



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

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Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030:

Toward the Achievement of Agenda 2030



Phnom Penh, June 2025



This version of the Action Plan for Cambodia is released for the purpose of the launch event on 19 June 2025. The final endorsed version will be disseminated following official approval by His Excellency Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology

Foreword

Water is a national priority in Cambodia, as outlined in the Pentagonal Strategy Phase I of the Royal Government's Seventh Legislature. To support this priority and align with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2024-2028, the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) has set out a clear vision in its Strategic Development Plan 2024-2028: "to improve effectiveness in water resources management and development by applying technologies and an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach at the basin level". It is with a profound sense of urgency and purpose that I present The Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030. It draws on official data and findings from Cambodia's Third Round of SDG 6.5.1 Monitoring, supplemented by desk studies and a participatory, multi-stakeholder consultation process. This process helped identify key IWRM challenges and shaped the plan's priority objectives and actions.

This action plan promotes climate-resilient, integrated and multi-purpose water resources management. It strengthens the capacity of institution and stakeholder while advancing Cambodia's progress towards the 2030 agenda. The plan sets a clear goal for 2030, underpinned by three priority objectives and three actions with 22 activities over the 2026-2030 period.

This plan was shaped through the active engagement of a National Working Group led by MOWRAM and involving ten key ministries and agencies, including: (i) Cambodia National Mekong Committee, (ii) Tonle Sap Authority, (iii) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, (iv) National Committee for Disaster Management, (v) Ministry of Planning, (vi) Ministry of Environment, (vii) Ministry of Rural Development, (viii) Ministry of Women Affairs, (ix) Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, and (x) Ministry of Mines and Energy.

Financial and technical support was provided through the CREWS Cambodia and Lao PDR project, coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Bank and United National Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Implementation of this action plan is expected to make a significant contribution to Cambodia's sustainable water management and development and supports the implementation of national strategies and development goals.

Phnom Penh, June 2025

H.E. Thor Chetha

Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology

This “Cambodia Climate Resilient IWRM Action Plan 2026-2030: Toward the Achievement of Agenda 2030”, was developed using the support of Climate Resilient and Early Warning Systems Initiative (CREWS) under the collaboration of World Meteorological Organization and Global Water Partnership.

This plan was developed from October 2024 to March 2025, with coordination and technical support from UNEP-DHI and GWPO under the SDG 6 IWRM Support Program, in collaboration with GWP-SEA and GWP Cambodia and a designated National Expert.

The methodological approach used the [IWRM Action Planning Framework](#), under Stage 2 of the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme, with technical review and quality assurance provided by the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme team, particularly from the UNEP-DHI Centre on Water and Environment and GWP. The [SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme](#) assists governments and other stakeholders in designing and implementing country-led responses to SDG indicator 6.5.1, the degree of implementation of IWRM, as an entry point to accelerate progress towards the achievement of water-related SDGs (including but also going beyond SDG 6) and other development goals, in line with their national priorities. The IWRM Action Planning Framework is a practical guide designed to support countries in accelerating progress on water-related targets.

SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme

Assists governments and other stakeholders in

Stage 1

**Identifying
Challenges**



Assisting countries to identify the country's main water and climate-related challenges by bringing together stakeholders to monitor progress towards SDG 6.5.1

Stage 2

**Developing
Action Plans**



Assisting countries and stakeholders to develop IWRM Action Plans to address the identified challenges

Stage 3

**Supporting
Implementation**



Accessing implementation support for the Action Plans



Cover Image: Cambodia river

Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Siborey Sean

Acknowledgement

The development of this IWRM Action Plan has been made possible through the collective efforts and contributions of many dedicated individuals and institutions.

Foremost, we extend our sincere gratitude to the members of the National Working Group, comprising representatives from various national line ministries and institutions. This includes department staffs from the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, and representatives from the Cambodia National Mekong Committee, The Tonle Sap Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, National Committee for Disaster Management, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, and the Ministry of Mines and Energy. Their invaluable inputs, comments, cooperation, and support have been instrumental and are deeply appreciated.

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We greatly appreciate the continuous coordination and close collaboration provided by the GWP Southeast Asia team, particularly: Dr. Raymond Valiant, Regional Coordinator; Ms. Louise Desrainy, Deputy Regional Coordinator; Mr. Fany Wedahuditama, Former Regional Coordinator, and Mr. Hari Gumilang, Financial and Logistics Officer and Ms. Uli Handayani, Communication and Outreach Officer. Their dedication, support in reviewing drafts, and overall facilitation have been critical to the successful completion of this work.

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Executive summary

Developed under the CREWS project (Cambodia/Lao PDR), the "Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030" supports Cambodia's Water Vision and MOWRAM priorities. It aligns with the Royal Government's "Resilient, Sustainable and Inclusive Development" policy and guides IWRM implementation to promote efficient water use (especially in agriculture and domestic supply), preserve ecosystems, and protect vulnerable communities from water hazards.

The planning process involved stakeholder mapping, forming an IWRM Working Group, an Alignment Meeting, a desk review, three national workshops, and reviews by GWP, UNEP-DHI, and WMO. Following a Regional Workshop, the plan was submitted for endorsement.

This \$4.02 million Action Plan aims to enhance climate resilience and water security in vulnerable basins by strengthening river basin management and IWRM. It outlines 22 activities under three priority objectives:

1. Develop a sustainable financial plan for IWRM.
2. Promote climate-resilient, multi-purpose water projects in five priority basins (2026–2030).
3. Strengthen the river basin approach and IWRM-based water governance.

The expected sources of funding are public (government and Official Development Assistance) and private sources. Integration into MOWRAM's Strategic Plan 2024-2028 will secure government funding. A Technical Working Group will support fundraising and implementation. Progress will be tracked using defined indicators (Section 6). The plan also proposes establishing a multi-disciplinary IWRM Technical Working Group (ITWG) for basin management, led by MOWRAM and supported by a dedicated IWRM Unit (Section 7). Targeting full implementation by 2030 (Section 8), the Action Plan aims to significantly advance Cambodia's SDG 6.5.1 score.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB Asian Development Bank

AFD Agence Francaise Pour Development

ASEAN The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CNMC Cambodia National Mekong Committee

CREWS Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems

CSDGs Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals

Cambodia WP Cambodia Water Partnership / GWP Cambodia

DFAT Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

EU Executive Unit

ERW Explosive Remnant of War

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FWUC Farmer Water User Community

GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GMS Great Mekong Sub-region

GWP Global Water Partnership

GWPO Global Water Partnership Organization

ITC Institute of Technology of Cambodia

IWMI International Water Management Institute

IWRM Integrated Water Resources Management

JICA Japan International Cooperation Agency

LMC Lancang-Mekong Cooperation

LMs Line Ministries

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

MAFF Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

MEF Ministry of Economic and Finance

MISTI Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation

Abbreviations and Acronyms

MLMUPC Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction

MME Ministry of Mine and Energy

MOE Ministry of Environment

MOI Ministry of Interior

MOP Ministry of Planning

MPWT Ministry of Public Work and Transport

MRC The Mekong River Commission

MRD Ministry of Rural Development

MOWA Ministry of Women Affairs

MOWRAM Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NCDM National Committee for Disaster Management

ODA Official Development Assistance

PPP Public-Private-Partnerships

RBMC River Basin Management Committee

RGC Royal Government of Cambodia

SC Steering Committee

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

TSA Tonle Sap Authority

WB World Bank

UN United Nations

UNEP UN Environment Programme

WG Working Group

WMO World Meteorological Organization

WSSD World Summit on Sustainable Development

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1. Strategic context

This chapter provides an overview of Cambodia's water-related development landscape, situating IWRM within the broader context of national policies, SDG progress, and institutional frameworks. It examines Cambodia's achievements and gaps in implementing SDG 6.5.1, highlights key challenges, and maps out the roles of relevant government institutions and stakeholders. The chapter also reviews related planning processes and outlines the current and anticipated funding mechanisms that support IWRM implementation.

Participants await the start of dragon boat race competition during the annual Water Festival in Phnom Penh in 2019.

Source: www.focus-cambodia.com

Photo By: Tang Chhin

1.1. Brief overview of the status of the SDGs in Cambodia

Cambodia has localized the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework 2016-2030, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2018. The monitoring framework is well established and clearly delineates responsibilities for each indicator across relevant line ministries (LMs) and institutions.

CSDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) plays a critical role in supporting broader national development objectives, including Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Growth (CSDG 1), Zero Hunger (CSDG 2), Climate Action (CSDG 13), Life Below Water (CSDG 14), and Life on land (CSDG 15). According to the Country Acceleration Case Study results on CSDG 6, conducted by the UN-Water in 2024, Cambodia has shown significant progress across multiple dimensions. The degree of implementation of integrated water resources management – as measured by SDG 6.5.1 - increased from score 46 in 2017 to 62 in 2023. Substantial improvements were also noted in access to drinking water (SDG 6.1.1 and 6.1.2) and sanitation services (SDG 6.2.1).

Water use efficiency has also improved, particularly in the industrial sector, which recorded the highest efficiency (at USD 257.89/m³), followed by the services sector. The agricultural sector also made progress, increasing from USD 0.23/m³ in 2000 to USD 0.40/ m³ in 2021, based on the latest available data from FAO (SDG 6.4.1). Additionally, UN Environment Program (UNEP) Earth observation data indicates that the spatial extent of water-related ecosystems remained stable between 2015 and 2022 (SDG 6.6.1).

Furthermore, between 2014 to 2021, official development assistance (ODA) provided by donor countries to Cambodia for water-related programs increased four times, from approximately USD 75 million to over USD 300 million (SDG 6.a.1).

While significant progress has been made in increasing the proportion of the urban population with access to safely managed and clean water supply services (SDG 6.1.1), extending access to safely managed drinking water in rural areas (SDG 6.1.2), and improving access to safely managed sanitation services, including handwashing facilities with soap and water (SDG 6.2.1), the Royal Government of Cambodia remains firmly committed to achieving 100% coverage for these three indicators by 2030.

1.2. Relevant national existing / planned policies, programs and initiatives

1.2.1 Relevant national existing policies that support the implementation of IWRM

In addition to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2015), the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) has established several key policies and legal instruments that forms the enabling environment for IWRM implementation. These include: (i) The National Water Resources Policy for the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2004), (ii) The MOWRAM's National IWRM Strategy 2005 and Roadmaps, (iii) The Law on Water Resources Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2007), (iv) The Sub-decree #98 on River Basin Management (MOWRAM, 2015), and (v) the Sub-decree #31 on the Establishment, Dissolution, and Roles and Responsibilities of the Farmer Water Users Communities (FWUC) in 2015.

a) Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2015)

Article 59 stipulates that *“The State shall preserve and protect the environment and the balance of natural resources, by organizing precise planning for the management, especially of the land, water, atmosphere, air, geology, ecological systems, mines, energy, petroleum and gas, rocks, sand, gems, forests and forest by-products, wildlife, fish and aquatic resources.”* This constitutional provision provides a legal foundation for sustainable water resources management, aligning with IWRM principles.

b) National Water Resources Policy for the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2004)

The policy of water resources of Cambodia was developed and approved by the Council of Ministers during a Plenary Meeting on 14 January 2004. The Policy aims at providing access for all to safe, adequate, and affordable drinking water and hygiene services, to provide sufficient water for agriculture, industry and economic activities, tackle and minimize for all from the threat of loss of life and livelihood resulted from water-related hazards, to manage water in such a way as to prevent and reduce water pollution.

The policy articulates Cambodia's Water Vision (2004), as follows:

- **Access for all** to safe, adequate, and affordable drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation.
- **Freedom for all from the threat** of loss of life and livelihood as a result of floods and droughts.
- **Sufficient water** where it is needed, to provide for food security, people's livelihoods, and economic activities.
- **A water environment that is unpolluted** and supports healthy fisheries and aquatic ecosystems.

It outlines specific principles for water resources management in general and it defines specific policy measures for river basin management, water in agriculture, water for energy, water for industry, small manufacturing enterprises and services, water for domestic use, water for navigation and tourism, equitable water sharing and allocation, mitigation of water-related disasters, data collection, forecasting and warning, maintenance, protection and sustainability of aquatic system, administration and institutional strengthening, financial aspects and international aspects of water and transboundary management of waters.

c) The MOWRAM's National IWRM Strategy 2005 and Roadmaps

This strategic document provides long-term directions (20 years from 2005) for sustainable water resources development. It synthesizes national plans and strategies while incorporating a basin-level IWRM approach, aiming to promote coordinated development among stakeholders.

Key related policy frameworks are translated into actions, which include:

- Strategic Framework for Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms
- Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity, and Efficiency
- National Strategic Development Plan (2006–2010)
- Strategic Development Plan for the Water Sector (2006–2010)
- National poverty reduction strategies of Cambodia.

While the IWRM strategy and roadmaps provides useful guidance to sustainable water resource development and management in Cambodia, it lacks detailed mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and integration of IWRM processes into basin and resource development plans.

d) The Law on Water Resources Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2007)

The *Law on Water Resources Management* is the primary legal framework governing water resources in Cambodia. Its objective, as stated in Article 1, is to promote the effective and sustainable management of water resources to support the country's socio-economic development and public welfare. The law establishes:

- the rights and responsibilities of water users,
- the core principles of water resources management, and
- the role of water user associations in supporting sustainable development.

Notably, Article 4 underscores that “Water resources shall be developed and managed following an integrated water resources management approach.” Effective IWRM implementation under this law must consider all aspects of water resources, the interconnection between water and the broader natural environment, and the sustainable use of water for both human and ecological needs. Collaboration among relevant line ministries is fundamental to the successful execution of IWRM in Cambodia.

e) Sub-decree no. 98 on River Basin Management (RGC, 2015)

Issued under Article 10 of the Water Law, this sub-decree provides a legal basis for river basin planning and management, reinforcing IWRM principles. Key provisions under Article 5 include:

- Management of water resource for utilization, conservation, and development of water resources in the river basin
- Application of integrated water resources management approach in accordance with the Law on Water Resources Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia and climate change adaptation
- Equitable and sustainable upstream-downstream water resource management beyond administrative borders
- Maintenance of the minimum flows of water stream and sustainable groundwater level to support ecosystem
- Alignment with international agreements for transboundary water management
- Integrated planning with other natural resources in the river basin
- Equitable and effective water allocation
- Consideration of water quantity and quality to improve livelihood and daily living standard of the population
- Promotion of river basin conservation
- Cooperation with riparian countries in all water-related sectors

Other chapters, including River basin delineation (Chapter 3), Authorities and mechanism of the river basin management (Chapter 4), River basin management plan (Chapter 5), and River basin management measures (Chapter 6), further strengthen the enabling environment for the IWRM implementation in Cambodia.

f) Sub-decree #31 on the establishment, dissolution, and defining the roles and responsibilities of the Farmer Water Users Communities (FWUC)

Recognizing the vulnerability of rainfed rice farming, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) initiated a policy in the late 1990s to expand irrigated agriculture, aiming for food security and poverty alleviation. This policy was translated into the construction of new infrastructures and the rehabilitation of old irrigation schemes with the financial and technical support of internal budget and external donors.

Furthermore, the sub-decree also led to the introduction of the Policy on “Participatory Irrigation Management and Development” (PIMD) in 1999 promoting the Farmer Water Users Communities (FWUCs) as local managers of the irrigation scheme. Later, the FWUC Sub-decree #31 was approved on 12 March 2015 (RGC, 2015) with aims to ensure the management and use of irrigation schemes in an effective and sustainable manner. It further defines the procedures for the establishment, dissolution, roles and obligations of the FWUCs in Cambodia. MOWRAM provides oversight to the overall management of the FWUCs, while the registration processes through Provincial Departments of Water Resources and Meteorology (PDOWRAM).

FWUCs are recognized as legal entities serving shared community interests in sustainable irrigation use, contributing to economic development and poverty reduction. Key articles of interest:

- Chapter 4: Membership, roles, duties, and rights of FWUCs
- Article 5 (Point 8): External assistance eligibility
- Article 12: Access to financial and technical support
- Article 31: Procedures for obtaining government funding

The sub-decree empowers sub-national authorities, FWUCs, River Basin Management Committees, and women, aligning closely with IWRM principles.

1.2.2 Relevant Programs and Initiatives Supporting IWRM

Water resources are a critical component of Cambodia's environmental and natural resource base. The nation's river system - particularly those of the Mekong and Tonle Sap – support fisheries, irrigated agriculture, domestic and industrial water supply, inland navigation and hydropower generation. These water systems underpin the health, livelihoods and economic development of the Cambodian people and the whole nation. However, water and related resources are increasingly under pressure from both the natural processes and human-induced development at the local, regional and global level. At the same time, institutional capacity for water management remains limited.

Efforts have been made to address these challenges, with the following national water security and climate resilience target prioritized:

- Achieve 100% access to safe drinking water nationwide by 2030;
- Expand irrigation capacity to enable the cultivation of 2 to 3 crops per year;
- Protect critical wetlands and aquatic ecosystem and maintain their connectivity;
- Strengthen the resilience of Cambodia's Mekong and tributary river basins to climate change, flooding and drought;
- Proactively address water scarcity

At the 2023 MOWRAM-Development Partners Annual Coordination Meeting, strengthening IWRM capacity within the river basin management and development was highlighted as key area for future programmatic improvement. In recent years, MOWRAM has undertaken several initiatives aligned with IWRM principles, some of which are currently under implementation or in the planning stages.

a) DFAT-Supported Program for Climate-Resilient Water Governance

This program components aim to address Cambodia's short-and medium-term challenges in water resources management, particularly in the context of climate change and demographic shifts. This multi-disciplinary initiative, supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), is being developed by MOWRAM. The program adopts a programmatic approach aimed at establishing a strategic framework and foundation for climate-resilient water governance. The program is intended to be nationally driven and owned by Cambodia, ensuring alignment with local priorities and government structures.

b) World Bank- Financed Cambodia Water Security Improvement Project

“This project aims to integrate water security concerns across both safe drinking water supply and irrigation development. In this context, water security is defined as the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies” (Grey & Sadoff, 2007).

Key findings from recent policy dialogues with national and sub-national water-related institutions have highlighted the following needs:

- Support for identifying integrated investment in flood and drought management with economic viability in focus;
- Enhance inter-ministerial collaborations on the integrated nature of water and other sectors
- Development of an integrated master plan for water resources management with clear institutional roles and responsibilities;
- Strengthening of enabling policies, incentives and institutional capacities for river basin level management

The above needs are addressed by the following project development objectives:

- To improve water security and increase agriculture productivity in selected river basins in Cambodia, and
- To provide immediate and effective response in case of an eligible crisis or emergency

The project emphasize that the successful implementation of policies, incentives, and institutional capacities is essential to advancing integrated river basin management and improving water governance across Cambodia.

c) ADB-Financed Integrated Water Resources Management at the River Basin Level Project

This project, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), will be implemented in the Pursat and Svay Daun Keo River Basins (Pursat Province) and Dauntry and Sangker River Basins (Battambang Province) during the 2025–2030 period. Implementation will be managed by the PMU–ADB, EIB, and AIIB within MOWRAM. The tentative components are:

- Component 1. River Basin Development (Soft component)
- Component 2. Irrigation and Storage Facilities
- Component 3. Flood Control Infrastructures
- Component 4. Project Management

d) MOWRAM's WAT4CAM Phase 1 Program (2019-2023) supported by AFD and the European Union

Component 3.2 focused on IWRM strengthening and included the following activities:

(i) Pilot project in the Stung Sen River Basin

- Renewal of RBMC members, Board of Directors, and Executive Basin Committee;
- Initiation of a second IWRM cycle with validation of priority actions
- Ground-level engagement through budget allocation and formation of working groups.

(ii) Consolidation at Tonle Sap Lake Basin level

- Bibliographic study, surveys and consultations on past and present IWRM projects in Cambodia
- Drafting of recommendations to improve IWRM implementation, in consultation with development partners and MOWRAM

(iii) Strengthening IWRM process in the Stung Sangke River Basin

- Establishment of an inter-institutional Technical Working Group for IWRM in the Stung Sangke River Basin to prepare the establishment of the Stung Sangke RBMC
- Identification of the main issues in the basin and potential rules for priority water allocation in the basin
- Field surveys and data exchanges for preparing the Stung Sangke basin profile
- Signing a MoU with the PDOWRAM Battambang to support the IWRM process in the Stung Sangke basin

e) **FAO Asia-Pacific Water Scarcity Program (WSP)**

WSP activities in Cambodia aim to promote sustainable water resource development and improve cross-sectoral coordination. The program focuses on establishing a foundation for routine water accounting and building institutional capacity in this area.

Initial efforts will concentrate on one or two provinces within the target area of the Cambodia Water Security Improvement Project (CWSIP), ensuring alignment and coordination with World Bank initiatives. Key Focus Areas:

- Addressing dry-season drinking water shortages in both urban and rural areas;
- Assessing groundwater use (both planned and spontaneous) for WASH and agriculture;
- Examining irrigation practices by commercial concessions, tourism, and industrial users.

1.3. Findings from the SDG 6.5.1 survey listed by IWRM dimension

Cambodia has been progressively adopting the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach since the early 2000s. Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which called for the development of IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005, Cambodia developed a National Water Resources Policy in 2004 and formally institutionalized IWRM through the 2007 Law on Water Resources Management.

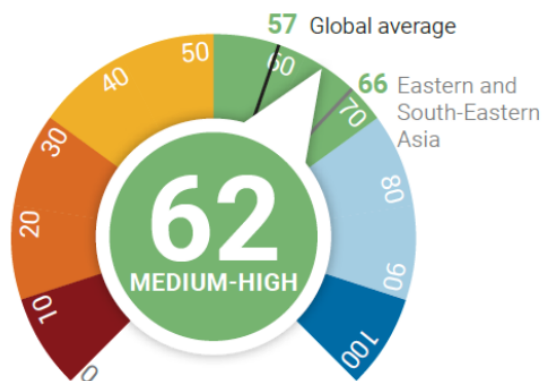
To monitor progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 6.5 — implementing IWRM at all levels by 2030 — Cambodia participated in the SDG 6.5.1 global monitoring process in 2017, 2020, and most recently in 2023. This process is coordinated by the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) as the national focal point, with technical support from GWP Cambodia and the Global Water Partnership Organization (GWPO). National consultations involved a wide range of stakeholders from government ministries, academia, civil society, water professionals, and development partners.

The 2023 SDG 6.5.1 survey results indicate only marginal improvement in Cambodia's IWRM implementation. The overall score rose slightly from 59 in 2020 to 62 in 2023, maintaining a “medium-high” category (Figure 1). Key findings by IWRM dimension include:

- Enabling Environment: Improved to 66
- Institutions and Participation: Improved to 68
- Management Instruments: Improved to 63
- Financing: Unchanged at 52

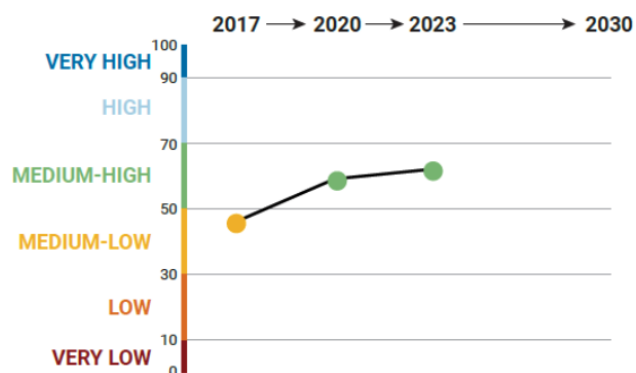
Despite modest gains, progress remains constrained by several persistent challenges. Limited financing continues to impede implementation of priority actions. In addition, gaps in institutional capacity and understanding of IWRM, particularly at the sub-national level—undermine effective coordination and execution. Without targeted investment and capacity-building measures, Cambodia is unlikely to meet the 2030 IWRM target.

STATUS



IWRM IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRESS



Global target for SDG 6.5.1 is “very high” implementation by 2030. Countries may set their own national target*.

Simple interpretation of 6.5.1 IWRM implementation category

Very high	91-100:	Vast majority of IWRM elements fully implemented and objectives consistently achieved.
High	71-90:	Objectives of programmes generally met, stakeholder engagement generally good.
Medium-high	51-70:	Capacity to implement IWRM elements under long-term programmes generally adequate.
Medium-low	31-50:	Elements of IWRM generally institutionalized, and implementation underway.
Low	11-30:	Implementation of some elements of IWRM begun, but potentially low stakeholder engagement.
Very low	0-10:	Development of IWRM elements generally not begun, or stalled.

ND No data

More on methodology and individual question thresholds: <http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/>

Figure 1. Status of IWRM Implementation in Cambodia as of 2023 SDG 6.5.1 Monitoring

(Source: <https://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/country-reports/cambodia>)

1.4. Issues and challenges in IWRM implementation in Cambodia

The key issues and challenges in the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management in Cambodia were identified through consultations with relevant line ministries during the third round of SDG 6.5.1 monitoring (GWP Cambodia, 2023). These challenges are summarized by IWRM dimension below.

1.4.1 Enabling Environment

The Government of Cambodia has made significant efforts to establish an enabling environment for IWRM implementation. This is reflected in the development of national policies, laws, and plans that support IWRM at the national, sub-national, and regional levels. However, the effectiveness of this enabling environment depends largely on the extent to which institutions at all levels understand, apply, and integrate IWRM into their operations.

The main challenges in this area include:

- Limited awareness, understanding, and commitment among relevant stakeholders and implementing agencies to effectively apply the existing policies and legal instruments.
- Insufficient institutional capacity, particularly at the sub-national level.
- Inadequate funding to support the implementation and operationalization of IWRM, especially at subnational level.

1.4.2 Institutions and Participation

Institutional capacity and stakeholder participation are central to the successful implementation of IWRM. This dimension includes the roles and effectiveness of political, social, economic, and administrative institutions, as well as mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination, stakeholder engagement, and gender inclusion. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the importance of partnerships and public participation to create synergies across sectors, including with the private sector.

Key challenges identified include:

- National and sub-national institutions lack the necessary technical knowledge, practical experience, and financial resources to effectively coordinate, implement, and sustain IWRM initiatives.
- Mechanisms for inclusive stakeholder participation and coordination remain underdeveloped.
- An illustrative case is the River Basin Management Committees (RBMCs), which, despite being formally established and having basin plans in place, have not been operational due to a lack of capacity and budgetary support. As a result, basin plans remain unimplemented.

1.4.3 Management Instruments

Although various management instruments exist to support IWRM, their effective use depends on the understanding and technical capacity of implementing actors across sectors and levels of government. The primary issues in this area are:

- Limited dissemination and communication of management instruments to practitioners and implementers, resulting in a lack of awareness and capacity to utilize them effectively
- Inadequate development of a national knowledge hub for water and related resources, constrained by a shortage of skilled personnel and funding

1.4.4 Financing

Financing remains one of the most significant constraints to IWRM implementation in Cambodia. Findings from the third round of SDG 6.5.1 monitoring indicate no progress in this area since 2020. Feedback from technical experts during and outside of the consultation workshop echoed this concern.

Key challenges include:

- IWRM elements are not prioritized in national or sub-national budget plans, possibly due to the absence of a clear technical approach and planning framework.
- There has been limited effort to mobilize resources or develop financing mechanisms and plans to ensure sustained investment in IWRM implementation.

The following suggestions were made to improve financing in IWRM implementation:

- Mainstreaming IWRM components into all water and related resources management and development plans, and water infrastructure and development projects to ensure fund security.
- Allocating budget for IWRM implementation at all level, communal, provincial and sectoral ministry levels.
- Incorporate the IWRM indicators into the monitoring frameworks of the water and related resources management and development plans, and the water resources development projects plans to track progress and inform future investments.

1.5. Relationship with other water-related targets

Under Article 4 of the Law on Water Resources Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia (RGC, 2007) and in accordance with the National Water Resources Policy (RGC, 2004), Cambodia implements IWRM and actively participates in the global monitoring and reporting of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Indicator Framework integrates key international commitments, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (SDG 15), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

The SDG 6.5.1 indicator is closely aligned with CSDG 6, which focuses on sustainable water resource management, water supply and sanitation, and the protection of water-related ecosystems. This alignment is reflected in the following national indicators:

- **CSDG 6.1.1:** Proportion of the urban population with access to safely managed and clean water supply services
- **CSDG 6.1.2:** Proportion of the rural population using safely managed drinking water services
- **CSDG 6.2.1:** Proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
- **CSDG 6.3.1:** Proportion of wastewater safely treated
- **CSDG 6.4.1:** By 2025, all urban residents have access to clean water that is sustainable, high-quality, and affordable
- **CSDG 6.A.1:** Amount of official development assistance for water- and sanitation-related activities that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
- **CSDG 6.5.2:** Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation
- **CSDG 6.6.1:** Spatial extent of water-related ecosystems

These indicators reflect Cambodia's commitment to holistic water resource management and its alignment with global sustainable development and environmental frameworks.

1.6. Key Government Institutions and Stakeholders Involved in IWRM

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Cambodia is led by the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM), with support from a range of national line ministries and institutions:

1. Cambodia National Mekong Committee (CNMC)
2. Tonle Sap Authority (TSA)
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
4. Ministry of Environment (MOE)
5. Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)
6. Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA)
7. Ministry of Planning (MOP)
8. National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM)
9. Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC)
10. Ministry of Public Work and Transport (MPWT)
11. Ministry of Mine and Energy (MME)
12. Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISTI)
13. Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC)

Key non-governmental and development stakeholders include:

1. Cambodia Water Partnership (Cambodia WP)
2. Mekong River Commission (MRC)
3. Great Mekong Sub-region (GMS)
4. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
5. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
6. Lacang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)
7. Asian Development Bank (ADB)
8. Agence Francaise pour le Développement (AFD)
9. World Bank (WB)
10. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
11. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
12. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
13. International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

1.7. Relevant government or multi-stakeholder Planning Supporting IWRM

Cambodia has made notable progress in embedding IWRM principles across national, sectoral, and local planning frameworks. These frameworks reflect growing recognition of water as a critical resource for socio-economic development, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has integrated IWRM approaches into strategic plans, legal reforms, and institutional mandates, demonstrating a shift from fragmented water management toward a more coordinated and sustainable model.

1.7.1 National-Level Policy and Planning Frameworks

Cambodia has integrated IWRM principles across its national strategies, sector plans, and legislative frameworks. Key planning documents include:

a) National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2024-2028 of the Royal Government of Cambodia

Vision of the NSDP 2024-2028 is to lay foundation toward the achievement of the 2050 Cambodia's vision. One of the four strategic objectives is *“Resilient, Sustainable and Inclusive Development”* to contribute to the Fifth Strategic Direction on *“Ensure sustainable social and economic development by building climate resilient through sustainable natural resources management”*.

To implement the Resilient, Sustainable and Inclusive Development Priority Policy of the RGC, MOWRAM's priority is to increase effectiveness in IWRM-based water resources management and development at the river basin level and in irrigation management and development.

b) The Strategic Plan of Water Resources and Meteorology 2024-2028

This plan outlines a Water Vision aligned with the NSDP 2024–2028 and the Pentagonal Strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia's 7th legislature:

- Universal access to clean water for hygiene, security, and affordability.
- Adequate water supply for agriculture, industry, and other economic sectors.
- Mitigation of severe threats to lives and livelihoods from water-related disasters.
- Management of an unpolluted water environment.

To achieve this vision, MOWRAM sets out the following objectives aligned with IWRM principles:

1. Strengthen governance, technical capacity, gender mainstreaming, and institutional operations.
2. Enhance human resources with expertise, technology, and professional ethics.
3. Develop and manage water infrastructure, including storage, irrigation, flood protection, and drainage systems.
4. Improve water resource management using technology and river basin-level IWRM.
5. Strengthen disaster mitigation capacity using structural, nature-based, and non-structural solutions.
6. Protect and conserve river basins, lakes, and water sources to build climate resilience.
7. Improve hydrometeorological data systems to support cross-sector water management.
8. Update and implement relevant policies, laws, and procedures for sustainable water management.
9. Conduct research to inform decision-making and investment planning.

c) The Strategic Plan of the Cambodia National Mekong Committee 2024-2028

This plan incorporates IWRM through Strategic Goal 2: supporting and strengthening cooperative, participatory river basin management. Key outcomes include:

1. Enhanced cooperation among CNMC members and regional partners.
2. Effective application of technical tools, strategies, and plans for sustainable and inclusive basin management.
3. Strengthened national engagement in regional river monitoring and planning.
4. Implementation of studies and projects to support national contributions to regional water governance.
5. Promotion of gender-equitable stakeholder consultations in IWRM.

d) The Environmental and Natural Resources Code (ENR Code), 2023

The Code was developed by the Ministry of Environment and adopted on 29 June 2023 by Royal Kram № NS/RKM/0623/007. Its main aim is to create a legal and policy environment for protecting the environment while supporting sustainable economic development in Cambodia. The Code consists of 12 books and 865 articles, covering several areas, including land use, water supply, forestry, fisheries, other natural resources, and ecosystems, with cross-cutting issues such as climate change, environmental harm responsibility, governance of environmental and natural resources, improving public participation in accessing environmental information, raising awareness, and developing capacity-building activities to improve Cambodia's natural environment. The main objectives that align with and supportive of IWRM include:

- Promote an integrated approach to water resource management, considering the interconnections between land use, water supply, and ecosystem health to maintain ecological balance.

- Prevent and control water pollution from various sources, safeguarding both surface and groundwater quality.
- Encourage public participation and access to information, providing opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes related to water management, thus enhancing transparency and accountability.
- Promote green development and address challenges such as climate change, including building resilience for communities to adapt to environmental challenges.
- Develop sustainable urban environments with effective waste management and pollution control to improve urban living conditions.
- Enhance environmental governance by modernizing and harmonizing environmental management practices, strengthening legal frameworks, and building institutional capacities for better governance.

e) The National Strategy for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2011-2025

This strategy prioritizes rural access to clean water and sanitation as part of broader rural development under the government's Rectangle Strategy. It promotes IWRM-based planning to expand water supply, manage flood and drought risks, and ensure long-term water security. Despite progress, service coverage remains insufficient, especially in remote areas.

f) Law on Clean Water Supply Management in Cambodia (Royal Kram #NS/RKM/0323/002, dated 11 March 2023)

The RGC has recently approved the Law on Clean Water Management, which was officially promulgated by the Acting Head of State on 11 March 2023. The new law consists of 15 chapters and 65 articles, aims to establish a legal framework for managing and developing the water supply service throughout the country. The law's main objectives are to ensure the quality, safety, sustainability, and affordability of clean water for the people of Cambodia and to promote their well-being and living conditions while preserving the environment.

The Law on Clean Water Management will enhance the water supply sector and promote better living conditions for the people of Cambodia. According to the law, the government will regulate and monitor commercial water supply services in Cambodia to ensure compliance with the required standards. The former Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts initiated the law in 2016 and has been revised with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This new law is expected to play a vital role in ensuring access to clean water, a fundamental human right, for all Cambodians, especially those living in rural areas.

This Law provides rules for the management and development of clean water supply in Cambodia to ensure quality, safety, and affordability of clean water supply services. It provides a legal framework for commercial water supply throughout the country. The management of clean water supply services shall be under the jurisdiction of the ministry in charge of the clean water sector, Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation (MISTI). The Clean Water Development Fund is established to ensure the maintenance, improvement, and development of clean water supply services in an effective and sustainable manner, especially in developing and remote areas.

g) The Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to 2030

This strategy focuses on food security and climate adaptation through sustainable, inclusive, and resilient agricultural growth. IWRM alignment includes:

- Promoting climate-smart agriculture and efficient irrigation.
- Empowering women in agriculture.
- Strengthening governance and institutional cooperation with the private sector and development partners.

h) Fishery Law, 2006 and the Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries 2015-2024 in Cambodia

The Fisheries Law of Cambodia aims to conserve and sustainably develop fisheries resources. with at least two main objectives related to water and IWRM: i) Promote the sustainable use of fisheries resources to maintain ecological balance and biodiversity, and ii) encourage responsible fish farming and aquaculture practices to boost fish production and support food security. Based on this law, the Strategic Planning Framework (SPF) 2019-2024 was designed to manage, conserve, and develop sustainable fisheries resources to ensure food security and contribute to socioeconomic development, thereby enhancing livelihoods and national prosperity.

There are five key initiatives associated with, and guided by IWRM principles, including:

- (i) Promote co-management by involving the Government entities, fishing communities, and stakeholders.
- (ii) Balance water uses between agriculture and fisheries to maintain ecosystem's health.
- (iii) Strengthen enforcement of fisheries laws.
- (iv) Establish Community Fisheries (CFi) Management Plan that addresses environmental sustainability, socioeconomic well-being, and governance.

- (v) Promote the integration of water resource management with fisheries sustainability, by aligning with IWRM principles through promotion of:
- Fishery practices that support the health of aquatic ecosystems.
 - Optimal water allocation using Decision Support Systems
 - Climate change resilience and adaptation such as changing water levels and temperatures.
 - Transboundary cooperation with neighboring countries for shared water bodies by ensuring sustainable fishery practices across borders.
 - Alignment of national fishery policies, strategic planning with IWRM principles.
 - Regulations enforcement to prevent pollution and wastewater in the fisheries habitats.
 - Secured funding for sustainable fisheries projects, such as habitat restoration or eco-friendly aquaculture, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes to incentivize conservation efforts.

i) Law on Inland Waterway Transport, 2024

One of the key roles of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) of Cambodia is to play a significant part in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) through its responsibilities in developing and maintaining infrastructure that interacts with the nation's water systems. To this end, the Law on Inland Waterway Transport of MPWT was established in 2024, aiming to manage and develop the nation's waterway and port sectors to maintain order, ensure safety and security, protect infrastructure, and contribute to environmental preservation. The law also facilitates inland waterway vessels engaged in cross-border transportation to use designated waterways freely. Additionally, it aims to enhance waterway transportation infrastructure to support economic growth, regional integration, and sustainable development. Furthermore, the law contributes to minimizing the impacts of water-related hazards, such as floods and droughts on the communities and public infrastructure. It ensures that all related infrastructure does not harm aquatic ecosystems or water environments and aims to provide equitable access to water resources and services.

j) Law on wastewater system (Royal Kram, #NS/RKM/1124/005, dated 22/11/2024)

Promulgated on 22 November 2024 (Royal Kram No. NS/RKM/1124/005), this law governs wastewater management and aims to:

- Ensure efficiency, quality, and sustainability in wastewater systems.
- Protect the environment and improve public welfare.
- Reduce wastewater discharge into water bodies by 50% by 2030, aligned with the SDGs.

The development of the wastewater system is directly under the responsibility of the state. The state has the right to delegate the management and development and operation of the wastewater system to private sector in accordance with the laws and regulations which are in force. The MPWT is mandated to manage and develop the wastewater system in Cambodia, while the sub-national administrations are mandated to manage the drainage system and wastewater treatment system within their jurisdiction and other wastewater systems as assigned or delegated by the ministries, institutions that are responsible for wastewater system development, with the endorsement from the RGC.

The Cambodian Senate has approved the draft law on wastewater systems with the objective of achieving a 50% reduction in wastewater discharge into the seas, rivers, streams, lakes, creeks and ponds by 2030. This is in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Cambodia: New law aims to halve wastewater discharge by 2030).

k) National Action Plan for Drought Management and Adaptation (2025-2030)

This Action Plan aims to:

- Reduce vulnerability to drought and associated economic losses.
- Enhance national capacity for drought risk communication and early warning.
- Build community resilience through proactive drought mitigation and adaptation measures.

1.7.2 Relevant regional multi-stakeholder planning objectives aligned with IWRM

Multistakeholder plans for IWRM include transboundary cooperation and inter-basin integration within Cambodia's shared basins. The following documents will be part of this collaborative plan.

a) The 1995 Mekong Agreement (MRC,1995)

The Agreement establishes the goals, objectives and underlying principles by which the four Member Countries intend to cooperate. They are summarized as follows:

- To cooperate in all fields of sustainable development, use, management and conservation of water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin, in a manner that optimizes multiple uses and benefits of water and related resources in the Mekong River Basin including irrigation, hydropower, navigation, flood control, fisheries, timber floating, recreation and tourism (Article 1).
- To promote the sustainable development of the basin's full potential and prevent wasteful use, with an emphasis on joint and/or basin-wide development projects and programs (Article 2).
- To protect the environment, natural resources, aquatic life and conditions, and ecological balance of the Mekong River Basin and minimize pollution and other harmful effects (Articles 3 and 7-10).
- To utilize the waters of the Mekong River system in a reasonable and equitable manner (Articles 4-6).

b) The Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021–2030

The Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021-2023 aims to guide all relevant actors – not just the MRC – involved in the development and management of Mekong's water and related resources, to achieve improvements as laid out in the 1995 Mekong Agreement. The strategy encompasses all water and related sectors, integrates the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and incorporates a gender and vulnerability approach that emphasizes diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Basin Development Strategy 2021–2030 was developed to guide the planning and implementation including the design of project and program. It was formulated based on Mekong water-related issues, focuses on achieving improvements in environmental, social, and economic conditions across the basin. It emphasizes balancing development needs with the preservation of ecosystems, ensuring that the benefits of water resource utilization are equitably shared among the riparian countries.

The main objectives are to strengthen water, food, and energy security by:

- Enhancing access to safe water,
- Improving food security through sustainable fisheries and agricultural practices, and
- Promoting energy security and inclusive growth in sectors such as irrigated agriculture, hydropower, navigation, environment, and fisheries.

It also aims to improve disaster preparedness and adaptation strategies to address climate risks, extreme floods, and droughts.

Areas supported by the MRC under the strategy include:

- (i) Basin development and planning
- (ii) Water resource monitoring and assessment
- (iii) Climate change and disaster risk management
- (iv) Environmental management
- (v) Fisheries management
- (vi) Transboundary cooperation
- (vii) Navigation
- (viii) Hydropower development
- (ix) Social and economic monitoring
- (x) Data and information management

Among these, the strongest link to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) lies in promoting transboundary water cooperation among the four countries. This includes facilitating dialogue and coordination on water use—particularly for large infrastructure projects such as dams and irrigation systems. The strategy also emphasizes public and civil society engagement to promote inclusive water governance, along with capacity building and knowledge sharing.

1.8. Existing funding frameworks anticipated to be utilized

Investment in climate-resilient water infrastructure and management process requires multiple streams of funding. Investment in water resources in the river basin will draw from two main funding sources: public (government and ODA) and private sectors. The role of each funding source is distinct yet complementary.

Government funding is very limited—typically around 10% as co-financing. Most investment in water resource development is financed and administered at the national level or through the private sector. Donor funding plays a crucial role in ensuring targeted interventions and achieving priority development outcomes that may otherwise be unattainable.

Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) and innovative financial mechanisms, like debt to nature swap, can further enhance the involvement of user groups in water management. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of investment at all levels is essential to ensure accountability, and M&E programs should be an integral part of all investment plans.

For implementing this Action Plan, the development of a finance plan to secure necessary funding is essential. Therefore, the creation of sustainable financing strategy is recommended as one of the immediate priority actions.

2. Overarching goal and priority objectives

This chapter defines the overarching goal of Cambodia's IWRM Action Plan and presents a clear framework for achieving it. It introduces the general theory of change that underpins the plan, establishing logical pathways from identified challenges to desired outcomes. The chapter also outlines key solution areas and sets out a list of priority objectives that will guide implementation and investment across sectors and scales.

River boat in Cambodia

Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Siborey Sean

2.1. The Main Goal of the Plan

The main goal of the Action Plan is to ensure integrated water security and climate-resilient river basins for benefit of the Cambodian people and environment, while simultaneously achieving the national target of High IWRM implementation (Score 71–90) by 2030.

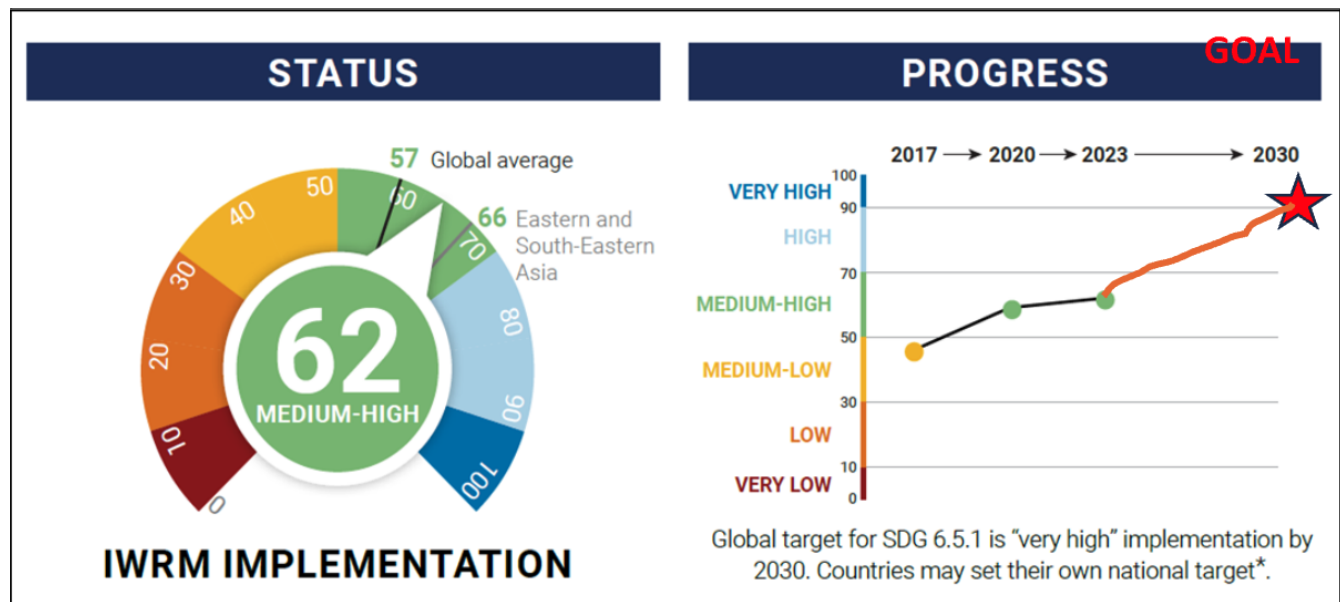


Figure 2. Progress of IWRM Implementation in Cambodia (2017-2030)

The priority objectives to support the achievement are to:

1. Develop a sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of the integrated water resources management
2. Promote climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the water scarce river basins
3. Strengthen the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development

2.2. Outline of a General Theory of Change

The three priorities objectives are directly relevant to achieving the main goal of the action plan, as they will enhance IWRM implementation and address key challenges, as follows:

1. The first priority objective aims to ensure enough funding to accelerate IWRM implementation and achieve the outcomes under objectives 2 and 3 of this action plan. It also addresses the challenges associated with Component 4 (Financing) of SDG 6.5.1, which currently limits the high level of IWRM implementation. This objective will be pursued through a combination of: (i) Securing government budgets allocations through strategic planning and communication; (ii) Mobilizing funds from development partners and relevant stakeholders; and (iii) Developing and establishing a sustainable finance mechanism to generate ongoing revenue raising to fund integrated water resources management. The IWRM Technical Working Group will need to act promptly once the Action Plan is endorsed (see Section 7 for further details). Commitment to this objective will ensure both short-term and long-term financial sustainability for IWRM implementation.
2. The second priority objective seeks to promote climate-resilient, integrated and multi-purpose water and related resources planning and projects development in the WSRBs through a river basin approach and IWRM-based water resources management and development. This will enable coordinated water resources management and development, improve water tenure security, and ultimately ensure water security and sustainable development. It will address issues and challenges across multiple elements of SDG 6.5.1, other SDG 6 (ranging from 6.1.1 to SDG 6.6.1), SDG 2, SDG 13, SDG 14 and SDG 15, particularly water scarcity.

These objective drives two major transformations:

- First, a shift from siloed sector planning and projects development to integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-purpose water and related resources planning and projects development with coordinated resources allocation and governance constituting a tangible outcome of IWRM implementation,
- Second, the water and related resources planning and projects development through a river basin and IWRM approach constitute a process-oriented outcome that enhances an in-depth IWRM implementation process.

3. The third priority objective aims to accelerate IWRM implementation by promoting participatory and interactive learning among stakeholders, grounded in practical experiences and successful case studies from other contexts. This learning process will build understanding, knowledge and skills, helping stakeholders to adopt a river-basin-approach¹ and IWRM mindset in managing and developing water and related resources. This objective is intended to prepare the river basin's stakeholders for the effective implementation of Objective 2.

It responds to various challenges identified in the [2023 SDG 6.5.1 Survey](#), including:

- Enabling environment: Questions 1.1c, 1.2a, 1.2b, 1.2d
- Institution and Participation: Questions 2.1e, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c, 2.2f, 3.2a
- Management Instrument: Questions 3.2b, 3.2d
- Financing: Questions 4.1b, 4.2a, and 4.2b

This objective is also expected to contribute to the broader SDG 6 target ranging from 6.1.1 to 6.6.1, and intersecting goals, such as SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Change), SDG 14 (Life below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

¹ The river basin approach is based on the principle that water and related resources should be managed and developed according to the overall conditions and characteristics of the river basin—including its resources, uses, priorities, potential sectors, and stakeholders (including gender considerations and vulnerable groups)—while maintaining environmental and ecosystem balance and ensuring climate resilience.

2.3. List of Priority Solution Areas and Related Priority Objectives

The priority solution areas are those that contribute to integrated water security and climate resilience in water-scarce river basins, and that address the issues and challenges in IWRM implementation discussed in Section 1.3.

Table 1. *List of Priority Solution Areas*

Issues and challenges identified based on SDG 6.5.1 monitoring	Related priority objectives to be reached	List of priority solution areas
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No progress of financing for IWRM since 2020 2. IWRM elements are not prioritized in national or sub-national budgets, possibly due to the absence of a clear technical approach and planning framework. 3. Limited effort to mobilize resources or develop financing mechanisms and plans to ensure sustained investment in IWRM implementation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of integrated water resources management and development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Securing allocations from government budgets 2. Mobilizing funds from other sources, such as development partners and other relevant stakeholders 3. Developing a sustainable finance mechanism to generate ongoing revenue for sustainable water resources management
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities for climate resilience and integrated multi-purpose water resources management and development have been insufficiently utilized and coordinated efforts management and development to enhance water security in the river basin have not been effective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote climate-resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the water scarce river basins 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development in the water-scarce river basins to ensure sustainable water security
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanisms for inclusive stakeholder participation and coordination remain underdeveloped. 2. River Basin Management Committees and its basin plans are already in place, but have not been implemented and operationalized due to lack of capacity and budgetary support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. River basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development

3. Overview of actions by priority objectives

This chapter provides a structured summary of proposed actions aligned with each priority objective identified in the IWRM Action Plan. It outlines the key interventions needed to address Cambodia's water-related challenges, improve governance, and strengthen resilience. The actions are categorized under their corresponding objectives to ensure coherence and facilitate effective implementation, monitoring, and resource allocation.

Dai fishing season

Source: Fisheries Administration, Cambodia

This Action Plan aligns with the Pentagonal Strategy of the Seventh Legislature, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2024-2028, and the Strategic Plan of the Water Resources and Meteorology 2024-2028. It is also grounded in the IWRM Strategy developed by MOWRAM in 2005.

Key result areas of relevance to Cambodia include economic development and poverty alleviation, environmental protection, social development and equity, flood and drought management, integration through basin planning (national, transboundary and Lower Mekong Basin), water resources information management, regional cooperation, and governance. Sector integration for economic development encompasses water for agriculture and irrigation, domestic and industrial water supply, fisheries, hydropower, navigation, tourism, flood and drought management and mitigation, and watershed management.

This Action Plan focuses on promoting water security and climate resilience in river basins through river basin approach and better implementation of IWRM, aiming to achieve a high degree of IWRM Implementation (score 70-90) by 2030. To this end, 22 activities are proposed for implementation during 2026-2030, under three main priority objectives that address critical issues and generate the intended three main outputs as outlined below. See Annex 1 for more details.

Table 2. Activity by Priority Objectives

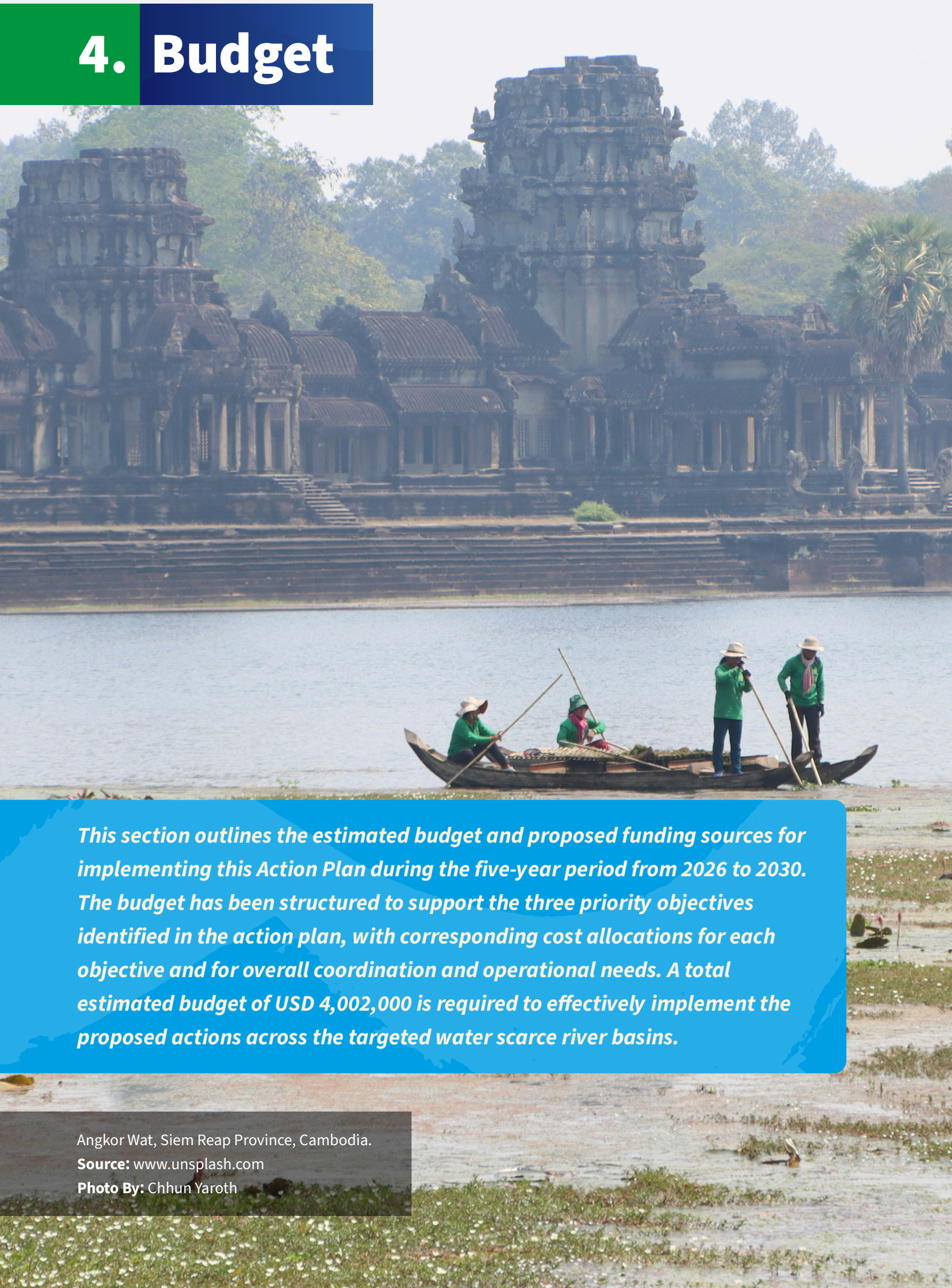
Priority Issue 1	Limited Funding
Priority Objective 1	Develop a sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of the IWRM implementation
Output 1	Sustainable finance plan for integrated water resources management
Indicator 1	(i) Substantial funds obtained for Action Plan implementation, (ii) Finance plan to ensure sustainable funds approved and operational, and (iii) Score of SDG 6.5.1 Component 4 reaches at least 70
Activity 1.1	Secure portions of government budgets through strategic planning and communication.
Activity 1.2	Apply for funds from development partners and other relevant stakeholders (see section 4.2).
Activity 1.3	Develop a sustainable finance plan and mechanism for ongoing revenue generation to support sustainable water resources management

Priority Issue 2	Opportunities for climate resilience and integrated multi-purpose water resources management and development have been insufficiently utilized and coordinated management and development to enhance water security in the river basin has not been effective
Priority Objective 2	Promote climate-resilient investments and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the water-scarce river basins (WSRBs)
Output 2	Climate-resilient, integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plans formulated for five WSRBs, with projects identified and developed
Indicator 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A river basin and IWRM-based planning and project development process coordinated and adopted (ii) Climate-resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plans formulated in five WSRBs (iii) Potential projects on climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management are identified, to enhance water security in each WSRBs. (iv) Project concepts and designs on the Climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management are developed for each WSRBs. (v) IWRM action plan and projects promoted (vi) One high priority project per WSRBs selected for funding and implementation (vii) River basin approach and IWRM implementation level enhanced (viii) River Basin Management Committee activated and operational (ix) Five detailed project proposals developed
Activity 2.1	Identify and determine five water scarce river basins based on results of water accounting and relevant studies
Activity 2.2	Conduct stakeholder analysis to identify key actors in climate resilient and multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the WSRB.
Activity 2.3	Provide technical orientation to 125 stakeholders (from relevant Line Ministries at national, provincial and district level within the 5 priority river basins), on river basin and IWRM approach in the water and related resources planning and project development for the five WSRB.
Activity 2.4	Conduct participatory review of water and related resources policies, strategies, legislation, governance, and tools

Activity 2.5	Conduct water accounting for each WSRB.
Activity 2.6	Conduct IWRM-based river basins studies and analysis to inform preparation of State of the WSRBs Report
Activity 2.7	Conduct water tenure assessment for each WSRBs
Activity 2.8	Conduct participatory analysis of opportunities and challenges for climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development
Activity 2.9	Develop climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plan for WSRBs
Activity 2.10	Identify priority projects through participatory processes
Activity 2.11	Develop projects concept and design for each WSRBs
Activity 2.12	Organize a national Learning Forum with key stakeholders of the five WSRBs and other relevant stakeholders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Launch their respective plans and projects, (ii) Share experiences and lessons learnt from the river basin approach, IWRM application process, and the sense of coordinated water resources management and development (iii) Select one high priority project per river basin for funding and implementation
Activity 2.13	Develop detailed proposals for the five selected projects for funding and implementation
Priority Issue 3	Implementation of IWRM is still limited and has not been profound
Priority Objective 3	To strengthen the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development
Output 3	Enhanced capacity and application of the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development, among key staff from line ministries and stakeholders in the river basins.
Indicator 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Number of key staff and stakeholders with improved capacity in river basin and IWRM approach in water resources management and development planning and project development (ii) A Guide for integrating IWRM into the project development approved and adapted (iii) SDG 6.5.1 implementation score reaches between 70-90 by 2030

Activity 3.1	Conduct learning need assessment at national and river basin levels and development of IWRM Learning Program
Activity 3.2	Organize IWRM Learning Session for key staff and stakeholders to build practical understanding of IWRM principle through case studies and shared experience on the importance of its application in water and related resources management and development
Activity 3.3	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the water and related resources management and development planning
Activity 3.4	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the project development and implementation
Activity 3.5	Organize Learning Session on stakeholder engagement and coordination in water and related resources management and development
Activity 3.6	Organize Learning Session on SDG 6.5.1 and its monitoring.

4. Budget



This section outlines the estimated budget and proposed funding sources for implementing this Action Plan during the five-year period from 2026 to 2030. The budget has been structured to support the three priority objectives identified in the action plan, with corresponding cost allocations for each objective and for overall coordination and operational needs. A total estimated budget of USD 4,002,000 is required to effectively implement the proposed actions across the targeted water scarce river basins.

Angkor Wat, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia.

Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Chhun Yaroeth

As has been discussed in Section 1.4.4, limited fund is a high priority challenge in the IWRM implementation to be addressed. In response, the priority objective to develop sustainable finance plan with intended output and three main priority objectives are set under Section 4 to support the implementation of this IWRM action plan. The ITWG and its IWRM Unit will make all effort to secure portions of government budgets, apply for funds from development partners and relevant stakeholders, and develop a sustainable finance plan and mechanism for ongoing revenue raising to ensure USD 4.002 Million.

4.1. Cost per action

Table 2 and Annex 1 presents the cost estimates per action and the annual breakdown from 2026 to 2030. The total estimated cost of implementing the Action Plan over the five-year period is USD 4.002 million, with following allocations:

- USD 117,000 for developing sustainable finance plans and mechanisms to support IWRM implementation,
- USD 2,525,750 for developing climate-resilient and integrated multi-purpose water resources management and development plans and projects in the five water scarce river basins,
- USD 837,250 for strengthening the capacity of key staff from water and related resources line ministries, and for engaging beneficiaries in the river basin approach and in IWRM implementation process, and
- USD 522,000 for five years of operational cost.

Table 3. *Cost estimate for the Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030*

Output	Activities	Estimated Cost (US\$)
Priority Objective 1: Develop a sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of the IWRM implementation		117,000.00
Activity 1.1	Securing portions of government budgets with carefully-made plans and strategic communication	14,000.00
Activity 1.2	Apply for funds from development partners and relevant stakeholders as outlined in section 4.2	56,000.00
Activity 1.3	Develop a sustainable finance plan and mechanism for ongoing revenue raising to fund sustainable water resources management	47,000.00
Priority Objective 2: Promote climate-resilient investments and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the water-scarce river basins (WSRBs)		2,525,750.00
Activity 2.1	Identify and determine five water scarce river basins based on relevant studies and existing data and information	164,250.00
Activity 2.2	Conduct stakeholder analysis to be engaged in climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and project development in the WSRBs	68,000.00

Activity 2.3	Conduct Kick-off Meeting and Technical Orientation (for 125 stakeholders from relevant Line Ministries at national, provincial and district level within the 5 priority river basins) on IWRM principle, approach and its elements, and its application in the water and related resources planning and project development for five WSRBs	133,000.00
Activity 2.4	Conduct participatory review of water and related resources policies, strategies, legislation, governance, plans, and tools in the five WSRBs	112,500.00
Activity 2.5	Conduct water accounting specific to each WSRB and consult with its stakeholders	139,000.00
Activity 2.6	Conduct IWRM-based river basins studies and analysis to inform preparation of State of the five Water Scarce River Basins Report	288,750.00
Activity 2.7	Conduct water tenure assessment for each water scarce river basin and consult the results with the river basins' stakeholders	100,000.00
Activity 2.8	Conduct participatory analysis of opportunities and challenges for climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development	149,750.00
Activity 2.9	Develop climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plan for the WSRBs	278,750.00
Activity 2.10	Conduct participatory identification of climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development projects	381,250.00
Activity 2.11	Develop projects concept and design for each water scarce river basin	443,750.00
Activity 2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Organize a national Learning Forum with key stakeholders of the five river basins and other relevant stakeholders to: Launch their respective plan and projects, (ii) Share experiences and lessons learnt from the river basin approach, IWRM application process, and the sense of coordinated water resources management and development, (iii) Select one high priority project per each river basin for funding and implementation 	75,550.00
Activity 2.13	Develop detailed proposal for the five selected projects for funding and implementation	191,200.00

Priority Objective 3: To strengthen the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development		837,250.00
Activity 3.1	Conduct capacity need assessment at national and River basin level and development of learning program	130,000.00
Activity 3.2	Organize IWRM Learning Session to enable the water and related key Staff and the stakeholders, understanding of IWRM principle through their practical experience and case studies elsewhere, and the importance of its application in water and related resources management and development	116,000.00
Activity 3.3	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the water and related resources management and development planning with the key staff and stakeholders	191,000.00
Activity 3.4	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the project development and implementation with the key staff and stakeholders and develop a Guide for IWRM integration into the project.	149,000.00
Activity 3.5	Organize learning session on stakeholder engagement and coordination in water and related resources management and development with the key staff	131,750.00
Activity 3.6	Organize Learning Session on SDG 6.5.1 and its relation to other SDG 6 indicators, and other SDG indicators and its monitoring with key staff and stakeholders	119,500.00
15% Operation cost		522,000.00
TOTAL		4,002,000.00

4.2. Sources of funding

As discussed in Section 1.8, two main sources of funding will be leveraged: public (government and Official Development Assistance - ODA) and private sector funding. The government public funding will be secured by integrating the Action Plan into MOWRAM's Strategic Plan 2024-2028. This integration will enable the inclusion of the Action Plan into the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP 2024-2028) and subsequently in the National Project Database for consideration under the three-year Rolling Public Investment Plan (PIP).

Once incorporated into national planning frameworks, the Action Plan's activity or project may be selected by development partner, particularly if they align with their strategic priorities. However, it is acknowledged that securing government budget allocations may be challenging due to the prioritization of infrastructure development.

Additional opportunities for funding include small government and ODA grants of up to USD 500,000, such as the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund, which covers sectors like IWRM and Climate Change. Donor funding and Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) and innovative financial mechanisms are also considered viable sources, particularly for IWRM-based water-climate infrastructure projects.

Relevant stakeholders and development partners who could potentially support or co-finance the implementation of Action 2 of the Action Plan, include:

- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- World Bank (WB)
- Agence Francaise Pour Development (AFD)
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

To secure sustainable financing, the IWRM Technical Working Group must take proactive steps in developing funding initiatives and innovative mechanisms. This includes promoting IWRM-based project concepts and seeking role as service providers for project implementation and stakeholder engagement to facilitate coordinated water resource development.

4.3. The Fundraising Plan

Fund raising plan is the first objective and initial action to address priority objectives and challenges of limited funding identified in this Action Plan. It must be implemented immediately following the endorsement of the Action Plan to ensure that funds are secured for implementation starting in 2026, particularly Activity 1.2.

MOWRAM can explore several fundraising opportunities, including:

- Develop the project investment plan and proposals for implementation, particularly, activities under Priority Objective 2,
- Engage and seek to persuade potential development partners during key events, including the launch of both Action Plans, the Regional Learning Exchange Workshop, the Development Partners Coordination Meeting organized by MOWRAM, and other regional or international funding opportunities such as those offered by the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) and similar initiatives,
- Initiate different mechanisms for fund raising, ranging from providing IWRM support in the project implementation, to be a service provider, and
- Develop a sustainable finance plan for fund raising.

Simultaneously, Activities 1.1 and 1.3 should be carried out in parallel with Activity 1.2. It is recommended that the IWRM Unit under the IWRM Technical Working Group be established promptly to take the lead in implementing these activities and ensure adequate financing for the Action Plan.

5. Monitoring and evaluation framework

To ensure accountability, transparency, and adaptive management, this chapter outlines the framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the IWRM Action Plan 2026–2030. Effective monitoring not only helps track the progress of specific actions and activities but also ensures alignment with national and international commitments, particularly the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.5.1 on Integrated Water Resources Management. The proposed framework combines national monitoring mechanisms with global reporting obligations to ensure that the plan remains on course and responsive to changing contexts.

Pink flamingo on body of water during daytime, Cambodia

Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Daniel Bernard

5.1. Suggested monitoring process and accountability mechanism

Monitoring of the IWRM Action Plan will take place through two complementary approaches:

1. Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan based on the specific indicators outlined for each activity (see Annex 1).
2. Monitoring the overall level of IWRM implementation, using the global SDG 6.5.1 Monitoring and Reporting Framework to track Cambodia's progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

As Cambodia participates in the triennial Global Monitoring of SDG 6.5.1, monitoring activities will align with the UN-Water Global Framework. These efforts are also integrated into the National Indicator Framework coordinated by the Ministry of Planning (MOP). The Focal Point for SDG 6.5.1, designated from MOWRAM, will be responsible for coordinating with relevant line ministries (LMs) to undertake the monitoring process.

Monitoring will include:

- Annual reporting on implementation progress,
- Triennial monitoring and reporting that aligns with Global SDG Monitoring cycle
- Final evaluation report at the end of the implementation period.

All reports will be submitted to the Minister of MOWRAM, UN-Water, and other relevant stakeholders.

5.2. Responsible institutions for coordinating and ensuring follow-up and monitoring the Action Plan

The Director of the Department of Water Resources Management and Conservation at MOWRAM, who also serves as Cambodia's Focal Point for SDG 6.5.1, is proposed as the lead coordinator for monitoring and follow-up on the Action Plan. Monitoring should be conducted on an annual basis, during the triennial global reporting cycle, and at the conclusion of the Action Plan's implementation period.

The same coordination and reporting approach used in the 2023 SDG 6.5.1 Monitoring and Reporting can be continued for this purpose.

6. Risks and mitigation strategies

Effective implementation of the IWRM Action Plan requires a careful assessment of potential risks that could hinder progress and the development of strategies to mitigate them. This chapter identifies key internal and external risks, particularly those related to financial constraints, and outlines corresponding mitigation measures. By proactively addressing these challenges, the plan ensures greater resilience, adaptability, and sustainability in its execution. The proposed measures are closely aligned with the plan's priority objectives, especially Objective 1, which serves both as a risk mitigation mechanism and an enabler for successful implementation of the entire Action Plan.

farmer at work

Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Robin Canfield

6.1. Identification of Hazards and Internal/External risks

No major hazards are currently expected to disrupt the Action Plan implementation, as Cambodia remains in a stable and peaceful condition under the protection of the RGC. Assuming there are no outbreaks of contagious disease, the primary risk to the action plan implementation is limited financial resources, as previously mentioned in section 4.2.

6.2. Risk Mitigation Measures

To mitigate the risk of insufficient funding, proactive and sustained fundraising efforts must be undertaken. These efforts are outlined in Section 4.2 and 4.3 and are also addressed through Action 2 under Priority Objective 2 of this Action Plan.

Because Objective 1 is not only a risk mitigation measure but also foundational to the successful achievement of the other two objectives, the IWRM Technical Working Group - supported by the Secretariat - should initiate implementation immediately in 2025 soon after the Action Plan's endorsement.

All three activities under the first objective should be launched simultaneously:

- Securing allocation from the government budget (Activity 1.1)
- Raising funds through available opportunities with development Partners such as the LMC Special Funds and others (Activity 1.2)
- Developing the sustainable financing plan with innovative funding mechanism (Activity 1.3)

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the IWRM Action Plan 2026–2030 in Cambodia relies on clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and effective coordination among multiple stakeholders. This chapter outlines the proposed institutional structure, mandates of key actors, and coordination mechanisms necessary to drive integrated water resources management in Cambodia. The approach builds on existing legal and institutional frameworks while introducing dedicated technical bodies to ensure alignment, accountability, and efficiency in implementation. The roles and responsibilities detailed here aim to promote inclusive participation, inter-ministerial cooperation, and strengthened stakeholder engagement across national, sub-national, and community levels, particularly women.

Pipe Water in a farm in Cambodia.

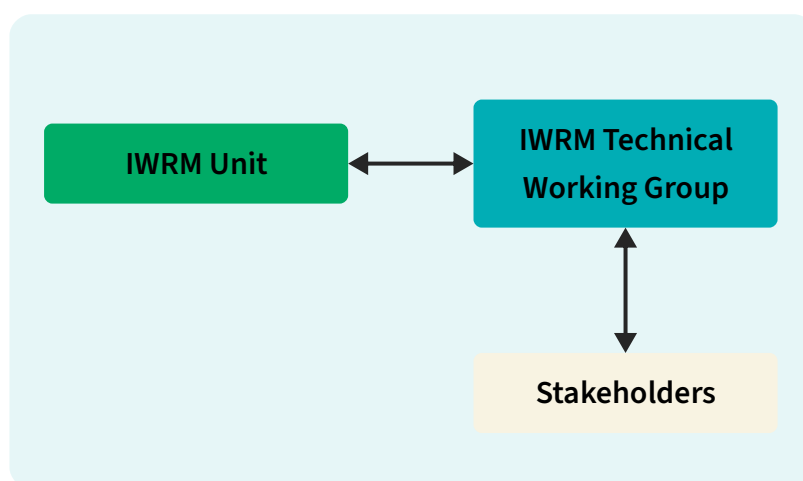
Source: www.unsplash.com

Photo By: Nils B

7.1. Structure

Building upon existing national and sub-national mechanisms, this Action Plan proposes the establishment of multi-disciplinary IWRM Technical Working Group (ITWG) for the river basin and water resources management (include drought and flood management), conservation and development, led by MOWRAM and supported by a dedicated IWRM Unit serving as the technical secretariat. This structure (see Chart 1) will guide and oversee the implementation of the Climate Resilience and IWRM Action Plan 2026-2030 and promote IWRM-based programs and projects across relevant ministries.

Chart 1. *Structure of the IWRM Technical Working Group*



The ITWG will consist of Leader, Deputy Leader and Members. This technical working group will induce dynamism and enhance on-going IWRM implementation with the support of the IWRM Unit. The ITGW will be composed of 15 to 17 Representatives at the Department level from water and related LMs and institutions. The group will be chaired by the Director or Deputy Director General of MOWRAM and will be officially established through a Ministerial Decision (“Sech Kdei Samrach”) issued by the Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology to lead and oversee the IWRM Action Plan implementation. Participating ministries and institutions include: the CNMC, TSA, MAFF, MOE, MRD, NCDM MOWA, MOP, MLMUPC, MME, MISTI, MPWT, MOT, MOI, MEF, MOFAIC. The responsibilities of the ITWG are:

- Coordinate with all implementing LMs and Institutions, Development Partners, Technical Communities, stakeholders, and other governmental institutions,
- Formal convener of any consultation workshops,
- Mobilize the resources for action plan implementation,
- Monitor the IWRM action plan implementation,
- Prepare quarterly, annual and ad hoc reports,
- Conduct quarterly and annual coordination meetings, and
- Report to the Secretary of State/Under-Secretary of State of MOWRAM.

A dedicated IWRM Unit will be established as the IWRM Technical Working Group's full time technical secretariat. The Unit will consist of:

- One Leader (preferably from Department Director of Water Resources Management and Conservation)
- One full-time Technical Expert preferably in IWRM (external or internal)
- Two technical staff from MOWRAM
- One finance and logistics Staff from MOWRAM

They will meet monthly, and main responsibilities will include, but not limited to:

- Assist the ITWG in action plan implementation,
- Carrying out full-time coordination function and technical operation,
- Assist the ITWG in all report preparation,
- Assist the ITWG in monitoring the progress, and
- Report to the Leader of the ITWG.

Stakeholders will form consultative groups of 10 to 50 individuals and organizations. These groups will be engaged throughout the Action Plan implementation process to provide feedback, contribute to monitoring, and ensure participatory planning. A stakeholder analysis will be conducted to identify and select relevant actors, users, and beneficiaries.

7.2. List of Mandated Institutions and Other Stakeholders Responsible for Action Plan Implementation

Since the implementation of IWRM in the Mekong River Commission through the Basin Development Program, the Cambodia National Mekong Committee has actively engaged significant relevant water and water related Line Ministries (LMs) and Institutions, Research and Academia and the NGO-Forum of Cambodia. These entities continue to be instrumental in the Action Plan implementation. However, there is a need to make an official arrangement for this purpose.

Table 4. *The key Line Ministries and Institutions responsible for the action plan implementation*

List of Line Ministries and institutions	Ultimate responsibility
(1) MOWRAM	Leading Line Ministries, Implementing
(2) CNMC	Implementing & Supporting Institution
(3) TSA	Implementing, Supporting institution
(4) MAFF	Implementing, Supporting Line Ministries
(5) MOE	Implementing, Supporting Line Ministries
(6) MOP	Integrate the IWRM action plan into the NSDP
(7) NCDM	Supporting Institution
(8) MRD	Implementing & Supporting Line Ministries
(9) MISTI	Implementing & Supporting Line Ministries
(10) MME	Implementing & Supporting Line Ministries
(11) MPWT	Implementing, Supporting Line Ministries
(12) MOWA	Supporting Line Ministries
(13) MLMUPC	Supporting Line Ministries
(14) MOT	Supporting Line Ministries
(15) MOI	Supporting Line Ministries
(16) MEF	Supporting Line Ministries
(17) MOFAIC	Supporting Line Ministries

The main International Organizations and Institutions, Financial Institutions and Development Partners listed below have cooperated and continue to cooperate and support the IWRM implementation in Cambodia in one way or another. Their cooperation and support ranges from implementation, funding support, financing, coordinating and monitoring. They include:

- (1) The Mekong River Commission (MRC)
- (2) The Great Mekong Sub-region (GMS)
- (3) The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC)
- (4) The Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- (5) The World Bank (WB)
- (6) The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- (7) The Agence Francaise Pour Development (AFD)
- (8) Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- (9) The International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
- (10) The GWP Cambodia (Cambodia WP)

7.3. Coordination Mechanism Among Different Actors

The IWRM Technical Working Group (ITWG) will be responsible for coordinating implementation across all stakeholders in the action plan implementation based on a five-year work plan and roadmap. Special emphasis will be placed on the implementation of Action 1, which is foundational to the success of the entire plan. The finance plan, developed under Action 1, should be implemented through a participatory and transparent stakeholder approach, ensuring accountability and long-term sustainability.

Coordination activities will include:

- Quarterly meetings (three per year) and one annual meeting for ITWG members to review progress, identify challenges, and discuss solutions and next steps.
- Ad hoc high-priority meetings may be called with specific agendas when needed.

The IWRM Unit, under guidance and direction from the ITWG Leader and Members, will coordinate day-to-day implementation activities, including meetings, workshops and other emerging activities. During monthly meeting, the IWRM Unit will report on activities' implementation and progress, raise issues and challenges and seek measures to reach the goal. The ITWG Leader will provide directions, update the Government policy to be aligned and foreseen events, and provide recommendations. This coordination mechanism is designed to ensure transparency, ownership, and shared accountability for the successful delivery of the Cambodia Climate Resilience and IWRM Action Plan 2026–2030.

8. Timeline and next steps



This chapter outlines the proposed timeline for the implementation of the “Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030: Toward the Achievement of Agenda 2030”, including key milestones and sequencing of activities under each of the three strategic actions. Timely and coordinated implementation is crucial for achieving the plan’s objectives, particularly in relation to financing, capacity building, and the development of water resources management plans. The sequencing of activities takes into account dependencies among actions, funding availability, and the need to build a shared understanding of IWRM among stakeholders.

Krong Preah Sihanouk, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Source: www.pexels.com

Photo By: Vicky Tran

8.1. Detailed Timeline Including Key Milestones during the Implementation Period

The implementation of Action 1 should begin immediately after the Action Plan is officially endorsed, for reasons outlined in Sections 4.3 and 6. The implementation of Actions 2 and 3, along with their respective activities, can also commence around the same time — provided that funding is secured (see Table 4).

- **Priority Objective 1: Development of sustainable finance plan**

The three activities under this priority objective are recommended to start in parallel beginning in 2025, immediately after the endorsement of the action plan. These activities should be carried out continuously throughout the implementation period.

- **Priority Objective 2: Promoting Climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management planning and project development in the five water scarce river basins**

This action is scheduled to commence after the completion of Action 3, likely by mid-2026. Each river basin will require the implementation of 12 specific activities, with an estimated minimum of 6.5 months needed to complete the planning and project development for one basin. To ensure timely completion, it is recommended that the ITWG implement the 12 activities for all five river basins in parallel.

- **Priority Objective 3: Strengthening the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development**

Although listed as the third action, its implementation should begin as soon as funding becomes available—ideally at the start of 2026. This is because Action 3 underpins the successful delivery of Action 2 by ensuring that all implementers and basin stakeholders share a common understanding of IWRM principles and are equipped with the appropriate tools and approaches for basin-level planning and management. The ITWG should try to complete all activities under Action 3 within the first six months of 2026, so that they can start implementing activities under Action 2 in July 2026.

Table 5. Indicative time and milestones of the actions and activities

	Actions / Activities	2025	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	Preparation Phase						
Action 1: Developing sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of the IWRM implementation							
1.1	Securing portions of government budgets with carefully-made plans and strategic communication	✗	✗				✗
1.2	Apply for funds from development partners and relevant stakeholders	✗	✗				✗
1.3	Develop sustainable finance plan and mechanism for ongoing revenue raising to fund IWRM	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Action 2: climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and projects development in the water scarce river basins							
2.1	Identify and determine five water scarce river basins based on relevant studies		✗				
2.2	Conduct stakeholder analysis in the five water scarce river basins		✗				
2.3	Provide Technical Orientation to 125 stakeholders on river basin and IWRM approach in the water and related resources planning and project development			✗			
2.4	Conduct participatory review of water & related resources policies, strategies, legislation, governance, and tools			✗			
2.5	Conduct water accounting specific to each water scarce river basin			✗			
2.6	Conduct IWRM-based river basins study and analysis and prepare State of the Water Scarce River Basins Report			✗			
2.7	Conduct water tenure assessment for each water scarce river basin				✗		
2.8	Conduct participatory analysis of opportunities and challenges for climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development				✗		
2.9	Develop climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plan for water scarce river basins				✗		
2.10	Participatory identification of climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development projects					✗	

	Actions / Activities	2025	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
2.11	Develop projects concept and design for each water scarce river basin					✗	
2.12	Organize National Learning Forum with key stakeholders of the five river basins and other relevant stakeholders						✗
2.13	Develop detailed proposals for the five selected projects for funding and implementation						✗
Action 3: Strengthening the river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development							
3.1	Conduct capacity need assessment at national and River basin level		✗				
3.2	Organize IWRM Learning Session to enable the water and related key Staff and the stakeholders, understanding of IWRM principle through their practical experience and case studies elsewhere, and the importance of its application		✗				
3.3	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the water and related resources management and development planning		✗				
3.4	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the project development and implementation		✗				
3.5	Organize Learning Session on stakeholder engagement and coordination in water and related resources management and development		✗				
3.6	Organize Learning Session on SDG 6.5.1 and its relation to other SDG 6 indicators, and other SDG indicators and its monitoring		✗				
	Monitoring the implementation of the IWRM Action Plan		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

8.2. Immediate next steps to kick-start implementation

To ensure a smooth transition from planning to action, it is essential to identify and initiate a set of priority activities that will lay the groundwork for effective implementation of the 2026–2030 Action Plan. These immediate next steps are intended to establish momentum, reinforce institutional coordination, and address foundational requirements such as capacity building, financing mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement. Table 6 outlines the proposed priority actions to be undertaken in the early phase of implementation.

Table 6. *Immediate next steps*

Activity	Timeline
1. Submit the IWRM Action Plan to the Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology for official endorsement	Q2 2025
1. Establish the IWRM Unit	Q3 2025
1. Establish the ITWG	Q3 2025
1. Raise funds and develop sustainable finance plan	Q3 2025
1. Develop detailed work plan	Q4 2025
1. Organize the first ITWG meeting to discuss the work plan, the implementation roadmap, coordination mechanism and logistics arrangement required, tasks and responsibilities, and to decide on the kick-off and starting	Q4 2025
1. Recruit key experts for providing technical assistance in project development	Q3 2025
1. Develop projects/program for each action	Q4 2025
1. Organize the ITWG Coordination Meeting with the Members to review the projects and programs proposals, provide technical input, discuss the project work plan, and implementation plan and process	End Q4 2025

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Annex 1 : Log Frame of the Cambodia Climate Resilient and Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan 2026-2030

	Activities	Indicators	Implementor	Targeted Beneficiaries	Cost Estimate (USD)
Priority issues 1: Limited fund					
Priority Objective 1: Develop a sustainable finance plan to support the achievement of the above objectives					
Output 1: Sustainable finance plan for integrated water resources management					
Activity 1.1	Securing portions of government budgets with carefully-made plans and strategic communication	(i) Substantial funds obtained for IWRM Action Plan implementation, (ii) Finance plan to ensure sustainable funds approved and operational, and (iii) Score of Component 4 of the SDG 6.5.1 will be at least 70	ITWG	ITWG	14,000
Activity 1.2	Apply for funds from development partners and relevant stakeholders as outlined in section 4.2			ITWG	56,000
Activity 1.3	Develop a sustainable finance plan and mechanism for ongoing revenue raising to fund sustainable water resources management			ITWG	47,000
	Sub-Total Output 1				117,000
Priority issues 2: Opportunities for climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development have been limitedly absorbed and coordinated management and development to enhance water security in the river basin has not been effective					
Priority Objective 2: Promote climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and project development in the water scarce river basins (WSRBs)					
Output 2: Climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plans for the five water scarce river basins formulated and projects identified and developed					
Activity 2.1	Identify and determine five water scarce river basins based on relevant studies and existing data and information	(i) A profound river basin & IWRM-based planning and project development process, and coordinated development foundation	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water and related resources departments of the five water scarce river basins (WSRBs)	164,250
	Activities	Indicators	Implementor	Targeted Beneficiaries	Cost Estimate (USD)
Activity 2.2	Conduct stakeholder analysis to be engaged in climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development planning and project development in the WSRBs		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources departs of the 5 WSRBs	68,000
Activity 2.3	Conduct Kick-off Meeting and Technical Orientation for 125 stakeholders on IWRM principle, approach and its elements, and its application in the water and related resources planning and project development for five WSRBs		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water and related resources departments of the 5 WSRBs	133,000
Activity 2.4	Conduct participatory review of water and related resources policies, strategies, legislation, governance, plans, and tools in the five WSRBs		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	112,500
Activity 2.5	Conduct water accounting specific to each WSRB and consult with its stakeholders		ITWG with support from consultants		139,000
Activity 2.6	Conduct IWRM-based river basins studies and analysis to inform preparation of State of the five Water Scarce River Basins Report		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	288,750
Activity 2.7	Conduct water tenure assessment for each water scarce river basin and consult the results with the river basins' stakeholders		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	100,000
Activity 2.8	Conduct participatory analysis of opportunities and challenges for climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development		ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	149,750

	Activities	Indicators	Implementor	Targeted Beneficiaries	Cost Estimate (USD)
Activity 2.9	Develop climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plan for the WSRBs	(ii) Five Climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development plans for the five WSRBs	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	278,750
Activity 2.10	Conduct participatory identification of climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development projects	(iii) Potential climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development projects for water security in each WSRB	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	381,250
Activity 2.11	Develop projects concept and design for each water scarce river basin	(iv) Project concepts and designs for the Climate resilient and integrated multi-purpose water and related resources management and development projects for each WSRB	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	443,750
Activity 2.12	(i) Organize a national Learning Forum with key stakeholders of the five river basins and other relevant stakeholders to: Launch their respective plan and projects, (ii) Share experiences and lessons learnt from the river basin approach, IWRM application process, and the sense of coordinated water resources management and development, (iii) Select one high priority project per each river basin for funding and implementation (iv)	(v) IWRM Action Plans and Projects promoted; (vi) One high priority project selected for funding and implementation (vii) River basin approach and the level of IWRM implementation enhanced; (viii) River Basin Management Committees activated and operational	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	75,550
	Activities	Indicators	Implementor	Targeted Beneficiaries	Cost Estimate (USD)
Activity 2.13	Develop detailed proposal for the five selected projects for funding and implementation	(ix) Five detailed project proposals	ITWG with support from consultants	Provincial water & related resources depts. & stakeholders of the 5 WSRBs	191,200
	Sub-Total Output 2				2,525,750
Priority objectives 3: Implementation of IWRM is still limited and has not been profound					
Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of key staff of water and related resources Line Ministries and beneficiaries in river basin approach and in IWRM implementation					
Output 3: The river basin approach and IWRM-based water and related resources management and development strengthened for the key staff of water and related resources Line Ministries and river basins’ stakeholders					
Activity 3.1	Conduct capacity need assessment at national and River basin level and development of learning program	(i) No. of key staff and stakeholders with capacity strengthened in river basin and IWRM approach in water resources management and development planning and project development; (ii) A guide for IWRM integration into the project development approved and adapted; (iii) Score of SDG 6.5.1 monitored in 2030 will be between 70-90	ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	130,000
Activity 3.2	Organize IWRM Learning Session to enable the water and related key Staff and the stakeholders, understanding of IWRM principle through their practical experience and case studies elsewhere, and the importance of its application in water and related resources management and development		ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	116,000
Activity 3.3	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the water and related resources management and development planning with the key staff and stakeholders		ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	191,000
Activity 3.4	Organize Learning Session on Application of the IWRM Principle in the project development and implementation with the key staff and stakeholders		ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	149,000
	Activities	Indicators	Implementor	Targeted Beneficiaries	Cost Estimate (USD)
	and develop a Guide for IWRM integration into the project.				
Activity 3.5	Organize learning session on stakeholder engagement and coordination in water and related resources management and development with the key staff		ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	131,750
Activity 3.6	Organize Learning Session on SDG 6.5.1 and its relation to other SDG 6 indicators, and other SDG indicators and its monitoring with key staff and stakeholders		ITWG with support from consultants	ITWG & Provincial water and related resources departments	119,500
	Sub-Total Output 3				837,250
	TOTAL				3,480,000
	Operation cost (15% of the total cost)				522,000
	GRAND TOTAL				4,002,000