



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# WASAG | The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

## Addressing water scarcity in agriculture and food systems

Water scarcity is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. Agriculture, encompassing crops, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry, is both a cause and a victim of water scarcity. It accounts for the bulk of global water withdrawals. With rising temperatures intensifying demand, in combination with more frequent and severe weather extremes impacting production, the need to address water scarcity in agriculture is apparent. Water withdrawals increased at almost twice the rate of the population in the twentieth century, and a 50 percent surge in food demand is expected by 2050. These matters most severely affect water-scarce regions, as well as areas where a lack of infrastructure or capacity prevents sufficient access to water. It is clear that there is an urgent need to address water scarcity.

The Global Framework for Action to Cope with Water Scarcity in Agriculture in the Context of Climate Change (in short, the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, WASAG) has been designed to bring together key players across the globe and from different sectors to tackle the collective challenge of using water better in agriculture to ensure food security for all. It is a Partnership hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and consisting of government agencies, international organizations, research institutions, advocacy groups and professional/membership organizations. WASAG fosters collaboration among its partners for the development and deployment of policies, strategies, and programmes, enhancing field capacity for the adaptation of agriculture to water scarcity.



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### Vision



A world whose food systems are secure and resilient to increasing water scarcity in a changing climate.

### Mission



Support measurable, significant and sustainable progress on improving and adapting agricultural systems in conditions of increasing water scarcity and a changing climate, using the combined expertise and resources of the partners.

## Objectives

Urgently address the following important and relevant work areas at international and country levels:

- advocating for political prioritization;
- cooperating on work programmes;
- sharing and disseminating knowledge and experience;
- developing new or improved solutions;
- promoting sustainable and integrated water resources management;
- building capacity of partners, countries and other stakeholders; and
- contributing to consistent monitoring systems.

## The work of WASAG supports the following SDGs

Addressing water scarcity in the agricultural sector contributes directly to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The 2030 Agenda aims to address multiple development priorities to make sure no one is left behind. The SDGs offer a vision of a fair, prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world. Food and agriculture are integrated comprehensively in the 17 goals and 169 targets.

WASAG works towards supporting countries in achieving the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda, with particular emphasis on SDG 6 'Clean Water and Sanitation' and SDG 2 'Zero Hunger'.



**Figure 1. WASAG and SDGs**

Many countries have listed water scarcity as an important issue in their Nationally Determined Contribution submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Investments made in dealing with water scarcity in agriculture will provide immediate short-term benefits towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, and long-term payoffs for sustainable development and economic growth.



## Partners

WASAG has quickly gained visibility and has now more than 70 partners jointly providing solutions to the challenges of increasing water scarcity in agriculture globally. WASAG partners are part of five groups:

**Group 1:** United Nations agencies and other United Nations bodies.

**Group 2:** Other intergovernmental organizations and State actors (including governments, public and governmental agencies).

**Group 3:** Academia and Research institutions.

**Group 4:** Civil society organizations, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

**Group 5:** Private sector organizations and trade associations.



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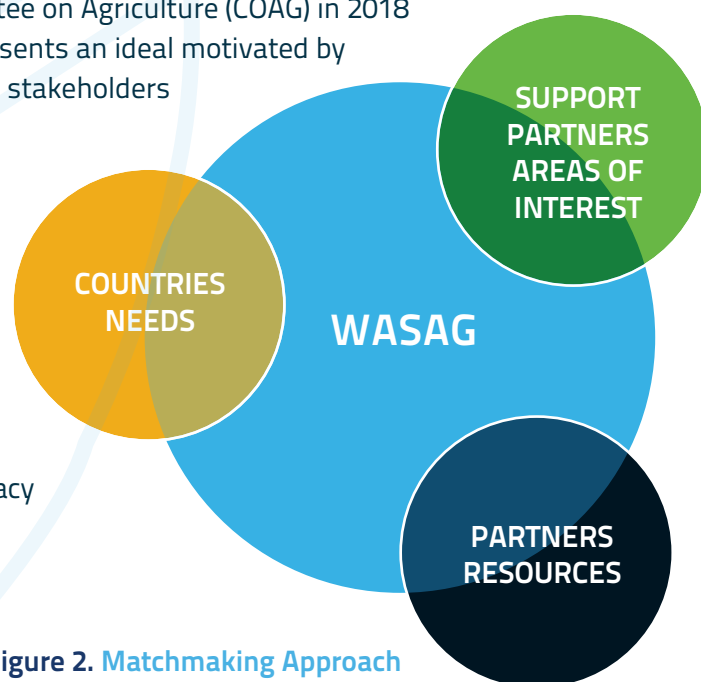
Countries supporting WASAG as partners	
Argentina	Mexico
Brazil	Morocco
Cabo Verde	Netherlands
France	Spain
Italy	Thailand
Jordan	Tunisia

Countries supporting WASAG as friends
Quebec – Canada
China
Switzerland
United States of America

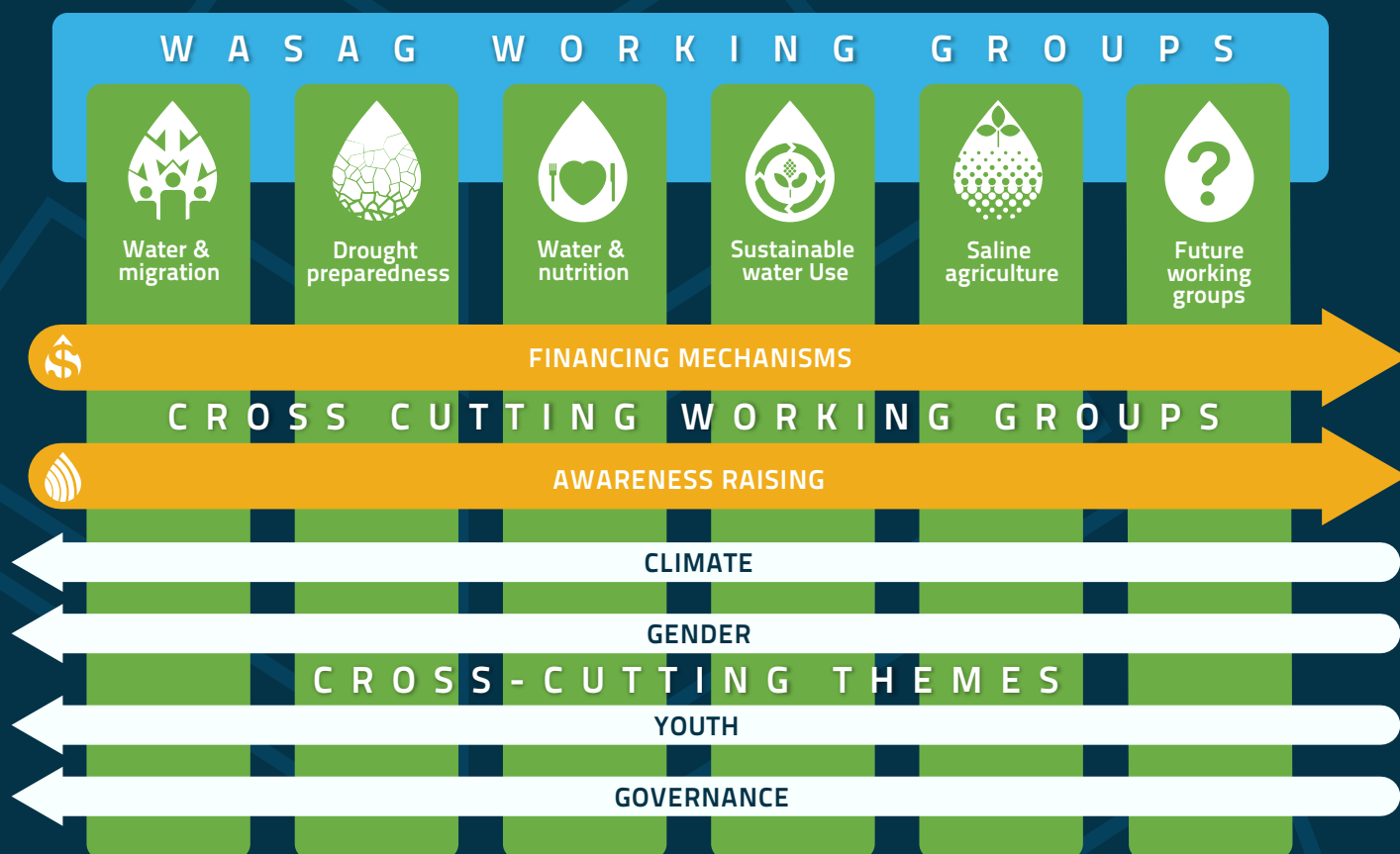
## Implementing the WASAG Strategy for 2021-2024

A strategy to guide the work of WASAG for the next four years (2021-2024) has become imperative to build on the achievements of the three years of its existence in order to better respond to the expectations raised, considering the numerous endorsements received and the mandate given to WASAG by countries, including during the 26th and 27th sessions of FAO’s Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in 2018 and 2020, respectively. Therefore, the strategy represents an ideal motivated by the commitment demonstrated by the partners and stakeholders of WASAG in its foundational years, as illustrated by the WASAG webinar series, of which 10 webinars were held in 2020, attracting hundreds of participants in a competitive environment and which started as an adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy takes stock of WASAG achievements and proposes a theory of change through which key action areas are identified from projects on the ground, innovation and data, research and training to advocacy and awareness raising.

This is all focused on collaborative solutions, building on the comparative advantages of its partners and using a match making approach.



**Figure 2. Matchmaking Approach**



**Figure 3. WASAG Working Groups and cross-cutting themes**

The four key action areas of WASAG include:

1. Development of initiatives to address water scarcity
2. Innovation and data
3. Research and training
4. Awareness raising

## Team



**Ruhiza Boroto**  
Senior Land and Water Officer



**Rosaida Dolce**  
Land and Water Consultant



**Nassila Boukaria**  
Land and Water Consultant



**Ying Ma**  
Land and Water Consultant



**Nathalie Dubler**  
Associate Professional Officer

## To contact us and for more information

Water-Scarcity@fao.org  
www.fao.org/wasag



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