GRoW-Newsletter 09/2018

Dear Readers,

The funding measure GRoW (Global analyses and local solutions for sustainable water resources management) has been launched by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) to help achieve SDG 6. Comprising 12 cooperation projects, GRoW unites experts from over 90 institutions active in research, business, and practice. Their aim, using some 40 case studies worldwide, is to develop innovative ways of increasing good governance in the water sector.

We are delighted to be sharing the first GRoW Newsletter with you. GRoW has been going on for a little over a year now, and it paints a very positive picture so far: The research projects started well, picked up pace steadily and are now attracting a great deal of international attention. We would also like to use the opportunity to announce the upcoming **Mid-term Conference**, which will take place on **20 - 21 February 2019 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany**.

This newsletter will feature the following:

- GRoWnet in dialogue with practicioners
- Highlights from GRoW projects
- Cross-cutting topics at a glance
- GRoW in the spotlight
- Upcoming GRoW events
- Water news

If you are interested in receiving more GRoW-Newsletters in the future but you are not on the distribution list yet, please subscribe here.

Enjoy reading!

Kind regards,
The GRoWnet team

GRoWnet in dialogue with practitioners

Dr Graham Alabaster, a co-initiator of GEMI (UN-Water Global Expanded Monitoring Initiative), is interested in cooperating with GRoW to discuss and develop ways in which the scientific community can engage in the monitoring process for SDG 6. The GRoW research programme and the scientific community could contribute to the process by improving data collection and modelling, helping to build data observatories, providing accessible research results and establishing bilateral relations with GEMI members.

Find the full interview on page 5.

Highlights from SaWaM, InoCottonGRoW and MuDak-WRM

SaWaM welcomes Sudanese state minister to workshop

The SaWaM project is developing a prototype for an online decision-support tool for seasonal reservoir planning and management in semi-arid regions. In its first year, SaWaM conducted initial test runs of diverse models and has been building up strong contacts in the test regions. One of the highlights was the participation of Sudanese state minister Hon Khidir M Gasm Elseed at the kick-off workshop in Khartoum, Sudan.

Find out more on page 7.

InoCottonGRoW commissions a pilot plant for the anaerobic treatment of wastewater in Pakistan

Within InoCottonGRoW German and Pakistani partners work jointly on making water consumption more efficient and productive along the entire cotton-textile value chain. The work combines satellite remote sensing, hydrological and hydraulic modelling, surveys of cotton farmers, audits of textile companies, and measurements of irrigation channels and groundwater. The setting up of the anaerobic pilot plant for wastewater treatment in Punjab marks a milestone.

Find out more on page 7.

MuDak-WRM receives a fully equipped research ship

The MuDak-WRM project is developing a globally applicable hydrological model for predicting mid- to long-term changes in the water quality of reservoirs. It is doing so by simplifying the underlying scientific approaches and therefore the required data. During its first year, MuDak-WRM made great strides in collecting local data, developing the hydrological model and conducting measurements in Brazil and Germany, and feeding the first results into a real-time data network (Sensorweb).

Find out more on page 8.

GRoW Cross-cutting topics at a glance

To harness synergies and ensure that knowledge is shared across individual projects, GRoW partners work on cross-cutting topics of joint interest. The work on the topics started off well with a kick-off event in Berlin in March this year. The first three topics address incentive mechanisms in the context of governance, hitting the targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, and water footprints. After additional online meetings have been conducted and next steps have been planned throughout the last months, the next meetings will take place soon.

Find out more on page 9.

GRoW in the spotlight

GRoW position paper introduced at High-Level Political Forum 2018

The GRoW project partners produced a position paper for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the in-depth review of SDG 6. The paper highlighted key scientific challenges to achieving the ambitious SDG 6. In the paper, the GRoW partners emphasise the need to build a better evidence base for achieving and monitoring SDG 6. They call for a global platform that would bring together science, policy and practice to bundle key water topics, and consolidate knowledge on achieving the SDGs and thereby strengthen evidence-based decisions. For further information and to read the position paper, please click here.
In July, an in-depth review of SDG 6 was conducted at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York. GRoW steering committee member Dr Ursula Eid introduced the GRoW position paper, its call for an international science platform, and the GRoW projects working on water footprints at several HLPF side events. Find out more on page 10.

GRoW attracts interest from international stakeholders and environmental organisations

GRoW has begun to develop active partnerships and networks with public and private stakeholders around the world, and is attracting a great deal of support from global environmental organisations. This keen interest shows that GRoW is doing relevant, topical work – primarily because it is successfully developing globally transferrable local and regional solutions for protecting water resources.
If you are interested in finding out more about our partnerships, find more on page 11.

GRoW at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil

We had a superb example of collaboration between GRoW projects in March. The projects SaWaM, Trust and WANDEL presented their work at the side event “Water scarcity in semi-arid environments of our Earth: Main challenges and recent developments for risk mitigation”, which was held at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil. In addition, several GRoW projects presented their work at the EGU General Assembly (8-13 April) and IFAT in Munich (14-18 May). Find out more on page 11.

Upcoming GRoW events

The kick-off conference was just eighteen months ago, but GRoW has already held a considerable number of events at relevant international conferences. What's more, GRoW has just picked up the pace and many more are to come. Keep up to date by checking the GRoW events regularly.

Here are the next events coming up for the whole GRoW community:

27 September 2018: Cross-cutting topic workshop, "Water footprints", Berlin, Germany
1 October 2018: 3rd meeting of the GRoW steering group, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

22 October 2018: Cross-cutting topic workshop, "Incentive mechanisms in the context of governance"**,** location TBD
11 December 2018: Cross-cutting topic workshop, "Sustainable Development Goals: Hitting the targets", Osnabrück, Germany
20-21 February 2019: Mid-term GRoW conference, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

If you're interested in finding out about relevant external events, have a look at our external event calendar here. It might also inspire you to attend events in collaboration with other projects!

Water news

High-Level Panel on Water publishes report entitled Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action

In March this year, the High-Level Panel on Water published its final report, Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action. The report stresses the need for action to avoid greater water shortage and defines three priorities for action: improving the understanding and valuation of water, leading integrated agendas to ensure access to water, and international cooperation.

Learn more about the detailed action plan on page 12.

UN announces Water Action Decade 2018-2028

World Water Day, which took place on 22 March, saw the launch of the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development. The decade will help to improve cooperation and capacity development in the field of water management by encouraging the sharing of good practices and providing a platform for advocacy, networking and partnership-building.

Learn more about the activities planned for the Water Action Decade on page 12.

World Economic Forum rates water crises among top five global risks for sixth year in a row

For the sixth year running, the annual Global Risks report has rated water crises as being among the top five global risks in terms of impact. The 2018 report covers more risks than ever, but pays particular attention to four key areas: environmental degradation, cybersecurity breaches, economic strains and geopolitical tensions.

Please visit the World Economic Forum website (here) for additional information.

Science Platform Sustainability 2030 calls for systematic implementation of Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy

In its inaugural publication, the Science Platform Sustainability 2030 has called for a significant increase in efforts to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Germany. The platform seeks to generate added value for science as well as for political and societal practice and to make a significant contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals.

Find out more about the key elements of the Science Platform Sustainability programme on page 13.

Interview with Graham Alabaster (UN Water GEMI initiative) on the possibilities for the science community to engage in the monitoring process of SDG 6

29.08.2018

Interview with Graham Alabaster of UN-Water's GEMI initiative on how the scientific community can engage in the SDG 6 monitoring process

Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a complex issue involving many UN organizations. In 2014, UN-Water launched the Global Expanded Monitoring Initiative (GEMI) to bring together the different UN organizations tasked with monitoring the SDG on water (SDG 6). GEMI's aim is to present the whole water sector and to bring together the many different initiatives that monitor the various SDG 6 targets. We spoke to Dr Graham Alabaster, one of the initiators of the GEMI initiative, about how the scientific community can engage in the SDG 6 monitoring process.

GRoW: Where do you currently see the greatest deficits in terms of SDG 6 monitoring?

Alabaster: For me, the main issue is that the countries haven't yet taken sufficient ownership of the monitoring process. They still see it as something which is external and to be supported by multilateral or bilateral organisations. This might be for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the national statistical offices have to deal with considerable gaps in technical capacity due to the complexity of SDG 6 monitoring compared to other SDGs. At our meeting in March, representatives from the statistical community, the

Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, who approved the SDG methodologies, clearly acknowledged the challenges of SDG 6 monitoring and asked for technical support. Besides the gaps in technical capacity at the national statistical offices, another challenge is that the institutional responsibility for the water indicators is divided across different ministries. But still, for me, our biggest challenge is to ensure that countries appreciate the need for monitoring. If they don't, they just won't do it – or they'll do it grudgingly and it won't be useful. So we have to work much harder to anchor the ownership of SDG 6 monitoring in sustainable development and encourage the countries to recognize it to a greater degree.

GRoW: The GRoW research projects work on different levels to support the SDGs. This ranges from local solutions to global analyses. Where do you see the greatest potential for a research programme like GRoW to support SDG 6? How could the scientific community and GRoW in particular support the monitoring process around SDG 6?

Alabaster: There are two aspects of SDG monitoring to which I think the scientific community can best contribute. One concerns providing improved and affordable methods of data collection and data modelling techniques where these are not available. For many of the countries, particularly in Africa where capacities are rather weak, collecting the data is still a huge challenge. One solution is to look at modelled estimates as an interim solution until better data becomes available. This could be done through a variety of methods and approaches, such as using remote sensing data, developing methods to compute wastewater inflows from water consumption, doing mass balances, or adopting model approaches that tap into existing knowledge and data in the countries. The other area where the scientific community can contribute is building national and regional data observatories for SDG 6, building capacities for data collection and related issues, and providing assistance for modelling data. These kinds of observatories must be interministerial. In most countries, an SDG 6 observatory would have to involve a combination of the ministries responsible for issues such as water, health, urban development and the environment.

The scientific community could also use SDG 6 monitoring to promote a resource conservation perspective. Looking at local solutions, there is a need to develop dedicated approaches for managing water demand and reusing wastewater. The scientific community should also help develop tools for assessing opportunities and approaches.

While the SDG monitoring looks at national data, it's also important to consider intranational differences to better understand the challenges and potential solutions. We need disaggregated data to understand things like differences and inequities in service levels across different urban areas, between the rich and the poor. We also need it to understand pollution sources and their impact on ambient water quality. In Mexico, for example, the volumes of wastewater from industry and domestic sources are equal. However, the organic load from industry is five times higher than from domestic wastewater. This is probably the case in many rapidly industrializing countries. Bangladesh is another example. Its huge textile industry is almost secretly polluting water resources in a very harmful way, while SDG 6 monitoring and related efforts are focussing on sanitation provision.

GRoW: How do you think research projects likes those in the GRoW programme could engage in ongoing processes in GEMI or other political processes related to the SDGs?

Alabaster: I'm always a fan of a good crisp paper that highlights relevant research results in a way that is accessible. That type of paper could be shared with the GEMI partners, mainly the seven UN agencies that are the custodians of SDG 6 monitoring. As for more direct involvement, we are planning a partnership platform within GEMI, where we could work much more closely with initiatives like GRoW and other partners to bring other sources of knowledge and information into the GEMI process. Within the process of developing SDG 6 monitoring, the custodian agencies have convened expert working groups, but on a rather ad-hoc basis. These doors shouldn't be closed. Depending on the research areas that the GRoW projects are working on, we could help establish bilateral relations between the GRoW organisations and the GEMI members, which include UNEP, UN-Habitat and FAO.

GRoW: Thank you very much for talking to us.

SaWaM welcomes Sudanese state minister to workshop

12.09.2018

Estimating the past, present and future availability of freshwater resources is essential to human life – especially in dry regions. However, the parameters are often prone to high levels of uncertainty due to factors such as insufficient local observations. The SaWaM project is therefore developing a prototype for an online decision-support tool for seasonal reservoir planning and management in semi-arid regions in Brazil, Sudan and Iran. The tool uses refined global seasonal forecasts, ecosystem and hydrosystem modelling, and satellite-based monitoring of key hydrological parameters in near real-time.

In its first year, SaWaM conducted initial tests of hydrological, atmospheric and ecosystem models and regionalized remote-sensing data. It also analysed the performance of seasonal predictions. One of the challenges turned out to be finding the right balance between the accuracy of the modelling/results and their transferability to other regions. SaWaM has also been busy conducting a series of workshops in the case study regions to involve local water managers from the outset and ensure that they transfer the findings into everyday practice.

One of the highlights of the workshops was the participation of Sudanese state minister Hon Khidir M Gasm Elseed at the kick-off event (which welcomed over 50 participants) in Khartoum, Sudan. The minister stressed the importance of seasonal water management across national borders. Other workshop attendees included important local partners such as representatives of the Dams Implementation Unit and the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation Sudan, who also greatly supported the organization of the event. One of the clear messages at the workshop was that the transboundary water management of the Nile and its tributaries across the countries of Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt is one of the major tasks in the region. It was also stressed that contributions from interdisciplinary projects (like SaWaM) are urgently needed in order to maintain the sustainable and fair distribution of water resources.

The workshops in Iran and Brazil also attracted a great deal of interest among local stakeholders. The kick-off meeting in Iran, which included training sessions on hydrometeorological methods, was hosted with Khuzestan Water and Power Authority (KWPA) and welcomed over 100 participants. KWPA also organized a tour of dams and reservoirs in the region for the SaWaM researchers. The kick-off meeting in Brazil was supported by local partner Agencia de national de aguas (ANA, which is responsible for managing the larger Brazilian rivers), and by Fundação Cearense de Meteorologia e Recursos Hídricos (FUNCEME). Along with ANA and FUNCEME, the SaWaM project was presented at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil.

SaWaM is currently focusing on combining satellite and model-based datasets. There are also plans to integrate the results into models and tools currently used in Brazil to monitor reservoir levels, precipitation and seasonal forecasts. In addition, a second workshop in the Lake Urmia region of Iran is being arranged. Since SaWaM aims to guarantee that the results will be transferrable to other areas once the project has finished, it is working to increase the exchange of information between the three pilot regions by setting up an online platform for sharing experiences and results between the local partners.

InoCottonGROW: Commissioning a pilot plant for the anaerobic treatment of wastewater from the textile industry in Pakistan

24.09.2018

Pakistan is the world's fourth largest producer of cotton, and a major exporter of textiles to Germany. The industry consumes and pollutes an immense amount of water. Within InoCottonGROW, 14

German partners from research and industry are working with 13 Pakistani partners to make water consumption more efficient and productive along the entire cotton-textile value chain. The goal is to optimise the water footprint as a steering instrument to help Pakistani decision-makers manage scarce water resources, and to give German consumers criteria for making informed purchasing decisions.

In collaboration with Pakistani partners, the project is initially analysing current water consumption and pollution in the Punjab province. The work will combine satellite remote sensing, hydrological and hydraulic modelling, surveys of cotton farmers, audits of textile companies, and measurements of irrigation channels and groundwater. Demonstration projects will show possible solutions for reducing the cotton textile industry's water footprint.

The demonstration project on textile wastewater treatment has made significant progress in recent months. Of roughly 220 textile businesses in the Faisalabad textile region, only around ten have treatment plants and several of those are not in use because of high energy costs. Yet with global brands under increasing public pressure to keep a closer eye on the environmental impacts of their producers, more and more Pakistani textile companies are being forced to invest in wastewater treatment. Cost pressure, improper planning and operation, and insufficient monitoring also lead to unsatisfactory treatment results. InoCottonGROW therefore wants to present an economic addition to the exclusively aerobic processes currently in use – by investigating the feasibility of anaerobically treating selected streams of easily degradable starchy wastewater from desizing.

After facing numerous logistical challenges in Pakistan, the FiW researchers commissioned the pilot plant, which was shipped as a container, in July 2018 at the Kohinoor Mills Ltd. textile factory in the district of Kasur, south of Lahore. The plant was planned and built in collaboration with the company A3 Water Solutions GmbH and the University of Stuttgart. After just a few weeks, the plant was producing biogas from the heavily organically contaminated wastewater. A high point was when the researchers used the biogas to boil a pot of tea in front of the factory employees. This was proof that wastewater can produce energy. The researchers then optimized the process to assess the economic viability of a large-scale plant under local conditions. Thanks to the close collaboration with the National University of Science and Technology in Islamabad, a local doctoral student will continue to operate the plant. In addition, initial offers have been made for providing textile companies with expert advice on wastewater. With the help of a documentary film about the project and the development of a water footprint label, InoCottonGROW is working to raise awareness among local decision-makers and German consumers.

The upcoming midterm conference 6 to 10 November 2018 at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad) will present interim results from all the work packages. These will also be discussed extensively in workshops and training sessions with Pakistani partners.

MuDak-WRM receives a fully equipped research ship

12.09.2018

One of the greatest challenges for reservoir management in many regions of the world is a lack of the input and validation data needed for today's highly complex models. The MuDak-WRM project aims to develop a globally applicable hydrological model for predicting mid- to long-term changes in the water quality of reservoirs. It will do this by simplifying the complexity of the underlying scientific approaches and therefore the required data. It is establishing key parameters to describe the characteristics of basins and bodies of water, and developing methods for minimum on-site monitoring.

In its first year, MuDak-WRM focused on collecting the necessary local data and developing the hydrological model. It set up the gauging stations in Brazil and conducted the first measurements in Brazil (at the Passaúna reservoir) and Germany (at the Great Dhünntal reservoir). It has also integrated the first results of the various measurements into a real-time data network called Sensorweb.

MuDak-WRM has been benefitting from great local support in Brazil. Right from the beginning, the project attracted wide-ranging interest in the Brazilian community. The kick-off event was very well-attended and interest in the project from local PhD students was exceptionally high. This led to the intensification of a joint graduate project between universities in Germany and Brazil, and the project now has ten Brazilian PhD students on board. MuDak-WRM also signed a memorandum of understanding with its local partner SANEPAR, the dam operator of Passaúna reservoir, at the start of the project. This cooperation resulted in a highlight for MuDak-WRM: SANEPAR provided a fully equipped research ship tailored to performing the measurements in the Passaúna basin. To prepare the ship for its mission, a number of challenges had to be overcome, including providing sufficient space for the measurements on board while taking account of the shallow draft in several parts of the lake, protecting the crew from the elements, and installing a power supply for laptops. Another highlight for MuDak-WRM is that the international environmental protection organization The Nature Conservancy is interested in the project. An MoU will soon be signed.

However, it hasn't all been plain sailing. The team encountered some delays in the transport of lithium-ion batteries, and were confronted with vandalism and theft. Buoys for the sediment traps were stolen, though the sediment traps themselves were found with the help of divers. In addition, setting up the drones used for data acquisition involves a number of technical challenges. Despite these issues, though, nothing has so far caused any major delays to the project's progress.

MuDak-WRM is currently planning and working on the land use survey and on integrating local, drone and satellite data. It is also implementing the hydrological and MoRE models in both reservoirs and is planning a general meeting with its German and Brazilian partners in Brazil in February 2019.

Cross-cutting topics at a glance

12.05.2018

With a kick-off event in Berlin, the first three cross-cutting topics in the GRoW programme began their work in March. Three days of exciting and insightful discussions resulted in the first concrete results, including a joint GRoW position paper highlighting what the GRoW projects see as the key challenges to achieving SDG 6. This paper has since been channelled into the current political process on SDG 6 monitoring (such as the UN HLPF meeting in July). In addition, two online meetings (on agricultural irrigation and digitalization) allowed a number of colleagues to exchange ideas and possible avenues for further collaboration.

Harnessing synergies

Here's a little reminder about why GRoW partners also work on cross-cutting topics: Although GRoW covers very diverse research areas, a number of thematic and methodological overlaps exist. The cross-cutting topics therefore allow us to harness synergies and share knowledge across the individual projects. The GRoW steering group has defined three topics so far: [SAB1]

- Incentive mechanisms in the context of governance
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Hitting the targets
- Water footprints

The work on these topics doesn't drive itself, though. It requires partners who are willing to invest time and energy in them, and who want to engage with fellow researchers. Support from the owner of each topic is therefore crucial to keeping up the momentum.

The way forward

A number of online meetings about topics such as digitalization and irrigation agriculture have recently taken place, and the next "real-world" meetings are coming up soon:

- Water footprints: 27 September, Berlin
- Incentive mechanisms in the context of governance: 22 October, Frankfurt (tbd)
- SDGs: Hitting the targets: 11 December, Osnabrück, Germany

These meetings will focus on potential outputs and end results of the joint work on the respective topic. The results could be manifold and might include joint publications, methodological guidelines, or expert events on topics of broader interest.

We're looking forward to welcoming you to these meetings and to continuing our productive discussions.

GRoW in the spotlight

GRoW position paper introduced at High-Level Political Forum 2018

29.08.2018

GRoW position paper is well received by participants at HLPF events

From 9 to 18 July, the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) convened at the UN Headquarters in New York to conduct and in-depth review of several SDGs, including the SDG for water (SDG 6). GRoW was involved in several events, represented by steering committee member Dr Ursula Eid, who acted as a moderator and keynote speaker.

In preparation for the HLPF, GRoW prepared a Position Paper on SDG 6, emphasising the need for an evidence-based approach to achieving SDG 6 and calling for a science platform on water that will bring together relevant actors. The paper and its key recommendations were brought into the discussion at several side events and thereby contributed to the review process. The paper was of particular interest at the side event "Are Women meaningfully involved in implementing SDG 6+ in National Plans?", during which there was a discussion about data insufficiencies and the need for better empirical data on SDG 6. Consequently, the proposed international science platform was well-received by the audience.

The GRoW position paper was also introduced at the side event "Sustainable Use of Waters – Precondition for a World without Hunger / The implementation of SDG 6.4 Water use and scarcity and its link to the Human Right to Food". The session focused on the link between virtual water exports and food security in water-scarce countries. The GRoW research projects working on water footprints therefore played a prominent role in the discussions at this event.

The HLPF's Ministerial Declaration adopted at the meeting's closing identifies water pollution, water scarcity and insufficient financing as key challenges for the water sector. Aiming at successfully implementing SDG 6, the declaration points to the International Decade for Action on Water and Sustainable Development and calls for greater international cooperation among stakeholders, political leadership to raise awareness of the urgency of SDG 6, and concrete actions to meet the global water targets.

GRoW attracts interest from international stakeholders and environmental organisations

28/02/2018

A short summary of GRoW's first year paints a positive picture. The research projects have started well and are also attracting a great deal of international attention. They have begun developing partnerships and networks with public and private international stakeholders, and are finding support among global environmental organisations. This keen interest shows that GRoW is doing relevant, topical work – primarily because it is successfully developing local and regional, globally transferrable solutions for protecting water resources.

Here are a few highlights:

In Iran, the SaWaM project is receiving support from one of the country's biggest players in the water and hydropower industries – the Khuzestan Water Authority, which manages over a third of Iran's water reserves. As well as helping to make the kick-off event in Iran a great success (over 100 people attended), it also took the time to visit key Iranian reservoirs with project participants and to outline local water management solutions. Similarly, iWaGSS has attracted a great deal of interest from the South African water authority, which is helping the project to install measurement stations and providing its own stations.

Meanwhile, go-CAM is collaborating closely on research with the University of Rhode Island, since sustainably managing coastal aquifers is also raising important research questions across the Atlantic. WANDEL has set up a new partnership with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA). The corporation recognized WANDEL as playing a significant, relevant role in the context of the growing tension between energy production and sustainable water management in Brazil.

The MuDak-WRM project has entered into a partnership with The Nature Conservancy, an international environmental protection organization, also based in Brazil. The partners have already signed a memorandum of understanding. In addition, MuDak-WRM is benefiting from the full support of SANEPAR, a major Brazilian water technology firm. Among other things, it has provided a research ship specifically tailored to the needs of the project. InoCottonGrow has also attracted interest from international environmental organisations and is currently working on a memorandum of understanding with the World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan).

A wide variety of workshops, capacity-building schemes, measurement campaigns, and event visits are planned for 2018. These will provide major support to all the GRoW projects, help them make progress, and strengthen their international impact.

GRoW at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil

Between 18 and 23 March, water experts from government, science, industry, consultancies and NGOs met at the World Water Forum 2018 in Brazil to discuss potential solutions for key water-related challenges at the global level. Three of the four GRoW projects working in South America were present and jointly featured at the side event "Water scarcity in semi-arid environments of our Earth: Main challenges and recent developments for risk mitigation", which was organised by the Water Science Alliance. The event focused on practical examples from South America, such as seasonal prediction of water resources, estimation of sediment loads into reservoirs, water quality problems, and efficient irrigation and water use. SaWaM presented an operational hydrometeorological forecasting system for dryland conditions in north-eastern Brazil. WANDEL gave a presentation on the improved water footprint of sugarcane-related energy production, and Trust introduced modular concepts for sustainable water supply and water reuse. SaWaM had the honour of being invited to present its work in the Brazilian pavilion with the Brazilian water authority.

Water News

High-Level Panel on Water publishes report entitled Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action

09/05/2018

In March 2018 the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) published its final report „Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action“. The HLPW had been convened by the UN and the World Bank Group to contribute to the achievement of SDG 6 and further important SDGs to counteract a global water crisis. The report stresses the necessity of actions to avoid great water shortage and stresses that water should not be seen as a given any longer. Within three priority levels specific recommendations have been formulated:

1. A foundation for action based on an increased understanding of water, the improvement of its governance and its social, cultural, environmental and economic valuation.
2. Leading an integrated agenda at local, national and regional levels to ensure access to water and sanitation and to increase the resilience of societies and economies.
3. Catalysing change, building partnerships and international cooperation at the global level to be achieved by the promotion of innovations, partnerships and strengthened global water cooperation.

Addressing governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and citizens, the recommendations aim towards achieving a better understanding, valuation and management of water at different scales in order to enable the necessary changes for the implementation of the SDGs. Ongoing initiatives like the OECD Water Governance Initiative, the launch of new cooperative initiatives, the UN High Level Meetings, and the Water Action Decade are suggested to support the implementation of the recommendations by 2030.

The full outcome report can be downloaded here.

UN announces Water Action Decade 2018-2028

On the World Water Day, 22 March 2018 the International Decade for Action: "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028 was launched aiming to further improve cooperation, partnership and capacity development in response to the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To implement these water-related goals and targets, and building on the achievements of the previous “Water for Life” Decade 2005-2015, the International Decade for Action: "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028 aims to create a solid platform to advance cooperation and partnerships at all levels, and put a greater focus on the integrated management of water resources. The Decade will contribute to the achievement of these goals by facilitating the sharing of good practices and providing a platform for advocacy, networking and partnership-building.

Also recent milestone agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Paris Agreement, have placed water at their heart. Guaranteeing sustainable water management is a vital element to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant goals in the social, environmental and economic fields.

The launch of this decade shows: GRoW has its finger on the pulse of the time and contributes with local solutions and an enhanced global understanding of the ressource water to pressing contemporary questions.

Find out more here.

Science Platform Sustainability 2030 calls for systematic implementation of Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy

20/12/2017

In its inaugural publication, the Science Platform Sustainability 2030 has called for a significant increase in efforts to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Germany. To this end, a steering group of representatives from science, business and civil society, which was established at the invitation of the Federal Government, has outlined the platform's positions and tasks vis-à-vis politics and science. The platform, as a space for dialogue and a source of innovative ideas, seeks to generate added value for science as well as for political and societal practice and to make a significant contribution to the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Key elements of its initial programme of work include the establishment of working groups to address the topics of sustainable consumption, the future of work and global commons. Find out more here