1. Introduction

This opening chapter introduces the OECD Council Recommendation on Water, its purpose and scope. It presents the objective of the Toolkit and outlines its main sections.

The Toolkit for Water Policies and Governance (hereafter the "Toolkit") compiles policies, governance arrangements and related tools that facilitate the design and implementation of water management practices in line with the OECD Council Recommendation on Water (OECD, 2016[1]). It is designed to inspire and support countries, which have either adhered to, are considering adhering to, or aim to converge towards the OECD standard.

The Recommendation of the OECD Council on Water [OECD/LEGAL/0434] (hereafter the "Recommendation") was adopted by the OECD Council in December 2016. The adoption marked the outcome of a 2-year consultation process. It involved delegates from ministries active in the fields of agriculture, development assistance, environment, public governance, regional development, and regulatory policy, as well as with relevant stakeholders (the business sector, trade unions, environmental organisations) and the OECD Water Governance Initiative.

The Recommendation puts forward a concise and coherent international standard providing high-level policy guidance on a range of topics relevant for water resources management and the delivery of water services: managing water quantity, improving water quality, managing water risks and disasters, ensuring good water governance as well as sustainable finance, investment and pricing for water services. Box 1.1 provides a description of the purpose and scope of the Recommendation. The Recommendation is available in English and French (OECD official languages) and in Portuguese and Spanish.

To date, all OECD members are Adherents to the Recommendation. Cabo Verde is the first non-OECD member country to adhere to the Recommendation. The adherence of other countries is pending.

The Toolkit provides tools and good practices in place, for each section of the Recommendation. It was developed as part of a reporting process for the OECD Council, referred to as "the Council" in subsequent chapters. Since the adoption of the Recommendation, the OECD has provided a platform to exchange policies, practices and lessons learned. The tools and good practices compiled derive from these exchanges. The Toolkit documents a wide range of initiatives and practices, which are well-aligned with the ambition and the substance of the Recommendation.

The outline of the Toolkit follows the substantive sections of the Recommendation, covering water policies (Section 2), managing water quantity (Section 3), improving water quality (Section 4), managing water risks and disasters (Section 5), ensuring good water governance (Section 6), as well as ensuring sustainable finance, investment and pricing for water and water services (Sections 7 and 8).

Box 1.1. Purpose and scope of the OECD Recommendation on Water

The effective and efficient management of water resources and water services remains a major challenge for countries around the world, and pressures on water resources continue to mount. The inclusion of water as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 6) and its prominence in a range of other SDGs reflect the importance that the global community places on water.

The objective of the Recommendation is to provide Adherents with a strategic approach to develop a coherent water management system that contributes to sustainable growth and development. It sets out high-level policy guidance for water resources management and the delivery of water services.

The Recommendation captures and updates the main messages that derived from earlier recommendations and OECD work on water, including the 2015 OECD Principles on Water Governance, which are reflected in its section 6.
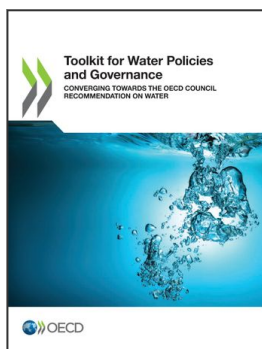
The Recommendation is structured in seven substantive sections:

- Water Policies (Section 2)
- Managing Water Quantity (Section 3)
- Improving Water Quality (Section 4)
- Managing Water Risks And Disasters (Section 5)
- Ensuring Good Water Governance (Section 6)
- Ensuring Sustainable Finance, Investment and Pricing for Water and Water Services (Sections 7 and 8).

Source: https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0434

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From:

Toolkit for Water Policies and Governance
Converging Towards the OECD Council Recommendation on Water

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/ed1a7936-en