

Public-Private Dialogue

Highland Water Forum Approach

by

Highland Water Forum Secretariat

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1- Background and Context

The Highland Water Forum (HWF) is a multi-stakeholder dialogue that was established in May 2010 under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The HWF is supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Programme "Management of Water Resources" and the French Embassy in Jordan.

The Highland Water Forum is meant to be the official umbrella for Public Private Dialogue through Water Basin Management Committees in the Kingdom. Each Basin Management Committee would comprise the representatives of the stakeholder groups related to groundwater in one way or the other such as the water users (for agricultural and municipal uses), the local communities, the water-governing institutions, and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations.

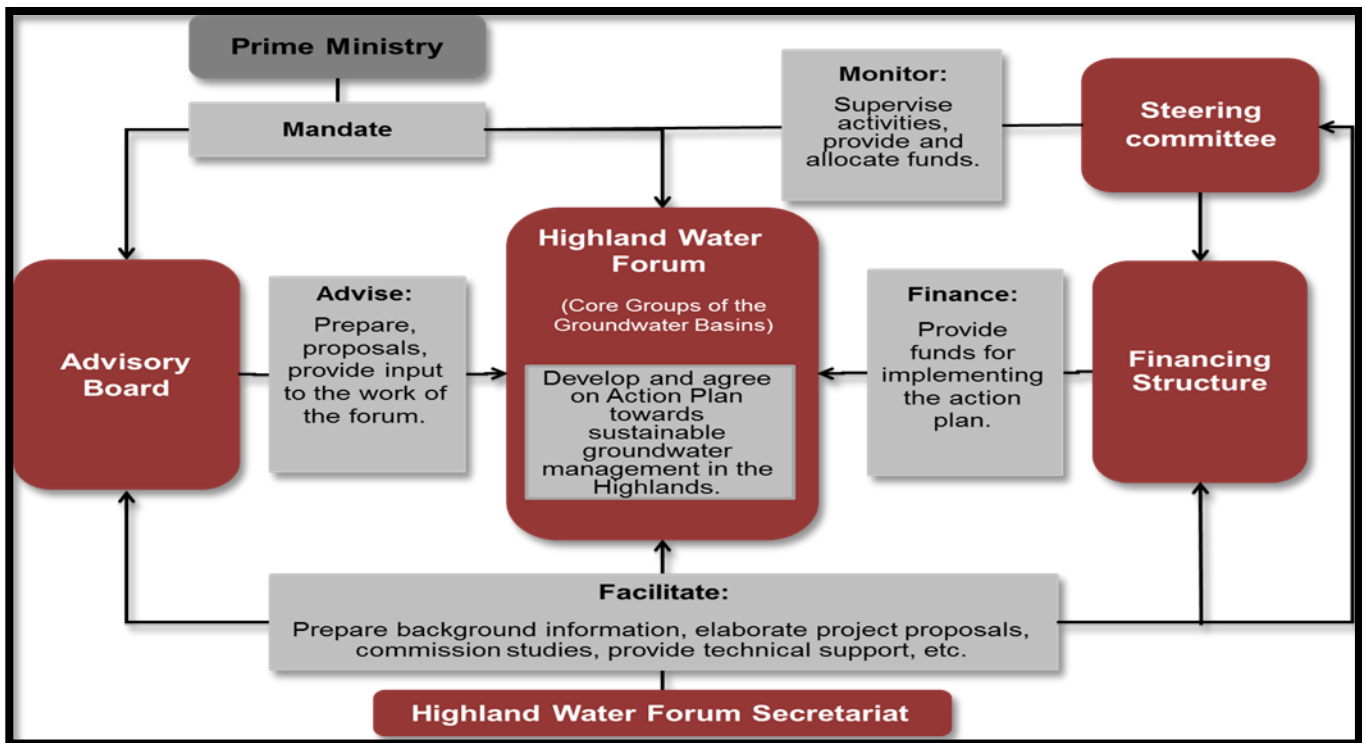
Good governance of Water Resources through Stakeholder Participation is the core principle of the Forum, aiming to achieve sustainable management of groundwater in the Highlands and all over the country. Participation allows improved communication among the relevant stakeholders, helps the government to be more transparent with respect to its policies and more realistic in assessing the conditions and needs of the residents of the areas affected by the its decisions and laws. Ultimately, the Forum aims to enable the Ministry of Water and Irrigation of implementing the National Water Strategy (Water for Life 2008-2022) with regard to sustainable management of groundwater resources and involvement of the public.

The first Basin Management Committee was established for Al-Azraq Groundwater Basin as a pilot in May 2010, and the Azraq Groundwater Management Action Plan was developed and finalised in consultation with Al-Azraq Stakeholder Group in November 2013. The action plan was later on officially endorsed by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation in close consultation with the relevant ministries (which are represented in the Forum's steering committee).

In 2012 the Jordan Valley Forum (JVWF) was established by the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) with the support of the World Bank Institute, and in 2013 the Yarmouk River Basin Committee

was established by MWI with the support of the European Union Delegation in Jordan. The Yarmouk River Basin Committee (YRBC) was established using the same methodology as Azraq. As Azraq, the YRBC aims to develop an action plan to sustain groundwater abstraction in presence and participation of the different stakeholders.

2- Organisational Structure



3- Principles

The Azraq Basin Management Action Plan is based on the following guiding principles: **To promote participatory, sustainable management and conservation of groundwater while respecting the existing agricultural investments and encouraging social development and stability for the local communities.**

The measures enlisted in the action plan follow a dual incentive approach; some of them aim at deterring groundwater-exhausting activities (the negative incentives), while others encourage and reward groundwater-saving initiatives (the positive incentives) to promote changes in water consumption behaviours.

4- Process

The elaboration of the Basin Management Action Plan is a dynamic process; it is implemented in parallel to its own elaboration. In fact, the implementation of some of the activities that were identified along the way has already started with the support of different donor organisations, namely the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and GIZ.

5- Structure of the Action Plan

The Azraq Groundwater Management Action Plan has four major thematic areas:

- Legal and Institutional Framework Conditions.
- On-Farm Water-Use Efficiency.
- Alternative Incomes Opportunities.
- Community Development.

6- Financing

The Highland Water Financing Mechanism will provide financial support for the implementation of the Azraq Basin Management Action Plan and any other basins action plans. The legal and institutional framework of the financing mechanism is under development, taking into account the diverse financing, administrative and governance structures of the different donor agencies and the governmental institutions.

In harmony with the action plan process, the Financing Mechanism will proceed in two ways. Before the establishment of the financing mechanism, the financing of selected individual projects is carried out where MWI agree with the implementing/donor agencies on common objectives, procedures and measures, but manage and disburse their funds individually (according to their own disbursement procedures). This funding type is applied at least at the initial phase.

On the long run, the establishment of a common Financing Mechanism will automatically secure the financing for all of the measures of the action plan(s). This will guarantee the highest degree of harmonisation, ownership, simplification of management arrangements, as well as avoiding the duplication of effort.

7- Monitoring and Evaluation

As the **process of action plan elaboration** and review and the **progress of its implementation** need to be followed very closely and evaluated according to well-defined criteria. In the initial phases prior to the establishment of the Financing Mechanism, MWI decides together with the relevant implementing/donor agencies, on how and according to which criteria to monitor individual projects. But in the long run after the establishment of the Financing Mechanism, a

clear monitoring system should be established for all the Basin Management Action Plans. Currently, the HWF Steering Committee presides over the overall supervision of the monitoring process.

In this regard, the monitoring process will pursue a dual approach; one that identifies and promotes shifts in the water consumption behaviour, and one that ensures that the appropriate policy and juridical environment enabling these shifts to occur in a sustainable manner is in place.

8- Vision

The following objectives are expected in the long-run:

- The institutionalisation of the Highland Water Forum within the organisational structure of MWI. The HWF Secretariat should steer the consultation process, the development of the action plan(s), and seek funding to implement them.
- The establishment of a Basin Management Committee for each basin in the Kingdom composed of the basin stakeholders/ water users. These committees will act as consultative bodies and assume an advisory role to the water-governing authorities. In the short-run, these committees would establish action plans towards sustainable groundwater management. In the long run, they would be involved and consulted in the major discussions related to the water sector and their respective groundwater basin.
- The integration of all action plans/recommendations which are developed by the Basin Management Committees within the executive plans of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation as a contribution to implement the National Water Strategy 2008-2022.
- The establishment of the HWF Financing Mechanism as a tool to finance the implementation of all of the Basin Management Committees.
- The development of a strategy for rural development, taking into account the socio-economic characteristics of the farms (the farming systems) vis-à-vis the limited water resources and the chas imposed by Jordan's geo-political conditions.