



Annual report 2022

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 2022:

- New Framework completed
- Multi-annual plans approved
- Increased budget for the eight remaining years

Best Blue Deal year so far. On to 2030!



Annual Report 2022



Preface

In 2022 the Blue Deal was in its fourth year, and with the pandemic behind us, the partnerships had a chance to flourish. In 2022, the design of the programme was also improved, based on the Mid-Term Review and the four years of experience that everyone now had. Major improvements were made, including enhanced organisational efficiency and improved focus of the programme's objectives. All these changes were formalised in a new Framework. 2022 was also the year of new ambitions. In the run-up to the UN 2023 Water Conference, the Blue Deal was the first commitment by the Dutch government to do more. It increased the budget from €16 million in Phase 1 (average of €5 million per year) to €80 million in Phase 2 (average of €10 million per year) for the remaining eight years. The programme also launched six Communities of Practice (COPs) in which partners from the partner countries and the Netherlands exchange knowledge on important topics such as water allocation and monitoring, and nature-based solutions. Thanks to a contribution of the NWB Fund, a group of twenty local Young Professionals started their two-year training programme within the Blue Deal. Twenty professionals in the Netherlands also started a two-year training programme called KIWI: an introduction to working on international water projects. Both groups gave a major boost to the partnerships involved. 2022 was also the year in which the partnership Indonesia started its first year as part of the Blue Deal.

In addition, the partnerships prepared for the next phase of the programme and drew up multi-annual plans. It was not all plain sailing, though, as the challenges were myriad. Drafting multi-annual plans, thinking about ways in which the programme could be improved and participating in programme activities such as COPs placed a strain on capacity, because regular work was also ongoing. And even though COVID-19 no longer had a major impact, many people had changed roles during the pandemic and time was needed to build new relationships. But despite all the challenges, 2022 goes down in the books as the best Blue Deal year so far.

ENHANCE, ANALYSE, SHARING.

The Blue deal in outline



What is the Blue Deal?

The Blue Deal is an international water development programme jointly run by 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 the 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.

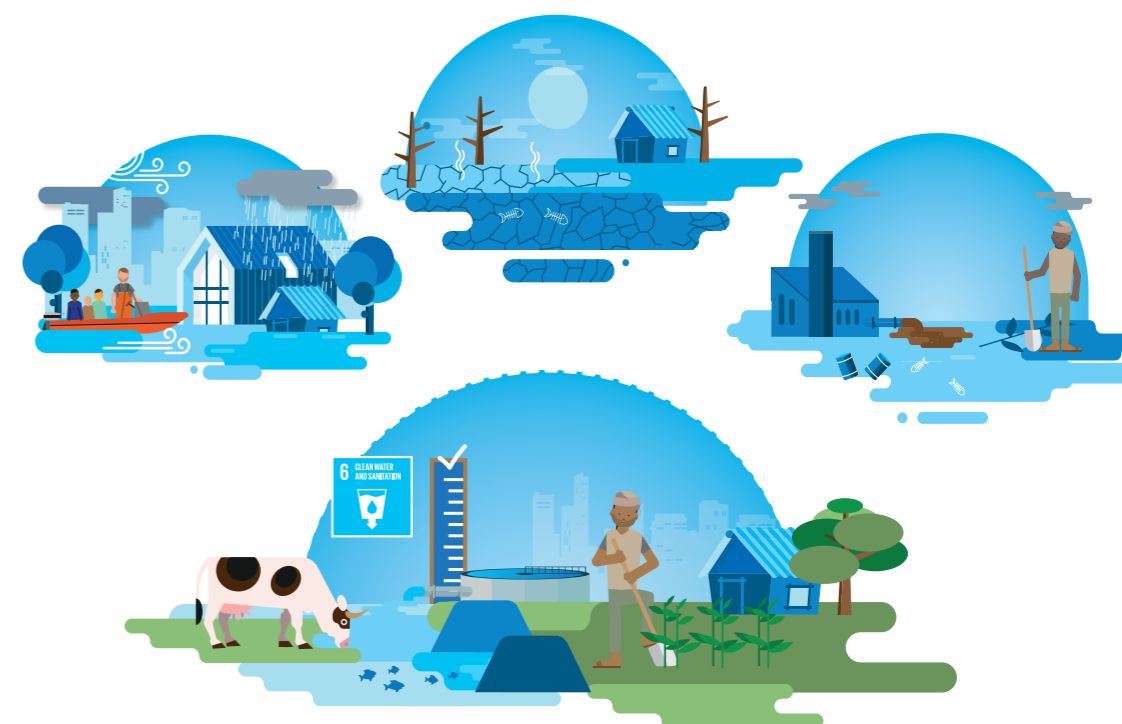
In 2022 it was decided to narrow the focus from five to two cross-cutting themes. Starting in 2023, together with the start of Phase 2 of the Blue Deal, we will focus on the themes 'climate adaptation' and 'social inclusion'.

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. As a result of the pandemic, however, we have changed our working method. All partnerships have now adopted a hybrid approach: a mix of digital meetings and work visits. This method has proved so successful that we intend to continue with it, even though physical work visits are once again possible in all the countries we work in. We have also strengthened the capacity of local teams, which has reduced the need for physical visits.





2022

INCREASING EFFECTIVITY

17 PARTNERSHIPS IN 15 COUNTRIES WORKING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO CLEAN, SAFE & SUFFICIENT WATER



CLEAN

14 partnerships working on clean water



SAFE

11 partnerships working on safe water



SUFFICIENT

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.

22 YOUNG EXPERTS ABROAD



21 from partner countries
1 from NL



12 YEARS PARTNERSHIP

— worldwide



2972 people trained



371 stakeholder meetings



109 plans approved



621 activities completed

* In these numbers the results from partnership Ethiopia WWTP are not included

TOTAL AMOUNT OF DAYS WORKED ON BLUE DEAL

Country partnerships: 10332

Dutch Water Authorities: 6266

TOTAL EXPENSES
€9.8 mln

LEARNING TOGETHER

6 sessions of 6 different Communities of Practice

1 Regional Exchange Meeting - with 3 partnerships in South Africa



Lessons learned: gains and setbacks in the Blue Deal partnerships

2022 goes down in the books as the best Blue Deal year so far. The programme being in its fourth year, and with the pandemic firmly in the rear-view mirror, teething troubles were now a thing of the past and the partnerships had a chance to flourish. Nevertheless, the challenges remained myriad. Some of the gains and setbacks are listed below.

(-/+) Transparency and the role of data and benchmarking

Many partnerships aim to increase water authorities' transparency, but this is proving difficult to achieve. For instance, partnership Colombia notes that in Huila there are shortcomings in the data obtained in the field. They also cite a failure to clearly explicate the results of planning instruments and how they translate into investment decisions. In other words, the absence of good data and a sound translation of data into decisions can hamper the transparency of water authorities. In other instances, data quality is perceived as too deficient to share. As a result, no data is shared at all with the public, undermining transparency in the process.

How to break this cycle? In Burkina Faso, the water agencies are active on Facebook and report on good practices in water resource management. Similarly, in another part of Colombia, social networks are used to communicate weather and water level data to the community. They also send out flood warnings when necessary. In other words: a good practice is to start by communicating such data as is available.

Another way to increase transparency is working with recognisable benchmarks. For instance, in South Africa, Green Drop Assessments were reinstated, underlining the importance of sanitation and the functioning of waste water treatment plants. Another example is the Blue Flag programme, which recognises communities working hard to promote swimmable, drinkable and fishable water.

(+) Morale-boosting effect

To keep momentum going, it is helpful to realise what can help to boost morale. Partnership South Africa writes: "The direct interaction from the Deputy Minister with the regional and local partners boosted the moral and the impact of all the Blue Deal interventions. This effect was augmented by the positive vibe of the Blue Deal Conference in November." They also note that cooperating and sharing experiences with neighbouring countries, such as was done during the regional meeting between eSwatini, Mozambique and South Africa, can give a boost.

(-) High turnover

High staff turnover – an issue in previous years – remains a problem, and will continue to pose serious challenges to sustainable outcomes. People will of course change jobs now and then. The question is: does the water sector suffer more from this than other sectors? Do regional authorities suffer more compared to other layers of government? The audit of the Global Climate Change Alliance cites high staff turnover as impeding progress. Good handovers are a way of mitigating this, but the very fact that people change roles so often makes it difficult for partnerships to ensure this. Does more need to be done to retain staff? For instance, is there scope for improving improve working conditions? This will surely be an ongoing topic of discussion, for example within our Communities of Practice.



Results of the partnerships

All seventeen partnerships of the Blue Deal booked successes and faced challenges in 2022. The successes differed per partnership, as set out below. The partnership of Mali is missing from this overview.

An issue faced by partnerships across the board was starting up again after the COVID-19 pandemic. Luckily, they were all able to resume their work visits, which both enhanced relations and helped them achieve greater success. While they all still saw the advantages of hybrid working, it sometimes took time for partners to reacquaint themselves with each other and work on relations.

Another challenge that many partnerships faced was high staff turnover or deficient capacity, either on the Dutch side or on the local partner's side. This partly had to do with the drafting of the multi-annual plans, which had to be finished in the autumn of 2022. Although the plans helped realign the projects of each partnership to the main goals, drawing them up proved very time-consuming. Eswatini, for example, wrote: 'The biggest challenge in 2022 was following planning and at the same time writing the project proposal for phase 2. The latter took a considerable amount of time and energy, making the former challenging at times.'

Argentina

Important steps were taken within the Argentina partnership in 2022, mainly due to mutual work visits: two Dutch visits to Argentina and one by the Argentinian partner to the Netherlands. The need for such encounters was crucial, because the Dutch team had never met in person with their Argentinian counterparts. The latter team's members had changed after the presidential elections at the end of 2019, and the pandemic had prevented travel in 2020-2021. The team focused on further elaborating the project objectives with the Argentinian partners and strengthening ties with and activities in the project area. The result of the work visits was to considerably strengthen ownership of the project by the Argentinian partner.

This is evident, for example, in the fact that the Argentinian partner ADA (Autoridad de Agua de la provincia Buenos Aires) has reflected extensively on its role in its own

organisation and that it has stepped up cooperation with other departments in the province, such as the project organisation DPH (Department of Projects and Hydraulics). Another important result is that the project has been more firmly embedded in the region, thanks to relations with municipalities and farmers in the project area being enhanced. The participative monitoring programme of water levels has been expanded and the results are now all properly registered in the database of ADA.

The visit of four young hydrologists from ADA and DPH to the Netherlands in November was another success, leading to a productive exchange of knowledge in the field of modelling and water management in general. The young professionals proved very enthusiastic and keen to learn, and were able to take important steps to further develop their hydrological model for the project area. The partnership had one more work visit planned in 2022, on the topic of water quantity. However, neither side had either the capacity or the budget for the visit. Flight costs had almost doubled due to high energy prices. As a result, even without the extra work visit, the partnership exceeded its budget for 2022 (while it had underspent in all previous years). However, this is not necessarily perceived as negative: the overrun partly resulted from a high-capacity deployment of the Argentinian partner.

Burkina Faso

The main theme the Blue Deal partnership in Burkina Faso worked on was to improve the integrated water resource management of the Agences de l'Eau (water authorities) in Burkina Faso. For this, the partnership developed training materials and supported the development of water basin plans by the local water authorities and water committees. The partnership also contributed to the building of water infrastructure: a spin-off of the Blue Deal and financed by the Dutch embassy and the European Union. The water infrastructure included regeneration of water reservoirs, anti-erosion measures (sand traps, hedges, reforestation and demarcation of cultivation-free zones). It was the first time that the water authorities had managed water infrastructure projects, a process that requires both a different skillset and a shift from planning to actually building water





infrastructure. This was something the Blue Deal contributed to.

It was a challenge, however, to achieve long-term improvements and not to be distracted by the many urgent issues arising during infrastructure construction. In addition, the Blue Deal provided training on integrated water resource management to around 400 individuals. The water monitoring and water plan teams also made good advances which have been put into practice. Despite these successes, there were also some challenges. The partnership's objectives for 2022 proved too ambitious. This was partly due to budgetary constraints, but also to the personal circumstances of team members. As a result, some planned activities could not be achieved, whereas others surpassed the output objectives.

Unfortunately, there was also sad news in 2022. The founding father of all Dutch Water Authorities' projects in Burkina Faso, Henk Post, passed away unexpectedly. His death

shocked the entire water sector in Burkina Faso and left a huge gap. His last words were: 'I was not yet finished with the work in Burkina Faso'.

Colombia

In 2022, InspirAgua, the Blue Deal partnership in Colombia, focused on five main goals in the five clusters in which it works:

- participatory monitoring for evidence-based decision making
- stakeholder and SWOT analysis in the implementation of plans
- training and support of operators
- support in the process of designing and building waste water treatment plants (WWTP)
- introduction to crisis management and organisational crisis approach.

The result is for example evident in Santander, where the development and implementation of participatory monitoring has made great progress.

The strategy of working in small and relatively manageable pilot areas proved very successful.

Another success was the collection of situational information and analysis of water infrastructure (WWTPs) for the implementation of pilots or analysis of other management models and instruments. This has generated an information package that enables Colombian partners to make informed decisions. InspirAgua also initiated a training course for WWTP operators in November. Unfortunately, the collaboration between InspirAgua and Aguas de Huila did not deliver the result intended for 2022. The development of a model waste water treatment plant was delayed due to complex bureaucratic processes and poor communication. The team was therefore forced to adjust activities for 2023 to reflect the current situation. At a national level, InspirAgua furthered the aim of influencing national policy on water governance by strengthening cooperation with national partners such as ASOCARS, Andesco and Cormagdalena. Erik de Ridder, President of the Dutch Water Authority De Dommel, paid a visit to Colombia. In May, a delegation of directors of the CARs

(Environmental Authorities), the governor of Santander, directors of Cormagdalena and ASOCARS, along with directors of public companies and embassy representatives, visited the Netherlands. Partly thanks to the visits, InspirAgua is now considered a strategic programme for the improvement of water governance in Colombia, working from regional level and with resonance at national level.

Eswatini

Blue Deal Eswatini was 'Flowing steadily in the right direction'. That was the title of the annual plan for 2022 and that's what the partnership did. Phase 1 of the Blue Deal project in Eswatini saw the beginning of decentralisation of water management in the country. The partner organisation JRBA (Joint River Basin Authorities) was gazetted and established. Ms Takhona Dlamini became its first official employee, making the step up from YEP to a full member of staff. Others were seconded from the national government to join the team, and the JRBA is gradually expanding its staff, expertise and capabilities. Of course, as in any start-up, as soon as one question is answered, new ones arise.

Another success of 2022 was having all YEPs from Blue Deal Eswatini visit the Netherlands over the course of the year. Data management was also given a boost. At the beginning of the year, an intensive work visit to Eswatini took place, with data managers training and sharing knowledge. At the end of the year, data management was the topic of the first ever Blue Deal Day, hosted by programme management from the Netherlands. People from four countries – Eswatini, Mozambique, South Africa and the Netherlands – got together in South Africa to share knowledge and learn from each other.

There were other successful work visits too, including the training course on the roles of board members and ambassadorship. Sending two Dutch financials to partner with the Swazi financial also proved a good decision, enhancing understanding and future communication.

The only objective for 2022 which the team did not achieve was to start building an interventionary team of 3 CEOs: two Dutch and one Swazi. However, the partnership did manage to execute this in January 2023 and will enlarge in the future.

Ethiopia Abbay

In 2022 the partnership in Ethiopia Abbay mainly focused on capacity building on drafting the Water Allocation Plans for two

critical subbasins in the Abbay region. This resulted in the delivery of two draft Water Allocation Plans for Tana and Beles subbasins, which were presented in the Netherlands during a stakeholder meeting and high-level quality management training course in the Netherlands for two Ethiopian experts. Other results the partnership was proud of were a masterclass by Dr Mulugeta from Bahir Dar University and Dr Maarten Waterloo from Acacia Water about the value of data standards, data gaps, data assessment and development of a water balance. Another success was an informal agreement with two flower farmers for a tariffing pilot in the Kunzila floricultural development area. One of the biggest challenges in 2020 was that after the elections, Ethiopia's civil service was restructured. As a result, experts from the Ministry and the Ethiopian Blue Deal partner were assigned other roles. This process lasted for a good three-quarters of a year, which delayed some activities.

Ethiopia Awash

Two of the biggest achievements for 2022 within the partnership Ethiopia Awash were: a governance structure/mechanism for the Water Agreement and an infographic (including clickable pdf) for the Water Allocation Planning Process. There was a surprise development in April, when COVID-related travel restrictions were relaxed and there was a ceasefire/peace



agreement between the national government and rebels in the north. This meant that for the first time in two years, partnership work visits were once again possible. We responded by setting up work visits both to Ethiopia and to the Netherlands.

During one such visit, by the Ethiopian partners to the Netherlands, the partnership set up a governance structure to implement federal and regional government cooperation under the Water Agreement. The partnership organised a comprehensive workshop in which high-level staff from the Steering Committee and experts from the Technical Committee learned about coordination and cooperation. Since then, several Steering Committee meetings have been held. Experts and stakeholders lack understanding of the comprehensive water allocation planning process. The partnership responded by designing a very appealing infographic, including a clickable pdf, illustrating the process. The infographic works as an evaluation and learning tool to assess strengths and weaknesses of actual water allocation planning by the partners. These strengths and weaknesses will also form the agenda for interventions and improvements in 2023.

The Blue Deal partnership is very happy with the way that cooperation between the Ethiopian partners and their Dutch counterparts is progressing. Even more promising is the cooperation among the six Ethiopian partners themselves, which is intensifying in all five projects in the partnership. This is clearly visible in the joint

monitoring plan and the implementation of the monitoring rounds. The initiative to work jointly, bringing with it an enhanced sense of responsibility for implementation, is increasingly shifting to the Ethiopian partners. The Dutch partners are impressed by the speed with which the Ethiopian partners are acquiring the necessary skillset, as well as their openness to new ideas and grasp of the path the partnership has to follow to achieve the ultimate goal: clean, sufficient and safe water for everyone.

Ethiopia Waste Water (WW)

The work theme for 2022 for Ethiopia WW was to organise efficient and effective faecal sludge management in the frontrunner cities Adama, Shashemene and Hawassa. Other water utilities can learn from these cities with regard to scaling up, and through this achieve better quality of life and improved health for its citizens.

Like all the other Blue Deal partnerships, Ethiopia WW spent a considerable amount of time during the first half of 2022 on preparing for Phase 2 of the Blue Deal. During this process, decisions were made to work more directly with the water utilities, which led to the choice to work with the utilities of Adama, Hawassa and Shashemene. The delivery of a well-coordinated multi-annual plan for Phase 2 was therefore an important milestone, including clear commitment of the three participating utilities and the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) to more practical implementation, and the connection to the main stakeholders working on sanitation in Ethiopia (Unicef, EKN, NGOs).



Furthermore, a proposal to construct a wetland to mitigate the negative impact of overflowing (badly constructed) septic tanks was awarded a grant by the NWB Fund in 2022. This enabled the partnership to start preparations for a showcase in Adama by initiating the construction of a wetland for wastewater treatment at condominium housing. This will act as a model for other cities in Ethiopia. With this showcase, the partnership was able to focus on a presentation of technical solutions for sanitation, collection, transport, treatment and disposal.

In the last quarter of 2022, the partnership also started preparations for a high-level event together with the Ethiopia Awash partnership. The general objective of this event is the signing of MoUs on cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Environment (Water Resources Department and WASH department) and with the utilities of Adama, Shashemene, Hawassa and the Abbay Basin Development Office. Thanks to the security situation in the country having grown more stable since the previous year, it was easier to get work done in the partnership. However, there were also changes in the partnership lead and partnership focus, which meant that time had to be invested in establishing a new setup.

Ghana

The main work theme for the Blue Deal in Ghana in 2022 was helping the national and regional water authorities to enhance their governance structures in a sustainable manner. Together with its Ghanaian partners, the team booked many successes in terms of strengthening governance in the Lower Volta Delta and White Volta Basin.

The partner strengthened the organisation of Ghana water management through the official installation of the Lower Volta Basin Board, on which fifteen stakeholders have a seat. Without the help of the Blue Deal team members and their catalytic role this could not have been achieved within such a short period of time. In the years to come, the technical and financial capacities of the Basin Board will be improved to effectively implement and coordinate local water resources management activities.

The Blue Deal also introduced the concept of 'area-oriented approach' and combined that with actual pilot projects, which helped greatly in putting theory into practice. This approach is an effective method for translating policy into implementation. An example from 2022: with the help of Blue Deal a reforestation project was set up in the White Volta Basin. The aim of the project is to prevent siltation of the Veia Dam, improve the water balance and enhance the livelihood



of 20 communities by planting 220,000 trees upstream of the Veia Dam. Another example of the strength of the area-oriented approach was seen in the Songor Lagoon. At the beginning of 2022, this mangrove restoration pilot project was proving quite a challenge. After a successful start with key stakeholders, it became clear to the Blue Deal team that it lacked a holistic view. There was an overly strong focus on mangrove planting. The team concluded that the focus should be broader in the Songor Lagoon, encompassing an integrated approach to water-related issues, such as monitoring and data, salt intrusion, lack of drinking water, sanitation and safety (flooding) issues. The team accordingly introduced the area-oriented approach, thereby helping to embed a more holistic view.

These were only a few of the many activities that took place within the partnership. A scenario study was conducted for the Delta approach in the Lower Volta Delta. This will help to set up a Delta programme for Ghana, which is one of the big issues the partnership will continue to work on in 2023.

Indonesia

In 2022, the partnership in Indonesia became an official part of the Blue Deal. Because the partnership has only just started, there are no visible results yet from the measures taken. However, it was possible to travel again in 2022. Thanks to intensive online workshops with the partner, the presence of local contractors and the involvement and support of RVO, work visits could be well prepared.

Especially in the case of the first work visit, this greatly raised the profile of the Blue Deal collaboration among high-level local officials. This was picked up by the media, and a local TV item and newspaper article were devoted to it. Expectations appear to be high. The partnership mainly focuses on flood control. This involves developing and implementing multiple approaches in the three regions of orientation. Considerable attention is being paid to floodings at the coast and from severe rainfall/run-off from the main river discharges. Discussions on how to tackle flood control are broad: from nature-based solutions (mangroves) to technical solutions (building dikes, polders), as well as non-technical (social behaviour, land-use planning).

Because the partnership is so new, time was also devoted to setting up the team. This resulted in a clear description of the roles and tasks of the Dutch core team. It was sometimes challenging to find a balance between the feedback and expectations of the Blue Deal programme office and spending time on activities both in the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Besides this, the biggest challenge was to get the three regions/partners together in one workshop in an active working session to jointly discuss the principles and starting points of the Blue Deal programme. Ultimately, the partners themselves determined their own development objectives for their own three sub-regions, based on their Water Governance Assessment situation and a thorough issue analysis. And although this



was the biggest challenge, it was also one of the best direct results of 2022.

Kenya

In 2022, the Blue Deal partnership between the Water Resources Authority (WRA) in Kenya and Dutch Water Authorities mainly focused on sufficient water. For this, they took preparations for the development of a Water Allocation Plan for the Thika River catchment. The partnership measured the water availability and water demand in the Thika and Chania river, including environmental flow, by implementing the Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) tool. The team was very proud of this success, because all the modelling was done by WRA staff and because it is important input for the Water Allocation Plan.

Another result the partnership was proud of, was the introduction of the Mobile Water Monitoring (MWM) app as an improved and more reliable method for the monitoring of water levels in the rivers. This method has great potential for improving the water level monitoring and for direct use of the data for management decisions.

The partnership also established two tree nurseries with the Upper Thika and Thika mid Water Resources Users Associations (WRUA's), associations that function as a powerful stakeholder engagement platform in

water resource management in Kenya. These were some very tangible and visible results that benefit the livelihood of the communities and for restoration of the catchment. This project has also further developed the cooperation between WRUA, WRA and the Blue Deal.

Of course 2022 also contained some challenges. In general, the team had hoped for more progress in its planned activities, mainly in Water Allocation Planning. One reason is the scarcity in financial resources in Kenya for Water Resources Management. For this reason, the Blue Deal partnership also addresses the mobilisation of financial resources and improved revenue collection.

Mozambique

In 2022, the Blue Deal partnership in Mozambique focused on several topics: financial sustainability of the Mozambican water authorities, improving the allocation of ground and surface water, water quality licensing, maintenance of urban drainage canals and flood prevention. The partnership supported the drainage department SASB of the city Beira in cleaning up 90% of their secondary urban drainage system. This resulted in a well-prepared water system able to handle precipitation during the rainy season 2022/2023.

In addition, the partnership introduced a blended learning journey training module on

water quality featuring online course options for trainees, and set up a ratified legal system for new water use tariffs in order to generate more revenue for water authorities. The partnership also helped to finalise the merger of five regional water authorities into three new water authorities in Mozambique.

Like many of the other Blue Deal partnerships, Mozambique struggled to balance efforts to wrap up Phase 1 of the Blue Deal with preparations for Phase 2 – a time-consuming process that placed a strain on capacity.

Palestinian Territories

In 2022, the Blue Deal partnership in the Palestinian Territories mainly focused on implementing components of the planned water sector reform in the two pilot areas of Salfit Municipality and North Hebron area (eleven municipalities and three village councils).

There were of course numerous activities, but one of the biggest successes – as well as challenges – of 2022 was the global launch and installation of three tailor-made decentralised wastewater treatment units, one in Salfit and two in North Hebron. These 'BluElephants' were developed within a public-private partnership of 7 Dutch organisations. The design, tailored to local circumstances, addressed the need to accelerate the transition from non-sewered to centralised sanitation.

The placement of the BluElephants in 2022 was the start of a two-year pilot in which several aspects play a role: technical (operation and maintenance, monitoring, laboratory analysis), institutional (fit within local governance and regulations), financial (development of business model for cost-recovery) and social (awareness and acceptance of reuse of treated water). All partners of the Blue Deal in the Palestinian Territories showed great dedication. They undertook a risky venture: trying to develop the best solution to the pressing need for safe, sufficient and clean water in the West Bank as a model for similar needs worldwide. In just two years, from 2020-2022, a fully operational and unique decentralised wastewater treatment concept was developed, built, transported and installed. The installation will be tested from 2022-2024.

However, placing the BluElephants also came with many challenges, such as their transport and tax-free import, and assigning local

responsibilities for installation, ownership, and operation and maintenance. This pilot accordingly also demonstrates the importance of good governance in the Palestinian water sector, which is something the Blue Deal partnership will continue to work on.

Peru

The Peru partnership's main focus for 2022 was adaptation to climate change and capacity building. One of the results was the update of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plan in both regions (Piura and Tumbes). Two YEPs also started in 2022, in both regions.

There were also three successful work visits to Peru, dealing with various themes through the expert working groups: IWRM and water allocation plans, water quality (plans for improvement of RWZIs) and the elaboration of catchment inundation prevention plans and urban drainage plans. The involvement of Dutch experts was increased. In addition, a delegation of the Peruvian partners visited the Netherlands for the first time. This proved useful in enhancing mutual commitment and exchanging knowledge and experiences. The biggest challenge for 2022 was to combine the project implementation with preparing the planning for Phase 2 of the Blue Deal partnership, which is something many other Blue Deal partnerships struggled with as well. Regarding implementation within Peru, the challenge was to help the regional Water Councils escalate their concerns about water safety plans to national level, so that they could negotiate to have the plans adjusted. Another challenge was language-related: the partnership had planned to work with Spanish-speaking Dutch experts, but they proved to be scarce. The partnership solved the problem by setting up a system for translation to English through the partnership managers and YEPs.

In December 2022, a political crisis and social protests broke out in Peru (although the situation stayed relatively calm in the North, where the partnership is located). Fortunately, this had barely any impact on the programme. The last work visit had finished just before the crisis started and at the time of writing this annual report the situation has quietened down. The Dutch remained in close contact with their Peruvian counterparts and received updates on the situation. Luckily, these partners did not have any issues in their areas.





Romania

In 2022 the partnership in Romania mainly focused on financing water management and tackling drought and flooding. This resulted in the realisation of two regional water management plans and a regional strategic contingency plan.

The partnership also booked other results that it was proud of in 2022. Among them, the agreement that the partner National Administration Romanian Waters (NARW) concluded with the World Bank to improve the financing of water management in Romania. The Romanian partner told its Dutch counterparts that this was only possible because of the partnership with Dutch Water Authorities. The partnership also viewed the completion of its multi-annual plan 2023-2030 as a success. This was really a coproduction between all the partners. Another result of 2022 were the six training work visits to Romania and the Netherlands, involving collaboration between a total of fifty Romanian and Dutch colleagues.

The biggest challenge throughout 2022 was finding enough capacity to execute the annual plan while simultaneously drafting the Romanian multi-annual plan 2023-2030. Another challenge was finding ways in which Dutch Water Authorities can support NARW in developing a decision support system for reservoir management.

South Africa

The Blue Deal South Africa partnership is a learning programme, in which problems of the water sector are addressed in local pilot projects. The results of these projects are shared and replicated in other areas with similar challenges. In this way, the partnership strives to provide 2.5 million people with sufficient, clean and safe water. In 2022, the lessons learnt from Phase 1 of the Blue Deal were abstracted and the objectives

for Phase 2 were set. The focus is on improving the quality of water resources and the performance of waste water treatment works, and on reducing the pollution of water systems in and around informal settlements. The partnership presented its results for Phase 1 during the Stockholm International Water Week in August, the WISA Conference in Johannesburg in September, and the Blue Deal Conference in South Africa in November. During this last event, the partnership agreement for Phase 2 between the Department of Water and Sanitation and the Dutch Water Authorities was signed. All national, regional and local partners were present. Together they workshopped the different goals and activities, shared many lessons learnt and initiated collaborative relations across the country.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, all the projects managed to build a strong network of regional and local partners and stakeholders in Phase 1. With the assistance of national partners, the performance of waste water treatment works was improved, the negative impact of invasive species on water resources was diminished, community involvement was increased and data management and data sharing enhanced. Especially deserving of mention was the award ceremony to present certificates to the first group of women who were trained to produce household commodities from the waste of harvested water hyacinths. Another highlight was the first exchange visit of a group of waste water treatment operators from South Africa to colleagues in the Netherlands.

An additional important result was the assistance provided to the Department of Water and Sanitation at national level. The Blue Deal supported the department in developing the business case for the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency and implementation of the new infrastructure

procurement strategy and policy. These activities will boost the resilience and responsiveness of water resource management from national to local level. This close collaboration strengthened the high-level commitment of the Director General and the Deputy Minister to Phase 2 of the Blue Deal South Africa partnership.



Products from harvested water hyacinths, made by South African women

the Vietnamese partnership was completed and the partnership held four training weeks. At the end of each training week, the results were presented and discussed. On each of these occasions, all managers were present, even when this meant they had to drive to another province – which showed how important it was to them. The partnership also noticed that the partner provinces were working more closely together.

They consulted each other more often. For example on how to quickly approve extension of Phase 1 by the People's Committees and on the joint outcomes of Pool 1 and Pool 2. The challenges the partnership had to deal with were still mostly COVID-related. Vietnam remained closed to foreigners until the end of March 2022, so the partnership could only have online meetings. The third training week of Pool 1 also had to be postponed when one of the Dutch trainers contracted COVID.

Vietnam

2022 was the year in which the Blue Deal partnership in Vietnam truly took off, and a base was established with three partner provinces in the Mekong Delta. On 10 June there was an official kick-off of the programme in Vietnam. Besides this, there were also other successes. The website of the Community of Practice for

Finances

In 2022, total expenditure on all seventeen partnerships amounted to € 8,894k. As expected this almost doubled the amount of 2021, though this was still within the planned annual budget for 2022.

Expenses all partners (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Budget 2022	Actual 2022
Hours Dutch Water Authorities	2,308	2,039	2,257	3,683	3,895
Hours local partners	415	403	1,098	1,529	1,405
Travel and accommodation	622	284	292	1,432	1,359
Contractors/third party	262	230	437	831	653
Project expenses	489	666	1,288	1,580	1,581
Contingency				144	
Total project expenses	4,096	3,621	5,373	9,199	8,894

Table 1: Budget vs. actual expenditure 2022 Partners

The Association of Dutch Water Authorities (Unie van Waterschappen) 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 and the Association, financed 50% of all expenses in 2022. 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 50% of all expenditure in 2022.

The NWB Fund financed several nature-based solutions for Blue Deal partners. They also partly funded the tailor-made Young Expert Programme (YEP) group of the Blue Deal and fully funded the KIWI group that both started in 2022. These actions are additional to the Blue Deal programme budget and as such not part of the expenditure of this annual report, but helped improve the impact of the programme.

Cost and contribution (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Actual 2022	Actual 2022 in %
Project cost partners		4,096	3,621	5,373	8,894	91%
Inception and Reconnaissance	1,884	206				
Programme office (excl. learning prog. and communication)		510	707	629	664	7%
Learning programme and communication		63	95	87	198	2%
Total programme costs	1,884	4,875	4,422	6,089	9,756	100%
In-kind Dutch Water Authorities and local partners	586	2,591	2,125	2,947	4,792	49%
Contribution NWB fund (for learning prog. and comm.)	158	80	120	100	100	1%
Contribution Association of Dutch Water Authorities	1,110	2,141	2,082	2,955	4,864	50%
Contribution ministries	1,884	4,875	4,422	6,089	9,756	100%
Total Contributions		1,884	4,875	4,422	6,089	100%

Table 2: Costs vs. contribution 2022



Expenses by partnership (in 1,000 euro)	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Budget 2022	Actual 2022
Argentina	54	30	55	136	183
Burkina Faso	222	244	188	343	370
Columbia	725	546	664	1,081	1,083
Eswatini	70	133	645	740	873
Ethiopia Abbay	165	126	160	304	246
Ethiopia Awash	340	388	370	568	615
Ethiopia WWTP	116	112	56	245	142
Ghana	222	122	312	294	554
Indonesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	627	375
Kenya Tana	119	183	210	294	400
Mali	141	181	318	274	355
Mozambique	690	659	1,189	1,431	1,230
Palestinian Territories	66	214	328	394	416
Peru	213	121	109	568	426
Romania	287	60	165	327	307
South Africa	557	395	496	850	990
Vietnam	7	108	106	723	329
Volta	101	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	4,095	3,622	5,373	9,199	8,894

Table 3: Expenses by Blue Deal Partnership



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



May 2023

For more information about the Blue Deal or to apply for the monthly newsletter, please send an email to info@bluedeal.nl or visit dutchwaterauthorities.com 

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

Koningskade 40
2596 AA The Hague
070-351 97 51

info@bluedeal.nl
dutchwaterauthorities.com 



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management

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