



## Annual report 2021

Improving access to clean, sufficient and safe water  
for 20 million people around the world



Ministry of Infrastructure  
and Water Management

 DUTCH WATER  
AUTHORITIES



Ministry of Foreign Affairs





## The Blue Deal in 2021:

- ➔ Mid-term Review completed
- ➔ Work visits can take place again
- ➔ Preparation for second phase started

**On to 2030!**



Annual Report 2021





## INTRODUCTION

The past year has been an exciting one for the Blue Deal. Although COVID-19 had a bigger impact on the programme in 2021 than we'd anticipated, we could at least visit our partners worldwide once more – something that had long been impossible. To see each other face to face gave a positive boost to our teams and the progress of our partnerships. Work visits were combined with online meetings and new plans were made. Another exciting moment was when Indonesia joined the Blue Deal after two years of preparation. The Blue Deal now consists of 17 partnerships in 15 countries.

2021 also saw the completion of the Mid-term Review (MtR). The first evaluation of the programme found that the Blue Deal had great potential, but that changes were needed to the set-up in order to fulfill that potential. The MtR recommended taking the time to make those changes, and that the second phase be started in 2023, which makes 2022 a transition year. In 2021 preparation started on the second phase of the programme, taking a lead from the MtR recommendations. The future for the Blue Deal looks bright: the live work visits can be continued, and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the MtR will be incorporated in a new programme set-up, enhancing effectiveness.



# THE BLUE DEAL IN OUTLINE



## WHAT IS THE BLUE DEAL?

The Blue Deal is an international water development programme jointly run by the Dutch Water Authorities (DWA) and the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Infrastructure and Water Management. The programme's ambition is to help 20 million people around the world gain access to clean, safe and sufficient water by 2030. The Blue Deal meets the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDG 6.3-6.6), the goals of the Netherlands International Water Ambition (NIWA) and the collective goals of DWA. The long-term commitment (12 years between local partners and DWA) and the focus on strengthening water governance makes the programme unique.

### Cross-cutting themes

The partnerships pay special attention to cross-cutting themes – climate, gender, innovation, sustainability and poverty reduction – in the planning and programming of activities, boosting the Blue Deal's impact. For example, Blue Deal partners are working on water models that predict flood and drought scenarios. Partnerships seek to reduce poverty by raising awareness of the effects of water interventions on most vulnerable groups in society. Others actively help their local partners to raise budgets for water/WASH infrastructure and thus contribute indirectly to poverty reduction.

Though gender and poverty reduction are important, innovation and sustainability are more central to the core work of the Dutch Water Authorities.

## WHAT IS OUR APPROACH?

The Blue Deal approach is demand-driven. Dutch Water Authorities partners with river basin/catchment area management authorities and water treatment organisations in other countries. These partnerships work on strengthening the three crucial elements of good water management:

- 1 Enhancing water management knowledge and expertise
- 2 Reinforcing organisational functioning
- 3 Promoting collaboration with other (regional) organisations.

This demand-driven capacity building is achieved through one-on-one coaching, webinars and on-site training, the aim being to reach visible progress. Due to the coronavirus crisis, however, we've changed our working method. All partnerships have now adopted a hybrid approach: a mix of digital meetings and work visits. We've also strengthened the capacity of local teams, which has reduced the need for physical visits.





# 2021

HYBRIDLY ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

16 PARTNERSHIPS IN 14 COUNTRIES  
WORKING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO  
CLEAN, SAFE & SUFFICIENT WATER



13 partnerships working on clean water



10 partnerships working on safe water



14 partnerships working on sufficient water

The core work of the Blue Deal contributes to SDG 6.3-6.6, 6.A, 6.B and SDG 13.

13 YOUNG EXPERTS ABROAD



2909  
people trained



335  
stakeholder  
meetings



90  
plans approved



606  
activities  
completed

TOTAL AMOUNT OF DAYS WORKED ON BLUE DEAL

Country partnerships: 5627

Dutch Water Authorities: 3473

TOTAL EXPENSES  
€6.1 mln

LEARNING TOGETHER

7 sessions of 4 Communi-  
ties of Practice

16 Partnerships Mid-term  
Reviews



IN- AND OUTGOING FLIGHTS





# PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

A Mid-term Review (MtR) was conducted at the start of 2021, producing crucial recommendations for the future of the programme. Its main conclusions were:

- 1 The Blue Deal programme has great potential.
- 2 In order to reach that potential, however, the governance structure needs to be improved.
- 3 Strategic decisions on ambitions and partnership need to be taken at steering committee level.

Taking a lead from these conclusions, preparations for the second phase of the Blue Deal were started and accelerated. All stakeholders (from steering committee to project managers) were involved in translating the recommendations of the MtR into an enhanced Blue Deal programme,

a process that was completed in 2022. After two years of preparations, a new partnership has been incorporated in the programme: Indonesia has joined the Blue Deal. Though it was not yet possible to travel and meet physically, we were able to jointly develop a proposal in digital meetings.

In the case of most other partnerships, visits were able to resume in 2021. This has revived the programme after a long period of purely digital support. In 2021 a combination of virtual collaboration and physical meetings took place, leading to more frequent mutual contacts, both online and in person. This is seen as an important added value to the Blue Deal.

## LEARNING WITHIN THE PARTNERSHIPS

2021 was the year in which travel became possible again – something that was greatly welcomed by both the partners abroad and DWA. Though less than in 2020, the impact of COVID-19 was still profound, for instant necessitating priority changes by our partners. Below, four topics are discussed that require attention in the case of many partnerships.

**Kenya partnership: “The online on the job training sessions contributed much to the progress made”**

### Optimising working on-site and online

While 2020 was the year of the deep dive into working digitally, 2021 has been the year of optimising working on-site and online. Major differences in the effectiveness of working online are emerging in Blue Deal partnerships, depending on the country and context involved. For instance, while the Mali partnership notes that a specific online activity “reinforces that face-to-face training and content cannot be replaced by online learning, especially in the context of Mali”, the Palestinian Territories partnership comments that a “focus on optimal online working (MS Teams, SharePoint, WhatsApp, etc.) between physical work visits since the start of the partnership in 2019 pays off and worked well in improving capacity to define training plans and implementing them also online”.





The next step – which will be an ongoing topic in the Blue Deal learning programme – is to identify key elements that help make digital activities (and on-site activities for that matter) effective, and identify elements that hamper online cooperation.

## Mali partnership: “Inequality in digital literacy is a challenge”

### Changing priorities

A frequently recurring topic is finding a balance between having a bottom-up, demand-driven approach and staying on track with long-term outcomes. For instance in South Africa, municipalities’ priorities changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The same happened in Piura, Peru, where our partner organisation ANA was forced to focus on their crisis management role, which meant that certain planned outcomes were delayed. These challenges were discussed in online sessions of Blue Deal Communities of Practices; experiences were shared between partnership managers.

## Mid-term Review on the Colombia partnership: “While an excellent bottom-up job has been done, it’s crucial not to lose sight of top-down objectives”

### Gaining high-level commitment

One of the Mid-term Review’s recommendations was to improve partnership connections with national institutions and political agendas. This is not yet optimal for all the partnerships. Partnership Ethiopia Awash, for instance, has faced a lack of high-level commitment due to failure by new directors in the partner organisation to fully grasp the Blue Deal approach, as well as travel restrictions. In the coming year, the partnership seeks to increase understanding of the Blue Deal capacity development strategy at all levels in the partner organisation.

### High staff turnover and lack of personnel

Multiple partnerships lack sufficient personnel to make progress on the partnerships’ objectives. Others are experiencing high staff turnover due to political or economic factors. In both instances, the partnerships’ success is undermined. How can this be dealt with most effectively? One of the solutions proposed by the project leaders of the Peru partnership is to maintain contacts at different levels within the organisation. During each visit to Peru there are meetings with high-level management of the National Water Authority as well as with all team members of the Water Resource Council. In the event of personnel leaving, there are enough other staff members to keep the partnership operational.





## Blue Deal Indonesia finally in place

### 1. Obstacles and challenges

When the Blue Deal programme started in 2019, Indonesia was not yet a partner. At the time, funding was still available up to about 2023 via the embassy and the NWB Fund. With a view to including Indonesia in the Blue Deal in the long term, it was decided – on the basis of lobbying by participating water authorities and insights gained in the Blue Deal programme – to explore whether the water authorities already active in Indonesia could jointly draw up a proposal for participation in phase 2.

In February 2020, the water authorities Delfland, Schieland en Krimpenerwaard, Zuiderzeeland, Hollands Noorderkwartier and Aa en Maas started exploring potential for collaboration with Indonesia, supported by the Blue Deal programme office. Current projects that had been initiated with support from the embassy and the NWB Fund were reviewed and evaluated. Discussion then took place on the shape various projects might take within the framework of the Blue Deal. The plan was to continue these discussions with partners in Indonesia during working visits, in order to round off agreements.

And then the pandemic struck, and the world went into quarantine for two years. Things went quiet on all fronts until people started to get used to the new situation. In the summer of 2020 it became clear that the plans would need adjusting. Phase 1 of the Blue Deal programme had stopped a year earlier; the fourth year was used to evaluate the programme and consider its follow-up.

In the summer of 2020, the five above-mentioned water authorities dusted off their plans for Indonesia and worked hard to firm them up in fortnightly online working sessions. Initial drafts were produced, and ideas put down on paper. The NWB Fund joined with these efforts, because although any new partnership might be incorporated in the Blue Deal, that was of course by no means yet the case. But plans had been made to carry out working visits and make agreements in 2021. As a result, a draft annual plan for 2021 was also drawn up for the NWB Fund, which generously proposed to finance this transitional year in the run-up to partnership with Indonesia.

There had been high hopes that international travel would get easier in 2021. Unfortunately, nothing could have been further from the truth: nearly all countries remained classified as 'code red', meaning a high risk of infection. Indonesia was no exception, and travel to the region was strongly advised against. Assistance was mobilised in Indonesia (thanks to invaluable help from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency), and online working sessions were set up with potential partners in Indonesia.

And then came the great day: 3 December 2021. After multiple Delta team consultations, a panel review, three steering committee meetings, WINTER and CINTER meetings, 29 project group consultations and seven international workshops a new partnership was added to the Blue Deal programme. The Blue Deal Indonesia was finally in place!

### 2. What will we do and what are our goals?

The Indonesia partnership focuses on three regions/sub-projects on Java. Building on existing ties, the plan is to set up a demand-driven, programme-based approach with a view to long-term collaboration between government bodies, both local and regional. In the regions Tangerang, Pekalongan and Semarang the emphasis will be on protecting urban areas and the northern coastline from flooding (from the Java Sea and the hinterland), polder development and integrated water management (multidisciplinary and strategic). A look is also being taken at how water management governance can be made sustainable – an example being the structuring of management and maintenance of the Banger Polder

in Semarang. Scope for improving the quality of surface water will also be looked at, where relevant and important to the integrated nature of water management.

In the second half of 2022 we plan a visit to these regions to liaise with our Indonesian partners. The aim is to fine-tune plans, bring partners closer together and draw up a joint proposal for objectives and activities for the period 2023 to 2027.

### 3. Who are our partners in Indonesia?

Our partners in Indonesia are the development planning boards (Bappedas) of the regions (Kabupaten). Unlike in the Netherlands, where water management is carried out by water authorities, in Indonesia, it is more fragmented, falling under various government bodies. Management of the main rivers is largely the task of provincial and/or river basin organisations. Other forms of water management tend to be carried out by regions. Within Indonesia, regions are a lower tier of government than provinces, somewhat like with municipalities in the Netherlands, although villages (Desas) and towns (Kotas) often have their own water management systems. In short, achieving an integrated system will be a huge challenge – but one that we relish!

We – a collaboration of the above-mentioned Dutch water authorities, each with our own skill set and expertise – are exploring how we can best give shape to the project organisation needed for this. Alas, the first live consultation session that we'd planned couldn't go ahead. Which was a shame, not least because of the Bossche Bollen (chocolate-coated cream puffs) we were going to have as a treat! But we hope to reschedule the meeting soon.







## RESULTS OF THE PARTNERSHIPS IN 2021

### South America

#### Argentina

Besides travel restriction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Blue Deal partnership Argentina faced three challenges in 2021:

- 1 Strengthening the team in the Netherlands.
- 2 Developing the relationship with the new team of ADA, the counterpart in Buenos Aires.
- 3 Difficulties in providing online training in technical and organisational components of water management in river basins.

At the beginning of 2021 the partnership's DWA partnership manager was reassigned to another role. Replacing her meant rethinking available capacity and using the strength of the DWA team. During the same period ADA took on new staff members, which meant building a relationship with a new team. The solution adopted was regular Zoom meetings with key members. The Dutch embassy in Buenos Aires played an important role in strengthening relations with the new team.

To inspire collaboration, the partnership made a film about a successful work visit in 2019. The film was used as a tool to relaunch the project with a new team, and as a starting point for workshops (release in March 2021). The partnership organised five Zoom workshops with ADA on the topic of water

quantity. The Dutch deputy ambassador participated in one such workshop. Three online workshops were also organised with the ADA team on the topic of monitoring water quality in urban areas.

ADA itself booked a major success in 2021: the results of participatory water level monitoring data for the project area were presented on its website, boosting motivation for such monitoring.

#### Colombia

In September 2020 the partnership resumed physical work visits to Colombian partners and was able to achieve a significant part of the results for 2021. It emerged that the collaboration is still experienced as very positive, and that there is still a solid basis for continued cooperation. The need for a mix of virtual collaboration and physical meetings has become clear. The hybrid work form has led to more frequent mutual contacts and virtual and physical meetings, often with participation by multiple partners and other Colombian water authorities. This development, in which networks of knowledge development are generated within Colombia, is seen as an important added value of the Blue Deal.

The partnership have reinforced this trend with partners at national level, like the umbrella organisations ASOCARS and ANDESCO. The partnership participated in workshops held by Deltares about the further development of HERMANA and by Witteveen+Bos about wastewater treatment

of tanneries. RVO assisted in a seminar in Santander, where a Colombian network for water governance was established. Substantial progress has also been made on various fronts. For example, in Santander, confidence in the government improved due to participatory monitoring. A participatory monitoring plan has been set up, through which integral area knowledge is built up collectively. An application has been developed for data collection and transmission from field to server as part of a 'Water Information System'. Field monitoring manuals have been tested in the field by schoolchildren from the village of Tona. Preliminary modules of a virtual water governance course have been developed for COOPERASÜR, a platform for South-South collaboration. The course will enable the partnership to share knowledge and experiences in water governance at Latin America level.

Visits were paid to several sewage treatment plants: this involved exchanging practical knowledge about operation and maintenance, with a view to improving the plants' functioning. A start has been made on providing support for the construction of the first sewage treatment plant for the city of Manizales. The partnership continued its efforts to prevent industrial discharges from polluting the sewer system, thus enhancing the operation of the new wastewater treatment plant.

Now that we are well on track, it is important to visualise the results of the collaboration, as



recommended by the Mid-term Review. A bi-national communications team has been set up to focus on this. This has already led to more dissemination documents and greater visibility on social media.

#### Peru

Working entirely digitally, the Blue Deal partnership started in 2021 with successful joint collaborations. All partners made a valuable contribution to a project video, which was broadcast at the national Expo Agua event. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions made it necessary to devise a flexible working method. Its priorities were discussed during joint calls, as well as possible support from Dutch experts. One of the concrete results was a webinar for partners and stakeholders on the technology and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants, which was attended by 87 participants from both regions. With support from Deltares, additional digital advice was given on the studies on preventive measures against flooding and how partners can effectively provide technical advice.

In September the partnership was boosted by a physical visit from the Dutch Ambassador, Natalie Lintvelt, to the project partners in the north of Peru. The project's progress and challenges were discussed jointly with the chief of the National Water Authority. The Young Expert briefed the dignitaries on the

YEP training programme and his efforts to help update the water resource plan.

In November travel was once again possible, so the Dutch team paid a visit to the National Water Authority to meet the new directors and the partners in the north. The aim was to re-establish contact, discuss progress and pay field visits to a wastewater treatment plant and flood prevention projects.

#### West Africa

##### Burkina Faso

Despite the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Blue Deal partnership, called Faso Koom, made good progress in 2021. The partnership focuses on effective integrated water management by the local Water Authorities (Agences de l'Eau and SPGIRE). Faso Koom was able to start the project 'Eau, CLE et Développement Durable (ECDD). This project, funded by the Dutch Embassy, is jointly executed with SNV and became operational in 2021. It is carried out in close collaboration with the Blue Deal activities and its objective is to promote integrated water resource management and sanitation. It includes the realisation of water infrastructure, like anti-erosion measures.



Thanks to this project, Faso Koom was able to increase the local team to nine staff members and open a local office.

A key output for 2021 was the development of monitoring plans for quantity and quality. Plans are devised by all five water authorities.

Faso Koom also developed a water allocation model, with financial support from the European Union. To date, 16 training modules on good water management practices for local water committees (CLEs) have been created. These include a module on artisanal gold mining and environmental protection and a module on the maintenance of reservoirs. A team of local trainers has been trained, and training courses are given to improve ownership of the CLEs. Strong relationships with the Ministry of Mining and the research institute IRSAT ensure alignment of actions on mining. The training courses also prepare the CLEs for water infrastructure investments made by the ECDD project. Finally, in 2021, Faso Koom supported preparations for an RVO Develop-to-Build project for the construction of eight large reservoirs.

##### Ghana

The Ghanaian partners and DWA are combining their expertise and knowledge to establish a sustainable regional water management organisation. Its aim is to implement integrated water management in the White Volta and the Lower Volta Delta basins. In 2021 the partnership paid two work visits in July/August and November.

Together with the WaterworX team, the partnership produced newsletters and films to improve the Ghanaian network in the two target areas White Volta and Lower Volta Delta. In addition, the pilot Veia Dam in the White Volta started on creating buffer zones, including tree nurseries, and a training course for 400 lead farmers. The partnership is using this pilot to train the Basin Board to coordinate the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management measures (IWRM). In the case of the Ghana Lower Volta Delta, an IWRM and Delta plan prioritised actions gap analysis was carried out, with defined outlines for a Delta plan. In addition, the partnership fleshed out the regional governance structure for the Lower Volta Delta basin. Members of the River Basin Board Lower Volta Delta were installed and trained by the working group in specific tasks, structure and funding for the Secretariat River Basin Board Lower Volta Delta.

##### Mali

2021 was a transformative year for the local agency ANGESEM and for Mali. The image of the national waste water operator has been strengthened by the dynamic new head of ANGESEM, who has been a partner of DWA activities since 2016. 2021 was also a year of firsts for ANGESEM. The national happening 'le quinzième de l'environnement', which brings key stakeholders together, featured an event hosted by ANGESEM, including the formal opening of the new laboratory. It was also the first time that ANGESEM participated in a study visit that addressed its own learning objectives, rather than participating in an externally designed programme.



The visit to the National Office of Water and Sanitation (ONEA) included discussions with the directorship, a visit to the laboratory and the ONEA bio-digester site. Through ANGESEM's enhanced presence within the Malian context, more external partners are approaching the state institution to involve it in the realisation of sanitation projects. The Blue Deal has played a key facilitation role in this, and is a trusted partner of ANGESEM. It has been able to support ANGESEM throughout the process thanks to its commitment with local presence. There is considerable scope for development in ANGESEM and, more widely, in the sanitation sector in Mali, but, as a Bambara proverb so evocatively puts it:

*Doni doni kononi b'a nyaga da* – Little by little the bird builds its nest.

## East Africa

### Ethiopia Abbay

Unfortunately, in 2021 the Blue Deal partnership continued to suffer the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of that, the civil war in the Tigray region caused unsafe situations throughout the country during the latter half of 2021. This meant that, apart from a short work visit in October, travel remained impossible in 2021. The team deserves a big compliment for their commitment to

coordinating project activities remotely via Zoom/Teams. Yet it is clear that physical work visits are preconditions to generate real impact in capacitating the Basin Development Authority and the Abbay basin development office.

Despite the lack of physical visits, in 2021 the partnership was able to provide support for hydrological data management. Hydrological data deficiencies/needs were addressed and data collection took place in two critical sub-basins. Furthermore, support was given to data analysis enhancement in the form of giving training to Ethiopian experts in groundwater modelling and WEAP-modelling (a decision support system for integrated water resources management).

The partnership's original plan for 2021 was to make a start on setting up a tariff system for water users in order to gain revenue from large water users (large-scale farmers and industries). Because national legislation is not in place and stakeholders are not aware of Basin Development Authority plans to raise tariffs in future, it has been decided to change the focus into raising awareness of the value of water and permitting. This will also be the new plan for 2022.



### Ethiopia Awash

The Ethiopia Awash partnership focuses on improving the water data of the Ethiopian partners. This data helps the partners to improve policy and plans for flood risk management, water quality and quantity. In 2021 the partnership set up three Joint Implementation Teams on information management in which partners exchange data, information and experiences on water quality, water allocation and water wells. It's a locally driven process with many local workshops. In addition, a registration app has been developed in collaboration with the Sustainable Water Fund and VNGi. Its purpose is to collect and systematically store data on pollution sources, as a first step towards charging for discharges.

The partnership facilitated the design of a joint monitoring strategy, which brings more focus and harmonisation to the monitoring of five organisations. Their monitoring programmes will be modelled on this strategy. Progress was limited for a number of reasons, necessitating a re-evaluation of project goals. As a result, the partnership carried out a gap analysis and arranged extra capacity (high-level consultant and two Young Experts) to support implementation in 2022. As part of efforts to enhance climate change adaptation and water allocation planning, an erosion vulnerability map and a 3R potential map were produced and a more learning-oriented approach introduced. These are important knowledge tools.

Under the auspices of the Water Cooperation Framework Agreement, federal and regional

water governments laid down a formal structure to cooperate and coordinate/harmonise IWRM in the Awash basin. The Blue Deal Partnership organised a signing ceremony for this unique landmark.

### Ethiopia Waste Water Treatment Plants

The Blue Deal supports its partner Water Development Commission (which falls under the Ethiopian Ministry of Water and Energy) in technical assistance for the contractor on the design process of faecal sludge management systems. It is also assisting in the capacity building of five utilities in five Ethiopian cities on future management of the entire chain of sanitation, collection, transport and disposal. In 2021 the Blue Deal partnership brought stability to the Ethiopian side by hiring a new local manager. He started by holding talks with all kinds of stakeholders, which improved the direction and scope of the partnership activities. In 2021 the partnership conveyed their technical knowledge by giving various webinars on faecal sludge management systems.

The biggest challenge in 2021 was the unsafe situation that arose in Ethiopia because of the civil war. Because of this, the partnership was unable to carry out the (already postponed) work visit of December 2020. This has had a negative effect on all activities and outcomes. There is also a delay in the tender process for the construction of a faecal sludge management system, which means the partnership cannot continue support for the capacity building of the five utilities. On the Dutch side, the partnership also faces challenges in terms of capacity and





deployment of team members: due to various circumstances, crucial team members are (temporarily) unable to contribute. We are discussing a solution with other parties.

#### Kenya

In 2021, most of the partnership's work involved making the necessary preparations for starting the process of developing the Water Allocation Plan. Conducting an Abstraction & Pollution survey was an essential part of these preparations. The required budget presented a problem for WRA, the local partner of the partnership, but the first part of the survey was completed in 2021. With the help of the Blue Deal, the remaining part will be carried out in 2022.

The Water Evaluation And Planning (WEAP) model was introduced as a suitable tool for WRA for drawing up water balances and calculating the impact of scenarios. Staff members have been trained on the job to use WEAP for the development of the Water Allocation Plan. Collecting and checking the necessary data and calibrating the model proved time-consuming. This will be completed in early 2022. Staff members were also trained in drawing up a monitoring plan and a draft plan has been delivered. A mobile water level monitoring app was demonstrated to improve data collection, and both parties agreed to start a pilot.

In September 2021 it was possible to visit Kenya again (for the first time since February 2020) and meet with new staff members at WRA. Through the collaboration between the Blue Deal project with WaterworX and the (newly started) Catchment to Tap (C2T) project, we now have three shared team members permanently based in Nairobi.

This makes it easier to get things done and helps us better understand the difficult context in which IWRM is conducted in Kenya.

#### Southern Africa

##### eSwatini

At the start of the year, the pandemic was still hampering activities. Workshops and trainings could still not be carried out, but the partnership did make progress in fundraising and growing JRBA, the partner organisation in Eswatini. Also, the necessary steps were set in motion concerning water pricing. The local YEP Takhona Dlamini is growing into her role and has changed the operational mode at the organisation.

In 2021 civil unrest hit Eswatini. Both in June and October people took to the streets in protest, resulting in violent clashes. In autumn, a work visit was paid to eSwatini. HydroLogic and a Dutch trainer were on-site to give a workshop on HydroNet and to prepare for the next visit with Royal Eijkelpark, involving a survey of the development of the monitoring system. The partnership organised an initial online training session during that visit. In order to secure online participation, a facilitator was hired to intermediate between the two trainers in the Netherlands and the team in Eswatini. These extra measures proved sufficient.

10 November 2021 was the day of the official launch of our partner organisation, JRBA. The launch was reported in the press, and the CEO was interviewed on national television. Government officials, representatives of stakeholders and the Dutch delegation of the Blue Deal were present.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Energy stayed all day and enjoyed the festivities together with us.

##### Mozambique

During 2021, with the assistance of Mozambican consultants, our partnership managed to organise various training courses on dyke management, groundwater- and surface water modelling, asset management and administration of raw water use. In cooperation with the Dutch Embassy in Maputo and RVO we developed a plan for capacity strengthening the city of Beira's Autonomous Sanitation Unit (SASB).

The most important activity (under component 0 – Knowledge Sharing) by our partnership in 2021 was a significant contribution to the review of tariffs for raw water (ground and surface water). The process started in April 2021. Its objective was to help the 3 ARAs (regional water authorities) in Mozambique to optimise revenue generation through raw water use tariffs, so that they can become financially sustainable and autonomous. Sustainable means that the operational costs associated with a desired level of service are fully covered. Autonomous means that the ARAs are not financially dependent on government grants. To contribute to this objective, the Blue Deal partnership formalised a working group (ARA representatives, DNGRH (Ministry of Water), Blue Deal Partnership and a Mozambican economic consultant) and a steering committee (ARA directors, National Director, Blue Deal).

The next step was the analysis of current costs and revenues and an analysis of the level of current and desired services. After both analyses, a scenario was developed for future costs and revenues, together with

tariff structure principles and a rate structure. The tariff proposal was discussed during stakeholder consultations in the regions of the 3 ARAs, and by the end of 2021 it had been forwarded to various advisory committees and subsequently for decision-making in 2022 by the Council of Ministers.

##### South Africa

As the pandemic continued to have an impact in 2021, communication through digital meetings, webinars and virtual workshops was prolonged for the first nine months. Between September and November it became possible to travel again (until 'Omicron' was detected). In January 2021 the Mid-term Review was conducted. After documental research, a digital survey and a Focal Group discussion with relevant partners, the South Africa Partnership received a positive review.

The third virtual work visit in March took place with a 'Blue Deal Workshop', together with the eSwatini Partnership and the finals of the Wetskills Challenge. The Crocodile River Team won the challenge with their Look-See-Do case. The Crocodile River Project, aiming at improving the operation of Wastewater treatment plants in three municipalities, was impacted by the COVID-19 situation.

After the third COVID-19 wave in September, physical visits once again became possible, resulting in a fresh commitment by the senior management of all the partners to revitalise the project. Scope for a physical meeting also boosted enthusiasm at the Vredefort Dome Project, resulting in the signing by all the partners of a regional MoU to improve the quality of the Vaal River.



The digital meetings of the third project, the Blesbokspruit Project, were followed by a physical meeting in November. This project aims to restore the wetland, a RAMSAR site, by removing the water hyacinth, an invasive alien. Training courses on how to turn the harvested water hyacinth into domestic commodities are being developed for the local community.

At the fourth project at the Msunduzi River, the integration and sharing of data using the Hydronet application by different partners is proving successful. Conversely, the imminent threat of a major sewer pipe failure required intervention from the new minister of Water and Sanitation. Through the learning strategy, the results of these projects are being disseminated amongst the Blue Deal partners and areas with similar challenges.

A specific webinar was held, attended by over 200 people, to underline the importance of community involvement in water resource management. Also, a successful digital workshop was held on the turnaround strategy regarding sanitation in Ngwathe Municipality in the Vredefort Dome Project.

The South Africa Partnership is a successful collaboration between the national, regional and local partners. It allows the different tiers of government to meet and address various challenges in an experimental environment. Even the meeting with the new minister and deputy minister of Water and Sanitation in October provided an opportunity for exchanging views on lessons learned in the areas in which the Blue Deal Partnership is active.

## Europe and Asia

### Palestinian Territories

Both online and off-line, 2021 saw the continuation of a well-oiled partnership relying on a high level of trust, high-value peer-to-peer support and carefully established relationships with crucial stakeholders, with a focus on reaching set outcomes for 2019-2022 and outlook towards 2030. The Mid-term Review (MtR) found that partnership 'activities have been adjusted to the country's challenging political context'. The MtR also concluded that 'although the partnership is only in its second year of implementation, there are indications that it is rather effective at generating results.' Despite the impact of the COVID pandemic,

90% of planned activities in 2021 were successfully implemented by dedicated activity teams comprising over 60 Palestinian and 15 Dutch experts (including a new Arabic-speaking member and two DWA staff enrolled in the KIWI international learning programme) and two Young Experts. Three junior team members were recruited. Close ties have been maintained with the Netherlands Representative Office, WaterWorX, NWP, IHE, NUFFIC, YEP, The Hague Academy, a WOP in Jordan and other Dutch-Palestinian projects.

Having both Blue Deal and WaterWorX partnerships at full strength in 2021 boosted synergy in integrated water cycle management, an approach that is strongly supported by the Palestinian Water authority (PWA). The goal is to reform the water sector by reducing the number of water providers from 300 to 10 by 2030. Assistance was given in implementing the PWA National Service Providers Improvement Programme (financed by the World Bank). A positive outcome at the Palestinian governance level is that PWA and the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC) have reinforced their relationship. Moreover, in 2021, two essential bylaws were established in addition to the Water Law of 2014, which fully aligns with the Blue Deal outcomes towards 2030. At local level, within the two pilot areas of Salfit and North Hebron, training and technical assistance focused on GIS, asset management, financial sustainability, local governance and shit flow diagram development (with GIZ SuSanA).

Several spin-offs significantly increased the impact of this relatively small partnership. Three examples are:

- 1 The NUFFIC funded tailor-made one-year training programme worth €100,000, implemented in 2021 by The Hague Academy, PWA and World Waternet.
- 2 Initiation of a public-private partnership to develop small-scale decentralised WWTPs (BlueElephant; three units will be placed Q1, 2022).
- 3 GWOPA/UN-Habitat EU WOP Proposal formulation with Hamburg Wasser, PWA, Arab Water Experts Network and Palestinian Wastewater Engineers Group.

Enhanced trust has resulted in multiple additional support and information requests from PWA and other authorities in Palestinian territories, including the implementation of COVID-19 surveillance in wastewater.

### Romania

In 2021 the Blue Deal partner the River Basin Administration (RBA) Jiu completed a draft water management plan for the Oltania Plain. The draft was discussed with the main stakeholders and incorporated in the RBA River Basin Management Plan. In addition, knowledge about stakeholder management was exchanged and used in the implementation of the RBA Jiu Flood Risk Management Plan, developed with technical assistance from the World Bank. In 2021, collaboration with IHE-Delft on hydrological modelling also started. The Dutch team further assessed the field situation in the chosen pilot area in the Jiu basin.

Central government is now considering a proposal to raise tariffs, in line with the project on improving the economic mechanism of water management. Ideas were developed on how to generate income from Black Sea activities. The government is also considering an agreement with the World Bank to explore three scenarios for a new economic mechanism and legal framework. The two-year project is expected to start in 2022.

Another activity in 2021 was the drafting of a feasibility study for a decision support system for reservoir management. The draft was sent to the Ministry of Water for discussion. As part of a project on handling flash floods in the Siret River Basin, four participants of Wetskills Romania 2022 developed a Flash Floods inspiration guide for the Basin. The inspiration guide and other measures were discussed with main stakeholders. A draft strategic contingency plan was developed. River Basin Administration Siret demonstrated a contingency exercise. Building on experience with recent events in the Dutch province of Limburg, a further exchange of knowledge on flood risk management took place.

### Vietnam

During 2021 the Blue Deal Vietnam partnership – dubbed the Blue Dragon programme – was again seriously hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas during 2020 Vietnam had kept its borders closed, 2021 saw the arrival of the

virus with several lockdowns throughout the country. Meanwhile, the vaccination campaign in Vietnam took off with high vaccination percentages all over the country. This did not however result in the resumption of international flights. The start of the programme, planned for November 2021, had to be postponed.

During the first quarter of 2021, a survey was conducted between the three participating provinces in the Mekong Delta on existing knowledge and use of asset management. The input of the survey will be used for training on asset management. During 2021, the programme website was built, tested and supplemented with content both in English and Vietnamese ([www.bluedragonprogram.com](http://www.bluedragonprogram.com)). An additional function is currently being added. It will provide a forum for discussion as well as knowledge and experience sharing between the participants and Dutch and other experts. Ties between the programme and the WaterworX program of VEI were strengthened in 2021. Participants of WaterworX can participate in training courses and the Vietnamese secretary of the programme was also offered a role at the WaterworX program of VEI, resulting in additional experience in programme management. The programme will now start in the first quarter of 2022, starting with the online preparation of training courses.



# FINANCES

In 2021, total expenditure on all sixteen partner projects amounted to € 5,373k. Though much higher than in 2020, this was still below the planned annual budget, because the pandemic continued to impact Blue Deal activities in 2021. This was reflected, among other things, in lower spending on travel and accommodation. On the other hand, due to online activities, more hours were spent locally with partners compared to 2020, including the hours for training and online meetings for the implementation of projects. The further start-up of local activities is also reflected in higher expenses for contractors and project expenses.

Expenses all partners (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Budget 2021	Actual 2021
Hours Dutch Water Authorities	2,308	2,039	2,662	2,257
Hours local partners	415	403	1,342	1,098
Travel and accommodation	622	284	1,593	292
Contractors/third party	262	230	604	437
Project expenses	489	666	1,455	1,288
Contingency	-	-	167	-
Total project expenses	4,096	3,621	7,824	5,373

Table 1: Budget vs. actual expenditure 2021 Partners

The NWB Fund financed the learning and communication programme and the Association of Dutch Water Authorities (UvW) bore part of the expenses of the programme office. Dutch Water Authorities and local partners contributed to the partnerships in kind. In total, local partners, Dutch Water Authorities, UvW, and the NWB Fund financed 51% of all expenses in 2021. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water bore the bulk of Blue Deal out-of-pocket expenditure. Their contribution comprised 49% of all expenditure in 2021.

Cost and contribution (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Actual 2021 in %
Project cost partners	-	4,096	3,621	5,373	89%
Inception and Reconnaissance	1,884	206	-	-	0%
Programme office (excl. learning prog. and communication)	-	510	707	629	10%
Learning programme and communication	-	63	95	87	1%
Total programme costs	1,884	4,875	4,422	6,089	100%
In-kind Dutch Water Authorities and loacal partners	586	2,591	2,125	2,947	48%
Contribution NWB fund (for learning prog. and comm.)	30	63	95	87	1%
Contribution association of Dutch Water Authorities	158	80	120	100	2%
Contribution ministries	1,110	2,141	2,082	2,955	49%
Total Contributions	1,884	4,875	4,422	6,089	100%

Table 2: Costs vs. contribution 2021





Expenses by partnership (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Budget 2021	Actual 2021
Argentina	54	30	86	55
Burkina Faso	222	244	162	188
Colombia	725	546	954	664
eSwatini	70	133	790	645
Ethiopia Abbay	165	126	351	160
Ethiopia Awash	340	388	669	370
Ethiopia WWTP	116	112	85	56
Ghana	222	122	314	312
Kenya Tana	119	183	282	210
Mali	141	181	224	318
Mozambique	690	659	1,576	1,189
Palestinian Territories	66	214	335	328
Peru	213	121	579	109
Romania	287	60	358	165
South Africa	557	395	539	496
Vietnam	7	108	520	106
Volta	101	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,096</b>	<b>3,621</b>	<b>7,824</b>	<b>5,373</b>

Table 3: Expenses by Blue Deal Project

The abovementioned expenditure of € 5,373K on projects is for all sixteen partnerships in fourteen countries - in Ethiopia there are three separate partnerships. The table below gives an indication of expenditure per partnership. The remaining budget in 2021 will be transferred to 2022, in line with the decision of the Blue Deal steering committee.





# Helping 20 million people around the world to gain access to clean, sufficient and safe water



June 2022

For more information about the Blue Deal or to apply for the monthly news letter please send an email to [info@bluedeal.nl](mailto:info@bluedeal.nl) or visit [www.dutchwaterauthorities.com](http://www.dutchwaterauthorities.com) [↗](#)

Watch more about the Blue Deal activities on our [YouTube Channel](#). [↗](#)

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