concrete tools and engagements on the ground. The initial WPS activity in **Ethiopia** was a four-day workshop in Bishoftu (in December 2021) with high-level decision-makers from the federal Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), regional water bureaus, basin offices, academia, and representatives of pastoralists and fishermen from the lower Omo Gibe Basin (OGB). The workshop aimed to determine why previously developed basin plans had not been implemented, an understanding considered foundational for developing an effective OGB plan. Following the 2021 workshop, WPS met with the State Minister of MoWE and representatives from Wolayita Sodo University (WSU). MoWE acknowledged both the substantial development potential of the OGB and its existing challenges—including water shortages, flooding, and resultant conflicts in the lower basin. Consequently, it commissioned WSU to develop a basin development and management plan. A draft plan presented at a 2023 consultation workshop was found to be incomplete, lacked consideration of current data, and failed to address the true scale of the problem. Stakeholder representatives generally agreed that the plan needed revision, a view shared by WRI and MoWE. The plan is still under revision and is not yet complete. A critical knowledge gap is a general lack of understanding about regional groundwater availability, essential for effective basin planning. In response, WPS/WRI planned to develop a groundwater potential map for the lower basin, using available data and remote sensing. The plan also included assessing potential groundwater recharge rates by 2024, to understand replenishment and sustainable yields during extraction. As explained above, modelling work was started but not yet completed. In **Mali**, ABM simulations were realised of three climate scenarios, three demographic scenarios, and two interventions (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025, interviews). WPS also conducted a gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis across local, national, and basin levels in 2021-2022. Over 40 women participated in workshops and meetings, needing their husbands' authorization to join. They enhanced their understanding of the connections between water, peace, and security. The results were shared with stakeholders in a June 2022 workshop (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; interviews). In **Iraq**, research was conducted on “Water challenges and conflict dynamics in Southern Iraq”.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, HCSS published the report “Iraqi Marshland Women: The True Guardians of the Marshes” in 2022.<sup>24</sup> In 2023 the gender-sensitive stakeholder map was refined, using it to identify relevant local partners and communities.

<sup>23</sup> <https://hcss.nl/report/water-challenges-and-conflict-dynamics-in-southern-iraq/>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://hcss.nl/report/iraqi-marshland-women/>.

Table 3 shows that the April 2025 IATI value of **Output Indicator 1.1.2** is equal to 4, which is apparently the sum of the values equal to 1 in each of the four countries in the Excel monitoring document, although the reported value for Mali is equal to 3. The achieved value of 4 compares favourably with the target value of 1. A question, however, is whether WPS was not ambitious enough in setting the target value of output indicator 1.1.2.

**Table 3: Output indicators**

	2020 Baseline	2021 – in 2022 IATI	2022 – in 2023 IATI	2023 – in 2024 IATI (Oct)	2024 – in 2025 IATI (Apr)	Target
Output 1.1.2 indicator: Link between water and conflict/security in the context of climate change further explored with relevant stakeholders	0	3	4	4	4	1

Sources: Excel monitoring document (related to Section 7 WPS Logframe in Draft 2024 Annual report); IATI (d-portal.org).

An example of Output 1.1.2 in **Kenya** is the [WPS report 238](#) on water-related conflict and stakeholder analysis in Kenya (see also WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025). In **Ethiopia**, relevant stakeholders—including representatives of MoWE, regional water bureaus, local peace and security offices, women and children offices, Gibe III dam, private irrigators and pastoralists/fishermen—were engaged in December 2021 to understand the root causes of linkages between water and security. Subsequent consultation workshops in 2022 and 2023 further explored existing and future conflicts in the basin, particularly those exacerbated by climate change and water scarcity. Further exploration of the link between water and security was however hampered by the fact that not all models and tools were completed in 2024. In **Mali**, stakeholders from local to national levels have been sensitized on the link between water and conflicts/security. They highlighted this link through the establishment of the causal loop diagram (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025). In **Iraq**, links between water and conflict were explored with High and Mid-Level Iraqi officials through a number of virtual workshops in 2022. Partners working on conflict-sensitivity in Iraq were informed on WPS(-supported) research and included the research findings in their ongoing programmes. Partners were, among others, the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources, WFP, SWEDO, Hydronova and Mercy Corps. Extensive research conducted in 2024 on potential intermediate solutions/initial steps to mitigate water-related conflict in Iraq resulted in the publication of a policy brief in 2025 (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; information request HCSS).<sup>25</sup>

It is plausible that the activities contributed to the realisation of the outputs and that, in general, the latter formed a basis for the earlier-mentioned specific actions by high-level policy makers (Outcome indicator 1). More specifically, it is likely that Output 1.1.2 has in general contributed to the use of tools and models developed by WPS. However, it is clear that in the case of Ethiopia, the contribution of Output 1.1.2 towards achieving Outcome 1 measured by indicator 1.1 is limited, primarily because most of the WPS quick scan and zoom-in tools are not developed.

In the four countries, not all key assumptions were valid, and some key risks materialised. Regarding the assumptions, it must be emphasized that in all country cases, groundwater was not included in the analyses from the start. In Kenya, for instance, it was more recently decided to focus developing suitable mapping tools that could support dealing with conflicts in Turkana County related to groundwater availability. In Ethiopia an

<sup>25</sup> See <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/files/521>.

additional mapping of groundwater was requested. In Mali wells are part of the problem and the solutions in relation to herders.

The consequence of no or insufficient attention to ground water is that a major source is not systematically included in the decision-making process. The assumption of an adequate MEL system is also not valid, as was argued elsewhere (ref. Proposal WPS Phase 2; annual reports; MT meeting reports; interviews). Other assumptions are generally valid. For example, regarding collaboration of partners, HCSS took steps to make sure that the CSO they involved in the activities in Iraq would avoid a more activist position – to avoid political surprises – in exchange for a collaboration on achieving the CSO’s goals through a more diplomatic process (ref. interviews). In contrast, in Ethiopia, the MoWE has reportedly had no official relationship with WRI for the past one year, a point confirmed by a WRI interviewee. Furthermore, there are no structured and institutionalised stakeholder platforms at either the OGB or sub-basin levels, leading to unsystematic stakeholder collaboration. Another critical issue, overlooked in WPS activities in the OGB, is the lack of a monitoring system to track stakeholder interactions and ensure results are managed and sustained.

Some risks materialised. The security situation partially affected implementation of WPS activities. In the project area in Mali there has been an upsurge of violence linked to religious and ethnic causes. In this case “ethnic” is also linked to being a herder, a fisherman or a farmer. It is not reported to what extent these conflict/security issues can be separated from water-related issues.<sup>26</sup>

In the case of Mali, the agenda of Wetlands is not exclusively focused on WPS. As a CSO, it has its own strategic goals (and has had these for many years already). This is an aspect that should be respected but also needs to be addressed when discussing priorities in the WPS frame. Experiences as in Iraq (involving an activist CSO) might serve as an inspiration (ref. WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; interviews).

No significant operational risks were observed in carrying out WPS activities in Ethiopia generally, or in the Omo-Gibe Basin (OGB) specifically. In the lower basin there is tribal conflict mainly driven by flooding and dry season. During this time there are operational risks. The primary risk identified relates to the MoWE apparently proceeding independently with developing/revising the OGB plan, which encompasses nine sub-basins. This approach is likely compounded by the recent absence of a smooth institutional relationship between MoWE and WPS/WRI, as indicated elsewhere in this report.

The alternative explanation is not likely to be plausible and to provide a better or additional explanation of outcomes in the four countries. In Kenya, for instance, the alternative hypothesis of parallel donor programmes contributing to actors initiating informed and conflict-sensitive actions may explain some momentum, but is less likely than the WPS causal chain in accounting for the specific water-conflict policy actions achieved, because WPS analyses were explicitly requested and then embedded in policy tools, and no other actor is reported to provide equivalent evidence products.

In the case of Mali, there is probably an additional point to be made regarding the hypothesis. The long-term presence of Wetlands International in the area has created a lot of social capital, giving it considerable “convening power” because its staff knows people. That element should probably be added to the explanation of how this part of the project worked out (WPS 2024 annual report draft April 2025; interviews).

Table 4 summarises the CA results.

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<sup>26</sup> See ACLED, December 2024, Conflict intensifies and instability spreads beyond Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

**Table 4: Summary of Contribution Analysis results**

	Kenya	Ethiopia	Mali	Iraq
<b>Plausible that activity 1.1.2.a contributed to Output 1.1.2?</b>	Yes, plausible that the activity was critical for achieving the output.	Yes, the link between water, conflict/security, climate change, and gender has received due attention, though further analysis hampered because not all models and tools were completed.	Yes.	Yes.
<b>Plausible that achievement of Output 1.1.2 contributed to Outcome 1?</b>	Yes. The county peace-building guide and the cross-county platform draw directly on the dashboard and ABM evidence.	It is too early to assess this	Yes	Yes.
<b>Assumptions valid?</b>	Generally valid, though ground water not covered in analyses and no adequate MEL system.  Stakeholders were willing to engage with evidence on water-conflict.	Generally valid, though ground water not covered in analyses. The assumptions regarding adequate organisational structure, robust partner collaboration, and effective monitoring and quality of stakeholder platform management (WPS partnership management) do not currently hold true.	Generally valid, though ground water not covered in analyses and no adequate MEL system. Adequate attention to such a system could have provided better understanding of the way conflicts work and functioning of WPS.	Generally valid, though ground water not covered in analyses and no adequate MEL system. Adequate attention to such a system could have provided better understanding of the way conflicts work and functioning of WPS.
<b>Did risks materialise?</b>	Despite a volatile context, the risks were managed.	WRI points at the operational risk linked to the security situation.  The primary risk relates to the MoWE apparently proceeding independently with developing/revising the OGB plan.	The security situation partially affected implementation of WPS activities (choice of location).	The security situation partially affected implementation of WPS activities (choice of location). The centralized system in Iraq makes it hard to get the local voices heard. WPS seeks to use its outsider/honest broker position to facilitate the proposed local activities to be brought into the national decision process.  No other key risks.
<b>Alternative explanation of parallel donor programmes likely?</b>	UNESCO/WFP Lake Turkana Livelihoods Programme influencing county decisions acknowledged in WPS documents as complementary. No other actor is reported to provide equivalent evidence products. Alternative explanation less likely.	It is too early to assess this.	Alternative explanation not likely.	Alternative explanation not likely.

## Unintended results

One form of a negative unintended effect in Kenya was backlash due to perceived bias. As noted, initial activities concentrated on certain communities (e.g. one section of the lake or one ethnic group) which led others to feel excluded. This created “resentment in other BMUs/fishermen who felt neglected”. In conflict-prone settings, even a perception of favouritism can trigger new tensions. With more budget flexibility and volume this could have been prevented by expanding trainings and dialogue to all sides.

A possible negative unintended effect of focusing on “software” (dialogue) without simultaneous “hardware” fixes is that critical infrastructure needs, if not addressed, could become flashpoints again. A concrete example is that having only two functional boreholes in a place like Kibish (when many were drilled but left unfinished) means the root cause of water conflict persists.

A positive unintended result in Kenya was that women and youth have entered the fisheries value chain. Pastoralists have been investing in nets after inter-tribal peace. This matters for water-peace-security, because it diversifies livelihoods, lowers economic incentive for cattle raids, and elevates marginalised groups in local resource governance (observations from evaluation fieldwork).

## Effectiveness of intervention area “global”

The “global” part of the programme consists of: (1) the prediction tool; (2) an awareness programme; and (3) a training programme. The output and outcome indicators were almost all realized (what remains to be done is an international conference that will take place in Nairobi in 2025). But there are questions about the actual use of the global prediction tool. In the analysis the evaluators only had one observation (March of 2025, referring to the situation in 2024). Here too the absence of a monitoring system and missing systematic process documentation has consequences for the learning process.

## Contribution analysis “global”

The results hypothesis **H2** that will be assessed consists of the following parts:

- From activity to output: *If* there is regular updating of the tool, development of global tool 2.0 and inclusion of additional (and contextual) data, including relevant climate data, as well as of causal relationships into the global tool/causal model development [**Activity 2.1.1.a-d**], *then* this will contribute to the improved performance of the global tool in its 12-months’ forecasting (automated updates, additional parameters, causal relationships) [**Output 2.1.1**].
- From output to outcome: *If* **Output 2.1.1** is achieved, *then* this will contribute to relevant actors from the 4D community at the global level promoting and supporting informed and conflict-sensitive change to mitigate or adapt to the threat of water-induced conflict in at-risk regions and increase water-related cooperation and peacebuilding [**Outcome 2**].<sup>27</sup>

Key assumptions are:

- Adequate organisational structure and culture; partners collaborate well.
- Adequate monitoring, evaluation and quality of management.
- Additional data become available

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<sup>27</sup> 4D stands for Development, Diplomacy, Defence and Disaster.

- Good interaction between global level- and regional/local-level WPS activities

Key risks that can be identified are:

- Risk of conflict, competition or loss of commitment within the partnership network.
- Risk that organisations start to implement their own activities independently of the partnership.
- Risk that major external shocks reduce the predictive power of the model.

Alternative explanation:

Global level 4D decision-makers initiate specific actions to mitigate water-related conflict risks with regards to relevant regions using other information and knowledge as inputs.

### **Achievement of the intended objectives**

**Outcome Indicator 2** (“At least 4 specific actions have been initiated by global level 4D decision-makers to mitigate water-related conflict risks with regards to relevant regions”) has been achieved: the 2024 value is equal to the target value 4. Details are presented in an annex to the Annual Report 2024 of the WPS partnership:<sup>28</sup>

1. USAID initiated the 25 million USD Fragile Water programme to assist their missions to responding to water and security challenges, supported by WRI (DAI was the prime);
2. IFRC and WPS signed an MoU as partners on a IFRC and KOICA partnership related to strengthening water systems, community adaptation, and resilience building in the Middle East and Central Asia, specifically in Iran, Jordan, and Yemen;
3. The Omo basin has been selected as one of the six basins in Ethiopia as part of the BRIGHT project on water resources planning for river basins in Ethiopia that started in 2023;
4. UNOCHA in Mali invited WPS to facilitate a training for its employees in Mali region on gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive approaches from the programme in 2023.

Three specific Outcome Indicators 2.1-2.3 related to respectively the pillars Understand, Mobilise and Learn of the WPS Integrated Approach have also been achieved. Outcome indicator 2.3 is even being overachieved: the 2024 value is equal to 560 training participants, compared to a target value of 80.<sup>29</sup>

With respect to **Outcome Indicator 2.1** (“Active use of WPS’ early warning tool, expertise and publications by 4D policymakers has been demonstrated at least 5 times (references to tool/website use”), it has been reported that:<sup>30</sup>

1. Around 1,000 decision makers read and use the quarterly reports.
2. A USAID WASH Advisor used the Global Early Warning Tool to identify potential areas of conflict and to strengthen understanding of the link between WASH and conflict.
3. A Sida Specialist on the Unit for Peace used WPS to support work in the climate-conflict-peacebuilding nexus.
4. Researchers from various universities have contacted WPS to download data, discuss results and compare conflict predictions.
5. According to a 2024 website survey, the global tools and analyses were used for different purposes.

<sup>28</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025).xlsx’.

<sup>29</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025).xlsx’.

<sup>30</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025).xlsx’.

### Explanation of achievements

The activities 2.1.1.a-d that are expected to contribute to the Output 2.1.1 (“Improved performance of global tool in its 12-months forecasting (automated updates, additional parameters, causal relationships)”) that in turn is expected to contribute to achievement of Outcome Indicator 2 are:<sup>31</sup>

- a. Regular updating of tool
- b. Development of global tool 2.0
- c. Inclusion of additional (and contextual) data into the global tool, including relevant climate data
- d. Inclusion of causal relationships into global tool/causal model development.

The target value 1 of Output indicator 2.1.1 has been achieved. The following has been reported related to this result:<sup>32</sup>

- Global Tool 2.0 launched in 2022
- 2-month LSTM (Long Short-Term Modelling) forecast launched in Dec 2022 that improved upon forecasting work.
- In addition, causal models and explainers for how to use these were released in 2023.
- Numerous new indicators and datasets were added in 2020-2023.
- The tool was updated quarterly with a new forecast and updated data in 2020-2024.

The global tool gives a 12-month’s forecast of potential conflicts. An improved Global Tool 2.0 was launched in 2022 with an additional analysis, adding a 2-month LSTM forecast and adding indicators and datasets. Quarterly forecast reports were published during the whole period. WPS has created causal models to understand causes of conflict in different regions in the world.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the predictive power, the team reported that when both models are applied to historic data of past conflict events that were not used in training or testing the machine learning methods, the Random Forest focusing on predicting long-term risk on violent conflict captures 86% of future conflicts. The LSTM model (the new part in Global Tool 2.0) predicts the number of conflict events for subsequent two-month’s periods. Predicted event counts are – on average – within  $\pm 2$  events from the observed event counts at the first-order administrative level – e.g. states or provinces within a country. Compared to the naïve forecast baseline, the error decreases by 44 percent by utilizing the LSTM prediction model.<sup>34</sup>

Given the above, it is plausible that the activities 2.1.1.a-d contributed to the achievement of Output 1.1.2. Regarding the second part of H2, which concerns the use of the WPS global tool, expertise and publications (as input for specific actions have been initiated by global level 4D decision-makers to mitigate water-related conflict risks with regards to relevant regions), it became clear from interviews that the (exact) use of the global tool and products is not easy to track. As mentioned above, a 2024 website survey identified some uses. The 2024 Annual Report (WPS, 2025: 28) mentions that WPS surveyed participants of two trainings on their use of data and global tool services but does not present further information. It must also be emphasised that a part of the community that is to be informed, the defence- and diplomacy parts of the 4D community, are generally not open about the information they need or collect.

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<sup>31</sup> See WPS proposal and activity appraisal document.

<sup>32</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025).xlsx’.

<sup>33</sup> See <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/causal#regions>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/methodology>.

The WPS document ‘Impact Stories’ explains that several organisations, including security organisations, humanitarian and disaster risk organisations, research institutions and think tanks, use the WPS prediction published in the Quarterly Updates.<sup>35</sup> In the interviews, some additional uses have been mentioned:

- A global lead on water from the World Bank expressed the importance of the global tool as an important facility.
- The website of the annual global water conflict chronology, published by the Pacific Institute, mentions it does its work in collaboration with WPS and the Oregon State University.
- There was some anecdotal information about use of the Global Tool in an important political situation: the US state department.
- A meeting of the MENA-based NL embassies underlined the importance of identifying and addressing water- and climate related conflicts as part of their political and economic mission.
- The tool was also used by GIZ in its planning activities, and in the FREXUS project in the Sahel.

This suggests that Output 2.1 has contributed to the use of the tool, WPS expertise in this field and WPS publications. Since WRI was going to be the implementer of the USAID programme, it is also very likely that it used the WPS experience as input for that initiative. Similarly, the WPS partnership will bring in expertise on the water-peace nexus in its cooperation with the IFRC and KOICA partnership.<sup>36</sup> As discussed in the analysis of the regional part of WPS, the WPS work in Ethiopia was integrated in the BRIGHT project and could directly benefit from products of the global part of WPS. This suggests that Output 2.1.1 has furthermore contributed to the achievement of Outcome 1 as measured by Outcome indicator 1.

The following can be observed regarding the validity of key assumptions:

- Adequate organisational structure and culture; partners seem to collaborate well.
- Adequate monitoring, evaluation and quality of management. The quality of management is not something that can easily be checked. What can be evaluated is whether systems were put in place for providing feedback on the products of the global tool. The MEL system that was announced for improving the quality of the products was not yet seen.
- Additional data become available., this was the case.
- Good interaction between global level- and regional/local-level WPS activities: The Excel monitoring document mentions that ‘On Basecamp, a separate space has been opened where the WPS team shares knowledge to increase the connection between the global and regional teams.’ There is also an ongoing activity in Mali (Sélingué) where the combination of global, earth observation data is linked to activities on the ground.

The following is an assessment of whether key risks materialised:

- Risk of conflict, competition or loss of commitment within the partnership network. There were some critical exchanges during the course of this phase regarding the lack of presentation as “WPS”. According to an interviewee, ‘*This was not with bad intent. This mainly has to do with the challenge of having six organisations with their own communication teams (with frequent staff changes) and strategies.*’
- Risk that organisations start to implement their own activities independently of the partnership. There were remarks in the MT notes and in interviews about lack of priority for WPS.
- Risk that major external shocks reduce the predictive power of the model. The most recent developments in the global security situation may show such phenomena. The Global Tool team is aware of this.

<sup>35</sup> See <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/global-tool-update-jan-2025> for a recent example of a Quarterly Update.

<sup>36</sup> <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/press-release-09-11-2024-ifrc-wps-launch-cooperation>.

The assumptions are valid except for the existence of an appropriate MEL system and the risks did not materialise – the third risk at least not until recently - and the alternative explanation is less likely. It can therefore be concluded that there is a ‘plausible association’ between the implementation of activities 2.1.1.a-d and observed intended changes in terms of Output 2.1.1 and Outcome 2.

### Effectiveness of intervention area “institutional”

The third part of WPS is called “institutional”. It is a part of the project that seeks to develop the WPS organization, as well as the joint development of the WPS approach concept within the project. It also was for a long time a part that promoted WPS to the outside world. This part was supposed to establish a monitoring and evaluation system and process documentation, allowing to trace back what has been done, leading to specific results. The evaluation noticed that the MEL system was never created as a structured activity with clearly defined and reported intentions, data collection, results and adaptation of the approach. This would have an effect on the learning capacity of the project.

The project took an important step through the 2023-2024 strategic process, where a facilitated internal development dialogue was the basis for a deeper understanding of necessary steps, missing elements and improvement strategies. It led to some deepening around mission control on country cases and conceptual development of coherence between governance and instruments. Concrete steps were the creation of oversight structures, organising a process for partnership/consortium formalising and jointly developing a proposal for a next phase of WPS. This process has resulted in concept notes for a next phase, the creation of a steering committee and an advisory board, a draft financing strategy and a draft partnership agreement.

### Contribution analysis “institutional”

The results-hypothesis **H3** consist of the following parts:

- From activity to output: *If* a joint WPS approach is defined and applied in all target regions [**Activity 3.1.1.a-b**], *then* this will contribute to the joint integrated WPS approach having been strengthened and being implemented in at least 3 regions [**Output 3.1.1**].
- From output to outcome: *If* Output 3.1.1 is achieved, *then* this will contribute to WPS being the internationally recognized platform for water and security nexus issues, analyses and approaches at both global and regional levels and a sought-after partner for water-related conflict resolution and peacebuilding [**Outcome 3**].

Key assumptions are:

- All partners adhere to the joint integrated WPS approach.
- Good dissemination of results at regional level.
- There is demand for the services offered by WPS.

Key risks that can be identified are:

- Risk of conflict, competition or loss of commitment within the partnership network.
- Risk that organisations start to implement their own activities independently of the partnership.

Alternative explanation:

- Alternative platforms, if they exist, are less attractive.

### **Achievement of the intended objectives**

**Outcome Indicator 3** (“WPS is the internationally recognized platform for water and security issues and a sought-after partner in water conflict resolution and peacebuilding”) has been achieved, according to the logframe: the 2024 value is equal to the target value 1. The Excel monitoring document related to the WPS Annual Report 2024 states has become such a platform.<sup>37</sup>

Two specific Outcome Indicators 3.1-3.2 related to respectively the pillars Understand and Mobilise of the WPS Integrated Approach have also been achieved. This happened despite the fact that, the funding strategy was not achieved, nor was “setting up an adapted governance by 2022” realized (indicator 3.1.2 and indicator 3.2.2). **Outcome indicator 3.1** related to Understand (“WPS is approached at least 2 times for support by international and regional policymakers and other relevant actors from the 4D community”) is even being overachieved: the 2024 value is equal to 11, compared to a target value of 2.<sup>38</sup> The 11 instances are described in the Excel monitoring document. One is the same as the second specific action listed under Outcome 2 of the Global part of WPS and concerns the MoU of WPS with IFRC (see also WPS 2025, Annual Report 2024: 34). Another example is that the Council of Peace and Security of the African Union, requested support of the WPS partnership to advocate the theme “water for peace” in Africa. WPS was also approached by GIZ, resulting in the earlier-mentioned cooperation in the FREXUS project in the Sahel. In addition, in 2024, the Geneva Water Hub showed interest in a partnership with WPS.

### **Explanation of achievements**

The activities **3.1.1.a-b** that are expected to contribute to the Output 3.1.1 (“Joint integrated WPS approach has been strengthened and is implemented in at least 3 regions”) that in turn is expected to contribute to achievement of Outcome Indicator 3 are:

- a. Joint WPS approach defined.
- b. Joint WPS approach is applied in all target regions.

The integrated WPS approach was defined in the beginning of WPS 2. It is an integrated approach because it covers the four pillars Understand, Mobilise, Learn and Dialogue. It is also integrated because it addresses water and security issues from both a water and security angle. The WPS partners adopted the approach in all the four target regions.

**Output indicator 3.1.1’s** target value of 3 countries where the approach is implemented has been achieved and in fact overachieved, as the 2024 value is equal to 4, because WPS is adopting the approach in four countries. The following has been reported related to this result:<sup>39</sup>

- Consolidated and published integrated approach document and presented it at conferences.
- Recorded a session on the integrated approach in WPS e-learning.
- Implemented the approach in Mali, Iraq, Ethiopia and Kenya.
- The approach was updated in 2024.

The WPS integrated approach has been published on the WPS website, see [report 281](#). The WPS partners adhere to the joint integrated approach in all the four countries, which confirms the validity of the first key assumption. The cross-cutting team updated the WPS integrated approach based on the results of a workshop organised in May 2024 (WPS 2025: 8). There is no doubt that the activities 3.1.1.a-b contributed to the achievement of output 3.1.1. The second key assumption is in general also valid. Results at the regional level

<sup>37</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025).xlsx’.

<sup>38</sup> <https://d-portal.org/ctrack.html?publisher=NL-KVK-41146484#view=act&aid=NL-KVK-41146484-XM-DAC-7-PPR-4000003751>.

<sup>39</sup> Excel document ‘WPS Indicators 2020-2025 (Apr 2025)’.

are disseminated well via forums, conference and (internet) publications and videos, although some key informants in Mali were not aware of the WPS and its activities. The application of the integrated approach appears to have attracted quite some attention from members of the 4D community. WPS was approached more than two times to provide support. Hence, there appears to be demand for the services provided by WPS (hence confirming validity of the third key assumption).

There are no indications that the two identified key risks played an important role, if any. Regarding the risk of conflict, competition or loss of commitment within the partnership network, notes from the management team point at some problematic moments during the implementation, referring to a lack of commitment in relation to an underspending situation. Regarding the risk that organisations start to implement their own activities independently of the partnership, there was a problem with the flag under which WPS activities were presented, which was addressed in MT meetings. In Mali there were issues regarding the availability of the leading partner (ref. MT notes, interviews).

The above suggests that it is likely that there is also a credible association between Output 3.1.1 and Outcome 3, though it remains difficult to conclude that contribute to WPS has become *the* internationally recognized platform for water and security nexus issues, analyses and approaches at both global and regional levels. In other words, it is not certain whether alternative platforms, to the extent that they exist, are less attractive than WPS.

### ***Conclusions regarding institutional***

There is an important observation to be made regarding an inconsistency in the base-documentation of the project: the proposal from 2020.

The evaluators observed an unclear transformation of workstream institutional in a “brand-promotion and sales” activity, without equal or prior attention to the institutional creation that was proposed in the proposal from 2020. A disconnect in the text of the proposal is the first element in this problematic development: the obvious intention from the text becomes opaque in the logical framework in the annex of the same document. This then becomes a foundation for subsequent reporting and action problems. This would not have been a problem if there would have been a clear-eyed leadership with this objective in mind, as well as a similar vision on the side of the funder. Both seem to be absent. Between the members of the consortium there was not a major force for seeking the creation of a joint institutional “house”.

One original outcome for achieving the “platform” reads: *Further development and strengthening of an integrated WPS approach, combining analyses, knowledge, mobilization, training and dialogue into a “one-stop-Shop” approach. Application of this approach in regional work and feed-back from regional work to strengthen the approach.* This was not (yet) achieved.

When asked if there is an overview of the combined activities per location by various partners, including the moment of intervention, the results etc., allowing to analyse, but also allowing to step in when needed, the answer was “no”.

This part has not yet delivered the intended organizational backbone for the continuity of WPS. We can therefore not conclude that there is a credible association between activities, outputs and outcome.

**EQ B2: To what extent does the funding facilitate flexibility and effectiveness in programme planning and management?**

There is an annual process of planning-budgeting that also must pass through the ministry. The process of negotiating tended to take a lot of time and caused a lot of frustration. Options for adapting the budget are limited, creating stress on the process, in particular for the smaller organizations. If there would be an annual budget-transfer with ex-post justification, the process would be helped. The evaluation concludes that the current funding structure is reducing the flexibility and through that also the effectiveness. An alternative funding structure as announced in the plan from 2020 has not been prepared (ref. interviews, MT notes, annual reports).

**EQ B3: What has been the impact of the activities? What are the benefits and challenges? Should WPS change the mix of activities?**

The impact has not been part of the evaluation. This question can only be answered if “efficiency” can be evaluated up to the level of activity. That level of (financial) information was not available. This means that this evaluation cannot answer this question.

**Conclusions on effectiveness**

EQ B1: From the contribution analysis it follows that the regional part of WPS (workstream 1) proves to be effective, with probably the clearest positive results in Kenya and Iraq, and less so in Mali and Ethiopia, due to a mix of external and internal factors. An example of a positive internal factor is the choice of the local organizations with which the country-level activities were implemented. An example of a (negative) external factor is that the situation in Mali resulted in a complication of working with the central government, even though the project managed to deal with this. Another is the large-scale internal conflict in Ethiopia, which may have been a reason of delays in implementation of WPS activities. Looking more closely, there are important differences in the actual implementation in the four countries. These differences are partially recognised in the cross-cutting work undertaken. The evaluators think more could have been achieved if a MEL system (see below) would have been operational.

Workstream 2, global was also effective. The main results are achieved. The project is realizing the goals as proposed in the log frame. The global tool 2.0 is working. There is documented use of the tool, although exact knowledge about the use is hard to obtain, in particular use by the security sector. The activities on awareness and training are taking place. Together this workstream results in a global presence of WPS.

Effectiveness of workstream 3, institutional strengthening of WPS, is more limited. The main result, an organized structure with organization, products and funding based on a MEL system, a knowledge base and good governance has not been achieved so far. The proposed MEL system, including “*Systematically document processes, outcomes and learnings from project implementation to support the feedback loop*” was only very partly effectuated. This affects the overall quality of the results. Governance for oversight of the project was not established until 2024, reducing the strategic potential of the project. The indicators in the log frame for this workstream suggest that virtually everything was achieved, but the evaluators observe that this part of the log frame does not represent the combined activities announced in the 2020 proposal.

The 2023-2024 strategic process has brought serious advances. The six partners have stepped up their efforts for creating this, showing initial, albeit belated results.

EQ B2: The evaluation also concludes that the current funding structure is reducing the flexibility and through that also the effectiveness of WPS. An alternative funding structure as announced in the plan from 2020 has

not yet been prepared. A funding structure should be based on an organization with its own oversight and strong internal control. This in combination with a sufficiently big capital available for operations to allow a continuity of activities. The proposal from 2020 suggested a trust fund, which would indeed be an effective way of organizing.

EQ B3: The impact has not been part of the evaluation. This question can only be answered if “efficiency” can be evaluated up to the level of activity. That level of (financial) information was not available. This means that this evaluation cannot answer this question.

## Efficiency

The ToR of the evaluation ask the following questions:<sup>40</sup>

- EQ C1: Does the WPS monitoring system provide good data for the evaluation of progress and impacts?
- EQ C2: To what extent are the expected impact and benefits arising from activities in balance with the level of effort and resources spent?
- EQ C3: To what extent is there sufficient attention to operate the programme in a cost-efficient manner?
- EQ C4: Does the programme have clear regulations with respect to maximum costs of the different budget items?

The evaluation of the efficiency of the project is hampered by the lack of data at the level of WPS activities listed under each envisaged output in the logframe. The evaluators were informed that the WPS partnership was not required to submit to DGIS annual financial reports at the level of activities. So, although proposals are made each year with a specified allocation of funding, the project does not report at the same level. The evaluators are of the opinion that the external reporting agreement with the funder should not reduce the internal reporting of the project, if such reporting is needed to manage the project. There is also a limitation in understanding the implementation of activities and the contributions of all institutions via the auditing, because there was an agreement that auditing would be done in the form of a summarised institutional audit of the six partners. This was done for reasons of cost and time. As a result of all this, there is no information available for calculating unit cost of outputs by comparing the achieved values of output indicators to the actual expenditure incurred for the implementation of the activities related to the respective outputs. It was only possible to calculate unit costs at the level of outcomes.

Some of these unit costs were calculated, assuming that the IATI reporting of the outcome indicators is for the previous year in each case. Hence, it is assumed that IATI 2025 reports the 2024 indicator values, IATI 2024 report the values of 2023, etc. The top part of Table 1 shows the cumulative actual expenditures for the years 2021 to 2024 in millions of Euros, assuming that the actual expenditures in 2024 are equal to the estimated expenditures presented in the Annual Plan 2025. The final column of the top part of Table 1 shows the budgeted expenditure for the entire period of WPS 2 implementation. The middle part of the table presents the achieved and target values of the outcome indicators, while the lower part shows the calculated unit cost in thousands of Euros.

The results indicate that the unit costs for Outcome indicator 1 are of the same order of magnitude for Iraq and Kenya/Ethiopia, but somewhat higher for Mali. For the four countries combined, the unit cost for Outcome indicator 1 first decreased slightly, before increasing in following years.

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<sup>40</sup> The term “impact” in the first two questions is again interpreted as results at output and outcome level.

**Table 5: Expenditure, outcome indicators and unit costs**

Cumulative/budgeted expenditure	Cumulated in euros, millions				Original budget, euros, millions 2021-2024
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Cross-cutting regional	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7
Mali	0.6	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.7
Iraq	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.1
Kenya-Ethiopia	0.2	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
<b>Regional</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Global</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Actual/targeted Outcome indicators</b>					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	Target
Mali	..	..	..	4	2
Iraq	..	..	..	4	2
Kenya-Ethiopia	..	..	..	5	2
<b>Regional - Outcome indicator 1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Global - Outcome indicator 2</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Institutional - Outcome indicator 3</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unit costs (x 1,000 Euro)</b>					
	2021	2022	2023	2024	Planned
Mali	..	..	..	421	850
Iraq	..	..	..	317	550
Kenya-Ethiopia	..	..	..	299	750
<b>Regional</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>825</b>
<b>Global</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>650</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>550</b>

Source: Own calculations based on WPS indicators in 'WPS Indicators 2020-2024 (April 2025).xlsx' and financial data presented in the Annual Report 2024 and the Annual Plan 2025.

Using the budget figures in the activity appraisal (BEMO), it is found that, for the four countries together, the unit cost for Outcome indicator 1 is equal to 384 thousand Euros, which is lower than the planned unit cost of 825 thousand Euros. This is related to the finding that WPS was apparently not ambitious enough in terms of Outcome indicator 1. The unit costs for Outcome indicators 2 and 3 are more or less as budgeted. Another finding is that the actual secretariat costs were higher than budgeted (7.3% vs. 6.5% of the total).<sup>41</sup>

***EQ C1: Does the WPS monitoring system provide good data for the evaluation of progress and impacts?***

As agreed with DGIS IGG, this evaluation does not cover impact. The monitoring system does provide information regarding progress on the workstreams “global” and “regions”. It is not at all properly linked to the workstream “institutional” (as explained elsewhere). In the operational workstreams, the indicators were quite/too broadly defined. The Outcome indicator 1 should for example be the result of the four outcome indicators for the four pillars. That is not the case. Therefore, the results for Outcome 1 can be fully detached from the outcomes of the pillars.

<sup>41</sup> Own calculations based on and financial data presented in the Annual Report 2024 and the Annual Plan 2025.

A genuine missing system regarding the indicators is missing. A monitoring system would show the information from earlier years, and the underlying activities, to allow analysis and learning. Such a system was not presented to the evaluators. The evaluators are of the opinion that both the indicators and the levels of ambition might have been different if there would have been an evaluating exchange on the monitoring system after a year of initial operation. In conclusion: the WPS monitoring system as it was implemented does not provide good data for the evaluation of progress and impacts.

**EQ C2: To what extent are the expected impact and benefits arising from activities in balance with the level of effort and resources spent?**

As agreed with DGIS IGG, this evaluation does not cover impact. As observed earlier, the level of reporting/data available at the level of activities did not allow the evaluators to come to any opinion on this question.

**EQ C3: To what extent is there sufficient attention to operate the programme in a cost-efficient manner?**

The evaluators were told that there is a lot of negotiation with respect to budgets and re-allocation of funds. It seems that there was an increase of efficiency due to that. But the evaluators did not see proof of debates based on cost-efficiency, such as “should this be done in-house or is another party (much) cheaper?”. That questions was actually raised in retrospect by MFA regarding a groundwater study in Ethiopia, for which a local office of a Dutch consultant might have the information already available.

The evaluators note the decision by MFA to agree that the project would not report at activity level and to accept a summarized/simplified audit. This combination seriously affected the evaluation of efficiency (cost-effectiveness, *doelmatigheid*), despite the fact that the cost effective operation is a responsibility of the WPS partnership. In conclusion: the WPS could have put more effort in clarifying how the cost-efficiency of the programme was managed.

**EQ C4: Does the programme have clear regulations with respect to maximum costs of the different budget items?**

The evaluators were not presented such regulations. There is an annual discussion on budget, and there were discussions between partners regarding activities. As mentioned earlier, there was a budget made each year but there was no reporting found of expenditures at the level of activities. In conclusion: the evaluators did not find proof for this.

**Conclusions on efficiency:**

EQ C1: The efficiency at the level of activities could not be analysed due to a lack of systematic data collection. The cost in relation to results is another level of analysis, where the lack of a good M&E system and consequently lack of data became the limiting factor. The level of reporting/data available at the level of activities did not allow the evaluators to come to any opinion on the question whether the benefits arising from activities are in balance with the level of effort and resources spent. The evaluators note the decision by MFA to agree that the project would not report at activity level and agreeing to a summarized/simplified audit. This combination seriously hampered the evaluation of efficiency (cost-effectiveness, *doelmatigheid*), despite the fact that the cost effective operation is a responsibility of the WPS partnership. WPS could have put more effort in clarifying how the efficiency of the programme was managed.

In the operational workstreams, the indicators were quite/too broadly defined. The Outcome indicator 1 should for example be the result of the four outcome indicators for the four pillars. That is not the case.

The evaluators are of the opinion that both the indicators and the levels of ambition might have been different if there would have been an evaluating exchange on the monitoring system after a year of initial operation.

The following can be concluded for the other three evaluation questions related to efficiency:

EQ C2: the evaluation does not cover impact. The level of data collection does not allow for an answer.

EQ C3: the WPS could have put more effort in clarifying how the cost-efficiency of the programme was managed.

EQ C4: The evaluators did not find proof for regulations regarding maximum costs of budget items.

## Sustainability

The following questions were part of the ToR for the evaluation:

- EQ D1: How sustainable is WPS and its activities? Identification of factors which may be constraints and those which may be beneficial to sustainability, organizational embedding, staff capacity, ambition and financing.
- EQ D2: Does WPS enhance local ownership of programme activities with the aim to increase sustainability on the long term?
- EQ D3: What are the main medium-long term developments anticipated by WPS with regard to 1) demands from its customers and clients, 2) its programmes and services, and 3) its funding?
- EQ D4: How can the financial sustainability of WPS be improved and what are recommendations for a possible next phase?

**EQ D1: How sustainable is WPS and its activities? Identification of factors which may be constraints and those which may be beneficial to sustainability, organizational embedding, staff capacity, ambition and financing.**

The sustainability refers to the WPS organization as to the various results that were created: global tool, knowledge platform, country cases.

In the proposal from 2020 it was announced that “WPS will engage in developing and implementing a long-term sustainability plan”. The evaluators did not find this plan.

The main results (global tool, knowledge platform, country cases) each have their own dynamic. Country cases will require maintenance which is different in each country.

### *Workstream 1, Country cases*

The **Kenya** case had an explicit exit-strategy built into the activity, based on a handover to CSOs from the Turkana region. The sustainability of WPS outcomes in Turkana depends on how well local systems can maintain and build on the progress with diminishing external support. There are encouraging signs of local ownership. Many of the structures set up (peace committees, inter-agency forums, community resource maps) are now anchored either in community tradition or county government routines. However, interviews also flagged areas where support needs to continue to ensure sustainability. Capacity turnover is one issue: local institutions suffer from high staff rotation and loss of trained personnel. Another aspect is equitable reach. For peace to last, all stakeholders need to feel included. Earlier phases of the programme had a narrow geographic focus, which “created resentment in other [fisherfolk] who felt neglected”. Communities urge that no group be left behind going forward.

Livelihood support and economic incentives are another pillar of sustainability. Many interviewees believe peace will hold only if people see tangible benefits (or at least no economic losses) from not fighting. From a governance perspective, institutionalizing conflict sensitivity in county and national systems will determine sustainability. The creation of multi-county forums (Turkana-Marsabit, or via the Frontier Counties Development Council) also provides a platform for continuity.

In **Ethiopia**, a stakeholder platform was created through a workshop process, but the process was not repeated or maintained. No proof was found of an active continuation of the dialogue process.

The dialogues are now part of the local processes in **Mali**. Some dialogues that were started continued, even if the facilitators from the programme were not able to attend, due to the security situation. The activities were handed over to the groups that were created and the results were achieved with local- and national authorities. The municipality of Djenne has included the process in the procedures for its development plan and the governor of Mopti has integrated the Dashboard in its procedures as well. WISO and IA have jointly applied for funding by ADA with the BLISS project (Blue Lifeline Initiative for a Secure Sahel).

The process in **Iraq** created a new role for the CSOs that were involved, creating for them the potential to experience an alternative facilitating role, instead of the purely activist position they took earlier. This may have a lasting effect, provided the processes are maintained. Based on the WPS role, the CSOs were shortlisted for funding by other partners.

Factors that may influence the sustainability of the regional cases are: (1) the four country cases all have a form of hand-over that took place, based on local organizations (CSOs and government); and (2) an active link with the embassy also provides introduction to consecutive funding options where the assistance of WPS has led to an improved planning that requires such support.

#### *Workstream 2, Global programme*

The objective-area “global” consists of a predictive tool, awareness raising and training. It is only the tool that would be an element to sustain. The tool is functioning and freely available to any user. That means that the programme provides a “service to the world”. Being branded under WPS, the maintenance is expected to come from WPS. The rapid development of AI and the fast appearance of similar services are creating a pressure to decide on the future of the tool, to rebuild and redesign the tool and perhaps its uses.

Factors that may influence the sustainability of the global workstream are:

- Appearing in connection to globally recognised actors may carry the credibility and use of the global tool.
- Continuing an active presence in global processes (in combination with proven results and documented increase in quality of the tools)
- The quarterly publication is an attractive way of drawing attention to the facility and its potential.

#### *Workstream 3, WPS organization*

As analysed in other parts of this report, the sustainability of WPS as an organization is the overarching goal of workstream 3. Several of the activities for this workstream formulated in the main text of the original proposal were not or only partially included in the logframe and became sidelined. In 2024 a part of this process started to happen. At the time of the evaluation, 8 months before the end of the current funding, there are serious talks taking place to secure a more formal connection of the current partners, but the fundamentals still need to be agreed. The current level of discussion is to sign an MOU between the partners,

with a different set up of the management of activities and secretariat. That could allow proposing a legal set up to be able to sign contracts and manage funds for different projects from multiple donors.

The funding structure for a future WPS was already part of the considerations in the proposal from 2020. There the suggestion was the possible creation of a trust fund, a structure that would allow a more continuous funding by several donors, and with a more autonomous operation of a WPS structure.

The current WPS activity has also formulated a proposal for a next phase of the activity.

**EQ D2: Does WPS enhance local ownership of programme activities with the aim to increase sustainability on the long term?**

The evaluators observed that the question of “when do you leave?” was not clearly addressed in the WPS methods and reports.

The country cases in Kenya and Iraq showed an ambition to hand-over the supporting role to a local intermediary. This was less/not the case in Mali and Ethiopia. In Kenya and in Iraq the local activities were implemented by and with local CSO’s, that subsequently also found new financial support. This is in line with the intended approach of WPS.

In Mali the interventions were implemented by WI and IA, there was no handing over to other CSOs. In a collective response to the question, they explained that both of them are active as local organizations that are not moving out soon. The activities themselves have been anchored in the procedures of the municipality of Djenne and the governorate of Mopti.

In Ethiopia the interventions were partly handed over to local owners: the stakeholder platform was handed over to the ministry for water resources. But the person responsible left that department, and his successor was not approached by WPS. The platform has not re-convened in its capacity. The people that are in the structure have partly reconvened, without including the ministry.

In conclusion, the answer to this question is: Sustainability for the country activities was secured in various degrees and in various ways. In particular the link to existing CSOs seems important, with IA and WI securing that position in Mali. Linking to EKNs helps in linking to more sustained funding.

**EQ D3: What are the main medium-long term developments anticipated by WPS with regard to 1) demands from its customers and clients, 2) its programmes and services, and 3) its funding?**

The evaluators are of the opinion that this is not an evaluation question, but rather a direct question to the WPS partners and that they are in the best position to answer this question themselves.

**EQ D4: How can the financial sustainability of WPS be improved and what are recommendations for a possible next phase?**

The WPS funding strategy is basically a list of potential funders. It has not created an organisational basis for receiving funding for WPS as proposed in the 2020 proposal: a trust fund. Such a facility, in combination with a reliable governance (oversight, quality assurance) are elements for securing a simpler, self-managed, flexible funding, more in line with the character of some of the requested supports.

Having these organizational elements (a financial structure and a reliable organization) are foundations for creating a more sustainable financial basis for WPS. A reliable plan for creating these elements should be formulated before starting a next phase.

### **Conclusion on sustainability:**

EQ D1: The sustainability was part of the design of the project. Budget and activities for creating a WPS organization to replace the project are in the proposal for the activity, as well as a planned approach: a sustainability plan would be part of the yearly results. The sustainability plan announced in the project-proposal from 2020 was not prepared. The rest was implemented partially. Probably the most crucial remaining step is finalizing the creation of a credible WPS organization.

Sustainability for the global workstream is based on permanent improvement and enhanced by a visible global presence. The quarterly publication is an important part of the visibility.

The institutional workstream is in fact a sustainability action. The 2023-2024 strategic process was an important step in this workstream. The subsequent activities (creating a formalised partnership, setting up oversight, develop a proposal for the next phase) are in various stages of finalization.

EQ D2: Sustainability for the country activities was secured in various degrees and in various ways. In particular the link to existing CSOs seems important, with IA and WI securing that position in Mali. Linking to EKNs helps in linking to more sustained funding.

EQ D4: The WPS funding strategy is basically a list of potential funders. It has not created an organisational basis for receiving funding for WPS as proposed in the 2020 proposal: a trust fund. Having these organizational elements (a financial structure and a reliable organization) are foundations for creating a more sustainable financial basis for WPS. A reliable plan for creating these elements should be formulated before starting a next phase.

## **Governance & organization**

The ToR of the evaluation asked:

- EQ E1: Does WPS and its activities cooperate with the most important partners in the area of work?
- EQ E2: Is WPS able to involve other partners in its programmes? What are the results of this involvement so far?
- EQ E3: How appropriate and effective is WPS organizational structure and staffing profile in realizing a relevant, effective and efficient WPS programme of activities? What changes, if any, are needed to WPS organizational structure, and staffing profile going forward?
- EQ E4: Who is WPS accountable to and to what extent, and how is M&E built into programming and strategy to strengthen that accountability?
- EQ E5: How well does IGG interact with WPS and what are the recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this interaction?
- EQ E6: Are there examples of innovative approaches (partnership collaboration, achieving societal impact, sustainability, communication and dissemination)? What are the results and how do projects learn from others?

**EQ E1: Does WPS and its activities cooperate with the most important partners in the area of work?**

The question has multiple dimensions. The global workflow is focussing on a group of partners; the regional workflow has an additional set of actors. And for the institutional workflow there is yet another additional group of actors to be considered. Looking from the outside in, it can be observed in April 2025, that WPS is present in the global debate, with a brand that is known, a global tool that is seen, and a recognition through global actors.

At the country level there are observations that can be made about “cooperate”, but WPS surely is known in the four countries. The collaboration with the Netherlands embassies was good in most cases, although there were hiccups. As mentioned elsewhere, this cooperation is not voluntary; the project operates under the responsibility of the Netherlands government and therefore has an obligation to coordinate sensitive actions with the EKN.

When discussing the WPS global tool, the reaction from staff of important institutions such as the World Bank was that this is an influential contribution to the global toolbox. WPS is mentioned on the frontpage of the global annual water conflict review by the Pacific Institute.

There are activities and explorations with major institutions like the ICRC, UNDP, IOM, Climate Security Mechanism and with bilateral donors, proving a potential and a need.

In a more recent development, the WPS has created an advisory board, that also includes a high level representative from the African Union and a high level expert from the World Bank, as well as a high level representative from the Defence community, a judge from the international court of justice and a globally renowned expert on water and conflict, thus strongly increasing even further the network of WPS.

The evaluators conclude “yes” regarding this question (Ref. WPS annual reports, MT reports, interviews).

**EQ E2: Is WPS able to involve other partners in its programmes? What are the results of this involvement so far?**

At the start of the project, there were “associate partners” mentioned. There was also a section in the proposal focussing on training other institutions (knowledge base). The associate partners did not make it to become partners.

One attempt to involve a new partner was with SIPRI (from Stockholm). It was reported that this was not followed through because it overlapped too much with the profile of the existing partners.

In the period of review, WPS has involved other organizations in its activities. GIZ was involved in the West African activities, by joining forces in the FREXUS project. This allowed WPS to contribute with its approaches in two additional countries, Niger and Chad. It also was an occasion to make a link between a country programme and the global tool. GIZ was also a partner in Iraq (where the organization has a large presence). There were also local CSOs that were included in the activities of WPS. This was particularly the case in Kenya and in Iraq. The effects of these involvements is that in both countries the CSOs have found additional support for their activities. In the case of Iraq there was also a change of operation at the level of the CSO, shifting from “activist” to a more facilitating position. Over the years there were quite a number of other partners that were involved in different parts of the project. There was an initial category of “associate partners” that are also mentioned on the website. These links have not resulted in additional partners joining the WPS partnership.

The project mentions many occasions where the work of WPS was undertaken as part of activities or publications by others.

In June 2021 there was a request for support from the climate security mechanism. WPS did not jump on it but argued about the costs and about the risk of “only doing the analysis”, without the follow up. Apparently, the requested situation analysis was not seen as a result but as a cost.

(ref. WPS annual reports, MT reports, interviews)

In conclusion, yes, the WPS has involved other partners, which resulted in support for 5 additional countries.

***EQ E3: How appropriate and effective is WPS organizational structure and staffing profile in realizing a relevant, effective and efficient WPS programme of activities? What changes, if any, are needed to WPS organizational structure, and staffing profile going forward?***

The second part of this question is referred to the “recommendations” section of this report.

The initial structure of WPS was the result of the pilot activity that took place in 2018-2019. The proposal for the organization of the current project has a logical build-up, that included a secretariat, a management team and a steering committee. An advisory board was a proposed addition that needed to be determined later. For the workstream activities at country level there were four different partners that had the lead: WI for Mali, IA for Kenya, WRI for Ethiopia and HCSS for Iraq.

From the start the secretariat was created, as well as the management team, but the steering committee was not established until 2024. The feedback from this evaluation, as well as the strategic development retreat came with the same observations: the workload is too high, and too much work feeds back into the coordination/MT. The evaluators observed several details in the actual functioning of the secretariat. The archive is a (digital) collection of documents that proved to be difficult to retrieve for the current staff. An ex-staff member was willing to unearth material that was otherwise lost in practice. An example is a videorecording of a meeting on the MEL system, that showed an advanced awareness of the necessity and potential use. The financial documentation was also difficult to retrieve. That is annoying for the work of the evaluators, but more importantly, it affects the operation of the secretariat. The comment from various sides: this is not the strength of the institution.

The staffing of the secretariat, the people purely working for that project, was determined by IHE, where a coordinator was appointed, who had help from a part time secretary and persons working on a consultancy basis for doing day-to-day work and for doing strategic assignments. There were two coordinators since 2020, with the current coordinator in function since the start of 2023. The two people working on consultancy basis have both left and have recently been partially replaced by a staff member of IHE, who was already involved in an earlier phase. The profile of the current coordinator (a former minister, African national, research/advisory experience with Deltares and IHE) seems ideal for the position of “face” of WPS. But for running an organization with six autonomous institutions in a set of complex environments requires more than one person.

In the strategic process (end of 2023-start 2024) the lack of oversight was identified and addressed as a missing part. This resulted in the creation of an advisory board and the re-instatement of a steering committee.

The management of the country cases was different between the four. There were issues in the collaboration between WI and IA in Mali, which required intervention from the central offices. This was somewhat complicated due to language issues (not all spoke French).

The project has been created with institutional development in mind. The third workstream is there to create a more formal structure. However, as discussed elsewhere in this report, the organization of WPS and the future for of the organization have been ignored for a while. There was no consortium agreement between the six parties at the start (although the proposal said there was), which meant that there were no clear rules at the start of this project. That agreement is still under discussion. The actual structure is based on a financing agreement between DGIS IGG and IHE Delft, and separate contracts between IHE Delft and the other five partners. The staffing is then based on the actual tasks that are assigned through the contracts the annual plans, and decisions that are taken throughout the year. The whole cycle is also linked to an annual submission of reports and plans to the funder (DGIS IGG). From the interviews it became clear that this combination of structures results in a high workload for those involved in the management team, frustrating some of them – especially those organizations with less financial reserves (Ref. interviews, MT reports, emails IGG-WPS, draft consortium MOU, strategic retreat reporting, financing strategy WPS).

In conclusion, the structure as it has been operating from the start of this phase is not ideal. Missing oversight, no consortium agreement, too many functions concentrated in the coordinator position, a lack of time and capacity at the secretariat and a complicated system of budgeting and implementation made the overall operation difficult. Assigning the secretariat to the IHE was practical for contractual reasons, but based on the observations during this evaluation and the comments from the WPS partners it appears that the management of WPS, being a complex programme, may not be its strength, although several contributing factors, e.g. under-staffing, should be considered’.

**EQ E4: Who is WPS accountable to and to what extent, and how is M&E built into programming and strategy to strengthen that accountability?**

This question is answered in three parts are linked: the formal agreements, the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and the governance of WPS.

***Financing agreement and contracts***

The legal frame is a subsidy financing agreement with the Netherlands MFA. This financing agreement for the programme is with IHE Delft, the Netherlands. IHE is responsible for the agreement and its finances. The five other organizations have a subcontract with IHE. During the current phase of the project there is no other formal arrangement between the six partners. There was a consortium agreement during the pilot phase (2018-2019), but this is very light and didn’t include all partners.

A consortium agreement per the start of the current activity was announced in the project proposal: *“For the next phase (2020-2024), the funding will be provided directly – via IHE – to the different partners, taking WPS out of the DUPC2 programme. IHE leads the DGIS-funded program which will act in the form of a consortium (on the basis of a consortium agreement).”*, ref WPS 2020 proposal, p.38. The evaluation established that this agreement has not existed from the start, and still isn’t there. The partners in the consortium have been aware of this and have been discussing an agreement (ref. MT reports 2020-2025). The evaluators were informed that there have been various formal problems for concluding this process.

The financing agreement between DGIS and IHE has a financial paragraph, an obligation for annual planning and reporting (technical, financial, IATI), an annual audit report, and it includes an external evaluation. The subcontracts mirror/complement the obligations of IHE towards the MFA.

In an exchange between DGIS and IHE it was agreed that the auditing of WPS would be done through an audit that would add up the partial audits from the 6 institutions (rather than doing a separate audit).

The financing agreement stipulates what the ministry is willing to fund, how the exchange of information will take place, how the funding is supposed to be administered and who the communication is to take place. The agreement also contains conditions regarding the implementation, such as the responsibility of the NL government for the activities under international law: *In implementing the activity plan, you must take account of the fact that the Dutch government may be held responsible under international law for its implementation.* Operating in a sensitive domain, conflict in relation to natural resources, the necessity to do this activity in consultation with the representative of NL, the embassy, is not a formality. Accountability is not just with the ministry, but also with the embassies in the countries where the activities take place (ref. finance decision, BEMO, email IGG-WPS, interviews)

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, MEL**

The project proposal (WPS 2020: 29) has a solid proposal for MEL:

- *Developing an effective M&E system, enabling transparency and learning*
- *Develop a transparent (gender sensitive) M&E system for the long-term monitoring of WPS implementation and performance*
- *Maintain and develop the M&E system for comprehensive reporting of progress, outputs, quality of products, etc.*
- *Systematically document processes, outcomes and learnings from project implementation*
- *to support the feedback loop to further improve the WPS approaches, strategies and ways of working.*

There is also an annex in this proposal, where activities from the main text are put in a log frame (annex V), but in this annex the M&E plan has disappeared as activity. What remained was reporting. Those are not the same things, since the MEL plan is part of the 3-level experiment that WPS represents: understanding water conflict and predicting it (linked to the global tool and the country interventions), what are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level (the regional workstream) and what would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership and a sustained and organized WPS platform (workstream institutional). All three experiments can only be informed if they have information to learn from.

The evaluation found separate parts of this information gathering, as well as a start of a process of setting up the full MEL system. There was an elaborate process monitoring by International Alert, that uses detailed monitoring to inform the specific process and also provides information on the effectiveness of the interventions. There was not a similar level of monitoring for the technical side of the regional workstream.

Questions that came up during the evaluation: not all water resources were part of the initial analysis (no groundwater), was this discovered, and repaired? Climate change leads to additional flood events, that were not part of the initial analysis (the focus was on drought). Why was this not recognised? What has been done to correct in the situation and in the analytical set-up for new cases? The dashboard tool is limited to policy decisions, leaving out real time data. Is that what the users want?

The global workstream has been looking for information regarding the use, the way users work with it and necessary improvements. Examples are the relative complexity of using the global tool due to the high level of technical understanding that was needed for working with it.

The evaluators conclude that the process for creating the full MEL system was started and exists internally for part of the work such as with the activities of IA. Probably due to the changing of staff and the reduced logframe in the project proposal a full MEL system as intended is not yet functional.

### **Governance**

The question “Who is WPS accountable to” also links to governance and hierarchy in the organization of WPS. Within WPS there was supposed to be an adapted steering committee by 2022 (proposal page 38 and 57), but the text does not specify what would be done until that moment, other than claiming it would work on the basis of a consortium agreement (which did not exist at that moment between the six partners).

In the planned structure, there would be a management team based on the 6 partners, with a coordinator, employed by IHE, working from a secretariat, with IHE also securing the financial management and the reporting towards the funder. In addition, there would be a steering committee to *“take more strategic decisions, including ensuring the overall consistency of programme implementation and providing technical and content-specific guidance and deciding about the use of the flexibility fund”*.

The steering committee has not been operational until very recent. The coordinators were doing their work in part-time, the same was true for the secretariat. There have been two coordinators during this period. The management team had regular (monthly) meetings.

A steering committee as proposed in the 2020 project document has not convened until 2024, meaning that there was none of the strategic oversight that is mentioned in the proposal.

What remains is the WPS management team, led by the WPS coordinator, the department at IHE that oversees this activity, and the leadership of IHE as the signatory to the financing agreement. (ref. WPS proposal 2020-2024, interviews, email exchange IGG-WPS).

Concluding: At the time of this evaluation, the accountability for WPS would technically and financially be with the leadership of IHE Delft being accountable to IGG at MFA, combined with the country programmes that should be in closer contact with the NL embassies, for reasons of the technical cooperation, but also because of the formal legal responsibility of the NL MFA for the activities in the countries where WPS is active. The MEL was partly followed through, but disappeared from the logframe, which may explain a reduced attention. This in turn reduces the steering information regarding the effectiveness of the various interventions. Not implementing the strategic level (steering committee) in the project aggravated the situation. On paper, as proposed, the system in the text of the proposal was well thought through. In implementation, starting with the annex V of the proposal, the system was not realized as proposed, resulting in missed opportunities for learning, improving, adapting and an absence of informed strategic decisions.

### **EQ E5: How well does IGG interact with WPS and what are the recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this interaction?**

The origin of WPS is an initiative that closely involved IGG. This involvement included a proposed composition of the consortium, the creation of a pilot within the DUPC2 programme, the hosting at IHE and the

organization of the funding structure. The evaluation did not find much proof that this level of leadership from the start in creating an “arranged marriage” was continued in later years.

The interactions of WPS and the Netherlands ministry are through various channels: there is a link through the financing agreement, and there are links via the content. The information for this section comes from interviews and the reports from the meetings of the management team.

The links via the financing agreement were focused on the country/region results. Underspending was not appreciated. There was an urge from the department to show results on the ground.

The evaluation found that the financial side of the communication was complicated by decisions regarding the reporting and auditing. It was agreed that reporting would not be done at the level of activities, and that auditing is done as part of institutional audits, combining the results of those. This results in reduced clarity regarding cost effectiveness for IGG (but also for those managing the activity). This also affects the work of this evaluation.

Rotation of staff was happening on both sides: at IGG there have been three contact persons since 2020, at WPS there were two coordinators. At the embassies there were also some rotations of staff over the years (although local experts tend to be the ones securing a continuity and institutional memory).

For the content of the work, it was especially the embassies that have been in contact with the teams implementing the WPS activities. There are very positive experiences in the cases of Iraq and Kenya. The WPS programmes there are perceived as useful and effective. Both embassies were impressed by the work and the results. The former ambassador to Iraq (and former NL water envoy) underlined the access to information of the situation on the ground that he had through the programme.

The embassy in Nairobi was very well informed about the work and has good contacts with the programme. The policy officer at the Embassy has been active with the linking to other activities, and knew in detail what interventions happened when, expressing some doubts about the actual timing of the technical part, and the effectiveness of that element in the overall intervention. He was also wondering if the local technical institutions at Lake Turkana, shouldn't have been involved, to secure learning and a continued availability of expertise. In Mali the contact was via the WPS lead, WISO. This did not always go smooth. The embassy is seeking to make various projects and programmes work together, wanting them to compare notes and work together.

Due to the nature of the work, being linked to conflict, it is a risk that the activities of WPS may be qualified as “intervening in national politics” by the host-countries government unless the connections with the government are secured from the start. Therefore, the connection WPS-MFA at country-level is much more operational and should be recognised as such from the start. In fact, as reported elsewhere, the water-specialist at the Dutch embassy in Kenya became an actor in the case and enabled a part of the results. The evaluators think that this allows for a revision of the explanation of the approach.

In the WPS MENA conference that was organized in Amman in 2024, the embassies in the MENA region convened. It was concluded that it was of importance for Dutch foreign policy (ODA as well as political) to analyse the potential conflicts in the countries and include possible support in the policies of the embassies.

The conclusion is that the ministry has not followed through its initial role in the creation of the current grouping of institutions and their project. IGG was less fortunate in its decisions regarding the administration, allowing a less-detailed reporting and auditing, resulting in a less-transparent operation than would have been possible.

It is also concluded that the current implementation-model of the contractual link should be avoided if a future activity were to be funded. Operational flexibility is vital and is hampered by managing in detail, as it is the case today. This should be combined with transparency in reporting a proper auditing (at activity level), thus enabling management and oversight. Introducing a proper oversight within WPS would avoid problems.

At the country-level the interaction WPS – EKN can be very effective and is a “conditio sine qua non” due to the character of the activity, and the explicitly formulated responsibility of EKN/Government of the Netherlands.

**EQ E6: Are there examples of innovative approaches (partnership collaboration, achieving societal impact, sustainability, communication and dissemination)? What are the results and how do projects learn from others?**

In essence the combined model of WPS is an innovation, and as argued earlier, an experiment in three layers:

- What predicts water related conflict? (linked to the global tool and the country interventions),
- What are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level as 4D community (the regional workstream)
- What would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership and a sustained and organized WPS platform? (workstream institutional).

Deconstructing this innovation doesn’t recognise the potential of WPS as a support to the emerging domain of need for recognising and addressing these problematic and potentially highly disruptive situations.

The evaluators observed some effective forms of collaboration that were improvised and logical for the occasion. But in looking at all 4 countries, there seems to be a pattern that could have been part of the wider understanding, and more importantly: the possibility to improve in case of future interventions. The problematic part for the evaluators was that the proposed monitoring of processes has not taken place in the systematic way it was announced in the proposal.

What seems to be universal is the need to start from an existing base of trust. You cannot just come in as an advisor, there needs to be an existing connection with people, usually this is based on a CSO or NGO already active in the area where the (potential) water related conflict is taking place. The concept of “social capital” surfaced to explain what is being done<sup>42</sup>. In Mali this were in fact WI and IA, that already had ongoing activities, making it an easy fit for adding tools and approaches. In Kenya and in Iraq this was done by linking to local groups that were integrated in the activities. In both cases this turned out favourable for these groups, leading to additional support through other partners, based on their earlier involvement in WPS. In Ethiopia the link was made with a university in the area that needed quite some support in its work.

There was also an innovative aspect in the enrolment of the CSO in Iraq, where the organisation originally had an activist approach to getting its way. This was tempered by the WPS partner (HCSS) demanding that the position of WPS as a neutral actor would not be compromised. The CSO agreed and has seen the positive results as a result.

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<sup>42</sup> Grootaert, Ch. (1998). Social Capital: the missing link? The World Bank, *Social Capital Initiative, Working Paper No. 3*.

Another element that is only partially made explicit in the WPS approach (in “mobilise”), is the inclusion of NL embassies in the activities of the country cases. In all 4 country cases there was an interest from the side of the embassies to work with WPS. In the case of Kenya this seems to have resulted in various extra possibilities, due to a more active engagement of the water expert at the embassy. Here too a more detailed monitoring of the interventions would have helped to understand better what exactly could be added through the involvement of a diplomatic capacity in the mix of support: “Diplomacy via Water” (ref. evaluation country cases Ethiopia and Kenya, interviews). Typically, this is a way of operating that is very common in the activities of Germany and France.

The Global Tool was enriched with several datasets, as well as with an additional predictive layer, resulting in Global Tool 2.0.

The learning between the activities was organized in the “cross-cutting” activities that are part of the workstream “regional”.

In conclusion, WPS is an innovation, that is starting to yield results. The current cases, the Global Tool and the operation would benefit from in-depth analysis to increase the understanding of the three main questions it has tried to address:

- What predicts water related conflict?
- What are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level as 4D community?
- What would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership and a sustained and organized WPS platform?

It is important to address these questions together. Deconstructing this innovation does not recognise the potential of WPS. It can be an important support to the (fast) emerging domain of water and conflict, situations that can quickly become highly disruptive.

The evaluators see enough result in the combined outcomes of WPS to continue supporting the initiative, provided it completes its’ workstream “institutional” and creates the committed and competent organizational frame that is required for advancing WPS.

## ASSESSMENTS

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation requested the assessments in this section.

### **Assessment of performance against the evaluation indicators in the period 1 February 2020 – 1 April 2025**

The project was evaluated, based on the text of the project's proposal<sup>43</sup> as well as the indicators from that same document (annex V) that were used in the monitoring of the project. The evaluation indicators are not different from the indicators that were agreed with the MFA at the start and during the implementation.

The project had 3 objective areas in the proposal: regional, global, institutional.

The regional part took place in 4 countries, Mali, Iraq, Ethiopia and Kenya. Each country had a different lead institution. The four countries showed a different interpretation of the approach and had different types of results. In all four cases the involvement of existing CSOs was vital, as was the involvement of the EKN. Overall, the conclusion is positive about developing the methods and achieving results. More information can (and should) still be extracted from the ongoing cases, to better understand the ToC and the possible results in future cases.

The project, per April 2025, has the following outputs:

- A global tool that is functional and has been extended during this programme-phase
- A structure for running and maintaining the global tool
- An emerging approach for working at country level with water- and peace & security expertise
- An emerging structure for operationalizing this approach, and repeating it elsewhere
- An emerging governance structure
- 4 different country cases where results of the approach can be identified and where meaningful lessons on the potential of the interventions can be drawn
- Global visibility of the topic WPS and global recognition of the brand WPS

The benefits are:

- Results on the ground that were achieved based on interventions by WPS members, using the global approach as a basis, allowing a further development.
- One case (Kenya) that seems to show the full 4D spectrum realized within the timeframe of this phase. As such an important proof of concept.
- Results with the global tool that is still unique in its capacity, allowing a next step forward.
- Results in the joint recognition of the consortium members that WPS has a future and that WPS is theirs

The challenges are:

- Securing informed adaptation of the theories of change
- Working in relation to conflict, security and diplomacy reduces the possibilities of transparency and demands confidentiality
- Deeper understanding of the interventions at country level
- Deciding whether or not (and how) to develop (and invest in) the global tool
- Clarify both the entrance-strategy and the exit-strategy in country cases
- Creating WPS as a structured organization

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<sup>43</sup> The evaluators used the document "2020 WPS\_Proposal\_Phase2020-2024\_Final\_20200324.pdf" (the date in the filename is different from the date in the text).

- Creating a sustained funding facility
- Organizing WPS for implementing and continuous learning
- Organising WPS for working with clients
- Being understood as a service-delivering facility

The global part has a predictive tool, training and awareness raising. The tool and its quarterly prediction document have an audience; there has been an important update and launch. The reliability of the results has increased. Part of this workstream was awareness raising. There were various events where the topic of water and conflict as well as the potential of the tool were highlighted. It is an important element in the visibility and communication on WPS and makes its audience aware of the increasing occurrence of water/climate related conflict. The actual use is difficult to measure, as the user-group is not easily interviewed. There are several testimonies indicating its use by the 4D community. The use for the country cases is for the moment still limited. There is also an appearance of alternative tools. For the “brand-creation” and awareness raising on water/climate conflict the tool was considered important. In conclusion the evaluators think that the intended results were achieved. The quality of the quarterly report can be increased by adding ground-proofing and by adding more dedicated capacity to the preparation of the document.

The proposed main result for the institutional part, a functioning platform, has not been realized yet. According to the IATI reporting and the Excel document for 2024, two intended outputs regarding ‘institutional’ were not yet achieved: Output 3.1.2 (*‘Set-up and adapted governance by 2022’*) and Output 3.2.2 (*‘Funding strategy has been developed’*). Activities related to other results announced in the proposal were delivered partially, and later than proposed. As an important booster, the WPS partners convened at the beginning of 2024, based on an internal study on the progress linked to the work, and challenges in connection to the partnership. This part is fundamental and represents the main challenge for the WPS partners.

A decision on future funding has to be conditional on the creation of a committed and competent organizational frame for a future WPS.

**Assessment of monitoring, learning and evaluation built into WPS processes including capacity to anticipate change, adapt, and manage for development results.**

As observed in the evaluation, the WPS project is an innovation in itself, as it tries to unify various layers and various “silos”: it has a global level, a regional/national level and a local level. It also combines technical information (and their communities) with the skills in the peace and security domain. In addition, there is the 4D aspect, development, disaster relief, diplomacy and defence.

The innovation or experiment is basically linked to three main questions (formulated by the evaluators):

- What predicts water-related conflict?
- What are the effective approaches for supporting interventions at country level as 4D community?
- What would be a viable way for the creation of an institutionalised partnership, a sustained and organized WPS platform?

The project had an initial Theory of Change for addressing these questions, but the actual framing and answering of these questions has not been a part of the activities of the project. The project proposal is showing awareness of the need for a MEL system. In the proposal, this is announced with a logic for doing so. Unfortunately, this logic was not followed through. The WPS project in this phase still has an experimental character, both for the global and for the country-level of activities. Having detailed observations will help in understanding the methodology.

The evaluators think that to have an effective MEL, there needs to be oversight, management and effective collection of information. The organization as proposed in the 2020 proposal is also showing the necessary elements: a management team, a coordinator and a steering committee. In fact, the systematic collection of detailed information did not happen – a MEL plan was not found – and the strategic oversight was only created towards the end of 2024. Separate parts of the WPS are doing individual work on data-collection, but not in the structured way, as proposed earlier. Not having a board/steering committee was probably an important part of the problem: MEL generates steering information that needs to be addressed. The management team is an operational unit that would benefit from the annual MEL results.

The evaluators noted two technical topics that were not included by the project and might have been picked up by a MEL system: the initial hydrological analysis did not include groundwater, while the trends in the four countries linked to climate change were not reflected in the policy focus (focus on drought, despite increased variability in precipitation in all four countries, in combination with an observed increase in river-based flooding in the Niger and rising water levels of the Rift valley lakes). Although already known at the start of the project in 2020, there certainly would have been a key moment for adapting the focus when the 6<sup>th</sup> report of the IPCC came out in 2023.

In conclusion, the design was correct (MEL plan, governance), but the implementation was not. In case there is a next phase, both elements need to be worked out and implemented fully (Ref. proposal 2020, annual plans and reports 2020-2024, MT meeting reports, 2024 strategic retreat reports, interviews).

#### **Assessment of the quality of the methodology of WPS to assess the impact of WPS activities.**

The evaluation does not cover the level of impact, as agreed with IGG at the start of the assignment. The evaluators noted several methods for assessing the impact of WPS activities within the project, such as outcome harvesting. But the evaluators did not find the systematic, planned approach for retrieving and combining such information.

The evaluation suggests adoption of a more elaborate MEL approach for the WPS partnership, as originally planned, so as to arrive at a better understanding of the WPS interventions. In the proposal, the following approach was announced: *“Systematically document processes, outcomes and learnings from project implementation to support the feedback loop to further improve the WPS approaches, strategies and ways of working.”* This would have been an excellent start to document the effects of the interventions.

#### **Assessment of the progress of WPS in the three intervention areas (regional, global, institutional), with emphasis on the achieved / anticipated impacts on the ground.**

The evaluation does not cover the level of impact, as agreed with IGG at the start of the assignment.

#### **Assessment of changes, if any, needed to WPS organizational structure, and staffing profile going forward.**

The assessment can only be made if there is a proposed profile for future activities and services.

The original aim, that has not been changed, as far as the evaluators are aware, is the creation of a “one stop shop” where the 4D community can refer to in case of water related conflicts. A “platform” was the rather broad word, used for the anticipated structure.

Reading in the original proposal and operationalizing this, the evaluators come to a series of tasks that would result from such an ambition. The organization would:

- Prepare and execute a workplan
- Secure the operation of the global tool (including the quarterly report, and probably additional services that can spin off the tool, such as zooming in to regional and country level)
- Select requested advice to various levels of response (from a simple advice to a full-scale local intervention) and secure that this advice is provided.
- Provide “emergency data-support” (quick scan, emergency monitoring) to rapidly emerging situations.
- Organize MEL in relation to all activities, to support its own operation but also to broaden the knowledge base of the group of actors that is active in the domain.
- Maintain a publicly accessible knowledge base.
- Provide dedicated training, online and in person.
- Manage the budget and develop and manage a funding structure for WPS.
- Set up and secure quality assurance and oversight.

The current organization misses the capacity for doing this.

There are similar structures, that come to mind, where advisory services are solicited. An example is the NCEA (*commissie MER Internationaal*). Here the organisation provides expert advice on ESIA and EIAs in qualifying countries, based on a request for such support. The NCEA has a secretariat with a group of ESIA/EIA experts that will convene to discuss if and how an advice will be provided. The same staff is also involved in providing training activities in the qualifying countries.

A future structure has the major advantage of already having a global tool and quarterly publication, it has already extensive experience in working in different ways in different countries, as well as providing a set of different products that were created over the years. These provide examples for structures seeking advice.

The staffing profile of the whole approach is not just limited to the WPS team. Because this is an approach that focuses on the 4D community, as reported in the evaluation part, the role of the Dutch MFA staff has proven to be important. This MFA/embassy staff should be considered when looking at the potential of WPS: there should be capacity available at the embassies to secure the active elements (diplomatic coverage, introduction with national authorities, linking to other international partners). Part of the approach could be “training of embassy staff in being part of the WPS interventions” (ref. draft MOU WPS, notes WPS meeting hosted by HCSS 2025, interviews).

**Assessment of the effectiveness, flexibility and efficiency of the WPS institutional arrangements in this period, as well as recommendations for what needs to be incorporated to improve adaptability and flexibility.**

During the second phase of WPS, the institutional arrangement was loose. There is a financing agreement between MFA and IHE, and five sub-contracting agreements between IHE and the others. There are conditions regarding administration and justification, but these too were quite loose. The governance of the activity during this phase was operational (management team), a steering committee only appeared in the course of 2024.

The creation of a more formal structure will also be a moment for reassessing the membership. It’s a moment for inviting other organizations, as well as a moment for opting out.

The currently proposed structure for a future iteration of WPS (laid down in a draft MOU for WPS) is not addressing the package mentioned in the earlier text on “organisation”. The MOU that is currently proposed is less centrally steered, which would reduce the number of tasks in the coordinator position. Having oversight

and having a connection with the outside via an advisory board would certainly improve the overall functioning of the consortium, but the result would probably be a set of separate projects, funded under a joint name. This would not be the answer to the emerging domain of water related conflicts.

The proposed financial structure as suggested in the proposal from 2020, working on the basis of a trust fund, would result in important changes as well. With a proper oversight and a funding that is much more directly available, both the regular procedures and the sometimes-needed improvisations would be much better served. But this trust fund suggestion has not been elaborated yet in a financial strategy document, nor has it been linked to the organizational structure as drafted in the MOU proposal.

To have maximum flexibility and adaptability, the WPS should be run as an organization, with its own funds. In such a situation a legal entity can be responsible for a certified activity, and it can take responsibility for funding, for instance in the form of a trust fund.

The current activity has in fact a decentralized central organization (MT) that partly works on WPS issues and has delegated work inside the six organizations. The next phase should concentrate part of the effort in one secretariat, where there would still be a delegation of work towards the composing structures. There will be some work involved in setting up such a hybrid structure. The ongoing activities for organizing WPS did not show this type of understanding of the roles and the necessary organization.

#### **Assessment of the key programmes and sector issues and/or other main drivers relevant to WPS in the next years, and what WPS needs to do to adapt/respond to anticipated changes.**

The question is too broad for a complete answer. It requires more consultation, also considering the global developments in the last two years. Some points to be considered are mentioned here.

The increase in water-related conflict as reported in the water-conflict chronology document (ref. Gleick) and the dramatic increase in water-related conflict research (ref. Kåresdotter et al. 2025) are indications of both the phenomenon and attention for the phenomenon. These indicate an increasing need for understanding, tools, advice and a place to refer to, with an increasing community of practitioners and an increasing number of researchers as well. There is little need to be worried about the “market”: unfortunately, that is proving to increase.

The key innovative contribution of WPS in water related conflict prevention is bringing in the combined skills of peace and conflict/diplomacy and water-resources skills.

In response to the increasing demand for capacity and skills, WPS should become a true platform for knowledge and experience in relation to water and conflict. It should make available its knowledge products, organize training, workshops and professional exchange facilities.

Elements that drive conflict are most probably a combination of climate change, population growth, technological development, environmental pollution (due to lack of regulation), disruption of funding for global institutions and a rapid increase in global instability due to the political developments.

The general increase in communication to more remote parts of the world, the more abundantly available satellite information, the rapidly dropping prices of energy, and the spectacular developments in AI are likely to be elements in the equation.

Technology is changing the use of water. Energy becomes cheap or even free due to solar solutions, resulting in solar pumping from both rivers and groundwater. It even makes desalination a more feasible option. These developments will affect balances. Upstream users become a threat for downstream users. Pollution is another potential driver of conflict, with many examples linked to small-scale gold mining.

Important data-technology developments are AI and satellites. AI developments are changing the game for the global tool and possible spin off instruments, such a scenario-building. Increased data-availability from satellites can increase the availability of ever more detailed information, even at local level.

The increased global insecurity increases the uncertainty regarding conflicts getting out of hand. The reduced funding of UN organizations will affect the possibilities of intervening and underlines the necessity to prevent where possible. Bilateral funding is becoming increasingly self-centred. Migration is a key topic. IOM, the UN organization for migration is project-based, and could be a partner in applying for funding.

A more concise answer should be part of a separate activity by WPS.

#### **Assessment of the financial sustainability of WPS and related recommendations for appropriate financial management arrangements for a possible new phase of WPS.**

WPS is currently a project. There is not yet an institutionalized partnership called WPS. At the end of the project, WPS ceases to exist. For financial sustainability, there needs to be something called “WPS” that can be financially sustained.

WPS as a facility will always cost money, as it is a preventive activity. The questions are: who feels responsible to finance this? and how can this funding be put to work in an efficient manner?

With the earlier-mentioned statistics on water-related conflict and some war-related water actions (cutting of water services in Gaza and the West Bank, pausing the water agreement between India and Pakistan, blowing up a dam in Ukraine) the world is seeing what actual water conflict can look like, so possibly this will provoke funding for the topic.

As argued in the assessments of the organization of WPS and the institutional arrangements of WPS, the preferred option would be an autonomous institutionalized partnership, with a trust-fund that would allow the structure to operate more freely, while having oversight and certified quality assurance. This requires the creation of an institutionalized partnership that would be able to do these things.

#### **Assessment of the interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and recommendations to improve this.**

The creation of WPS had the involvement of various MFA staff. The pilot activity as well as the current project were the result of an active interaction between the initial institutions and key staff from the ministry. This was an advantage when starting, speeding up the decision making. But it may have made the relationship less clear once the activity got underway. In particular the activities around the organizational part may have been affected by this: although the proposal clearly works toward an organization, *“There was never an agreement from the ministry to create an organization”... “The ministry did not support the creation of an organization but wanted it to remain a rather loose partnership; partners agreed with that as it was not clear what set-up would be possible at all (legally, administratively, etc.); the discussions were postponed to the end of phase 2 (so that should be now) on whether moving forward into phase 3 more institutionalization would be useful and feasible”.*

At the start in 2020, a design was made (the proposal) that named content and form: a global tool, country projects and the creation of a more permanent structure that would support water and conflict situations after 2024. Initially, the organizational leadership came from DGIS IGG: they have determined the composition. An example is the replacement of Institute Clingendael by a spin-off of the same institute, HCSS. In order to quickly finance a pilot of the initiative, an intervention was made by using existing funding for IHE, and a construction with a financing based on a subsidy was used for the implementation of the current phase (where you may have doubts about the effectiveness of that choice, and where the responsibility for results is significantly more difficult).

Subsequently, in the current phase, the DGIS IGG did not continue the initial leadership. Moreover, the project/consortium was allowed to start and keep going without oversight (a steering committee was missing). On top of that, IGG did not see that there were gaps in the management framework of the project (logframe), especially regarding the third workstream, the creation of a permanent structure for WPS.

After an internal strategy development process by the WPS consortium, at the end of 2023-beginning of 2024, a start was finally made with organizing WPS. This was done not through involving own expertise of the consortium, but through hiring external consultants. For a group of actors who consider themselves competent in multi-stakeholder processes, this is special. The aforementioned process is still (laboriously) going on after a year.

Now, in 2025, this means that results have been achieved on the content, global tool and country projects, but that the intended organization, the sustainable capstone, has still not been realized.

To achieve the overarching goal, the evaluators believe that a vision must be established in consultation between DGIS and the WPS partnership. A vision regarding WPS as an institutionalized partnership. With, among other things, a position determination in relation to Dutch interests. But also, a position determination regarding financing: will WPS 3.0 be a neutral platform that tries to support expertise in the world, or will it be a self-financing activity that competes with others in the field?

Currently, those choices are implicit and situational. As far as funding is concerned, there is competitive discussion about other parties, and access to knowledge and experience is virtually absent, which disrupts the platform idea.

As far as the relationship with Foreign Affairs is concerned, in one country there is a joint development with the embassy, while in another country the frustration at the embassy is great.

The current interaction is co-managing without having the capacity. In some case there was 5 or even 6 months between a submitted report and a formal reaction from DGIS. This should not be continued.

A future activity should preferably be based on an organization that functions independently and interacts specifically with embassies in partnership.

The alternative could be a delegated funding arrangement with RVO, where a service is offered to embassies, covering the WPS suite of activities. RVO would write out a tender for providing these services, which could include an expert at the EKN to secure the necessary coverage of the activity from a diplomatic level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The WPS project was still ongoing on 1 April 2025. The evaluation therefore also includes some suggestions for immediate action.

### *Recommendation on funding WPS:*

Continue the financing of WPS, with the condition that the partners will as soon as possible present an institutionalised partnership model that is credible and competent to act for the next phase.

### *Recommendation on an institutional structure:*

With the (still strengthening) status of WPS, and the increasing relevance due to the rising number of water and climate-related conflicts, being part of WPS is an institutional asset, as all current partners confirmed. A future structure should be open to others joining. It should also be underlined that the work on peace and security/governance requires neutrality and is at odds with specific advocacy. A future WPS would continue to have a hybrid structure, but it should be able to engage in financial agreements. There were several practical issues for creating such a structure, due to the specific characteristics of the current partners. A combination of possible forms of association (e.g. associate partner) should be considered for overcoming such issues.

### *Recommendation on the financial structure:*

The organization is a not-for-profit structure. The WPS partnership needs to have its own funds, secured in a trust fund, governed by a board, with a quality assurance system in the WPS operation to satisfy the requirements of contributors. There will be various ways for contributing, both at institutional level and for specific services.

### *Recommendation on organisation:*

The current WPS has a very minimal organization, making it hard to actually coordinate, create, advise, organize. In a next phase, the WPS must start with a strong secretariat that is able to advise at various levels of scale, manage its own resources and mobilize resources of others. That would probably mean a group of 4-8 persons. The secretariat manages the global tool as a basis for the periodic predictions, but also as an instrument for advice in specific regions and domains. The secretariat would also be the platform for strategic advice in relation to specific (potential) conflicts. With a collegial decision model it will decide on options for supporting, through its own resources or those of others, much like similar organisations such as the NCEA are having. Next to this operational structure there also should be as soon as possible a functioning steering committee/board, that that secures oversight, with possibly an active role of the chairperson of that board in a more regular capacity.

### *Recommendation on products and services:*

The WPS suite of activities and services can be more flexible and precise once the structure and organization are in place. The global tool will be more integrated in the overall operation; the services linked to (potential) conflict situations will be more diverse. Due to the capacity limitations of the organization, the main challenge will be to work as much as possible via others. Being a learning and service platform for this domain of expertise, especially the intervention part will be the core of WPS' activities.

### *Recommendations for the coming months:*

As soon as possible, a meeting should take place between the strategic leadership of DGIS and WPS to discuss the current document, the future relationship and next steps.

One decision that should be agreed between all parties is mobilizing resources for creating the secretariat. This should include a quartermaster (*kwartiermaker*) that will organize this phase.

The WPS partnership should use the remainder of this phase to understand all the activities that have taken place, extracting elements for future cases and further refining the ToC.

*Recommendation on an alternative pathway:*

If the level of organization of WPS would not be satisfactory, the alternative option for a continued WPS could be with RVO. A delegated funding agreement would open the way for organizing a WPS-like structure, albeit less engaged, and perhaps more expensive. To avoid losing time, initial talks on this option should be initiated in parallel to the process with the WPS partnership.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Persons interviewed

#### MFA DGIS

Marlies den Boer, Moumouni Damango, Antje van Driel, Maarten Gischler, Christian Hagedorn, Aart van der Horst, Pim van der Male, Astrid Mastenbroek, Tineke Rohol (retired), Jelmer de Vries, Jacob Waslander

#### International Alert

Jessica Hartog, Svenja Wolters

#### HCSS

Laura Birkman

#### Deltares

Dr Ruben Dahm, Harm Duel, Audrey Legat

#### Wetlands International

Francesca Antonelli, Charlie Avis, Chris Baker, Karounga Keita

#### World Resource Institute

Zablon Adane, Charlie Iceland, Liz Saccoccia

#### IHE

Prof Eddie Moors, Dr Yasir Muhamed, Dr Susanne Schmeier, Prof Pieter van der Zaag, Dr Ana Cascão, Martijn van Staveren, Dr Wim Douven, Ruben Vermeer

#### Others

Prof Eelco van Beek, international advisor, Meike van Ginneken, Netherlands water envoy, Dr Marc Zeitoun, director Geneva Water Hub, Prof Amadou Hama Maiga, Mali (and global) water expert, Dr Anders Jägerskog, World Bank CIWA, Dr Irene de Goede & Iris Bijlsma, RVO, Sandra Cats, RVO, Karin Roelofs, retired MFA, Dennis van Peppen, NCEA, Eddy Wymenga, Altenburg & Wymenga, Karen Meijer, I&M, Sibout Nooteboom, NCEA

#### Ethiopia

Dr. Zablon Adane, WRI, Mr. Fikade, Peace and Security office (Jinka/Konso), Mr Ermias Nagolio, Pastoralist/fishermen representative, Mr. Hora Galicha, Pastoralist/fishermen representative, Mr. Tele Mamo, Pastoralist/fishermen representative, Ms. Mihret Belay, Women and Children Bureau, South Ethiopia, Dr. Andarge Zewde, Research Director, Jinka University, Mr. Girum, Gibe III dam technologist, Dr. Abraham Asha, Wolayita Sodo University, engaged in OGB plan development, Assegid Ageme, MoWE, Acting Head, Basin Plan Desk, Mr Teketel, former MoWE, Head, Basin Plan Desk, (left MoWE a year ago).

#### Kenya

##### **Implementing Partners**

Dr Julie Mulonga	-	Regional Director, Wetlands International Eastern Africa
Grace Arot	-	Project Officer

Edmond Kuto	-	M&E
Daisy Kosgei	-	Senior Project Officer, International Alert
Miriam Muturi	-	M&E
Dickson Lowoi	-	Turkana Pastoralists Development Organization ( TUPADO)

**National Government**

Maurice Obiero	-	Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI)
Joel Musyoka	-	Water Resources Authority

**Turkana County Government**

Titus Lokorikeya Ekim	-	Director Peace Building and Conflict Management,
Losinyiro Benjamin	-	Deputy,
Erot Losenegei William	-	Ward Admin Kibish
Paul Lotum	-	Water département director
David Namwaya	-	Fisheries officer

**Water Resource Users Association**

James Loseny	-	Chairman
Selina Lomuru	-	Procurement
Sonny Epuu	-	Procurement
Patricia Eremon	-	Vice Chair
Maureen Okeno	-	Member
Peter Kaleng	-	Member
Joseph Eragas	-	Member,

**Beach Management Units (Fishermen's Association)**

Stephen Ekuwon	-	Chairman, BMU network
John Mame	-	Chairman, Impressa BMU
Francis Eito	-	Chairman, Namiet BMU
Edapal Kebo	-	Chairman, Elkoyo BMU
Kennedy Kamais	-	Daraja BMU
Stephen Emuron	-	Impressa BMU
Joseph Ekuwon	-	Natiral BMU
Samuel Loprito	-	Natiral BMU

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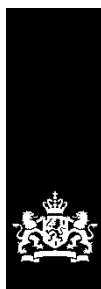
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## Annex 3: Terms of Reference



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## **Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of**

**Water, Peace and Security (WPS) partnership, activity number  
4000003751, to be executed in April-May 2025.**

Date	29 January 2025
Place	The Hague
Organisation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Reference	201865007.159.009
Contact person	Koen Huisman (procurement advisor)

## **1. Introduction**

Water insecurity and its impact on cooperation, stability and peace are a growing threat to people, communities, countries and the international community as a whole. The Water, Peace and Security (WPS) partnership aims to prevent and reduce water-related conflict and turn the vicious cycle of water insecurity and instability into a virtuous one of sustainable water resources management, stability and peace.

The WPS partnership includes: IHE Delft (lead), World Resources Institute, Deltares, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), Wetlands International and International Alert. Oregon State University and Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations are associated partners. The partnership is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and partly by GIZ for one project in West Africa.

The Water, Peace and Security (WPS) approach has been tested as a pilot in 2018 to 2019, before a full scale project (phase 2) started in 2020, and planned to be completed in 2024. Recently a budget neutral extension till the end of 2025 has been agreed. The budget of this phase 2 is 10 million Euro, funded by the Dutch Ministry for foreign trade and development cooperation.

The first (pilot) phase has been evaluated externally with a positive outcome. This Terms of Reference are for an assignment for a second, more extensive, external evaluation of the WPS partnership.

Last year, the WPS management team hired a consultant to carry out a strategic assessment with the aim to analyze the WPS Program, focusing on anticipated impacts, institutional arrangements and management, and sustainability and financing. On the basis of the report of the consultant the WPS management team formulated an action plan to enhance the WPS Partnership. Concrete measures taken by WPS are the establishments of both an Advisory Committee and a Steering Committee. WPS also hired a consultant to support the formulation of a “consortium agreement”, to be completed in the first quarter of 2025.

## **2. Water Peace Security Partnership in brief**

The objective of the WPS program is to develop innovative tools and services that help local stakeholders identify, understand and address water-related security risks. Different tools and models are used to increase awareness and understanding. This knowledge is used in participatory analysis, capacity building and awareness raising activities to support timely, informed and inclusive action in regions prone to water-related conflict.

WPS includes both global level initiatives in tools and risk forecasts as well as regional engagements in four countries: Mali, Iraq, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

The integrated approach of WPs is based on four pillars: Understand – Mobilize – Learn – Dialogue.



#### UNDERSTAND

Policy makers and stakeholders in a given water related risk, understand the risk and possible responses. Optimal use is made of remote sensing data, models, and artificial intelligence to support analysis and assessment of water related risks.

#### MOBILISE

Relevant actors acknowledge and act upon the need to respond to water-related security risks. The WPS team engage with key stakeholders at local, regional and global levels, to enhance awareness and understanding of water-related security threats.

#### LEARN

Relevant actors are capable of implementing timely, targeted and effective responses to water-related security risks. Through joint analysis and targeted capacity development, the WPS supports stakeholders in building coalitions and acting to mitigate current and future crises in a well-informed manner.

#### DIALOGUE

Relevant actors involve in inclusive and conflict-sensitive dialogue processes for preventing water related conflict risks. WPS facilitates dialogue among stakeholders, at different levels, making use of information tools and training to facilitate informed dialogue. This leads to the design of conflict-sensitive interventions among in a specific region.

The WPS program works on three main intervention areas (regional – global – institutional) and their respective work packages, which are:

- Regional (each consisting of sub-workstreams of tools/analysis, awareness raising, capacity development and dialogue support, embedded in a cross-

cutting sub-workstream tying the regional activities to each other in order to foster joint learning):

- Mali;
  - Iraq;
  - Kenya;
  - Ethiopia.
- Global
- Global tool and quarterly forecasts;
  - Global awareness raising;
  - Capacity development and training for the 4D community.
- Institutional The main objective here is that WPS becomes an the internationally recognized platform for water and security nexus issues, analyses and approaches at both global and regional levels.

The expected outcome indicators for the three objective areas: Regional, Global, and Institutional are given in the Table below:

<b>Regional:</b>	<p><b>For each region (Mali, Iraq, Kenya, Ethiopia)</b></p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 1.1: Understand - Tools and analyses:</b> Relevant stakeholders use the WPS quick scan and zoom in tools</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 1.2: Awareness and influencing:</b> Relevant stakeholders highlight the linkages between water and security - referencing WPS - in at least 4 instances</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 1.3: Training:</b> At least 60 training participants show increased understanding of the link between water and security</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 1.4: Dialogue</b> Relevant stakeholders have formulated responses to the water and security nexus through dialogue</p>
<b>Global</b>	<p><b>Outcome Indicator 2.1: Understand - Tools and analyses:</b> Active use of WPS' early warning tool, expertise and publications by 4D policy-makers has been demonstrated at least 5 times (references to tool/website use)</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 2.2: Awareness and influencing:</b> At least 4 calls for action by 4D policy makers demonstrating increased awareness of urgency to act</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 2.3: Training &amp; Capacity development:</b> At least 80 training participants show increased understanding of the link between water and security</p>
	<p><b>Outcome Indicator 3.1: Understand - Tools and analyses:</b></p>

<b>Institutional</b>	WPS is approached at least 2 times for support by international and regional policy-makers and other relevant actors from the 4D community
	<b>Outcome Indicator 3.2: Awareness and influencing:</b> WPS has become a trustworthy partner in the water and security nexus that receives support by at least 2 additional financiers or donors

**3. Objectives of the evaluation**

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to provide WPS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with an independent evaluation of WPS performance for the period 1 February 2020 – 1 April 2025, in order to seek lessons from the existing program, as well as provide input towards a possible new phase. The information and recommendations generated are expected to: 1) improve the relevance of the program, particularly given the rapidly changing landscape of development cooperation; 2) enhance achievement of results; 3) optimize the use of resources and 4) give ideas on a possible new phase of WPS.

**4. Evaluation questions**

The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the WPS, the overall institutional arrangements and the sustainability of the results. Each of these aspects of WPS will be assessed as follows:

**Relevance**

- How relevant is the program with respect to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s?)
- To what extent does the WPS program support the priorities of the Dutch government as written down in the policy letters “Water for development” (2012)”, “Do what we do best (2022) ”, the “Netherlands International Water Ambition” (2019) and the new policy paper of the Ministry expected in March 2025.
- Were the identified activities, outputs and products appropriate to the objectives in each area of the proposal?
- To what extent has WPS been able to adjust its program in the course of time to new challenges and policy priorities? Specifically, has the program been able to address new challenges in the area of water diplomacy and respond to particular requests from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this respect?
- Did WPS have a theory of change and intervention strategy with clearly defined elements and assumptions? If yes, was this ToC appropriate and how did it support the program to pursue its objectives?
- How did WPS take into account aspects of ecological sustainability, climate change, gender and inclusiveness?

### ***Effectiveness***

- To what extent do the activities and results achieve the intended objectives of the program as stated in the proposal and annual plans?
- To what extent does the funding facilitate flexibility and effectiveness in program planning and management?
- What has been the impact of the activities? What are the benefits and challenges? Should WPS change the mix of activities?

### ***Efficiency***

- Does the WPS monitoring system provide good data for the evaluation of progress and impacts?
- To what extent are the expected impact and benefits arising from activities in balance with the level of effort and resources spent?
- To what extent is there sufficient attention to operate the program in a cost-efficient manner?
- Does the program have clear regulations with respect to maximum costs of the different budget items?

### ***Institutional arrangements and management***

- Does WPS and its activities cooperate with the most important partners in the area of work?
- Is WPS able to involve other partners in its programs? What are the results of this involvement so far?
- How appropriate and effective is WPS organizational structure and staffing profile in realizing a relevant, effective and efficient WPS program of activities? What changes, if any, are needed to WPS organizational structure, and staffing profile going forward?
- Who is WPS accountable to and to what extent, and how is M&E built into programming and strategy to strengthen that accountability?
- How well does IGG interact with WPS and what are the recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this interaction?
- Are there examples of innovative approaches (partnership collaboration, achieving societal impact, sustainability, communication and dissemination)? What are the results and how do projects learn from others?

### ***Sustainability***

- How sustainable is WPS and its activities? Identification of factors which may be constraints and those which may be beneficial to sustainability, organizational embedding, staff capacity, ambition and financing.
- Does WPS enhance local ownership of program activities with the aim to increase sustainability on the long term?
- What are the main medium-long term developments anticipated by WPS with regard to 1) demands from its customers and clients, 2) its programs and services, and 3) its funding?
- How can the financial sustainability of WPS be improved and what are recommendations for a possible next phase?

## **5. Outputs**

The evaluation team would develop:

1. Criteria and evaluation indicators for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of WPS operations, the institutional arrangements and sustainability of the program;
2. An assessment of performance against these evaluation indicators in the period 1 February 2020 – 1 April 2025;
3. An assessment of monitoring, learning and evaluation built into WPS processes including capacity to anticipate change, adapt, and manage for development results;
4. An assessment of the quality of the methodology of WPS to assess the impact of WPS activities;
5. An assessment of the progress of WPS in the three intervention areas (regional, global, institutional), with emphasis on the achieved / anticipated impacts on the ground.
6. An assessment of the effectiveness, flexibility and efficiency of the WPS institutional arrangements in this period, as well as recommendations for what needs to be incorporated to improve adaptability and flexibility;
7. An assessment of the key programs and sector issues and/or other main drivers relevant to WPS in the next years, and what WPS needs to do to adapt/respond to anticipated changes;
8. An assessment of the financial sustainability of WPS and related recommendations for appropriate financial management arrangements for a possible new phase of WPS;
9. Recommendations to improve the content of a possible new phase of WPS;
10. An assessment of how well was the interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and recommendations to improve this.

## **6. Methodology**

The external evaluators are expected to use only qualitative methods, including:

- Desk review of relevant documents to be provided by WPS and the Inclusive Green Growth Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Based on the desk review the external evaluators will draft an evaluation plan showing the information required to answer the evaluation questions, including and how this information will be collected;
- The following methods may be applied:
  - In-depth, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. These should in any case include relevant staff from WPS partners and DGIS. Other stakeholders, like external global and local partners and beneficiaries, may be identified as a part of the planning and implementation arrangements;
  - Participatory workshops and/or group interviews with stakeholders;

- Questionnaire surveys;
- Field visit to Kenya (Turkana) and Ethiopia (Omo-Gibe basin);
- The other two pilot countries (Inner delta of Mali and Southern Iraq) are too insecure for field visits;
- Possible virtual interviews to other countries were due to security risks, field visits are not happening / possible (Inner delta of Mali and Southern Iraq);
- Extensive use of secondary data such as internal evaluations, reports, minutes, internet, etc.

## **7. Deliverables**

The evaluation team will prepare in the English language:

- An evaluation plan.
- An evaluation report.

### ***Evaluation plan***

One week after the start of the assignment, the evaluators will submit an evaluation plan, which will contain:

- A description of the key issues to be evaluated including the evaluation questions;
- Criteria and indicators for assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of WPS operations, the institutional arrangements and sustainability of the program;
- List of specific questions and concerns relating to the evaluation to which WPS management and/or DGIS will respond;
- A detailed program for a field visit, interviews and consultation meetings;
- List of key documents and resource people for the evaluation.

### ***Evaluation report***

Six weeks after the start of the assignment, the evaluators will present a draft evaluation report, which will contain at least:

- An overall evaluation of performance, institutional arrangements and sustainability over the period 2020 – 1 April 2025;
- Recommendations for strategic focus, approaches for impact and collaboration, growth, funding, staffing, M&E and institutional arrangements for both the remaining period as well as a possible new phase.

The draft evaluation report will be discussed with WPS and DGIS within 8 weeks of the start of the assignment. The final evaluation report will be completed 10 weeks after the start of the assignment.

## **8. Staffing and Resources**

### ***Staffing***

The evaluation team will consist of two evaluators with the following experience:

- At least 15 years of experience with international cooperation, especially in the field of water, peace and security;
- Experience with impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

### ***Time input***

The team of 2 evaluators will work for a period of 25 days, so in total 50 days. The indicative time spending is as follows:

- 3 days desk study and preparation of the evaluation plan.
- 5 days interviews in The Netherlands, including selected stakeholders (e.g. via video- or teleconference).
- 6 days field visit.
- 2 days interviews in the Netherlands, including selected stakeholders (e.g. via video- or teleconference).
- 9 days reporting.

The proposed time expenditure may differ from the indicative time inputs shown above. The external evaluators will detail their time expenditure and methodology in the evaluation plan.

### ***Milestones (preferred, earlier is possible)***

7 <sup>th</sup> of April 2025:	Start of the mission
14 <sup>th</sup> of April 2025:	Evaluation plan
12 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025:	Draft report
26 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025:	Final report

### ***Budget***

The maximum budget for this evaluation is EURO 100.000 excl. VAT.

### ***Financing***

The mission will be paid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **9. Tendering process**

The contractor will be selected using the "Framework Agreement Evaluations & Research 2024".

The framework partners have the opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest, before 18 February 2025, no later than 10:00 p.m. If more than four framework contractors express an interest, the candidates must submit a concept note within 10 working days. A maximum of four candidates will be selected to submit a full proposal. If four or fewer framework contractors express an interest, candidates do not need to submit a concept note, but can immediately start preparing their full proposal. Maximal four framework contractors which are selected to submit a full proposal, must submit a full proposal within 10 working days, after receiving the request for submission of the Full proposal. The formats for a concept note and a full proposal are provided by MFA. After receiving the full proposals, MFA will select the contractor.

### **Contact person**

The contact person for this evaluation is Koen Huisman. You may communicate only with the Contact Person regarding this Tender Procedure. The communication is channeled through CTM. If you communicate about this Tender Procedure with other employees of the Contracting Authority, or through other channels to influence them, this may constitute a reason for us to exclude you from participating. The planning for the tendering process is mentioned under point 7. Planning.

## 10. Planning and questions

### Planning

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>
Invitation of Expression of Interest	29 January 2025
Submission of questions and reporting contradictions in TOR	4 February 2025, no later than 16.00 am*
Publication of Note of Information	6 February 2025
Deadline for submission of Expression of Interest	12 February 2025, no later than 10.00 am*
Deadline for submission of Concept Note (if more than 4 EoI's are received)	26 February 2025, no later than 10.00 am*
Invitation to submit full proposal	6 March 2025
Deadline for submission of full proposals	20 March 2025, no later than 10.00 am*
Appraisal full proposals (possibly with interview) and contracting <sup>1</sup>	20 March 2025 – 28 March 2025
Start evaluation/kick-off meeting	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Submission of the inception report	14 <sup>th</sup> of April 2025
Submission of draft final report	12 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025
Presentation	13 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025
Submission of final report	26 <sup>th</sup> of May 2025

\*Central European Time (CET)

### Questions and inconsistencies

Something in the Invitation to Tender might be unclear to you. You can find out what to do in this section.

#### Ask all your questions via CTM

Do you have any questions about the content or procedure of this Tender Procedure? Or do you wish to report inconsistencies, inaccuracies or objections? Do this via the Message function in CTM. For this purpose, complete Annex A – Format for Summary of Additional Information and Changes. We will not answer questions you ask in another way.

#### Submit all your questions and any inconsistencies by the date and time in the timetable

This ensures you will receive an answer to your question. If you are late in submitting your question, we will answer your question only if we think it is important information for all suppliers. In principle, if you do not report these inconsistencies, inaccuracies or objections in time, we will no longer amend the

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<sup>1</sup> The contracting authority reserves the right to organize interviews with the team leaders of one or more consortia that have submitted full proposals. The purpose of these interviews is to gain a deeper understanding of the proposals, allowing for clarification of key elements of the evaluation team, proposed methodology, and the planning. No additional points will be granted for a possible interview, and the insights will be used in assessing the Full Proposal.

Invitation to Tender. You cannot derive any rights from inconsistencies, that you have not identified or that you have identified but not reported to us in time. Of course, we do our best to avoid inconsistencies in the Tender Documents.

Make sure your questions and suggestions are anonymous

In your question, do not use:

- company names;
- product names;
- other names related to your organisation.

We publish all questions and answers on CTM

You can read all the questions and answers in the Summary of Additional Information and Changes. All suppliers receive the same information in this way. You will receive an e-mail via CTM when we publish the questions and answers. We will publish the Summary of Additional Information and Changes by the date scheduled in the timetable.

## 11. Assessment of your Tender

In this chapter you can read how we assess your Tender.

The concept note will be assessed as follows:

	Criteria	Weighting factor
1	<p><b>Evaluation team (max 500 words)</b></p> <p>The Contracting Authority requires an explanation of how the proposed evaluation team meets the qualifications and criteria outlined in the ToR. Additionally, the Contracting Authority requests the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV of international team leader</li> <li>• CV's of other international team members</li> <li>• If the Candidate includes a consortium partner or subcontractor included in the Framework Agreement that is based in the country where the evaluation will take place, thus must be explicitly mentioned.</li> </ul> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority scores the team's collective methodological and thematic expertise and experience.</p>	50%
2	<p><b>Methodology (max 1,000 words)</b></p> <p>The Contracting Authority asks the evaluation team to briefly analyse the understanding of the ToR and to present an initial</p>	50%

	research design, including a preliminary selection of research methods, data collection methods and data sources.	
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The full proposal will be assessed as follows:

1. Team (40 points): the qualifications and experience of the team leader and the team as a whole. This is assessed on the basis of CV's.
2. Methodology (40 points): technical proposal. The tenderers are scored on their proposed methodology as outlined in the award criteria table
3. Plan (10 points);
4. Budget: financial proposal (5 points);
5. Number of consulting days (5 points).

	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting factor</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Evaluation team (max 600 words)</b></p> <p>The Contracting Authority requires a clear explanation of how the proposed evaluation team fulfills the qualifications and criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Additionally, the Contracting Authority requests the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive CVs of all team members, including national researchers.</li> <li>• If the Candidate includes a consortium partner or subcontractor from the Framework Agreement based in the country where the evaluation will take place, this must be explicitly mentioned.</li> </ul> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority will score the collective expertise of the team, focusing on their methodological, thematic, and contextual knowledge and experience.</p>	40%
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Technical proposal (max 2,000 words)</b></p> <p>The Contracting Authority requests that the evaluation team presents their understanding of the ToR and provides a detailed research design. This should include proposed research methods, data collection strategies, and data sources. Additionally, the proposal should outline an initial sampling strategy and case selection approach. The evaluation team should also transparently reflect on potential limitations and biases within the proposed research design.</p> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority will score the proposal based on the robustness and feasibility of the research design, as well as its alignment with the objectives of the ToR. Special attention will be paid to the relevance and appropriateness of the proposed methods in answering the evaluation questions.</p>	40%
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority will evaluate the extent to which the proposed planning is realistic, feasible, and aligned with the required timeline specified in the ToR. Particular attention will be given to the coordination of tasks and the efficient use of team members' expertise at critical stages.</p>	10%

4	<p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>The Contracting Authority asks for a detailed budget, specifying the total price (both excluding and including VAT). This should include a breakdown of costs per team member (number of days, daily fees), as well as a detailed listing of all other expenses related to the evaluation (e.g., travel, materials, overhead costs).</p> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority will take into account the overall cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 points for a total price of EUR 95.000 or less</li> <li>- 4 points for a total price between EUR 95.000 and 97.000</li> <li>- 3 points for a total price between EUR 97.000 and 99.000</li> <li>- 0 points for a total price above EUR 99.000, with a maximum of EUR 100.000</li> </ul>	5%
5	<p><b>Number of consulting days</b></p> <p>In its assessment, the Contracting Authority will assess the total number of consulting days, and the allocation of consulting days between junior and senior consultants.</p>	5%

If your Tender meets all Requirements, we assess the content of your Tender  
We assess the content of the Tender based on the Award Subcriteria and give it a score. An assessment committee assesses the content of your Tender.

**Assessment of the quality**

The quality of your Tender is assessed with a grade

You can score points for each Award Subcriterion. The maximum number of points that can be obtained and the relative weighting in the award model are indicated for each Award Subcriterion. This leads to total scores for the Tenders. The supplier with the highest total score is awarded the contract.

For the information provided by suppliers, the principle of the more SMART (Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Results-oriented, Time-bound) the better applies.

The grade expresses the substantive assessment

The assessment committee decides which grade to give your Tender. You will always be given an even-number grade between 0 and 10. The table below shows what each grade says about the quality of your Tender.

10	The Tenderer has given an excellent answer to the questions asked in this Award Subcriterion or this part of the Award Subcriterion.
8	The Tenderer has given a good answer to the questions asked in this Award Subcriterion or this part of the Award Subcriterion.
6	The Tenderer has given a satisfactory answer to the questions asked in this Award Subcriterion or this part of the Award Subcriterion.
4	The Tenderer has given an unsatisfactory answer to the question asked in this Award Subcriterion or this part of the Award Subcriterion.
2	The Tenderer has given a poor answer to the question asked in this Award Subcriterion or this part of the Award Subcriterion.
0	No score. The Tenderer does not address the Award Subcriterion, or part of the Award Subcriterion, or has skipped it.

After the members of the assessment committee have awarded specific points, the assessment committee meets for a consensus meeting that is supervised by the RIS purchasing advisor. During this consultation, the final score per Subaward Criterion will be determined for each Tenderer on the basis of consensus.