

# Perspectives on Green Growth Partnerships

Strategic Water Partners Network  
South Africa



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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the 2030 WRG or 3GF.

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# Foreword

A growing movement of governments, businesses, and civil society are calling for green growth - development that is compatible with environmental limits. The key to accelerating this type of growth and the transition to an inclusive green economy lies in collaborative partnerships

Such partnerships have huge potential, but often involve difficult processes: they require a significant investment in time and resources, and bring together individuals and organizations with different cultures, interests, incentives, value systems, and expectations.

To inspire those who are forming collaborative partnerships for green growth, the **2030 Water Resources Group** (2030 WRG) and the **Global Green Growth Forum** (3GF) have developed this case study. It provides insights on how collaborative partnerships can be a solution for green growth and what helps them succeed.

This document discusses the **Strategic Water Partners Network** (SWPN) for South Africa, which is part of the 2030 WRG network of country partnerships. The SWPN is a multi-stakeholder collaboration addressing South Africa's most pressing water issues: improving water efficiency and reducing leakage, managing effluent and wastewater management, and managing agricultural and supply-chain water.

Based on the perspective of the network partners, this case study demonstrates the benefits and challenges of companies working together with the government to overcome water challenges and identifies key success factors in establishing the partnership.

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*The **Global Green Growth Forum** is a Danish-led green growth platform. 3GF seeks to accelerate the transition to a green future by being a global platform that initiates and enables scalable green growth solutions through an annual process, convening top decision makers from governments, business, finance, civil society, and international organizations with a view to exchange strategic green ideas, share novel green growth evidence, and push forward innovative partnerships for green growth. One such partnership is the 2030 WRG.*

*The **2030 Water Resources Group** is a global public-private civil society partnership that helps governments and the private sector accelerate water resource reform. The 2030 WRG aims to develop national partnerships to help governments increase water sustainability and efficiency. The group is active in India, Bangladesh, Peru, Mongolia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa.*

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# Overview

## The Challenge

Water is arguably one of the most important resources on our planet. We are already consuming too much of it, and demands are increasing dramatically as more food and energy are produced and the world population continues to grow. By 2030, the world is predicted to face a 40 percent gap between available renewable water supply and demand. Water scarcity and competition for water use is already a fundamental challenge to development in many countries.

The water resource challenge is of particular importance for the governments of developing and fast-growing countries. Traditional approaches to managing water resources are struggling to deal with the increasing complexity of water demand and supply and are unlikely to close the predicted gap. As the competing demands of agricultural, energy, manufacturing, and domestic users increase, so will the complexity of managing water.

By 2030, South Africa is projected to have a 17 percent gap between its water supply and demand. Water demand, driven by rising population levels, economic growth projections, and current efficiency levels, is expected to rise by 52 percent over the next 15 years (17.7 billion cubic meters [m<sup>3</sup>] in 2030). By 2030, water supply is projected to amount to 15 billion m<sup>3</sup>, representing a 2.7 billion m<sup>3</sup> deficit - roughly one-sixth of the country's current use.<sup>i</sup>

To close this gap, South Africa needs to make difficult trade-offs between basic human and environmental needs and the needs of agriculture, key industrial activities such as mining and power generation, and large and growing urban centers.<sup>ii</sup> These trade-offs can cause tension and conflict among water users. No actor alone has the ability to solve these challenges, but much can be achieved if water users work together to identify shared solutions and implement strategies, policies, plans, and programs.

Although water stakeholders in South Africa recognize the importance of collaboration, experience of working across sectors has been limited and, in some cases, has resulted in frustration. In addition, there was no tailored vehicle to address these issues, at least not at the scale required to match the projected risk.

## The Partnership Solution

In an effort to combat the country's pressing water concerns, Edna Molewa, South Africa's former Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs<sup>1</sup>, working closely with the 2030 WRG, established the SWPN. The network, inaugurated in November 2011, is bringing together senior government representatives, leading private sector corporations, and other key stakeholders to discuss South Africa's water challenges.

The SWPN is an informal and voluntary platform that aims to close the 17 percent gap between water supply and demand projected for 2030. It now has nearly 50 members and has rapidly become an established space for constructive dialogue and the "go to" place for business and government relations on water management.

The SWPN is a multi-stakeholder platform, brokered by the 2030 WRG, chaired by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), and co-chaired by South African Breweries (SAB) on behalf of business. This diverse group of water professionals has one thing in common - a shared interest in the future of South Africa's water resources and how to manage them sustainably.

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*"The SWPN of South Africa is exactly the platform we need to forge the partnerships to achieve the impact and results that we need in order to ensure South Africa's continued growth and development. This leadership and effort, as already demonstrated by this group, serves as a model for collaboration moving forward."*

Edna Molewa, former Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> Water issues were previously managed by the Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs (DWA), which in 2014 became the Ministry of Water and Sanitation (DWS).

## SWPN Activities

The SWPN has a range of practical projects and initiatives across three strategic areas, each led by individual companies: Nestlé leads the group on improving water-use efficiency and reducing leakage, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited heads a second group on effluent partnerships for wastewater treatment and reuse, with a primary focus on the mining industry, and the Coca-Cola Company leads the third group, which focuses on the agricultural supply chain.

### Water-use efficiency

- Non-revenue water in municipal systems in South Africa is estimated at 37 percent and worth more than 7 billion South African rand annually. To address this problem, the SWPN developed the “No Drop Scorecard and Strategy” to assess the status of each municipality’s water usage and incentivize action to reduce municipal leakages. It was adopted by government in mid-2013 and is already starting to influence municipal plans and targets.
- The strategy is being implemented in eight metropolitan municipalities, which together account for more than 90 percent of total municipal losses. The SWPN has also developed model-performance-based contracts to enable municipalities to address water loss and bring in expertise and technologies, which are paid for through the savings they create.

### Effluent partnerships for wastewater treatment and reuse

- The SWPN seeks to develop sustainable technical, financial, institutional, and policy solutions to ad-

dress water pollution caused by mining. SWPN partners have identified the issues, opportunities, and constraints and are now developing institutional and financing models for sustainable mine-water management solutions.

- The group has also developed an emerging initiative on municipal wastewater management, which aims to improve municipalities’ performance in managing their wastewater, influence the direct reuse of treated municipal water, which has the potential to provide about 280 million m<sup>3</sup> of water, and unlock financing for much-needed improvements in municipal waste management.

### Agricultural supply chain

- The agricultural sector in South Africa accounts for 60 percent of water demand, of which losses in the river and canal conveyance system account for 35 percent.
- To address this challenge, the SWPN is developing a program to expand the reach and improve implementation of the national Water Administration System, an integrated irrigation water management tool that has already saved more than 81 million m<sup>3</sup> of water across 13 irrigation systems since 2009.
- Another project focuses on rehabilitating and upgrading the country’s irrigation systems. The 35,000 hectare Vaalharts system has been identified as the first case and the SWPN is discussing a system upgrade with the National Agriculture Marketing Board, with potential savings of 40 million m<sup>3</sup> of water per year.

## STRATEGIC WATER PARTNERS NETWORK

**Government:** City of Johannesburg, Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation of South Africa, National Planning Commission, South African Local Government Association, Tshwane Metro, Vaalhaarts Water Board

**Industry:** Anglo American, AngloGold Ashanti, Aveng Water, Barclays Africa, BHP Billiton, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited, Glencore Xstrata, Exxaro, General Electric, KPMG, Johannesburg Water, Mondi, MetKoh, Murray and Roberts, National Treasury, Nestlé, Obaro, Randwater, Rio Tinto, SABI, Sanlam, Sasol, Sembcorp, South African Breweries, Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority

**Business organizations:** AgriSA

**Civil society organizations:** WWF South Africa, Endangered Wildlife Trust

**Multilateral and bilateral development:** Development Bank of Southern Africa, GIZ, Industrial Development Corporation, International Finance Corporation (IFC)

**Research agencies:** Water Research Commission

# Success

The case study is centered on seven success factors that were identified through interviews with the network partners. They highlight how the partnership worked and the factors that may be useful to consider when forming similar partnerships.

The success factors highlight the roles and responsibilities of the partners and their commitment to solving water issues in South Africa. The South African government **championed the partnership** and the private sector **mobilized business commitment. Building trust** between business and government communities to create a platform for constructive dialogue and strong relationships was an important cross-cutting theme.

Process issues were also critical, including **defining the water gap** and leveraging existing information, research, and analysis. The SWPN made smart and non-conventional choices, **designing an inclusive approach** and **focusing on solutions**. It also **identified appropriate resources** to support delivery.

## Defining the Water Gap

A lot of work was done before the SWPN was launched in 2011. The national water challenge was defined and the scale of the problem quantified through the publication of the South African *Reconciliation Studies* and a global perspective was considered through the well-read and publicized *Charting Our Water Future*.

The publications focused high-level attention on the country's water challenge. The projected 17 percent gap between water demand and supply by 2030 became a simple and compelling fact that was well understood by the government and major water users.

"*Charting Our Water Future* used the combination of WEF, McKinsey, and other big corporates to put key messages into the laps of CEOs, business people, and non-water specialists," said Sanjeev Raghuram, Corporate Safety, Health, and Environmental Sustainability Manager at Nestlé. Alex Mung, Head of the World Economic Forum's Water Initiative, agreed that it provided "easily digestible and actionable information." He added that "the *Reconciliation Studies* gave the SWPN a national, strategic goal which we could hook our efforts on to."

This laid fertile ground for a multi-stakeholder partnership focused on eliminating the gap through problem-solving, solutions, actions, and implementation.

## KEY LESSONS

- Establish a comprehensive fact base by drawing on existing analysis or by filling the gaps through own research
- Turn the facts into a story or common vision that people can relate to and adopt as their own
- Ensure engagement and buy-in of existing partners and motivate new ones where necessary.

## Championing the Partnership

The former Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, was instrumental in forging the SWPN. After attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011, she asked the 2030 WRG to help set up a neutral and transparent platform to meet the government's strategic objectives for water. Andre Fourie, Senior Manager of Environmental Value at SABMiller said that "it provides legitimacy for the partnership when there is a global connection and the partners can align with international best practice and platforms."

After months of work behind the scenes, a formal partnership announcement was made at the World Economic Forum 2011 Africa Summit in Cape Town. The minister directly engaged with the partners and enabled others to participate by formally appointing senior staff and assigning a director-general as the co-chair. Ms Margaret-Ann Diedricks taking over as the co-chair from Trevor Balzer who also played a key and active role in the establishment and success of this partnership. Financial resources were also committed at a later stage. "A champion on the side of water affairs is absolutely critical to the partnership success, but success also requires commitment and capacity from beyond leadership and across the government," explained Andre Kruger, Public Sector and PPP Financing Specialist at Barclays Africa.

The SWPN platform was to be a new type of space - one that included business but was not focused on lobbying, privatization, or gaining access to government. This objective remains a central partnership principle under the leadership of the new Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, who continues to champion the partnership and allocate appropriate resources.

### KEY LESSONS

- Leverage respected (international and/or national) events and platforms to build and sustain momentum
- Demonstrate leadership by "walking the talk" and allocating resources coherently
- Recognize habits that have to be changed and break them (by, for example, creating a neutral space for the partners to talk).

## Mobilizing Business Commitment

SABMiller was invited by the 2030 WRG to be the driving force for business in the SWPN in South Africa.

Andre Fourie from SABMiller played a significant role in promoting the partnership among senior business leaders from other reputable and water-engaged companies. He helped these companies recognize the reputational value of public leadership on issues like water that are close to business operations and to focus on a shared national interest. "When business representatives are at the SWPN, you no longer see individual companies discussing regulation or compliance; you see a partnership of people that are concerned with a shared interest for the country," shared Tabisa Fiko, Director of International Relations at the DWS.

Andre also played an important role in establishing partnership principles to keep the SWPN focused on the big picture and avoid individual interests dominating discussions. Paul Herbst, Director of Water Use Efficiency at the DWS, explained that "to organize industry is much more difficult than to organize government because industry has private interests. And they need to set that aside, allocating people and resources to focus on this kind of thing."

The SWPN now includes active representation from a diverse range of companies from across the energy, mining, food and beverage, and financial service sectors.

### KEY LESSONS

- Understand business needs and current constraints
- Build a shared vision among partners and key stakeholders to gain commitment
- Establish partnership principles to ensure desired behavior and outcomes (for example, no lobbying or pet projects).

## Establishing an Inclusive Approach

To encourage participation, the SWPN was established as an open, voluntary forum with no commitments, financial or otherwise. In practice, this means any individual or organization can join, and leave, when they like. As Julia du Pisani, Program Manager at the SWPN explained, "All we have is our mandate; one simple agreement that says we're here to help save water." This inclusivity was a critical step in creating a credible and consensus-driven approach. But it also resulted in bringing together a diverse group of people who shared a passion for water.

The SWPN did not assume that governance must be part of the structure, but waited to see what governance was required. Once financial commitments had been made, a steering committee was established to oversee the overall strategic direction. As the SWPN has grown, so has the need for more mature membership and governance structures. It has been a proportionate and adaptive approach.

"Being part of the SWPN was never forced: the sooner you find value, the sooner you will want to contribute...We did not go looking for structures and governance, but we were responsive, introducing solutions as soon as problems came along," said Muzi Chonco, Sustainable Development Executive at SAB.

## Focusing on Solutions

The SWPN held its inaugural partners meeting in November 2011. Rather than starting from scratch, the partners agreed to build on the existing analysis and vision.

The SWPN addressed issues that could not be resolved through existing mechanisms, with a focus on unlocking deadlocks through private and public collaboration. In this way, impact and scale were core concerns and built into the project design.

"This partnership is a bit of an anomaly in the way the private sector comes in and brings in their ideas and gives their time, expertise, and resources...Within the mine-water project, we have a new type of problem that requires a new type of thinking for solutions, a collaborative type of thinking. It tests the boundaries and paradigm thinking of government and how they normally view business models, and, in terms of policies, it's a new space," said Nandha Govender, General Manager of Water and Environmental Operations at Eskom Holdings SOC Limited.

Another principle was avoiding policy discussions and focusing on solutions, actions, and implementation. This meant identifying some quick wins (water efficiency), while keeping an eye on more challenging, longer-term issues (mine water and agricultural work). It also meant focusing on scale: "The SWPN focused on scale right from the beginning; a sector like dairy is not going to close the gap, so we chose agriculture," shared Nicole Kranz, GIZ's Country Coordinator in South Africa.

### KEY LESSONS

- Ensure governance structure follows the partnership strategy, rather than the other way around
- Align structures with the life cycle of the partnership and its associated needs
- Monitor involvement and credibility of partners and adapt over time.

### KEY LESSONS

- Keep your "magnetic north" (in this scenario, close the 17 percent gap)
- Know when to switch from analysis to execution
- Track progress, but do not make it overly complicated (principle-based decision making may be sufficient, although it does limit changing gear/direction).



## Identifying Appropriate Resources

The SWPN started out with \$250,000 seed funding from SABMiller, which was not earmarked for specific projects. There was also early funding from the 2030 WRG (\$150,000 a year until 2016), which encouraged the SWPN to move quickly into business planning and project work. GIZ also provided a grant, in addition to contributions from seven other partner companies.

“To institutionalize a partnership, you have to establish a secretariat and progressively hand over the action points to someone who is accountable for delivery,” suggested Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the 2030 WRG. For the SWPN, this was the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Business Foundation (NBF), which provided administrative and technical support, project management, funding mobilization, and stakeholder management.

As a result, the SWPN had a project manager with the capacity to work behind the scenes and across different sectors, negotiating positions and perspectives. “Managing the partnership is extremely time consuming and you can’t have a water expert only - you need a diplomat, a water expert, a policy person - you need somebody who can talk to everyone; they’ve got to be very multi-disciplinary in that respect,” shared Ian Hirschfeld, Corporate Brand & Public Policy at Coca-Cola Africa.

Resources have been a key enabler for the partnership, but financial sustainability has not been a dominant theme.

## Building Trust

By working together on a shared vision and common objectives, government began to trust that business was willing to contribute to the broad national interest rather than specific individual corporate interests, and business saw that government was committed to the partnership and leveraging policy to implement change.<sup>iii</sup>

The dedication and commitment of the working group chairs from Eskom Holdings SOC Limited, the Coca-Cola Company, and Nestlé, as well as the neutral brokering role of the 2030 WRG and the convening role of government, was critical. As a result, a new level of trust has been established between public and private players in the water sector.

“The trust they built enabled a constructive dialogue. This was partly due to the strategic nature of the partners; they were able to step away from the operational issues and see the bigger picture,” explained Pieter Viljoen, Scientific Manager of Water Quality Planning at the DWS. “SWPN reflects the chemistry of partnerships - there is the chemistry of the partnership molecules, but also the chemistry of people in the partnerships. We need to get better at understanding this chemistry and how to make it work quicker and at scale,” said Nick Tandi, former Project Manager of the SWPN.

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*“The SWPN has great potential and can be used as a two-way sounding board for improving water management both within the private and public sector. While a collaborative culture is important, it is equally important for the partners to speak openly, given that their interests are not always easily compatible. Balancing such openness and a collaborative approach will sustain the partnership.”*

Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Water and Sanitation

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### KEY LESSONS

- Recognize the need for initial funding to get the partnership moving (ideally not allocated to specific projects or activities)
- Diagnose resource needs, including the right mix of money, people, and skills
- Match resource needs to ambition levels and adjust overtime appropriately.

### KEY LESSONS

- Elevate topics to avoid them getting stuck in operational and/or transactional issues
- Trust partners with significant responsibility (for example, leading working groups)
- Use a neutral and trusted broker to initiate the partnership and/or when specific topics cause issues.

# Scale

## Scaling Green Growth Partnerships

There are an increasing number of international, regional, national, and local partnerships being established, yet most are focused on individual activities and projects. The core challenge is for green growth partnerships to move beyond these individual activities and achieve impact at speed and at scale.

3GF recognizes that the success of a partnership in catalyzing green growth rests on its ability to push green technologies, practices, policies, or business models to be adopted at a large scale. Scalability is dependent on whether the solution goes beyond niche areas and shifts the behavior of the larger system.<sup>iv</sup>

Therefore, the challenge for the SWPN is whether it can push green practices and sustainable water management beyond a niche towards large-scale impact and widespread adoption. At a national level, the partnership is increasing impact, mainstreaming approaches, and addressing barriers. At an international level, it is enabling learning, replicating solutions, and working with organizations like the 2030 WRG and 3GF.

## Increasing impact

The SWPN's primary focus has always been on reducing the projected 17 percent gap between water demand and supply by 2030. To some degree, impact and scale can be measured against the reduction of this gap, but there are no specific goals to help demonstrate how the gap has been reduced. Establishing goals and targets could help the partnership to focus impact, galvanize resources, and increase its ambition. Goals and targets may also help the SWPN decide whether to take on new areas of work.

## Mainstreaming approaches

The key impact for the SWPN has been building relationships and trust. The partnership has improved the capacity of the DWS and companies to engage in a constructive dialogue on water management. One interpretation of scale for the SWPN is to mainstream this positive relationship between business and government. This could involve building the capacity of public and private sector stakeholders so they can continue to work together on shared water issues. There is also potential for this to work beyond the water community in other green growth areas such as energy and food production.

## Addressing barriers

Some partners understand scale as a linear process and believe it will be achieved by more organizations joining the partnership, more financial resources, or more projects being implemented. Most partners, however, believe that the SWPN addresses barriers through private and public sector collaboration and designing solutions that unblock long-term or complex barriers that existing mechanisms cannot solve. Scale in this scenario will result in successfully identifying and unblocking these barriers, and then identifying new issues and barriers. The new Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, believes in this vision and recently asked the SWPN to deal with a broader range of topics, including national concerns such as sanitation.

## Enabling learning

Beyond the immediate impact of the SWPN projects, there is an opportunity to take lessons learned to individual partner organizations and change internal strategy and practice. For some, this process has already begun. The NBF, the SWPN secretariat, has used the SWPN model for new thematic partnerships. SABMiller has designed a developmental model to enable effective government consultation and engagement in other countries in which it operates, including Tanzania. These lessons demonstrate the additional benefit of collaborative partnerships, but they also raise the question of how to institutionalize this knowledge more systematically.

Christine Colvin, Senior Manager of Freshwater Programs at WWF-SA and SWPN partner believed that "there is still an important role this group can play in terms of challenging each other to demonstrate best water practice in every area of their operations and supply chains."

## Replicating solutions

There is much to learn from the SWPN. The partnership hit the ground running at inception and as a result has demonstrated some early wins. Sharing and replicating lessons learned is therefore an important part of the SWPN's work. The "No Drop" incentive scheme has already received much attention. And as the other projects mature, there will be additional knowledge and experience to draw from the partnerships for wastewater treatment and reuse and agricultural supply-chain projects.

## 2030 WRG and 3GF

The 2030 WRG and 3GF are working to support partnerships to achieve impact and scale. The SWPN is part of the 2030 WRG, which has a similar vision to the South African partnership - to close the gap between water demand and supply by 2030. The 2030 WRG aims to understand the challenges and successes faced by the SWPN and share those findings in different geographical contexts. It also aims to replicate successes where appropriate.

The 2030 WRG approach varies in each country of operation to adapt to each country's specific water challenges, policy frameworks, and cultural settings. As the 2030 WRG learns from the SWPN and incorporates the partnership's experiences into its own methodology and approach, it needs to answer the same questions around understanding scale and how it can be achieved, what the potential tipping points are along the way, and who is best positioned to help the 2030 WRG.

The 2030 WRG uses the 3GF platform to achieve this. It has worked with 3GF to outline its approach, share lessons and experiences, identify opportunities for scale, connect the partnership in more countries to support scale, and explore new water management issues with high-level participants. 3GF enjoys working with the 2030 WRG, featuring a well-established and functioning partnership with a strong global network that has experience in identifying events and topical sessions.

3GF supports the 2030 WRG and other green growth partnerships to achieve scale by sharing thinking and experience, providing support and communications, and facilitating contacts and resources. 3GF provides annual and regional summits of high-level green growth leaders from governments, businesses, institutional investors, and international organizations willing to lead and promote partnerships for a greener economy. Like the SWPN and the 2030 WRG, these partnerships aim to develop and promote solutions that shift behavior in a significant way across borders and sectors.

3GF will continue to share and scale the work of the SWPN and the 2030 WRG with its broad network of senior decision makers and partnership practitioners. It will work to accelerate the transition to a greener economy, one partnership at a time, with increased scale and impact in the future.

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### Footnotes

- i 2009, Charting Our Water Future, McKinsey & Company, WRG 2030
- ii Internal documentation: SWPN evaluation
- iii Internal documentation: SWPN evaluation
- iv 2014, 3GF, Partnership Approach

# Strategic Water Partners Network

[www.thenbf.co.za](http://www.thenbf.co.za)

## **2030 Water Resources Group**

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