



# Final Report

Mainstreaming the Water-Energy-Food Security  
Nexus into Sectoral Policies and Institutions  
in the Arab Region

# PROJECT DOCUMENT

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ACCWaM</b>	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region
<b>AMCE</b>	Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity
<b>AMWC</b>	Arab Ministerial Water Council
<b>AOAD</b>	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
<b>CAMRE</b>	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
<b>COP 22</b>	22nd Conference of the Parties
<b>LAS</b>	League of Arab States
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>MedCOP</b>	Mediterranean Climate Conference of the Parties
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East / North Africa
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainability Development Goals
<b>UN ESCWA</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>WEF</b>	Water-Energy-Food Security
<b>WaPo</b>	Water Policy

## 1. Brief Description

The Arab region experiences new and continuously growing challenges due to socio-economic transitions related to population growth, urbanization, socio-economic development and political instability, as well as to land degradation and climate change, among others. The region faces an arid and extremely variable climate with increasing pressure on water resources, both natural and human-induced, and is highly dependent on food imports, while at the same time energy – fossil as well as renewable – is abundant. Efficiency of resource use remains low, and underpopulation and economic development, demands for water, energy and food, and the pressure on natural resources, for ensuring human securities, increase rapidly. Climate change aggravates this situation acting as a threat multiplier. A core problem, when it comes to addressing the increasing resource scarcities in a sustainable manner and adapting to climate change, lies in the low level of capacity in the institutions and authorities responsible and in the lack of integration in management and governance of natural resources.

**The nexus approach provides new opportunities** for increasing resource efficiencies, overcoming resource scarcities, improving human well-being and supporting political stability and regional cooperation, by addressing the interdependencies between the respective resources (water, energy, land), human securities (water, energy, food, WEF) and sustainable development. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) supports the League of Arab States (LAS) with the technical assistance project “**Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region**” (ACCWaM). Within this project, a study focusing on nexus mainstreaming has been subcontracted to GFA Consulting Group under the title “Water Energy Food Security Nexus Mainstreaming in the MENA Region”. The core objective is to identify entry points, processes and partners for WEF nexus mainstreaming in the MENA region and value-adding to regional and national policies and institutions there while contributing to integrated SDG implementation and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Using a cross-sectoral (horizontally integrated) and multi-level (vertically integrated) approach the study worked at the regional and national levels. At national level, three pilot countries were selected, namely Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. In close cooperation with various sectoral and cross-sectoral institutions, the study developed a network of partners, a Nexus Evidence Base and National and Regional Guidelines for nexus mainstreaming in policies and institutions.

The planned duration of the study was 1 year (01/02/2016 – 28/02/2017) with an extension until July 2017.

## 2. Achieved Objectives and Evaluation

The study supported regional and national mainstreaming of the nexus approach to policies and institutions in the MENA region. Besides continuous promotion of the nexus approach on various occasions (e.g. international and regional conferences and workshops, personal communication, etc), the concrete outputs are specified in the following.

### Component 1: Contextualization of WEF Nexus, the Resource and Human Securities Situation, Trend Analysis and Scenarios

Output 1: Evidence Base Report: Contextualizing the Nexus Approach, Situation and Trend Analysis (see Annex 1)

The Evidence Base **covers the Arab region<sup>1</sup> as a whole, and it zooms in on selected Arab countries** (Jordan, Egypt, Morocco). Accordingly, the report addresses horizontal (cross-sectoral) and vertical (cross-scale) coordination, collaboration and integration.

The Evidence Base demonstrates that the critical WEF interlinkages in the Arab region follow the patterns elsewhere in the world. Given the extreme scarcity in both water and arable land in the Arab region, some of these interlinkages have become particularly critical.

The **main aspects**, which can be concluded from the Evidence Base, are the following.

- Cross-resource use efficiency in the region is generally low, despite the extreme resource scarcity in large parts of the region. To a large extent, this situation is a result of very high subsidies on resource use. Lowering these subsidies and directing them towards more sustainable practices is a key to any successful nexus implementation and sustainability transition.
- Strong division between the richest and the poorest Arab countries with regard to (per-capita) resource use. While the GCC countries have a high level of resource consumption and thus exert pressure on the environment, most of the non-GCC countries have (per-capita) resource use intensities below the global average.
- Strong division of the region in terms of human securities: in the case of food security some Arab countries have record levels of stunting among children, while others have equally high levels of obesity.
- A number of current trends put pressure on water, land, energy and other resources. In particular the shift to non-conventional water resources is not always energy- and climate-smart, energy transitions (to renewables) are not always water-smart, and agricultural transitions are not always water- and energy-smart.
- The nexus approach provides excellent opportunities for cross-country sharing of technical, economic and institutional innovations, which may have been tested in selected locations or countries and now await upscaling (economic viability through economies of scale). The nexus approach also provides opportunities for regional cooperation.

### Component 2: Identification of Institutional and Governance Structures at the Regional and National Levels, with the Focus on Cross-Sectoral (“Bridging”) Institutions

Output 2: Report on the Findings of a Steering Body within LAS

- Consultations were held with relevant stakeholders within LAS in October 2016 to discuss options for improved coordination. Lessons learnt from existing cross-sectoral

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<sup>1</sup> According to the League of Arab States, Arab countries are: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen.

coordination within LAS were identified and their views on appropriate forms of coordination, including potential institutional mechanisms and their mandates, were discussed.

- The identified institutional reform options for the League of Arab States include
  1. **Closer Cooperation of Thematic Secretariats**
    - secretariats nominate focal points for temporary joint body
    - member states second national WEF experts
    - joint vision / strategy by three thematic secretariats based on decisions by ministerial councils or ECOSOC
  2. **Joint Work Program by Executive Bureaus on WEF Nexus**
    - agenda setting power (reporting to the secretary general)
    - monitoring & reviewing of member-state activities
    - member-state reports fed into economic outlook (quantifying WEF Nexus)
  3. **Lead by Department for Sustainable Development**
    - Arab mechanisms for sustainable development mandated by summit
    - link to the 2030 Agenda
    - coordinates Arab regional report to High Level Political Forum (2018)
    - coordinates with national sustainable development focal points and reports to the secretary general.

Output 3: Institutional Assessment Report and Capacity-Needs Assessment in Pilot Countries

The **results of the institutional assessment and capacity-needs assessment** are included in the national reports (see Annex 7a and 7b).

- A “Guidance Note”, “Guiding Questions and Reporting Template” as well as a “National Capacity Assessment Questionnaire” were developed and shared with all project partners, to ensure a common approach for the institutional and capacity-needs assessment in all three pilot countries.
- National Consultation Workshops were organized as a key part of the national dialogues in Jordan (November 2016) and Egypt (December 2016). In Morocco, consultations were held as side events to i) the MedCop in Tanger in July 2016, ii) COP 22 in Marrakesh in November 2016 and iii) the GIZ / 4C capacity building workshop in Rabat in March 2017. The results of the workshops and consultations were used for further validation and mainstreaming throughout the remainder of the study.
- National debriefings to present the results and discuss the implications of their implementation took place with relevant stakeholders on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Amman (see Annex 4a) and on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in Cairo (see Annex 4b).

### Component 3: Elaboration of Regional Policy Guidelines for Nexus Mainstreaming

Output 4: Executive Report on Practical Steps to Mainstream WEF Nexus in Regional Strategies, Policies and Institutions

- A Vision Document was developed aiming at strengthening inter-sectoral coordination within LAS and at establishing a framework (scope and priorities) for a mechanism for mainstreaming the WEF nexus approach in regional sectoral strategies, processes

and institutions. This Vision Document is to be endorsed by the technical secretariats of respective councils within LAS. The document is available in English and Arabic.

- The Regional Policy Guidelines are built upon the Vision Document and the respective feedback from LAS.

**Main contents** are

- Identification of different bodies within LAS that play important roles in setting policy goals and developing strategies relevant for achieving water, energy and food security. These are, in particular, the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity (AMCE), the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE). Environmental institutions need to be integral partners.
- Identification of current gaps and entry points for nexus mainstreaming at the regional level.
- Recommendation of institutional set-ups and procedures in support of mainstreaming a WEF nexus approach in LAS policies, strategies and activities.

All proposed institutional and policy procedures, settings and changes for nexus mainstreaming were developed, in truly participatory processes, through intensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders from various sectors of LAS and beyond.

#### Component 4: Development of Guidelines for Policy Integration at the National Level

Output 5: National Policy Guidelines for Nexus Mainstreaming

**Main contents** are

- Summary of the situation in Egypt and Jordan in terms of water, energy, and land resources, as well as their related human securities, their critical interlinkages, trade-offs and synergies as identified in the Nexus Evidence Base<sup>2</sup>.
- Map of key institutions and policies and identification of entry points (processes and partners) for increased coordination and cooperation of national (sectoral) institutions in order to achieve nexus synergies and minimize trade-offs.
- Recommendations for nexus mainstreaming, capacity building and data harmonization.

#### Component 5: Elaboration of M&E and the Dissemination Plan, and Reflection on the Process

Outputs 7 & 9: M&E and the Dissemination Plan for the ACCWaM Nexus Mainstreaming Project and LAS (see Annex 5)

- The M&E and dissemination plan evolved into a clear nexus framework, that can be used for example by GIZ (WaPo nexus dialogues, by the new SIDA MINARET and FAO nexus projects) and by LAS and its member countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Hoff H, Al-Zubari W, Mansour L, Abaza H, Biad M, Al Ouran N, Ulrich A. 2017. Mainstreaming the Water-Energy-Food Security Nexus into Policies and Institutions in the Arab Region: Nexus Evidence Base. GIZ, GFA.

### 3. Concrete Developments

#### 3.1 Design of the TA Measure, Partner Contribution, Study Period

##### Methodological Approach

The study used a cross-sectoral (horizontally integrated) and multi-level (vertically integrated) approach at the regional and national levels. Continuous and close stakeholder consultations and dialogue with various sectoral and cross-sectoral institutions were key components. The study team capitalized on existing WEF-nexus-related events in the pilot countries to establish networks and to consult stakeholders e.g.

- Nexus Conference organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Amman, Jordan (04/2016)
- MedCOP in Tanger, Morocco (07/2016),
- UNESCWA W&F nexus working meeting in Beirut, Lebanon (10/2016)
- COP22 in Marrakesh, Morocco (11/2016)
- AFED Nexus Conference in Beirut, Lebanon (11/2016)
- GIZ 4C Climate Adaptation Capacity Building Workshop in Rabat, Morocco (03/2017) and
- Arab Water Council Meeting in Cairo, Egypt (07 / 2017)

The continued interest in the nexus approach in the MENA region is noteworthy, as is also expressed through the nexus focus of the Arab Water Week 2017 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Water Conference of the Arab Ministerial Council in 2018.

The major critical interlinkages were identified in the Evidence Base. Institutional and policy landscapes and associated capacity needs were assessed and recommendations were developed based on stakeholder consultations. Validation of results by key stakeholders in national and regional debriefings anchor the WEF-nexus approach and the study results in relevant institutions, which is seen as a key factor for sustainable development in the region.

##### Instruments

An international team leader and policy expert coordinated the team with the support of two international experts (an institutional development expert and a capacity development, M&E and dissemination expert), one regional expert and three national experts.

Two events, a high-level inception meeting (16./17.03.2016) and a high-level validation meeting (09.04.2017), were organized in LAS with regional attendance.

At the national level, one national workshop was organized in Egypt and one in Jordan as the central event of a continued stakeholder dialogue.

##### *Collaboration with Other Development Cooperation Programmes and Projects in the Region*

See Annex 6

##### Timeframe

The study duration was 16 months, from 02/2016 until 07/2017.

#### 3.2 Target Group, Structure of Lead Agency and Partner Agencies

The study targeted regional and national policy- and decision-makers from institutions in the water, energy and agricultural (and environmental) sectors for improved intra- and inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration. The respective national water ministry was selected as lead institution. The interest of other ministries in the sector with regard to integrated approaches is improvable. This issue has continuously to be followed up with all involved stakeholders.

### 3.3 Impacts and Risks

#### Some Expected Impacts

**Raised awareness** of main critical inter-linkages between water, energy and food security and the need for integrated management and governance approaches among relevant stakeholders and institutions at the regional and national levels.

**Good understanding by all partners of the current institutional and policy situation** and requirements vis-a-vis these critical interlinkages, and identification of institutional gaps that hinder coordination and cooperation across sectors.

Initiation of a **stepwise and continuous process of mainstreaming WEF nexus** in policies and institutions in the Arab region and selected pilot countries, to be continued by LAS and other relevant regional and national institutions beyond the duration of the ACCWaM project.

**Improved regional cooperation** for exploiting the comparative advantages of individual countries and for sharing knowledge and information on best practices and success stories in terms of coordination, cooperation and integration.

#### Some Risks

Understanding of the critical interlinkages and awareness of the need for stronger institutional and policy integration, as well as the political will to act, remain limited. Against this backdrop the rather short study was not able to provoke all of the changes required in mindsets, established practices and institutional settings.

Moreover, outcomes of the political processes, short-term political urgencies and also conflicts in the Arab world tend to override strategic longer-term objectives, such as nexus mainstreaming and sustainability transitions.

Changes in government delete some of the institutional memory in ministries and authorities, including reshuffling of mandates and responsibilities that accompany the formation of new governments.

## 4. Experiences and Conclusions

### 4.1. Challenges and Opportunities for Mainstreaming the WEF Nexus in the MENA Region

The process revealed that an extensive consultative and participatory process is imperative for the identification of interlinkages, as well as for appropriate policy and institutional responses. This process not only requires continuous discussions and interactions, but also long-term follow up. The study highlighted the importance of policy and institutional support throughout the process. More specifically, the consultations have revealed the following.

- At the national level, there is a need to follow up with individual, institutional and systemic capacity development, in order to enable a nexus approach.
- At regional level, LAS plays a key role in explaining and advocating WEF nexus to the LAS member countries.
- Unless the nexus approach is integrated in the planning and implementation of new projects, including megaprojects, these may not appropriately address the enormous challenges of the region and may in fact obstruct the required sustainability transition.
- Water and water institutions provide a useful entry point for nexus mainstreaming in the MENA region, given the pressing scarcity and its essential role in providing food and generating energy. However it turned out to be counter-productive to make the water ministries exclusively responsible for the process, as this diminished the motivation of other sectors to engage in the dialogue.

- Given the scepticism of many individuals and institutions about the need for a nexus approach, the way forward is to start from those national and regional institutions which are interested and are willing to change their practices accordingly. These “champions” can lead the way and take the process forward.
- Political will, political commitment and good governance, as well as closure of the huge implementation gap from which the region currently suffers, are necessary prerequisites for successful implementation of a nexus approach.

#### 4.2. Challenges and Opportunities from the Evidence Base

The main lessons coming out of the Evidence Base preparation process are the following.

- **Data availability, complementarity and consistency** across the different sectors is a critical issue for nexus planning and implementation. There are significant gaps either because data has not been collected or because collected data has not been released.
- Within the scope of this study it was not possible to address the **economic and financial costs and benefits of nexus vs. sectoral approaches**. It will be critically important to generate such additional information for bringing critical partners for nexus mainstreaming on board.
- Discussions with the different sectors, institutions and individuals about the nexus Evidence Base and its content, and the validity of the data it contains, serve as a good starting point for the nexus mainstreaming process.

#### 4.3. Challenges and Opportunities from Regional Guidelines

The Regional Guidelines have raised several critical issues and the process has led to important recommendations and lessons learned, as indicated below.

- Nexus can serve as an entry point and motivation for cross-country regional cooperation. Many integrated solutions and examples of integrated governance exist in the different countries of the region.

There are large opportunities for sharing knowledge and information, and best practices. Regional cooperation can help to bring nexus solutions up to scale so that they become economically viable. Regional cooperation can also help to make better use of the comparative advantages that each MENA country has, in terms of availability and use of resources (efficiency) and human securities.

- A good example for sharing of knowledge and best practices are the Nexus Policy Briefs<sup>3</sup>, which received widespread recognition within the Arab region’s governments and among concerned constituencies. Country profiles were developed, analysing country specific critical interlinkages among and between natural resources and human securities. The most relevant institutional and policy frameworks for integrated cross-sectoral governance are described, and opportunities for improving the current institutional and policy settings and procedures are identified. These case studies, together with the national and regional policy guidelines, should be widely circulated and serve as inputs for regional consultations, conferences and other fora.

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<sup>3</sup> Web access to Nexus Policy Briefs: [Nexus Policy Brief 1](#), [Nexus Policy Brief 2](#), [Nexus Policy Brief 3](#), [Nexus Policy Brief 4](#), [Nexus Policy Brief 5](#), [Nexus Policy Brief 6](#)

### *Recommendation*

As a next step, further **best-practice and best-policy cases** should be identified and promoted, including the associated economic benefits. Nexus dialogues also need to encompass more strongly the success of the private sector and the important role it can and should play.

- Cross-sectoral and cross-country research and development programmes proved to be an untapped potential. In many of the LAS member states there are national research institutions on water, energy and agriculture with a strong sectoral focus.

### *Recommendation*

LAS can play a stronger role in facilitating cooperation across these institutions and across countries, starting from the knowledge generated in the ACCWaM nexus mainstreaming project. Nexus research can support more sustainable investments at all levels. In particular, LAS can promote the regional nexus dimensions in research. For that, **LAS can partner with international institutions** such as UN ESCWA, FAO, UNESCO, Future Earth and others. LAS is particularly well suited to bridge from science to policy and strategy development at the regional but also at the national level. LAS can also initiate and oversee nexus reporting mechanisms for use by its member states, e.g. establishing an annual nexus report.

#### 4.4. Challenges and Opportunities from National Guidelines

Although nexus challenges and opportunities were elaborated specifically for the pilot countries (Jordan and Egypt), common elements and priorities were identified that are also applicable to other countries in the MENA region. These include the following:

- There are many good entry points for nexus mainstreaming at the national level, e.g. existing integrative mechanisms and committees, and **opportunities for building links across the sectors**. However there is also strong inertia in favour of remaining within the sectoral silos and continuing with "business as usual" in management and governance.
- Nexus requires new knowledge and changing mind sets. **Updating and revision of educational curricula** at all levels (e.g. at the levels of schools, universities and professional training) is required, complementing sector-specific education and training in interdisciplinary knowledge and approaches. This should aim at curricula at the theoretical level as well as at the practical level. Nexus mainstreaming at the educational and training levels means doing both: **developing dedicated courses with specific nexus curricula**, but also building links between existing courses and broadening them.
- Given the complexity of nexus and the additional demands placed on the personnel in the different institutions for adopting, implementing and reporting on WEF nexus, **innovative and integrated management approaches** are required. Motivation, encouragement and promotion of staff, and the identification of "champions" need to be better institutionalized. This could include, for example, **rewarding systems and career opportunities** within and across institutions, which would provide incentives for inter-sectoral collaboration.
- There is a **need for in-depth analysis** (and possibly revision) **of national policies** which may encourage or hinder a nexus approach. This includes fiscal instruments, including taxation and financial incentives, which need to be sharpened to promote a nexus approach. **Examples of such instruments include water subsidies for irrigation and electricity subsidies in the agricultural sector**, which often do not account for critical interlinkages and which often promote non-sustainable use of resources, since they were derived with other priorities in mind.

#### 4.5. Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing WEF-Nexus in the MENA Region

Peace, security and regional cooperation is at the centre of LAS mandate. A **stronger focus** on integrated management and governance of water, energy and land resources, and on improved water-, energy- and food-security, can help to better achieve the LAS core objectives. The nexus approach, which addresses and operationalizes these goals, will be implemented mainly at the national level. There have been numerous **drivers of change and challenges** that require a stronger integrated approach, including:

- the food crisis in 2008/2009,
- the accelerated implementation of renewable energy production,
- the need for cross-border cooperation on the management of natural resources, international trade in agricultural products and energy,
- increased foreign direct investment in land and more recently
- the Paris Climate Agreement and the need for integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

All of these begin to encourage LAS and its member states to invest in cross-sectoral policies and institutions.

In particular, the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda** is now shaping the global development discourse and increasingly determining development financing. The commitment by LAS member countries and the mandate given to LAS by the LAS Summit, to develop the Arab regional report on SDGs for the HLPF in 2018, make it all the more important to draw upon WEF Nexus when developing comprehensive integrated policy responses to the wide scope of the SDGs.

However, LAS member states don't yet advocate nexus explicitly. There is a strong **need to mainstream nexus in countries' development planning** and to use it as a framework towards better linkage across sectoral policies and institutions. This requires a more convincing demonstration of the economic and financial benefits and gains which integrated and – more importantly – regional approaches can create, as compared to strictly sectoral or national approaches. There is a particular need to demonstrate, share and promote successful nexus cases among members. All this can elevate nexus from a scientific concept and an analytical tool to a guiding policy program. **Defining the role of private-sector engagement** is crucial in any such effort.

In addition to emphasizing the opportunities of cross-sectoral coordination, cooperation and integration, the **benefits of regional cooperation and harmonization of policies, strategies and action plans across countries** (e.g. fostering regional food and energy trade) are also **prime tasks for LAS**. The results of the studies provide a solid base for this important objective.

