

Water Priority Actions 2026-2029

30/06/2026

Agenda

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Opening remarks: Positioning UNEP's Freshwater Work within the 2026–2029 Medium-Term Strategy;

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Introducing the Water Priority Actions: Anchoring UNEP's role in the Post Agenda 2030 agenda;

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Practical aspects: Opportunities for raising ambitions and scaling impact;

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Open discussion segment;

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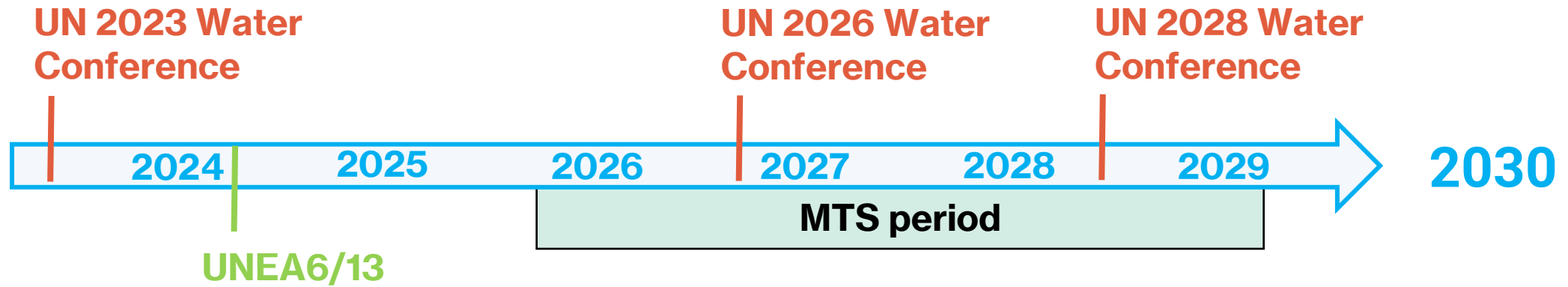
Shaping ambitions for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference;

6

Closing remarks.

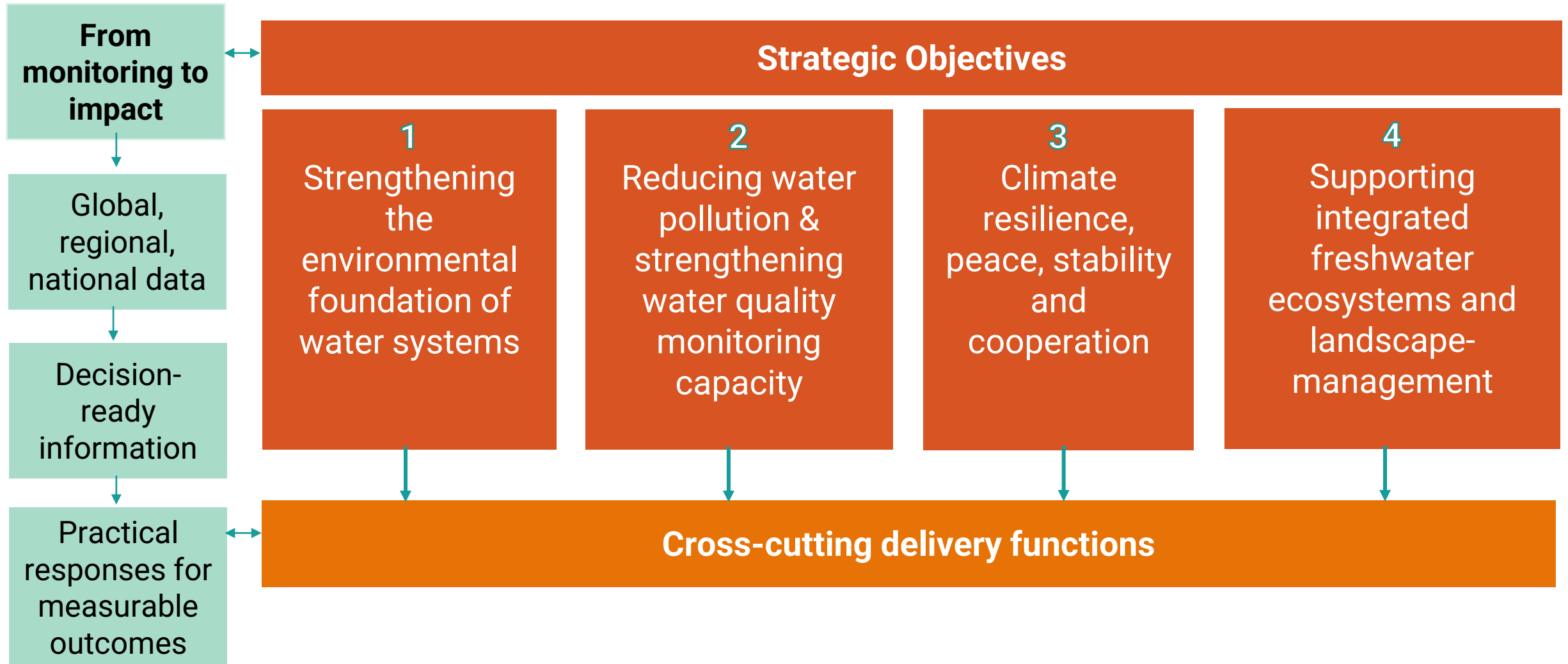
Opening remarks: Positioning UNEP's Freshwater Work within the 2026– 2029 Medium-Term Strategy;

Looking back and ahead – UNEP in a changing world

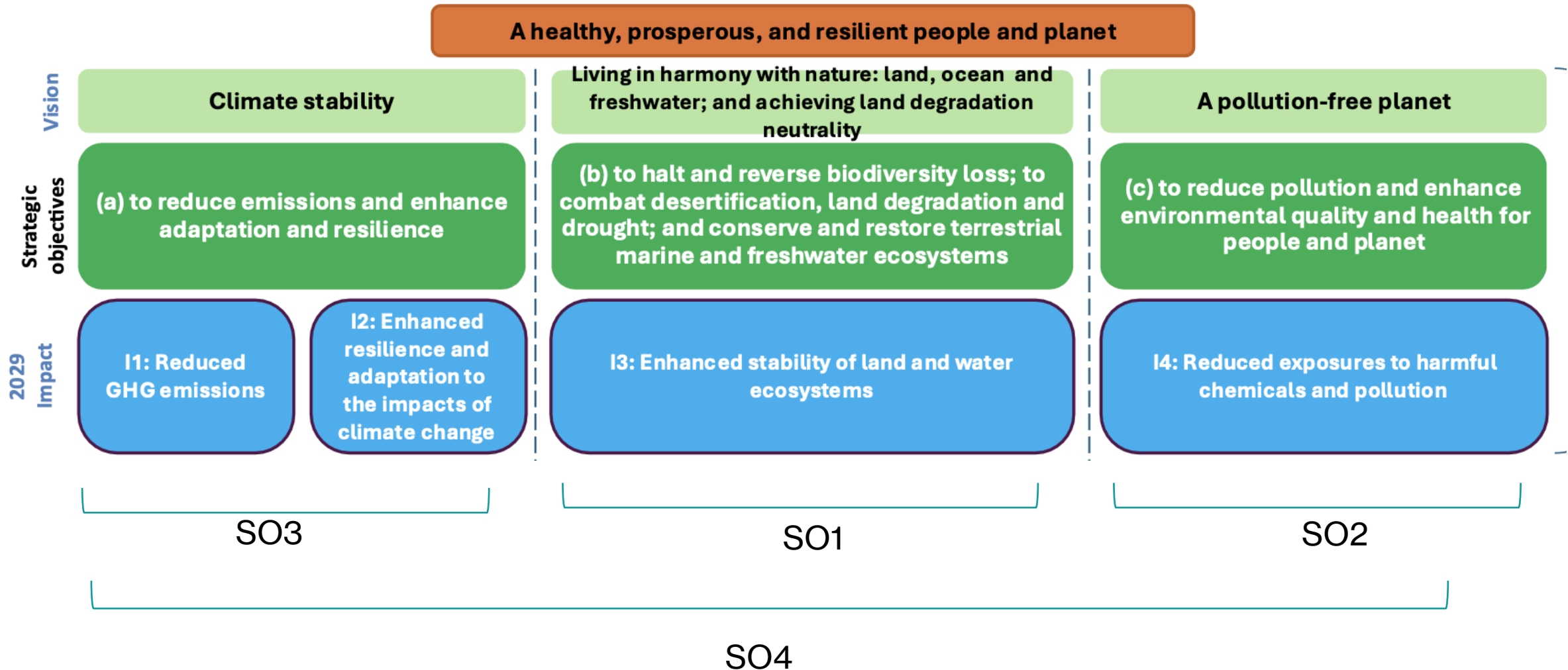


UNEP has a unique mandate, expertise and toolkit for freshwater.
The Water Priority Actions define where UNEP can achieve the greatest impact.

Water Priority Actions 2026-2029



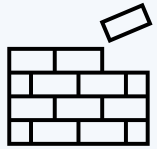
Water Priority Actions in support of the MTS and POW



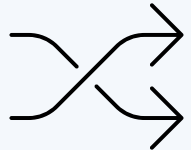
Introducing the Water Priority Actions: Anchoring UNEP's role in the Post Agenda 2030 agenda;

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SDG 6 Synthesis Report



Overview of the progress since the inception of Agenda 2030



Pathways to scale solutions for Water & Sanitation



Prepared to inform the UN HLPF SDG 6 in-depth review

Almost one billion gained access to safe drinking water

60% of countries have reached “medium-high” or above IWRM implementation level in 2023 (40% in 2017).

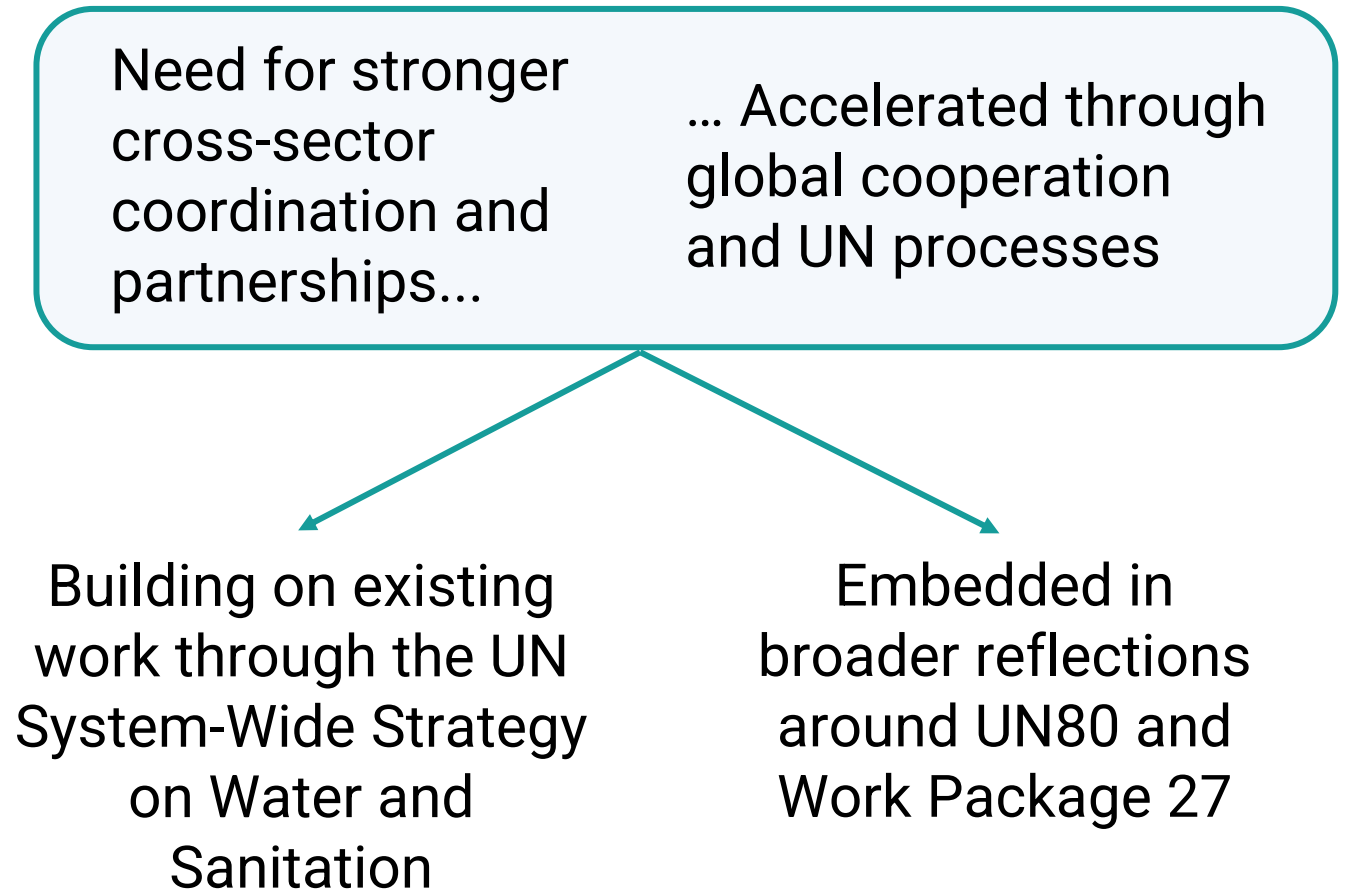
Over 2017-2021, 90/185 reporting countries show degradation in at least one freshwater ecosystem type

Reflecting on challenges and lessons learnt

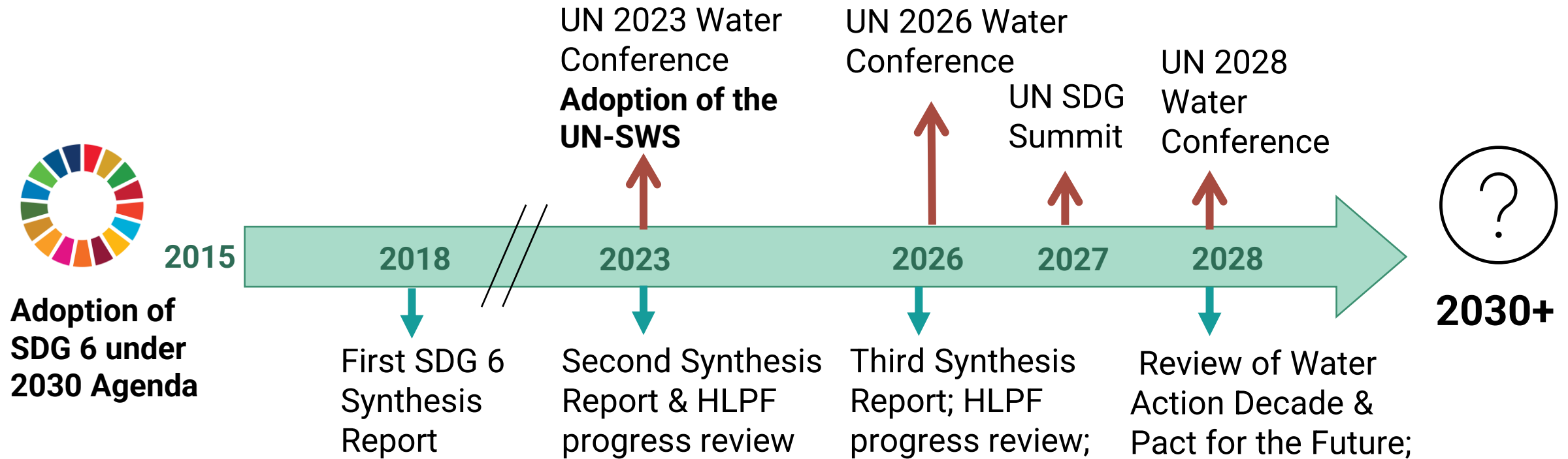
SDG 6 has demonstrated the value of a dedicated global goal for water and sanitation. Progress is real and at scale, supported by strong national plans and stakeholder momentum - but still uneven and insufficient to meet 2030 targets.

6-8x

Acceleration of current progress rate needed to achieve SDG 6.



The road to 2030 and key 2026-2028 global processes represent a critical window



Looking beyond 2030: Progress on SDG6 has been real, already making a difference for people and planet – need for upscaling. Strong support for a dedicated global water goal in the post-2030 development agenda.

Practical aspects: Opportunities for raising ambitions and scaling impact;

Continuing and upscaling UNEP's existing portfolio on freshwater

1 Environmental Foundation

Custodian of 3 SDG 6 indicators. Support provided to 191 countries

Capacity development

Information sharing

Convening the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA)

2 Water Quality & Pollution

Support +70 countries to address and prevent degradation of ecosystems by pollution

Global monitoring of water quality and ecosystems health.

Support inventories of wetlands

3 Resilience & Climate Risk

Alignment with climate agenda (Baku Dialogue)

Risk knowledge

Drought resilience (Drought resilience capacity index)

Implementing actions to build water resilience in conflict-affected settings

4 Ecosystems & Landscapes

Programmes on Integrated Watershed Management

Promoting a source-to-sea Approach (GPA and its partnerships – GWWI, GNPM, GPML)

Supporting freshwater ecosystems restoration

Mainstreaming water throughout governance layers

Implementing programmatic IWRM from system-wide agenda-setting to targeted support:

Acting at all level of water governance, embedded into a human-rights based approach, while ensuring cross-sectoral coherence that aligns with biodiversity, climate and development agendas.

Programmatic

Valuing water

Managing and restoring freshwater ecosystems

Mainstreaming water in the global agenda

Operational

Enabling environment & normative support

Droughts risk management and preparedness

THE ENGINE

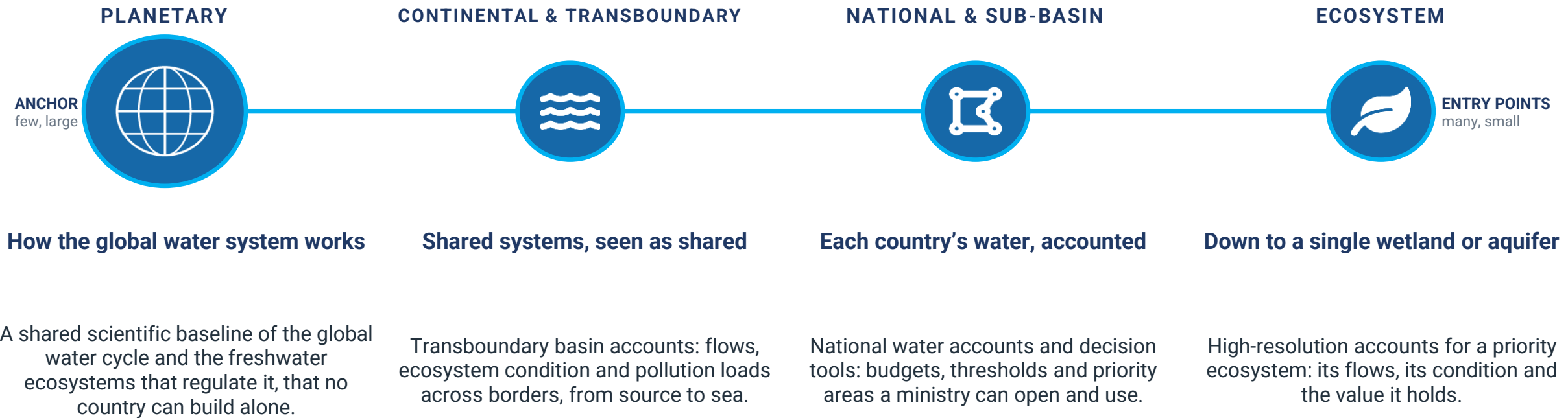
communication · normative support · technical support capacities

Seeing and valuing the world's freshwater

Using digital innovation to assess planetary water to a single wetland.

Mandate: UNEA-6 Res.13, OP 8 (Water) · UNEA-7 Res.9 (AI)

THE ENGINE SDG 6 monitoring · freshwater science · water ecosystem and basin accounts · Earth observation · GIS · AI analytics



UNEPs Water Monitoring System

INFORMING GLOBAL ACTION



SDG
Reporting



Global
Assessments



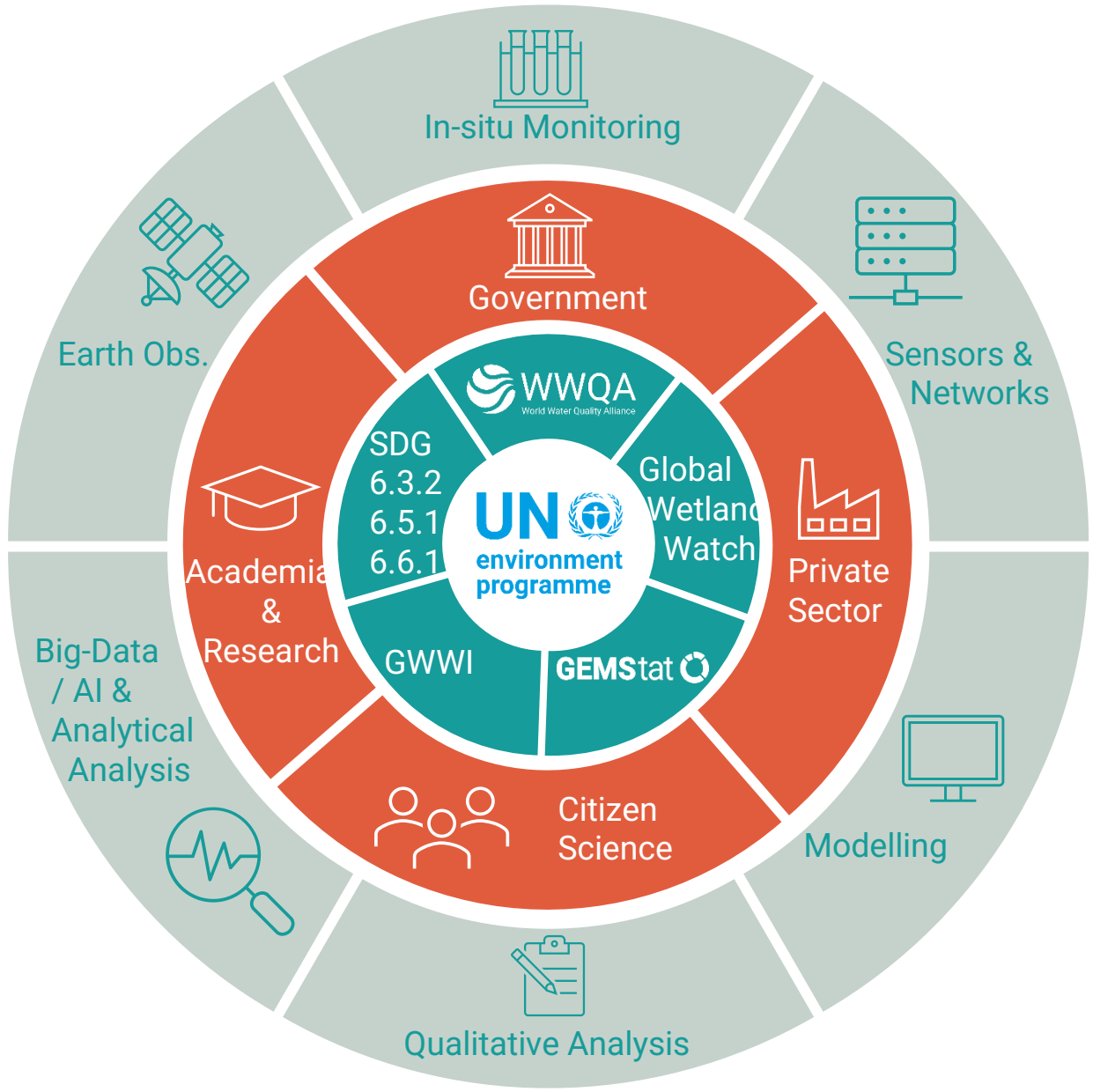
UNEA & MEA
Reporting



Science-
Policy
Interface



World
Environment
Situation Room



MONITORING
METHODS

MONITORING
PARTNERS

UNEP
MONITORING
INITIATIVES &
PROGRAMMES

UN-System Partners



UN WATER
INTEGRATED
MONITORING
INITIATIVE
FOR SDG 6



unesco



WORLD
METEOROLOGICAL
ORGANIZATION



UNECE



IAEA

UN WATER

Accelerating Technologies and Solutions for Water Efficiency



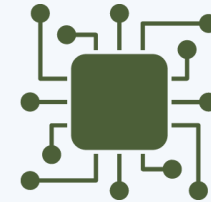
Scale Supply, Retention & Treatment

- Decentralized wastewater Management
- Traditional water management approaches
- Nature-based solutions
- Water desalination



Accelerate Circularity

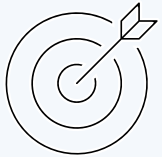
- Safe wastewater reuse
- Energy, nutrient & mineral recovery



Enhancing Digitalization

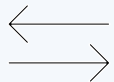
- AI-supported decision systems
- Smart water meters

UNEP as a water convener: advancing the global momentum around water through communication and advocacy

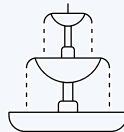


Communicate the value of water and freshwater ecosystems as well as solutions and lessons learned

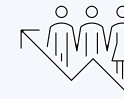
Opportunities:



Interconnectivity
with UN Oceans and
UN Water

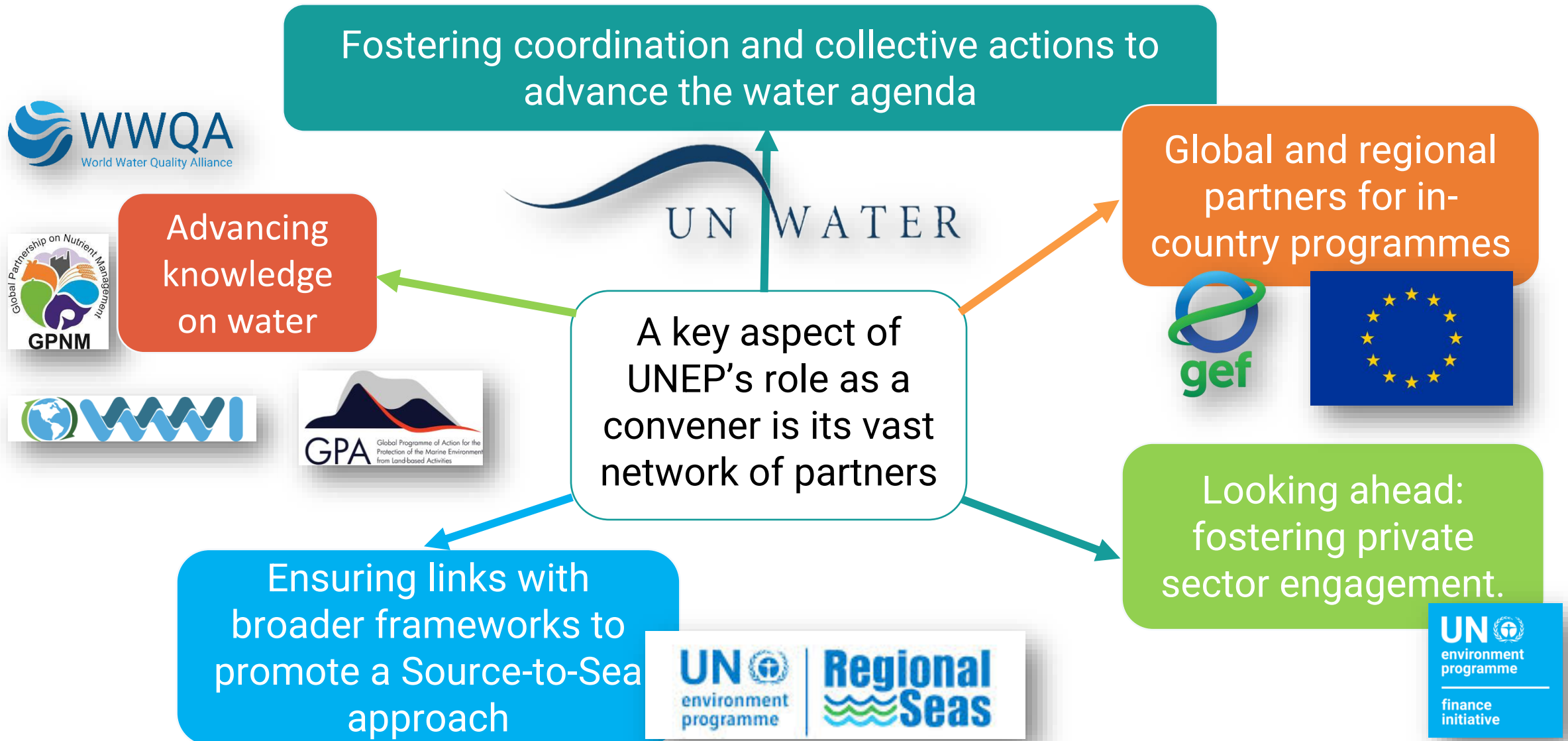


Embedding
water across
agendas



Raising awareness
among various
audiences

Catalyzing impact through partnerships



Open discussion segment

Open discussion segment



Any
question?

HOUSEKEEPING RULES

1. Before you speak state your name and country/affiliation.
2. This session is being recorded. The recording will be made available to participants at the end of the workshop.
3. You can also use the chat to submit questions or comments at any time.

Shaping ambitions for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference

Shaping ambitions for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference

2023 **2026** 2028

Third Water Conference since 1977.



Focusing on
means of
implementation



8 to 10 December
2026

Abu Dhabi



Co-hosted by Senegal
and the United Arab
Emirates

6 themes adopted as per resolution A/79/L.101 in September 2025:

a) Water for the People

- Co-conveners: UNICEF and WHO
- Co-chairs: Ghana and Switzerland

b) Water for Prosperity

- FAO, UNDP and UNIDO
- Spain and China

c) Water for the Planet

- IAEA, WMO and UNEP
- Japan and Egypt

d) Water for cooperation

- UNECE and UNESCO
- Finland and Zambia

e) Water in MEAs

- UN-DESA and UNDRR
- Germany and Mexico

f) Investments for Water

- World Bank Group
- France and South Africa

Ready-to-scale actions that respond to the dialogue's solutions and recommendations

ENVIRONMENT *the science and limits beneath every theme*

Set science-based water budgets and ecological limits at basin and aquifer scale to guide planning, permitting and investment

Recognize freshwater as natural capital, so the goods and services healthy water systems provide are reflected in policy and finance

ROOTED IN THE RIO CONVENTIONS

Climate

- Build NDCs and NAPs on realistic water availability
- Manage water as a climate solution as well as a casualty

Biodiversity

- Map all freshwater ecosystems and their role in a stable water cycle
- Protect & restore rivers, wetlands
- and aquifers as natural infrastructure

Desertification

- Restore degraded land and soils so landscapes hold water again
- Bring land and water targets into line

SUSTAINING THE WATER CYCLE

Source to Sea

- Reconnect rivers from headwaters to coast
- Cut pollution across the whole basin

Resilience

- Scale circular and efficient water use, reuse, recharge and storage
- Govern basins adaptively, with flexible allocation and joint planning

Disaster Risk Reduction

- Extend end-to-end early warning to every community
- Strengthen the monitoring and forecasting behind it

6 Closing remarks

Thank you!