UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH (UNU-INWEH)

Strategic Plan

2025-2029

UNU INWEH



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“Water is humanity’s lifeblood, flowing across all forms of life, cultures, and economies around the world. It is a human right and a common development denominator for shaping a better future.”

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
[SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023]



Image Source: Stock (Samad Deldar)

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1 Preamble

The world is facing an unprecedented convergence of water, environmental, health, and socio-economic crises. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and land degradation increasingly threaten human well-being, ecosystems, and economic stability. Water, while fundamental to life and a key driver of development, remains central to these interlinked challenges. The degradation of natural resources, inadequate governance, and unequal access to essential services continue to exacerbate global inequalities, food insecurity, and public health emergencies. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic, integrated approach that recognizes the complex interdependencies between water, the environment, and human health.

Access to clean water and sanitation remains a fundamental human right, yet billions of people still lack safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services. Pollution from industrial activities, agriculture, and urban expansion contaminates vital water sources, leading to severe public health consequences, particularly in marginalized communities. Waterborne diseases, respiratory conditions, and vector-borne illnesses are exacerbated by poor sanitation, inadequate hygiene, climate variability, and environmental mismanagement. Additionally, deforestation, soil erosion, and the destruction of wetlands and marine ecosystems reduce the planet's ability to mitigate climate change, regulate water cycles, and sustain biodiversity, worsening both environmental and health crises.

Climate change intensifies these challenges by disrupting precipitation patterns, increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, and exacerbating droughts and floods. These impacts threaten food production, endanger freshwater supplies, and force millions of people to migrate, fueling resource competition and socio-political tensions. The escalating intersection of environmental stressors, economic instability, and governance failures is driving conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires urgent, coordinated action at local, national, and international levels.

Beyond environmental and socio-economic stressors, governance failures remain a critical barrier to sustainable development. Weak institutional frameworks, inadequate policy enforcement, political instability, and insufficient investment in sustainable infrastructure undermine efforts to manage water, land, and other natural resources effectively. Corruption, mismanagement, and policy fragmentation further weaken the ability of governments and institutions to provide essential services, exacerbating inequalities and leaving communities more vulnerable to environmental disasters and health crises. Strengthening governance, ensuring accountability, and fostering inclusive decision-making are essential for building resilience and advancing sustainable development.

Recognizing these urgent challenges, the strategic plan of UNU-INWEH adopts a comprehensive approach to addressing global water, environmental, and health crises. Through rigorous, evidence-based research, capacity-building initiatives, and collaborative partnerships, UNU-INWEH seeks to develop innovative solutions that enhance water security, environmental sustainability, human health, and equitable resource management. The institute integrates expertise across governance, climate resilience, public health, and sustainable resource management to bridge knowledge gaps, support policy innovation, and drive real-world impact. By promoting interdisciplinary research and fostering collaboration among governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector, UNU-INWEH aims to empower decision-makers and communities to implement effective, science-based solutions.

The urgency of these challenges demands immediate and sustained action. As the world undergoes rapid urbanization, population growth, and increasing resource demands, sustainable and inclusive policies must guide development efforts. Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 is central to these efforts, providing a global framework for addressing poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. UNU-INWEH will continue to play a leading role in shaping global responses by advocating for social and environmental justice, ensuring equitable access to natural resources, and developing policies that prioritize the well-being of all communities. By strengthening resilience, promoting sustainability, and addressing the root causes of water, environmental, and health crises, UNU-INWEH remains committed to fostering a just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.



Image Source: United Nations

2 Introduction

The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)

is part of the global think tank and postgraduate teaching organization, United Nations University (UNU), which contributes, through collaborative research and education, to the efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development, and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, its Peoples, and Member States. Aligned in support of the stated objectives of the UNU in applying academic rigor based on universal values enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the pressing challenges of our time, UNU-INWEH seeks to drive transformative actions and policies that will generate impact through professional, independent research that is accessible to academics, students and policymakers in the Global North and South.

Founded through an agreement between Canada and the United Nations, UNU-INWEH has been working for nearly three decades on the most pressing water, environmental, and health problems worldwide, with particular attention paid to the countries in the Global South. It is one of the 13 UNU institutions located in 12 countries worldwide that collaborate with the UN member states on research, education, and policy outreach activities that can improve human well-being and the environment.

UNU-INWEH contributes to the global sustainability agenda led by the UN, particularly in supporting the UN Member States in achieving the UN SDGs. The institute contributes to raising awareness among a wide range of policy actors. It creates new knowledge on improving human security and reducing water-, environment-, health- and climate-related risks with a particular emphasis on implications for marginalized populations, including women, indigenous, and other vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the institute supports and strengthens the capacities of professionals and policymakers for evidence-based decision-making. It also contributes to enhancing the capacity of graduate students and young professionals to prepare them to address the water, environmental, health, and human security challenges as the next generation will be facing the results of today's practices.



Image Source: UNICEF

UNU-INWEH specializes in water, environment, health, and sustainable development, addressing global, regional, and national environmental and human security issues through integrated and multidisciplinary approaches. Known as the UN's "Think Tank on Water", water was the original entry point to UNU-INWEH's focus areas, including environment and health. But over the past three decades, the institute's activities expanded to a range of areas such as improving governance, security, and justice; promoting sustainable and equitable management of water, food, energy, land, biodiversity, and ecosystems; enhancing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and human health; and strengthening geospatial and climate analytics for risk reduction and resilience. Across all these areas, there is a focus on improving gender equality and social inclusion with particular attention to marginal and underserved populations. The success of UNU-INWEH's work is measured against the key performance indicators related to positively impacting societies and translating research and innovation into policies.

The institute works to bridge the gap between the wealth of evidence and research on water, environment, and health to develop knowledge products that support policy analysis, development, and implementation. UNU-INWEH is linked to critical processes in the UN system and represents the entire UNU in United Nations Water (UN Water). UN Water is an interagency mechanism with more than 30 members, including UNU, that coordinates the efforts of UN entities and international organizations working on water and sanitation issues. UNU-INWEH also represents the UNU system in the UN Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, focused on one of the most important challenges of the Global South and the world with significant health, environmental, water, and security implications. This Coalition involves the key UN organizations committed to a proactive approach to combat sand and dust storms and to enhance cooperation and coordination on sand and dust storms at global, regional, and sub-regional levels.

On the partnership front, UNU-INWEH's research has a diverse range of partners and stakeholders, including policymakers in low- and middle-income countries concerned with water, health, and environmental issues; donors and implementing agencies from the Global North and the South; scientific community in research institutions and academia; UN agencies and international and regional organizations and networks; host country and national institutions in Canada; private sector; media; and civil society.

This document outlines UNU-INWEH's strategic plan over the 2025-2029 period. To successfully implement its strategic plan, the institute will pursue a growth and capacity development plan that enables it to enlarge its international partnership network, secure additional resources for the institute, and expand its global presence and impact. UNU-INWEH will continue to play a key role at the global level in addressing the major water, environmental, and health problems, particularly those with justice, equality, gender, and security dimensions. Capacity building and capacity sharing will be a top priority for UNU-INWEH in the 2025-2029 period. Accordingly, UNU-INWEH will put major efforts into setting up new post-graduate degree and online learning programs, and launching new UNU Hubs. In pursuit of its strategic plan, the institute will also strengthen its engagements and partnerships with its host country and various stakeholders across Canada.

In a journey from a water-focused UN entity, the institute has broadened its scope of work over the past three decades by following an integrated and multidisciplinary approach where health, environment, land, food, agriculture, ecosystems, biodiversity, energy, climate change, and sustainability have become crucial thematic aspects. **Through continued collaboration with the UN Member States, leveraging its role within the UN system, and mobilizing its large global scientific and partnership network UNU-INWEH will continue to serve as a major actor in promoting and implementing effective scientific solutions, technological innovations, capacity building and sharing mechanisms, and policy measures that can improve prosperity, health, sustainability, security, justice, equity, and inclusivity around the world, with a particular focus on the Global South.**

3 Strategic Plan 2025-2029

This document outlines UNU-INWEH's strategy for tackling development and human security challenges, which are rooted in water, environment, and health problems, and establishing itself as a leader in this domain. The approach leverages institutional strengths and reaffirms its vision and commitment to its mission. Emphasizing knowledge exchange through high-quality research and strategic collaborations with research institutions, universities, and the private sector is integral to this renewed approach. The plan outlines strategic priorities to enhance institutional capacity and impact over the five years. The institute is committed to implementing a new organizational structural design and governance model to support its operations in the next five years.

UNU-INWEH strives to amplify its global influence beyond previous achievements through steadfast dedication to its established vision and mission. By focusing on innovative research, collaborative partnerships, and sustainable natural resources management practices, UNU-INWEH aims to address pressing global sustainability challenges and impact environmental conservation and human well-being worldwide. The institute is committed to advancing knowledge, developing capacities, and fostering partnerships to address water, environmental, and health challenges globally. The institute's strategic plan builds on the three pillars of *UNU's Strategic Plan (2025-2029)* based on:

1. **Strengthening capacity for policy-relevant research and education**
2. **Expanding through partnerships and collaboration, especially in the Global South**
3. **Increasing UNU's presence, brand, visibility, and tangible impact**

By generating, improving, and increasing global knowledge dissemination, UNU-INWEH will *strengthen the capacity for policy-relevant research and education*. In this regard, UNU-INWEH will continue to produce high-quality research on global water, environment, and health-related challenges, develop initiatives to influence policy and practice, and effectively communicate its research across relevant academia and professionals within the UN system and its Member States, international and regional organizations, and the private sector. By ensuring that research is timely and addresses the right questions, UNU consistently considers the potential policy implications and pathways for the uptake of its work across its programs. As a part of the UNU system, UNU-INWEH provides students with a unique educational opportunity through experiential and transdisciplinary learning opportunities while contributing to globally relevant projects with tangible impacts. The institute manages an online learning platform with specialized courses on various water, environmental, and health issues appropriate for different audiences. Some of these courses are offered in non-English languages, broadening their reach and impact. In addition, there is a vibrant in-house internship program that is open to students anywhere in the world remotely. The institute is embarking on diverse educational activities that contribute to capacity building and sharing, knowledge transfer, open access education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and training global change makers through its institutional collaboration hubs while expanding multi-regional dimensions of its work and impact.

In expanding partnerships and enhancing collaboration within the UN system, UNU-INWEH will build on the existing partnership, revitalizing existing networks and developing new ones to maximize global impact, expanding cooperation across Global North and Global South to enhance research complementarity and leverage knowledge, thereby supporting an active contribution to the worldwide knowledge platform, and promoting diversity by fostering equitable partnerships and supporting inclusive knowledge ecosystems. Strengthening partnerships and collaborations will be the key to doing so successfully. In addition, the institute will enhance its role in connecting researchers and policy makers and facilitating research uptake while acting as a crucial bridge linking scholars with decision makers and other groups of stakeholders by providing policy-relevant research and readily available evidence-based solutions. Reinforcing its role as a trusted knowledge broker that connects policymakers with timely, impactful research, UNU-INWEH will take additional steps to contribute to the global discourse, aiming to set the agenda in critical water, environment, and health areas.

Greater visibility and tangible impact through expansion, outreach, and branding will help UNU-INWEH's strategic expansion into new regions and emerging topics. While much of UNU-INWEH's research is already centered around challenges faced by the Global South, the institute will further enhance its work and presence, thereby intensifying the impact of its work with extended engagement with the decision-makers, disseminating relevant, evidence-based knowledge through diverse channels, and delivering insights on critical issues related to water, environment, and health. Through flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms, UNU-INWEH will provide timely responses to global issues, bring together researchers and decision-makers, and foster exchanges and partnerships.

The core values of UNU-INWEH over the strategic plan are:

1. **Excellence** in **transdisciplinary research**
2. **Knowledge dissemination**
3. **Transparency**, **diversity**, and **inclusion**
4. **Partnerships** and **collaboration**
5. **Commitment** to **United Nations values**

To achieve excellence in transdisciplinary research over the next five years, UNU-INWEH will foster an environment that transcends traditional academic boundaries. The institute will continue establishing collaborative research hubs that bring together experts from diverse fields, enabling them to tackle complex global challenges. By investing in research-policy bridging and supporting innovative projects, UNU-INWEH aims to attract and retain top-tier talent. The strategic focus will include establishing interdisciplinary projects, promoting joint research initiatives, and facilitating regular knowledge exchange through workshops, conferences, and symposia. The institute will prioritize publishing in high-impact journals and forming strategic alliances with leading research institutions worldwide, ensuring that our work advances academic knowledge and delivers tangible societal benefits.

UNU-INWEH is committed to broadening the reach and impact of its research through effective knowledge dissemination strategies. Over the next five years, the institute will enhance its digital infrastructure to provide greater access to its research outputs, including publications, datasets, and multimedia content. UNU-INWEH will leverage social media, webinars, and podcasts to engage with diverse audiences, ensuring that the institutional products are accessible to academic and non-academic communities. The institute will invest in research training programs to improve science communication skills, ensuring that complex ideas are conveyed clearly and compellingly. Additionally, UNU-INWEH will establish community outreach programs, public lecture series, and science talks to foster a culture of lifelong learning and encourage public participation in science.

In the next five years, UNU-INWEH will prioritize transparency, diversity, and inclusion as fundamental principles guiding its operations and culture. The institute will implement comprehensive openness, diversity, and inclusion policies that promote equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support for its staff and partnerships. Recruitment and retention efforts will focus on increasing the representation of underrepresented groups among staff, collaborating professionals, interns, and students. The institute will create inclusive spaces and support networks to foster a sense of belonging and well-being. By fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and transparency is upheld, UNU-INWEH aims to establish a thriving, innovative research, academic, and outreach community.

Building robust partnerships and fostering collaboration will be central to UNU-INWEH's strategic vision over the next five years. The institute will actively seek to establish and strengthen alliances with leading academic institutions, industry partners, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations locally and globally. These partnerships will facilitate joint research initiatives, co-developed curricula, and shared resources, enhancing the capacity to address complex challenges. By participating in global consortia and networks, UNU-INWEH will ensure that the institute remains at the forefront of academic and research advancements. The institute will also engage with local communities through outreach programs, fostering mutual growth and development. Such an approach will



Image Source: UNDP

UNU-INWEH's strategic plan will align with the core values and goals of the United Nations, particularly those outlined in the SDGs. Over the next five years, the institute will integrate these values into its teaching, research, and operational practices. The curricula will include courses that address global challenges such as poverty, gender, and socio-economic inequality, climate change, and environmental protection. The institute will encourage and support research that contributes to achieving the SDGs, providing funding and resources for projects with significant social impact. The institute will adopt sustainable practices, aiming for carbon neutrality and reducing environmental footprint. UNU-INWEH will also promote social responsibility and ethical behavior among our community members. By embedding UN values into the strategic framework, the institute will enhance its global standing and create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. In doing so, the institute will ensure fairness, impartiality, and accessibility and fully respect the impacts of policy on gender equality, disability, and inclusion.

3.1 Thematic Focus

UNU-INWEH's strategic plan focuses on various topics that help promote sustainable development and address water, environment and health-related human security challenges. Through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to excellence, the institute aspires to make a lasting impact on the world's development and human security issues through an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. UNU-INWEH will execute its strategic plan through the implementation of the following five programs:

1. **Enhancing water, environmental and health governance, security, and justice (Governance, Security, and Justice Program)**
2. **Boosting food security, land conservation, biodiversity, and protection of ecosystems (Food, Land, and Biodiversity Program)**
3. **Promoting equitable and sustainable management of water, energy, and critical minerals (Water, Energy, and Critical Minerals Program)**
4. **Improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, and gender equality (WASH, Health, and Gender Program)**
5. **Strengthening geospatial, climate, and infrastructure analytics for risk reduction and resilience (Geospatial, Climate, and Infrastructure Analytics Program)**

3.1.1 Governance, Security, and Justice Program

Climate change, conflicts, population growth, and growing inequalities in resource access are rapidly degrading the world's natural resources, leading to tensions and injustices at all levels. With accountability, transparency, and effective management options in place, inclusive governance, supportive policies, and strong institutions can support the sustainability of natural resources and ensure water and food security at different levels.

The Governance, Security, and Justice Program will support the UN Member States in enhancing governance and strengthening institutions to address water, environmental, and health security and justice-related issues at the local, national, and regional levels. UNU-INWEH will use its broad technical expertise in water, environment and health management and policy tools to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and policy development to support sustainable development at different levels.

More participatory forms of governance can improve natural resource management and outcomes for all affected parties, genders, minorities, vulnerable communities, and other relevant stakeholders to jointly decide on managing their resources, contributing to more long-term sustainable solutions. Such multistakeholder engagements can reduce the security-related sensitivities and injustices resulting from water-, environment-, and health-related challenges in an era when climate change increases inequalities and exacerbates socio-economic insecurities, contributing to increased human rights violations and population displacement. Justice issues related to specific genders, marginalized communities, and vulnerable groups can make them more susceptible to environmental degradation, health implications, and natural disasters.

This program will enhance governance frameworks, strengthen institutions to ensure human security, and promote justice in allocating and distributing natural resources, services, and infrastructure.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Conduct research and advocacy on water, environment, and health systems governance to improve human security and social justice under global climate and environmental change.**

2. **Support key actor groups institutional and project partners in developing policy recommendations and promoting inclusive governance.**

3. **Develop training programs on good governance addressing human security and justice implications of global water, environment, and health challenges.**

Key Performance Indicators

Use of UNU-INWEH's policy and governance recommendations by relevant stakeholders.	Number of countries and professionals using capacity-sharing modules and policy and governance-related tools developed by UNU-INWEH.	Number of policymakers and leading policy experts contributing to UNU-INWEH flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms related to the program.
1	**2**	**3**

3.1.2 Water, Energy, and Critical Minerals:

The sustainable management of water, energy, and critical minerals is essential to achieving a just and equitable transition to a sustainable future. Water is a key resource for all economic and social activities, yet inefficient use and mismanagement across sectors continue to exacerbate scarcity and access issues. At the same time, energy access remains uneven, with millions lacking reliable electricity. As the global shift toward clean energy intensifies, the demand for critical minerals necessary for renewable energy technologies—such as lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements—has surged, raising concerns about extraction sustainability, supply chain vulnerabilities, and geopolitical tensions.

This program focuses on improving water management and use across different sectors, ensuring that energy transitions are inclusive and sustainable, and promoting the responsible sourcing of critical minerals. Research will explore efficient water use in agriculture, industry, and urban planning while enhancing access to clean and renewable energy, including hydropower, geothermal, bioenergy, and advanced energy storage solutions. Furthermore, the program will assess the environmental and social implications of mineral extraction and trade, addressing justice, governance, and equity challenges in resource-rich but vulnerable regions.

By addressing these interconnected challenges, UNU-INWEH aims to foster a more resilient and sustainable global system, ensuring that water, energy, and critical minerals are managed equitably and responsibly for future generations.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Conduct research on sustainable water management practices to improve efficiency and resilience across sectors.**
2. **Develop policy recommendations to enhance equitable access to clean and renewable energy solutions.**
3. **Investigate the governance, economic, and environmental implications of critical mineral extraction and trade.**

Key Performance Indicators

Use of UNU-INWEH publications on water, energy, and critical minerals by other institutions, researchers, and collaboration partners.	Number of countries and professionals using the capacity building and capacity sharing modules and tools developed by UNU-INWEH on sustainable management of water, energy and critical minerals.	Number of policymakers and leading policy experts contributing to UNU-INWEH flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms related to the program.
1	2	3

3.1.3 Food, Land, and Biodiversity

Sustainable food production, responsible land management, and biodiversity conservation are essential to ensuring long-term environmental resilience and human well-being. Land degradation, deforestation, and habitat destruction not only threaten biodiversity but also compromise food security and livelihoods, particularly for vulnerable communities.

This program will focus on promoting sustainable agricultural practices, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity conservation. It will explore solutions for improving soil health, reducing deforestation, and enhancing agricultural productivity through innovative and nature-based approaches. Additionally, the program will address land governance and tenure rights, particularly for Indigenous and local communities, ensuring equitable access to natural resources.

By integrating food, land, and biodiversity considerations, UNU-INWEH aims to build more resilient ecosystems and equitable resource management frameworks for future generations.

Implementation Strategies

1

Research and develop technologies for improved agricultural production, food security, and sustainable land and ecosystem management.

2

Develop effective management solutions, including policy and economic instruments for more equitable and sustainable natural resources management.

3

Research and advocacy activities in areas in line with this program, including protecting biodiversity, land management, greenhouse gas mitigation, reducing pollution, and monitoring ecosystems.



Image Source: United Nations

Key Performance Indicators

1	2	3
Use of UNU-INWEH publications on sustainable land, food, and ecosystem management practices by other institutions, researchers, and collaboration partners.	Number of countries and professionals using capacity building and capacity sharing modules and tools developed by UNU-INWEH on sustainable agriculture, land management, and biodiversity improvement.	Number of policymakers and leading policy experts contributing to UNU-INWEH flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms related to the program.



3.1.4 WASH, Health, and Gender

Mitigating the health and gender equity impacts of inadequate WASH through research, capacity development, and advocacy is critical for sustainable and equitable development.

Lack of safe household WASH services impacts health, increases inequities, and stunts sustainable development. It is necessary to redress faults and gaps in current WASH policies, infrastructure design, and management. Despite calls for change, the WASH sector continues to be technologically driven and engineering-oriented, often resulting in interventions that overlook the human system, including its gendered dimensions, a significant factor in every successful WASH service. This program will critically consider how we – as humans – can enhance current planning, design, and processes to support the delivery of WASH services that improve health, well-being, and gender equality. Through collaborations with implementers, universities, and civil society, this program will co-produce people-centered policy outputs such as open-access courses and participatory planning toolkits to build global capacity and contribute data to inform advocacy campaigns for policymaking and decision-making that work towards more equitable outcomes in changing climate, especially for women and girls and underserved and Indigenous communities.

The goal of this program will be to enhance health and access to clean water and sanitation and promote gender equality in the water, environment, and health space.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Research to improve current WASH programs in underserved communities and promote safe water and sanitation approaches to protect the health of marginalized communities, particularly women and girls.**

2. **Synthesize, assess, and test the application of potential multi-level behavioral and science perspectives for adaptation in targeted areas in the Global South to enhance water, environment, and health security for populations vulnerable to climate change.**

3. **Develop gender-sensitive WASH and health policies and programs to ensure equitable access, address unique needs, and promote women's participation in decision-making, fostering inclusivity, safety, and improved health outcomes for all genders.**

Key Performance Indicators

Use of UNU-INWEH publications on WASH and gender-related aspects by other institutions, researchers, and collaboration partners.

1

Number of countries and professionals using capacity building and capacity-sharing modules and tools developed by UNU-INWEH on WASH and gender-related aspects.

2

Number of policymakers and leading policy experts contributing to UNU-INWEH flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms related to the program.

3



Image Source: UN Women

3.1.5 Geospatial, Climate, and Infrastructure Analytics Program

Climate change and increased natural and human-induced disasters impact socio-economic systems, environmental sustainability, and security. These changes necessitate innovative tools and strategies for mitigation and adaptation. Addressing climate risk remains a top priority for sustainable development, and climate finance can play a pivotal role in supporting initiatives that enhance water resilience and mitigate climate impacts.

While the digital revolution produces vast amounts of data like satellite imagery, a significant gap exists among policymakers, particularly in the Global South, in acquiring, processing, and utilizing systematically developed data to support sustainable development processes and initiatives. This program will address this discrepancy by enhancing data access and utilization for informed decision-making. Specifically, this program provides data-driven insights, geospatial and climate analytical methods and tools, open access training, and capacity-sharing to support evidence-based decision-making, sustainable infrastructure investments and climate finance, and environmental and climate justice, with a special attention to underserved and indigenous communities.

By emphasizing the importance of geospatial, climate, and infrastructure analytics, the program promotes using these data and advanced analytics to aid informed decision-making, understanding climate risk and climate finance opportunities, identifying vulnerabilities to aging and failing infrastructure, and enhancing resilience against climate change. The program will collaborate with universities, academicians, professionals, and the private sector to develop knowledge hubs to identify gaps, build and disseminate new tools and analytics, and synthesize data and information to generate knowledge products to demonstrate evidence and build capacity through a dedicated training platform and on-site training through collaboration, particularly in the Global South.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Research to develop reliable analytics to generate insights into complex problems related to climate, and infrastructure risks.**
2. **Develop training programs on data access and management, interpretation of analytics, and utilization of technologies for sustainable development.**
3. **Collaborate with researchers, national agencies, and the private sector to improve access and use of data on water, environment, and health, particularly in the Global South.**

Key Performance Indicators

1	2	3
Use of UNU-INWEH publications on analytics and data management related to climate and infrastructure risks by other institutions, researchers, and collaboration partners.	Number of countries and professionals using capacity building and capacity sharing modules and tools developed by UNU-INWEH on analytics and data management related to natural resources management, climate, and infrastructure risks.	Number of policymakers and leading policy experts contributing to UNU-INWEH flagship reports, peer-reviewed publications, policy and analytical briefs, and institute-led events at key international platforms related to the program.

3.2 Cross-Cutting Initiatives

In addition to marginal populations and gender equality as cross-cutting tenets, other cross-cutting aspects such as capacity building and capacity sharing, knowledge dissemination, partnerships, and data innovation are essential pillars of the UNU-INWEH's strategy addressing complex global challenges related to natural resources management. Capacity building and capacity sharing initiatives empower stakeholders at all levels with the skills and knowledge needed to implement sustainable water, environmental and health management and practices effectively. This includes training programs for local communities, governments, and organizations on conservation and efficient use of natural resources. Knowledge dissemination ensures that research findings, best practices, and innovative solutions are shared widely, fostering learning and adaptation across diverse contexts. Partnerships between governments, academia, communities, and the private sector enable collaborative efforts to tackle water, environmental, and health issues comprehensively, leveraging collective expertise and resources for greater impact.

Meanwhile, data and innovation drive evidence-based decision-making and transformative change in natural resources management. Advanced technologies such as data analytics provide real-time insights into the water and other environmental resources' availability, quality, and usage patterns. These innovations support informed policy development and adaptive management strategies, enhancing resilience against climate impacts and promoting sustainable development. By integrating these cross-cutting themes into holistic approaches, UNU-INWEH and its stakeholders can address water, environment, and health challenges more effectively, ensuring equitable access to clean water and safeguarding ecosystems for future generations.

Capacity Building and Capacity Sharing:

1. Develop training programs for students and professionals.
2. Collaborate with educational institutions to strengthen capacity for policy-relevant research and education.
3. Provide free online and self-paced learning opportunities such as the online Learning Centre.

Knowledge Dissemination:

1. Publish research findings in peer-reviewed journals, books, and book chapters, among other publication outlets.
2. Participate in international and regional conferences and workshops and present institute-led work by organizing side events, sessions, and individual presentations.
3. Engage in advocacy and public awareness campaigns.

Partnerships:

1. Strengthen existing partnerships and forge new collaborations with UN entities, research and academic institutions, and international, national, and regional organizations.
2. Collaborate with leading academics and private sector entities for research, capacity sharing, funding, and expert input on specific projects and activities.
3. Establish partnerships with marginalized and vulnerable communities associated with UNU-INWEH’s projects.

Data and Innovation:

1. Establish systems for collecting relevant data from various sources and implement robust data management practices to ensure data quality, security, and integrity.
2. Employ data analytics techniques and tools to communicate insights effectively to stakeholders.
3. Cultivate an organizational culture that encourages creativity and experimentation while incorporating ethical considerations into innovative solutions to mitigate risks and build collaboration with stakeholders.

Attabad Lake, Pakistan

3.3 Operational Mechanisms and Partnerships

Given staffing limitations and constraints, UNU-INWEH is seeking to meet UNU's objective of expanding its global research network through an innovative approach consisting of establishing UNU Hubs in collaboration with leading academic and research institutions, developing partnerships with a range of institutions in its host country; collaborating with world renown researchers, academics, professionals, and advocates with an active role; reassessing and strengthening collaboration with the private-sector entities; and establishing partnerships with marginalized and vulnerable communities associated with UNU-INWEH’s projects.

3.3.1 UNU Hubs

UNU-INWEH is expanding its Canada-wide and international partnerships network by establishing UNU Hubs in collaboration with leading academic and research institutions. The UNU Hubs initiative developed by UNU-INWEH intends to create a "Global Network of Excellence" in research, education, innovation, and advocacy in areas relevant to UNU-INWEH's mission. A UNU Hub is the gateway to the United Nations and United Nations University on an academic institution's premises.

Each UNU Hub has a specific overall theme and is involved in three activity pillars, namely: (1) research, development, and innovation; (2) education, training, and capacity building; and (3) outreach, advocacy, and impact.

The UNU Hubs initiative is based on the understanding that while many universities currently support and promote business-related and for-profit activities, less attention has been paid to creating training and empowerment opportunities for those students who have a strong talent and interest in international development and addressing central water, environmental, health, climate, and sustainability challenges through working for intergovernmental and non-profit organizations. This initiative also appreciates the current limitation of the UN system in offering adequate and equal opportunities to university researchers and students worldwide for involvement in policy making and benefiting from different training, capacity building, and internship programs. Last but not least, this initiative intends to enhance the global academic system's collective knowledge, capacity, and research to address the current digital divide by making knowledge and research accessible, especially addressing the challenges identified by the Global South.

UNU Hubs will play a significant and complementary role in expanding the institute’s research, education and outreach network. The hubs in different parts of the world, including the Global South, will take on varying degrees of research, education, and policy and society engagement depending on their capacity, strength, and research focus.

3.3.2 Host Country Engagement

While UNU-INWEH has established partnerships with various institutions in its host country, the new strategy will look to identify new opportunities for expanding partnerships across Canada by ensuring the institute has increasing visibility through its collaboration work. Canada's extensive freshwater and energy resources along with its large agriculture sector, its progressive environmental initiatives, its challenges and success in providing access to water in remote communities, particularly to Indigenous populations, its establishment of a new Canada Water Agency, and its strong support for disseminating research and assistance are excellent ingredients of an expanding collaboration recipe for UNU-INWEH's collaboration work in the country.

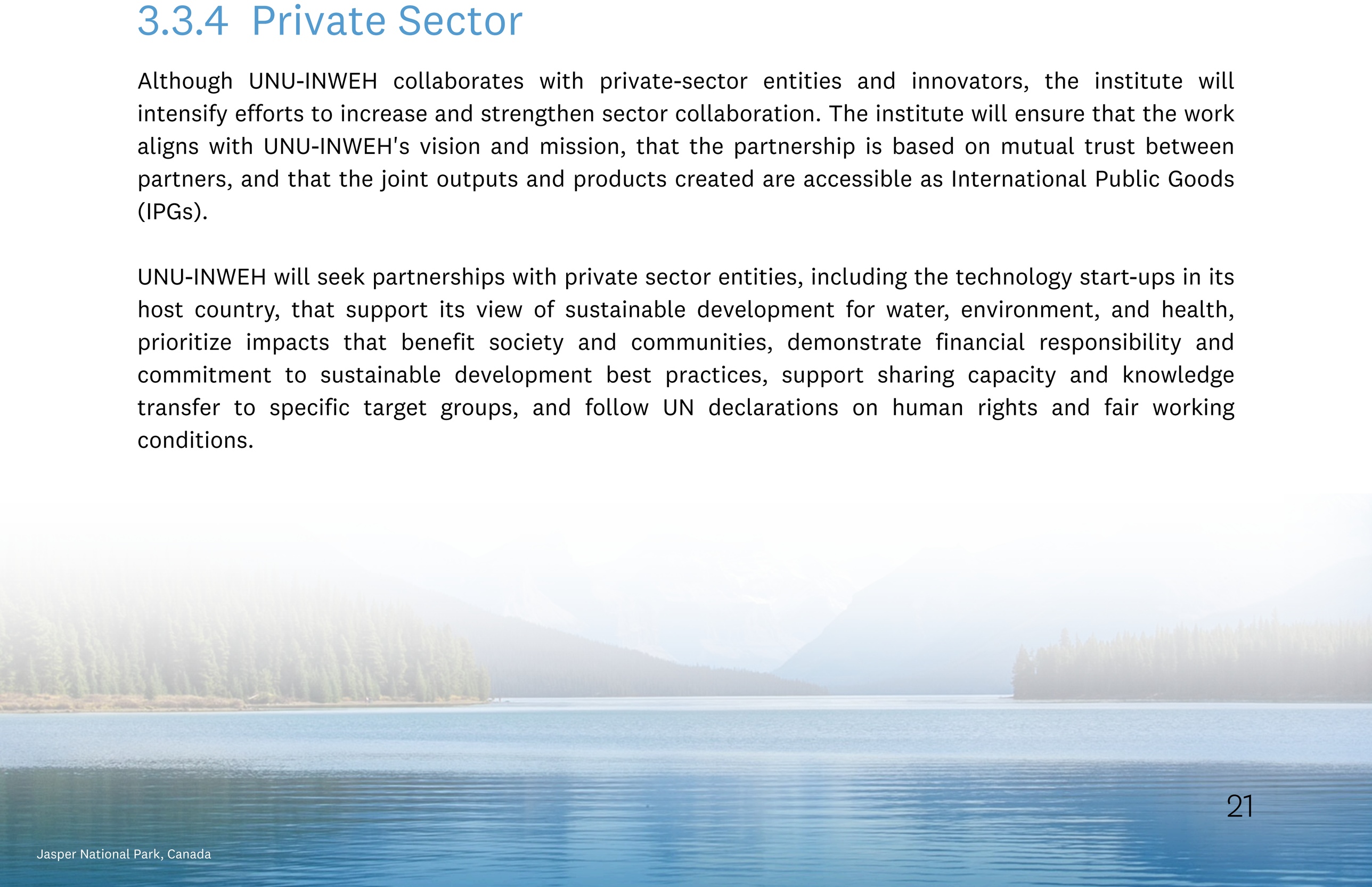
3.3.3 Affiliates, Associates and Adjuncts (AAA) Program

UNU-INWEH will be implementing a new partnership framework that enables the institute to partner with leading researchers, academics, and professionals around the world on an individual basis. This framework will significantly expand UNU-INWEH's research and capacity-sharing network by engaging world-renowned researchers, academics, professionals, and advocates such as affiliates, associates, and adjuncts (AAA). More importantly, this program will empower and increase the visibility of water, environmental, and health scientists and professionals worldwide. AAA is of particular importance in the case of Global South-based individuals who will benefit from the UNU-INWEH platform to promote the results of their research. Using the AAA framework, UNU-INWEH is bringing together the best research minds in the world to work collaboratively on the critical water, health, and environmental issues of our time.

3.3.4 Private Sector

Although UNU-INWEH collaborates with private-sector entities and innovators, the institute will intensify efforts to increase and strengthen sector collaboration. The institute will ensure that the work aligns with UNU-INWEH's vision and mission, that the partnership is based on mutual trust between partners, and that the joint outputs and products created are accessible as International Public Goods (IPGs).

UNU-INWEH will seek partnerships with private sector entities, including the technology start-ups in its host country, that support its view of sustainable development for water, environment, and health, prioritize impacts that benefit society and communities, demonstrate financial responsibility and commitment to sustainable development best practices, support sharing capacity and knowledge transfer to specific target groups, and follow UN declarations on human rights and fair working conditions.



Jasper National Park, Canada

3.3.5 Marginalized and Vulnerable

In specific community-based projects, UNU-INWEH will engage with marginalized and vulnerable communities as direct beneficiaries of the project-related interventions. Community engagement will involve community leaders, local researchers, extension staff, and related stakeholders. The outputs and outcomes of the community-based projects will be simultaneously used for the benefit of communities in similar locations. Community engagement will indirectly benefit stakeholders in similar systems elsewhere as the results disseminate through collaborating partners' activities.

3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation are indispensable components in implementing UNU-INWEH's 5-year strategic plan, ensuring accountability, transparency, and strategic alignment. By systematically tracking progress against predefined goals and targets, Monitoring and Evaluation provide crucial feedback on interventions' effectiveness and achieving desired outcomes. It enables timely adjustments to strategies and activities, optimizing resource allocation and enhancing operational efficiency. Monitoring and Evaluation also facilitate learning by identifying successful approaches and areas needing improvement, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within UNU-INWEH. Moreover, rigorous evaluation helps demonstrate the impact of UNU-INWEH's initiatives on stakeholders, donors, and the wider community, bolstering credibility and support for future endeavors. Through robust Monitoring and Evaluation that includes regular data collection, analysis, and reporting, the institute ensures that its strategic plan remains dynamic, responsive to emerging challenges, and aligned with its mission of advancing sustainable water management globally.

Regular Review:	**External Evaluation:**
Conduct periodic reviews to assess progress.	Commission external, impartial evaluations to ensure learning, strengthen accountability, and support research strategy.
Adjust strategies based on lessons learned and emerging challenges.	Incorporate evaluation feedback into strategic adjustments.

4 Summing Up

The UNU-INWEH Strategic Plan for 2025-2029 aims to tackle global challenges related to water, environment, and health by leveraging institutional strengths and reaffirming its vision and commitment to its mission. The institute emphasizes innovative research, collaborative partnerships, and sustainable natural resources management practices to address pressing water issues and enhance both environmental conservation and human well-being globally. The plan outlines strategic priorities, including a new organizational design and business model to strengthen institutional capacity and impact over the next five years. Building on the three pillars of UNU's Strategic Plan (2025-2029), UNU-INWEH's strategy highlights the importance of high-quality research, strategic collaborations, and the development of initiatives that influence policy and practice. The focus on generating, improving, and disseminating global knowledge will strengthen the capacity for policy-relevant research and education. UNU-INWEH is committed to producing high-quality research on global water, environment and health-related challenges, developing capacity building and capacity sharing initiatives, and effectively communicating research findings to relevant stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, and the private sector.

On the research front, UNU-INWEH's strategic plan centers on promoting sustainable development and addressing water, environment, and health-related human security challenges through four key programs: 1) Governance, Security, and Justice; 2) Water, Energy, and Critical Minerals; 3) Food, Land, and Biodiversity; 4) WASH, Health, and Gender; and 5) Geospatial, Climate, and Infrastructure Analytics. The Governance, Security, and Justice Program aims to strengthen governance frameworks and institutions to manage natural resources sustainably and equitably, addressing security and justice concerns exacerbated by climate change and socio-economic inequalities. The Water, Energy, and Critical Minerals Program focuses on improving water use and management, clean energy production, and sustainable use of critical minerals, facilitating a just and inclusive sustainability transition. The Food, Land, and Biodiversity Program focuses on improving food security production, land management, and biodiversity conservation, advocating for evidence-based policy and economic instruments. The WASH, Health, and Gender Program seeks to enhance health, sanitation, and gender equality through research, capacity development, and advocacy, emphasizing inclusive, gender-sensitive policies and programs. Finally, the Geospatial, Climate, and Infrastructure Analytics Program leverages data and advanced analytics to support informed decision-making and resilience against climate risks, particularly in the Global South and marginalized communities. Cross-cutting initiatives include capacity building and capacity sharing, knowledge dissemination, partnerships, and data innovation, aiming to empower stakeholders, share best practices, drive evidence-based decision-making, and improve gender equity. Operational mechanisms involve establishing UNU Hubs for collaborative research and education, expanding partnerships in Canada, engaging with global researchers through the AAA Program, strengthening private sector collaborations, and involving marginalized communities, where applicable.



In addition to its research endeavors, UNU-INWEH is dedicated to strengthening partnerships and collaboration globally, particularly in the Global South. The institute will build on existing partnerships, develop new ones, and maximize global impact by enhancing cooperation across regions. This approach aims to support an active contribution to the worldwide knowledge platform and promote diversity by fostering equitable partnerships. UNU-INWEH plans to increase its visibility and tangible impact through strategic expansion into new regions and emerging topics. The institute aims to deliver timely insights on critical water, environment, and health issues by disseminating evidence-based knowledge through various channels. Through applied research and publications on current world affairs, UNU-INWEH will provide timely responses to global challenges, bring together researchers and decision-makers, and foster exchanges and partnerships. The strategic plan's core values include excellence in transdisciplinary research, knowledge dissemination, transparency, diversity, inclusion, and commitment to United Nations values. These values guide the institute's efforts to address complex global challenges, promote sustainable development, ensure equitable access to water, environment, and health, and safeguard ecosystems for future generations.



Image Source: United Nations

Annex

1. A snapshot of the UNU-INWEH's Strategic Plan

Vision

A secure, sustainable, and inclusive world where access to clean water and a healthy environment is assured for all

Major Threats and Barriers

- Climate change, extreme events and natural disasters
- Misgovernance, political unrests, conflicts, and migration
- Inequalities and poor water, sanitation, and health services
- Unjust and unsustainable development

Strategic Research Areas

- Enhancing water, environmental and health governance, security, and justice
- Promoting sustainable and equitable water, energy, food, land, biodiversity, and ecosystem management
- Improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, and ensuring gender equality
- Strengthening geospatial, climate, and infrastructure analytics for risk reduction and resilience

Core Values

- Excellence in Transdisciplinary Research
- Knowledge Dissemintation
- Transparency, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Commitment to United Nations Values
- Excellence in Transdisciplinary Research

Actions

- Research-Policy Bridging
- Capacity Building and Strengthening
- Advocacy and Policy Outreach

Focus

Global, Global South, Host Country, Marginalized Communities

2. UNU-INWEH Institutional Results Framework (IRF)

Output 1: *Policy relevant research on global water, environment and health issues, risks and solutions* Indicator 1.1: Number of publications – peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed Indicator 1.2: Number of UNU-INWEH publications that included women as authors Indicator 1.3: Number of media reports and press interviews generated about UNU-INWEH Indicator 1.4: Number of gender and justice-related publications	***Outcome 1:*** *New evidence and solutions that improve water, environment, and health and reduce water, environment, health and climate-related risks, particularly for women and populations in contexts of vulnerability.* Indicator O1.1: Number of policy documents, reports, papers and publications that cite UNU-INWEH research Indicator O1.2: % increase in UNU-INWEH funding and resources (including in-kind) for new events, activities and research on water, environment, health and climate	***Impact:*** *Improved water, environment, and health and reduce water, environment, health and climate-related risks for everyone.* Indicator I1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water and sanitation services. Indicator I2: Number of deaths, people affected, and economic losses caused by water, health, environment and climate-related disasters and health risks Indicator I3: Amount and percentage of the UNU-INWEH budget spent on empowering women and gender equity Indicator I4: Number of the UNU-INWEH team members working on gender and justice-related issues
Output 2: *Partnerships with UN and other multi-lateral entitied, governments, Canadian and international research networks, and industry representatives* Indicator 2.1: Number of events, activities, research endeavours undertaken in collaboration with UN, multilateral, national governments, Canadian and international research networks and industry representatives Indicator 2.2: Number of institutions, public and private entities, non-profit organizations, and agencies that featured UNU-INWEH and its researchers, sought their input and advice for decision-making, or collaborated with UNU-INWEH in producing publications, developing research and education material, and organizing events, workshops, training opportunities, and seminars Indicator 2.3: Number of women featured and involved in the UNU-INWEH's collaborative activities and events Indicator 2.4: Number of gender and justice-related events, projects, and activities		
Output 3: *Targeted training to policy actors and researchers to support the implementation of the UN SDGs* Indicator 3.1: Number of internships, fellowships, embedded learning programmed, online education courses, webinars, visitors' research and training programs, and training sessions conducted Indicator 3.2: Number of individuals and women benefiting from the UNU-INWEH training Indicator 3.3: Number of women involved in and contributed to UNU-INWEH's programs, projects, and activiites	***Outcome 2:*** *Improved capacity of policy actors to use evidence that improves water, environment, and health and reduce water, environment, health and climate-related risks, particularly women and populations in contexts of vulnerability.* Indicator O2.1: Number of policy actors that have improved knowledge and skills to implement the UN SDGs and reduce water, environment, health and climate-related risks Indicator O2.2: Number of countries that have used tools generated and made accessible by UNU-INWEH in their national work and initiatives	
Output 4: *Practical tools that help policy actors manage water, environmental, health and climate related risks* Indicator 4.1: Number of tools developed or made accessible to policy actors Indicator 4.2: Number of tools developed and made accessible to support stakeholders in addressing gender inequality and environmental injustice		

*Policy actors are any individuals at the local, national, and international levels that are directly or indirectly (formally or informally), affiliated with or affected by the policy process at any stage. They can include governments, businesses, NGOs, civil society organizations and communities as well as individuals. For more see the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organizations' definition: http://www.fao.org/3/y4653e/y4653e08.htm

3. UNU-INWEH Institutional Performance Indicators (2025-2029)

Indicator	Source	Details and Narratives
Number of publications – peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed *(Indicator 1.1 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure research productivity by UNU-INWEH. This covers all publications authored or co-authored by UNU-INWEH (books, book chapters, journal articles, peer-reviewed reports, op-ed articles, blogs, newspaper articles, literature reviews, and anuual reports etc.).
Number of UNU-INWEH publications that included women as authors *(Indicator 1.1 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure UNU-INWEH's success in and commitment to involving women in publications. Data should indicate the number and percentage of UNU-INWEH publications reported under Indicator 1.1 that included women as authors or co-authors.
Number of media reports and press interviews generated about UNU-INWEH *(Indicator 1.3 in the IRF)*	Google Alerts to track mention of keywords (finds results in web pages, newspaper articles, blogs etc.) (google.com/alerts)	This indicator is intended to measure research uptake by multiple media outlets (traditional print, Internet and social media). Counted would be any reference to research that was led by UNU-INWEH, or where UNU-INWEH collaborated. The reference to research that was led by UNU-INWEH, but should reference research undertaken by UNU-INWEH, whether it be a report, article, event, initiative, project or individual affiliated with UNU-INWEH.
Number of gender and justice-related publications *(Indicator 1.4 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator intends to evaluate UNU-INWEH's degree of commitment to promoting gender equality and environmental justice. The indicator measures the number of UNU-INWEH publications that are focused on gender and justice issues or contribute to gender equality and environmental justice in the water, environment, health and climate sectors.
Number of events, activities, research endeavours undertaken in collaboration with UN, multilateral, national governments, Canadian and international research networks and industry representatives *(Indicator 2.1 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure the level of engagement that UNU-INWEH has with other institutions in Canada and internationally. The indicator refers to seminars, conferences, workshops, lectures, book launches, and other events either organized, co-organized, or participated in by UNU-INWEH (whether open or closed to the public).
Number of institutions, public and private entities, non-profit organizations, and agencies that featured UNU-INWEH and its researchers, sought their input and advice for decision-making, or collaborated with UNU-INWEH in producing publications, developing research and education material, and organizing events, workshops, training oppurtunities, and seminars *(Indicator 2.2 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure the demand for UNU-INWEH expertise. It would cover a broad range of requests from policy actors, industry representatives, academic and research stakeholders, practitioners and others for advice, training and participation in any endeavour linked to UNU-INWEH's mission and mandate. Included in the count would be expert peer-reviews, consulting advice, participation in meetings, conferences, as well as requests for being on boards. Counted would be both Canadian and international requests.
Number of women featured and involved in the uNU-INWEH's collaborative activities and events *(Indicator 2.3 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to reflect UNU-INWEH's commitment to gender equality and empowering women involved in water, environment, health, and climate-related areas. The indicator measures the number of women who were involved or featured in the events and activities that UNU-INWEH organizes and undertakes by its partners
Number of gender and justice-related events, projects, and activities *(Indicator 2.4 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	The indicator intends to evaluate UNU-INWEH's degree of commitment to promoting gender equality and environmental justice. The indicator measures the number of UNU-INWEH activities, projects, programs, and events that were focused on or related to gender and justice issues in the water, environment, health and climate sectors.
Number of internships, fellowships, embedded learning programmes, on-line education courses, webinars, visitors' research and training programs, and training sessions conducted (Indicator 3.1 in the IRF)	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure the level of capacity building activities that UNU-INWEH engages in. The indicator measures the total number of training events, sessions (whether in person or online) that UNU-INWEH has delivered.
Number of individuals benefiting from UNU-INWEH training *(Indicator 3.2 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure the number of individuals trained by UNU-INWEH with specific attention to gender balance, with the aim to empower women and increase their engagement in research, training, and decision-making for water, environment, health and climate. It measures the total number of individuals who received training from UNU-INWEH. Data should be broken down by gender when possible.
Number of women involved in and contributed to UNU-INWEH's programs, projects, and activities *(Indicator 3.3 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to evaluate the degree of UNU-INWEH's attention to empowering women in the water, environment, health, and climate-related sectors. The indicator measures the number of women involved in or contributed to the UNU-INWEH's research, capacity building, and outreach programs, projects, and activities.
Number of tools developed or made accessible to policy actors *(Indicator 4.1 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to demonstrate UNU-INWEH's productivity in developing and identifying tools relevant to water, environment, health and climate-related issues that can be used by different policy actors for improving decision-making and UNU-INWEH's capability in disseminating them broadly. Included would be a listing of all of the tools that UNU-INWEH developed, identified and made accessible to policy actors. This would include providing access to the tools developed by UNU-INWEH or contributed to their development as well as the tools developed by other actors that UNU-INWEH identifies as legitimate, safe, and reliable tools to be used by policy actors.

Number of tools developed and made accessible to support stakeholders in addressing gender inequality and environmental injustice *(Indicator 4.2 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to demonstrate UNU-INWEH's commitment to advancing gender equality, closing the gender gap, and addressing climate and environmental justice issues. It refers to the number of tools that UNU-INWEH developed, helped develop, or identified as legitimate, reliable, and safe, and made them accessible to policy actors that are related to gender and justice issues and enable the stakeholders to address inequality, gender gap and disparity, injustice, and in collection, storage, monitoring and/or reporting against gender-disaggregated data.
Number of policy documents, reports, papers, and publications that cite UNU-INWEH research *(Indicator 01.1 in the IRF)*	Multiple options including: Google Scholar Citations, Google Alert, Scopus For more see: researchguides.library.brocku.ca/publishing/metrics and beckerguides.wustl.edu/c.php?g=299569&p=2000869	This indicator is intended to assess the uptake of the research generated by UNU-INWEH. It refers to the number of citations that refer to UNU-INWEH research or personnel in documents produced by the UN, regional, national, local, policy or research entities. They would include the universe of documents published by governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental, private sector, and academic/research entities.
% increase in UNU-INWEH funding and resources (including in-kind) for. new events, activities and research on water, environment, health and cliamte *(Indicator 01.2 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This refers to the % increase in funding for UNU-INWEH activities above its 2019-2024 average baseline. The % increase would be tracked annually but the aim would be to demonstrate an overall % increase by 2029.
Number of policy actors that have improved knowledge and skills to implement the UN SDGs and reduce water, environment, health and climate-related risks (Indicator 02.1 in the IRF)	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports and self-assessment surveys of individuals who participated in UNU-INWEH training or used tools/research generated by UNU-INWEH	This indicator is intended to measure the degree to which UNU-INWEH training, tools and research improved the knowledge, awareness, capabilities and skills of those hwo participated in, or were made aware of, UNU-INWEH affiliated activities and research. The number would refer to those who self-assess as their knowledge and skill base having improved as a result of their engagement with UNU-INWEH affiliated activities.
Number of countries that have used tools generated and made accessible by UNU-INWEH in their national work and initiatives (Indicator 02.2 in the IRF)	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports and after-action engagement with policy actors that were introduced to UNU-INWEH research.	This indicator is intended to measure the degree of uptake of UNU-INWEH tools by UN Member States and policy actors. This includes the number of countries that adopted the tools that UNU-INWEH developed, helped develop, or identified as legitimate, reliable, and safe, and made them accessible to policy actors.
Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water and sanitation services *(Indicator I1 in the IRF)*	SDG 6.1.1 and SDG 6.2.1	This indicator is intended to asssess the degree to which the world is on track to achieve universal and equitable access to safe drinking water and access to adequate sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030. UNU-INWEH's concrete contribution to this impact indicator can only be measured indirectly. Where numerical indicators do not exist, UNU-INWEH progress toward these indicators may be described by a narrative. When available, UNU-INWEH will provide gender-disaggregated data.
% increase in UNU-INWEH funding and resources (including in-kind) for new events, activities and research on water, environment, health and climate *(Indicator I2 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to assess the degree to which the world is on track to achieve SDGs 3, 11, and 13. With respect to SDG 3, specific indicators include targets 3.3.5 (Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases- NTDs), and 3.9.2 (Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene). With respect to SDG 11, specific indicators include 11.5.1 (number of deaths, missing persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people) 11.5.2 (Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GSP). With respect to SDG 13, specific indicators including 13.1.1 (Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people). Where numerical indicators do not exist, UNU-INWEH progress toward these indicators may be described by a narrative. When available, UNU-INWEH will provide gender-disaggregated data.
Amount and percentage of the UNU-INWEH budget spent on empowering women, gender mainstreaming and gender equity *(Indicator I3 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	This indicator is intended to measure the resources allocated to women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming and gender equality internally and globally. The indicator measures the total amount percentage of the UNU-INWEHbudget spent on women (vs. men) in terms of recruitment, wages, travel, capacity building, etc. for the career advancement, empowerment, and support of women, and on any other effects of UNU-INWEH toward efforts towards gender mainstreaming, equality and inclusivity wihtin UNU-INWEH and its projects and programs. The indicator also reports the amount and percentage of UNU-INWEH's budget spent on projects, programs, trainings, events, partnerships, and activities that are focused on or related to gender issues, gender equality, gender inclusivity, and empowerment of women.
Number of the UNU-INWEH team members working on gender and justice-related issues *(Indicator I4 in the IRF)*	Internal UNU-INWEH Reports	The indicator intends to evaluate the degree of UNU-INWEH's commitment to promoting gender equality and environmental justice through its activities. The indicator reports the number of UNU-INWEH researchers who work on gender and justice issues as their primary and secondary areas of focus.



Image Source: United Nations

About UNU-INWEH

The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) is one of 13 institutes comprising the United Nations University (UNU), the academic arm of the United Nations. Established in 1996 through an agreement with the Government of Canada, UNU-INWEH is headquartered in the City of Richmond Hill, Ontario.

UNU-INWEH specializes in addressing critical global security and development challenges at the intersection of water, environment, and health. Through research, capacity development, policy engagement, and knowledge dissemination, the institute bridges the gap between scientific evidence and the practical needs of policymakers and UN member states, with particular attention to low- and middle-income countries. By collaborating with a diverse array of partners—including UN agencies, governments, academia, the private sector, and civil society—UNU-INWEH develops solutions that advance human security, resilience, and sustainability worldwide.

The institute operates under a robust governance framework. As a UNU institute, UNU-INWEH is managed by the Director, who reports to the UNU Rector, an Under-Secretary-General of the UN. The organization is governed by the UNU Council, which reports annually to the UN General Assembly and the UN Economic and Social Council. An International Advisory Committee (IAC), comprising world-renowned experts in environmental science and policy, provides strategic guidance to the institute.

Professor Kaveh Madani, a globally recognized environmental scientist and former Vice President of the United Nations Environment Assembly Bureau, currently serves as the Director of UNU-INWEH. The institute's International Advisory Board is chaired by Alexandra Bugailiskis, a distinguished Canadian diplomat and Canada’s former Permanent Representative to FAO, WFP, and IFAD.

UNU-INWEH’s work is driven by a diverse, impact-driven team of leading researchers, educators, and professionals, collaborating across disciplines to create science-based solutions that enhance prosperity, health, and harmony between humans and nature.

As the "UN’s Think Tank on Water," UNU-INWEH represents UNU in UN-Water, a coordination mechanism comprising United Nations entities and international organizations working on water and sanitation issues.

Through its five strategic program areas, UNU-INWEH supports decision-makers in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that evidence-based policies drive meaningful impact for communities worldwide.

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Institute for Water, Environment, and Health
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