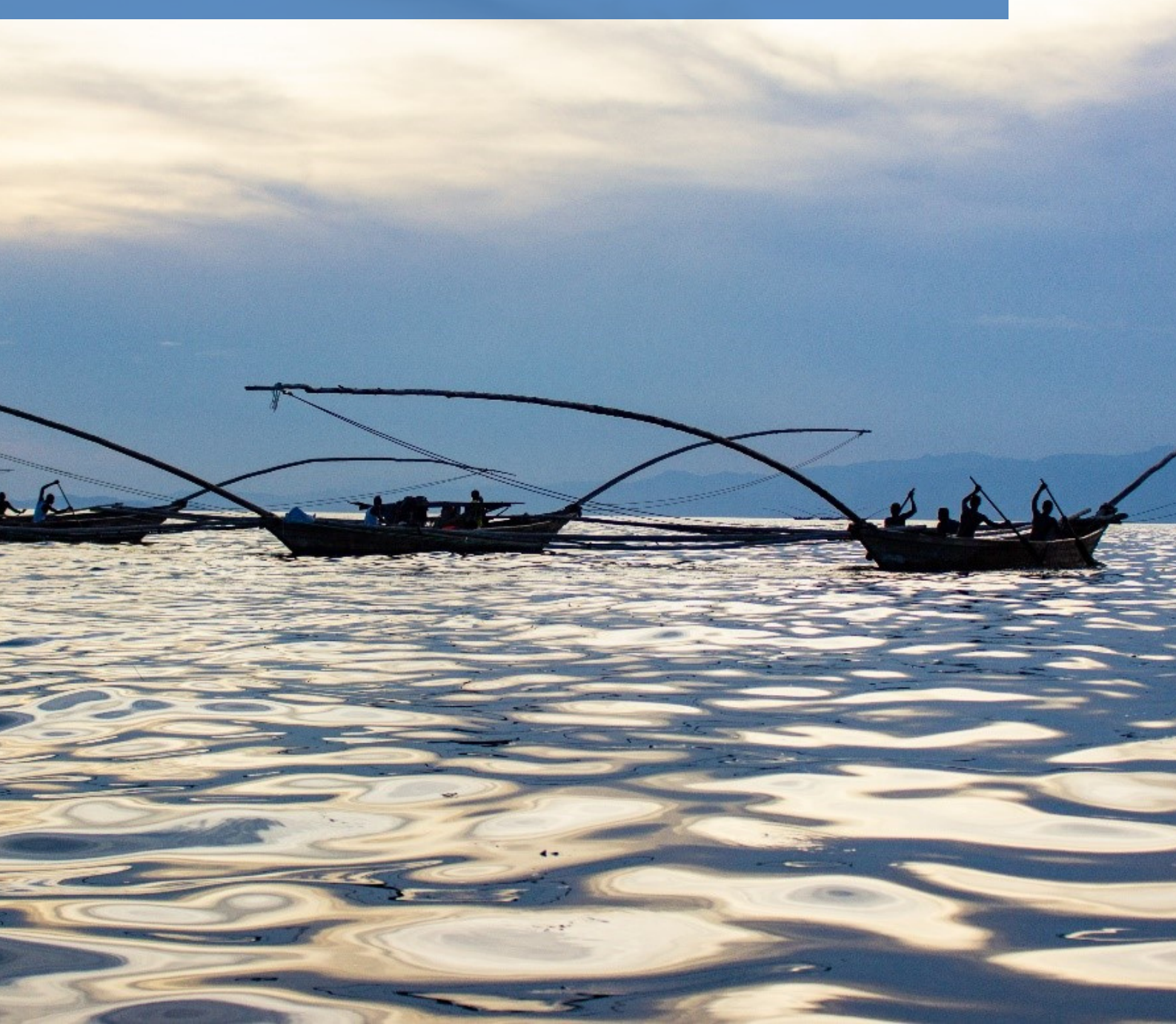


# THE NIA NEXUS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (NIA) TOOLKIT

## Turning Concepts into Action



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## 2. The WEF Nexus Principles and WEF Nexus Safeguards

Water, energy, and food (WEF) security are interlinked so that actions in one sector commonly have impacts on the others (FAO 2019). To breach policy and decision-making silos, it is important to apply the WEF Nexus to reduce trade-offs and build synergies across sectors. This essentially implies that when a given policy or project serves to secure an aspect of water, energy, or food security (a so-called WEF element), no other WEF element should be compromised. Moreover, and to the extent possible, it is desirable to ensure that WEF are secured simultaneously, creating double or even triple win situations.

To gain a clearer understanding of the WEF Nexus, Table 1 in Annex 2 underlines how water, energy, and food security are defined in key literature. It reveals that water, energy, and food security are defined by various physical, market, environmental, and social variables. Two recurrent themes, however, relate to the available quantity of the resource (whether it be water, food, or energy), as well as the reliability or quality of the resource. These have been summarised under the heading of quality.

With this in mind, easy-to-use tools help for identifying and prioritising diverse WEF projects or activities. The Nexus Impact Assessment (NIA) Toolkit can facilitate the implementation of such a project that aims to build synergies across water, energy and food sectors. The 1) **WEF Nexus Principles** and 2) **WEF Nexus Safeguards of the NIA Toolkit** are two tools that allow for a preliminary exploration and assessment of projects, whilst helping the project developer consider aspects<sup>[1]</sup> where more in-depth information or assessments may be needed to decide on whether to appraise the project or how to proceed with the planning and implementation.

The principles and safeguards complement not only the WEF Nexus Indicator catalogue and complement not only the WEF Nexus Indicator catalogue and cost-benefit analyses (CBA) of the NIA Toolkit, but also other existing documents and tools that are important for a successful project set-up (issues such as alignment with national strategies, gender safeguards, crowding-in financing etc.).

More concretely, the **WEF Nexus Principles** (see Annex 1) provide guidance on how to successfully apply, implement, and operationalise the WEF Nexus approach in various contexts. In addition to explaining the importance of the WEF Nexus approach and what it can achieve when used successfully, a selection of principles or recommendation are given as a guidance. Compliance with these principles, such as “leave no one behind” or “capacity building of people, institutions etc.” in project planning and implementation will be a first step towards successful integration of the WEF Nexus approach.

In addition, the **WEF Nexus Safeguards** (see Annex 2, Table 2 and 3) have been designed to provide policy makers as well as public and private project developers with an intuitive and user-friendly tool. In its application, the WEF Nexus Safeguards’ checklists can serve the following two purposes: First, ensuring that all intended and unintended consequences of natural resource management for WEF securities are duly considered in policy planning and project design (i.e., a project appraisal mission) and intersections<sup>[2]</sup> among WEF Nexus dimensions are identified.

To assist the project developer in identifying which types of activities may lead to potential negative impacts on the environment and/or raise significant concerns among potentially aff-

[1] Critical aspects with respect to resource allocation, biodiversity and wider ecosystem, climate change adaptation and mitigation, gender, environmental impacts, institutions, and governance, inside or outside the project boundary. In case of adverse impacts, these should be mitigated.

[2] Interdependencies can occur between all three dimensions simultaneously or simply just between two elements of the Nexus. This means in practice, intersections can be drawn between the water and food sector, the energy and water sector, the energy and food sector or all three.

ected communities and individuals, Table 3 in Annex 2 provides a checklist for the identification of high-risk actions. For further guidance on high-risk activities, the developer may refer to Annex 2 of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (UNDP 2019). Secondly, serving the purpose of selecting and prioritising projects according to their level of cross-sectoral considerations. Once intersections among the sectors have been identified, the project developer can take one step further and highlight the characteristics of those intersections and determine affected stakeholders. Additionally, for projects that have been classified as coherent with the WEF Nexus safeguards, the possibility of undertaking further project assessment of key indicators, pertaining to wider sustainability impacts of WEF Nexus projects is of great importance.