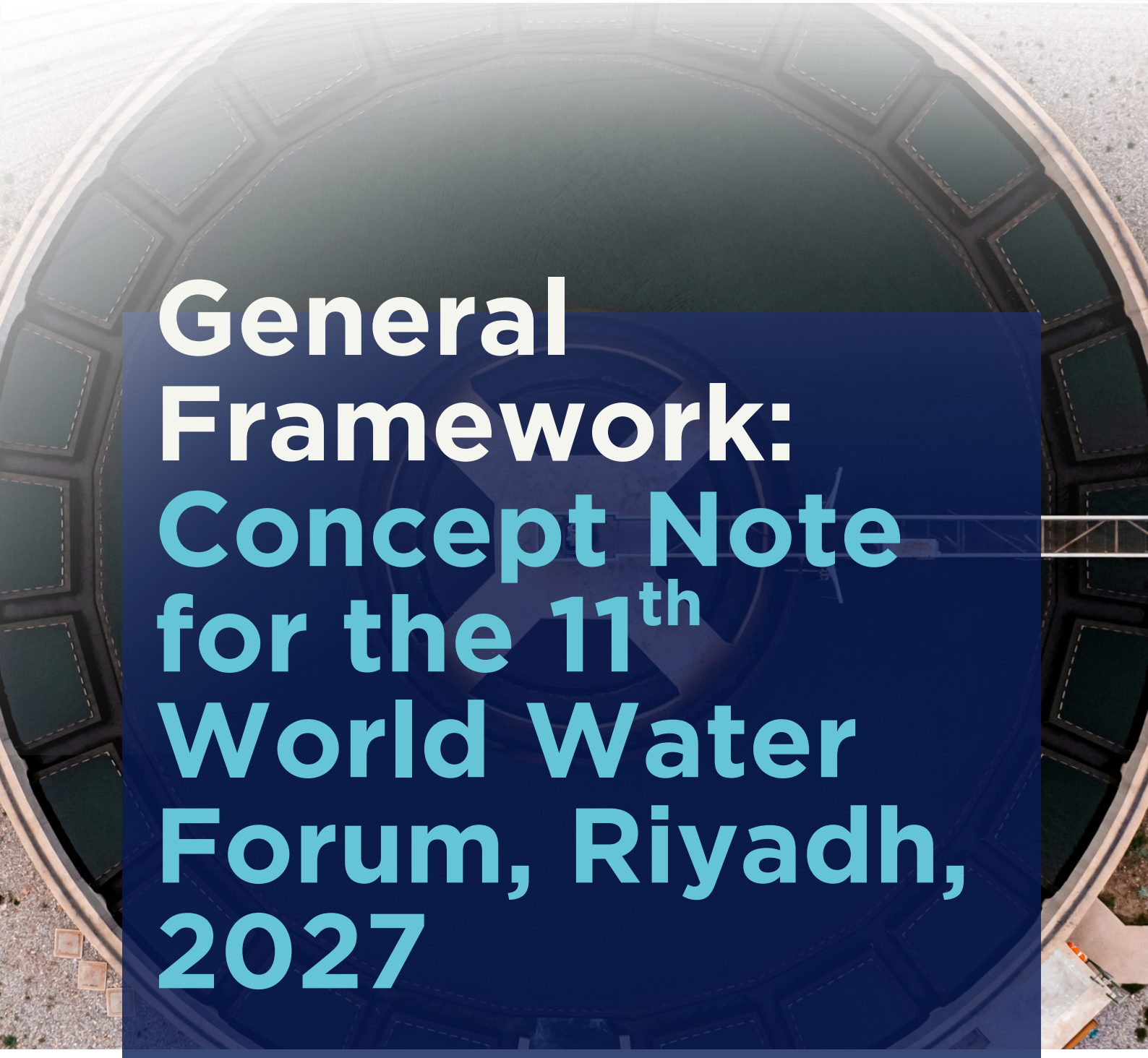
11th WORLD WATER FORUM
RIYADH 2027



# General Framework: Concept Note for the 11th World Water Forum, Riyadh, 2027

وزارة البيئة والمياه والزراعة
Ministry of Environment Water & Agriculture
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia المملكة العربية السعودية

WORLD WATER COUNCIL

# Foreword

From drying farmlands and depleting aquifers to rising seas and polluted waterways, the global water crisis is no longer a future concern, it is a present and intensifying reality. Water lies at the heart of food security, public health, resilience, peace, and economic stability. Yet billions still face water extremes such as scarcity and flood risk, contamination, and unequal access.

The 11th World Water Forum, under the overarching theme “Action for a Better Tomorrow”, marks a pivotal moment that promotes dialogue and drives concrete action. It calls on governments, innovators, youth, and communities to move from dialogue to action: scaling solutions, mobilizing financing, and forging inclusive partnerships. This is a global rally to break silos, localize action, and generate lasting impact across every region, river basin, and generation.

As the World Water Forum returns to an Arab country for the first time since 1997, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers a uniquely compelling setting: a nation shaped by extreme water scarcity due to its arid conditions, yet one that has emerged as a global leader, uniquely positioned to showcase its expertise in water policies, holistic governance, and efficient water management, including desalination, wastewater treatment, conservation technologies, and innovative water financing through Public-Private Partnerships.

This 11th World Water Forum is dedicated to fostering transformative discussions that move beyond theory to an action-oriented agenda, prioritizing policy implementation, cross-sector collaboration, regional problem-solving, and sustainable development.

As co-hosts, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Water Council will bring together the human and intellectual capital accumulated across the first ten editions of the World Water Forum and the expertise and experience of the host nation, to guide every track of the 11th World Water Forum toward the best possible outcomes.

The 11th World Water Forum calls on all stakeholders and custodians of water sustainability to unite in this mission, ensuring a water-secure future for generations to come.

# What a concept note is

A **concept note** is the strategic framing document for one component of the 11th World Water Forum: a theme, a topic, a region or a program. It sets out why that component matters, what it will deliver by March 2027, who leads it and how its work connects to the rest of the 11th World Water Forum. It is a planning and alignment document. It is not a research report and not a negotiated text.

### It frames

Defines scope objectives and the key questions the component will answer.

### It plans

Sets the work plan, responsibilities, milestones and the way stakeholders take part.

### It connects

Shows how the component feeds, and is fed by, the other processes and programs.

## Where a concept note sits in the Forum cycle




## What every concept note answers

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context and rationale** | Why does this part of the 11th World Water Forum exist, and why now? |
| **Objectives** | What is it trying to change or achieve by Riyadh 2027? |
| **Scope** | Which topics, regions or segments does it cover, and which are out of scope? |
| **Approach and work plan** | Which actions, in which sequence, with which milestones? |
| **Stakeholders and engagement** | Who takes part, and how are gender, youth and Indigenous voices included? |
| **Expected outcomes** | What will it deliver: sessions, reports, commitments, partnerships? |
| **Governance and coordination** | Who leads, who validates, and who reports to whom? |
| **Links to other processes** | What does it take from the others, and what does it give back? |

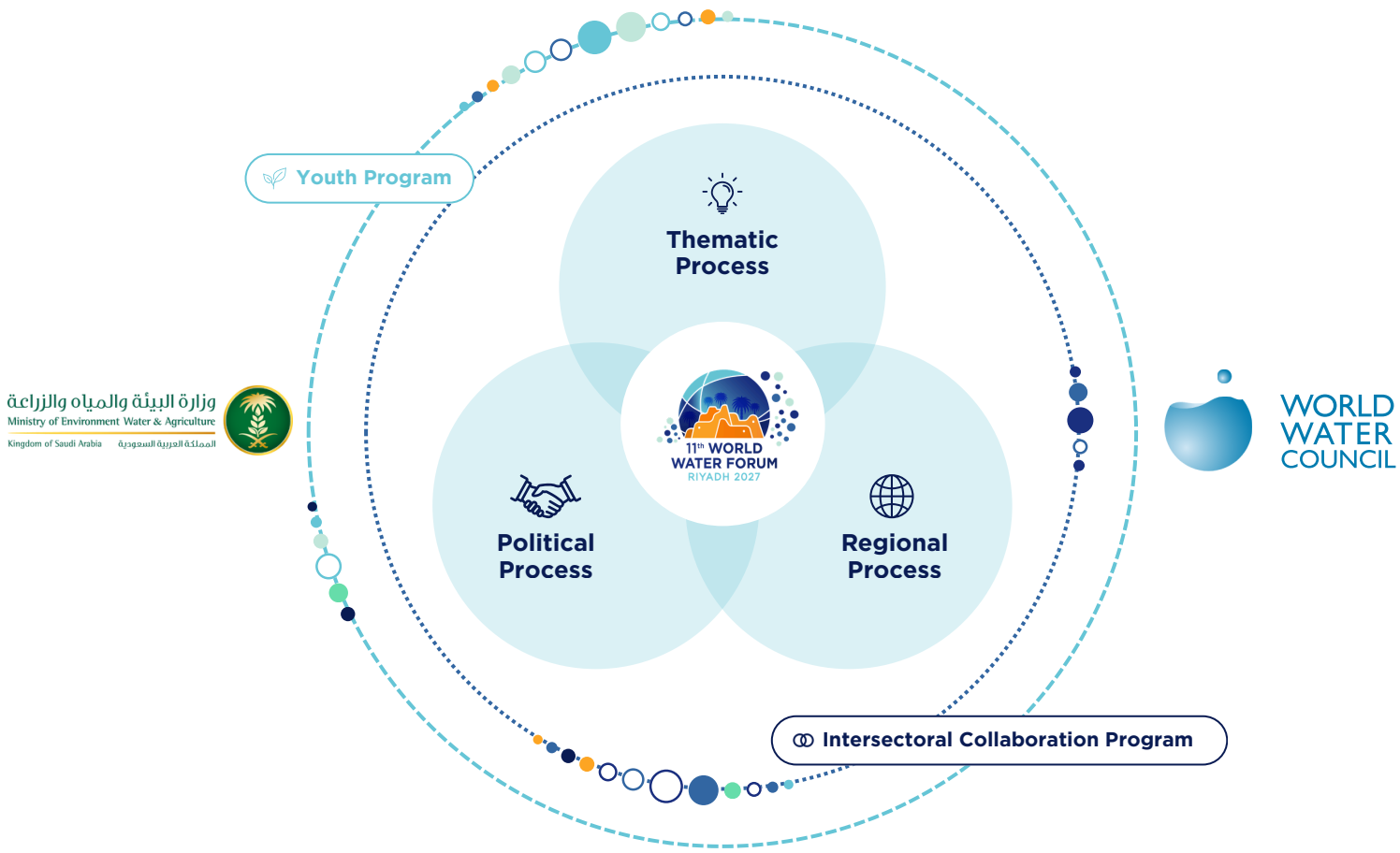
# How the Forum Works

## One Forum · Three Processes · Two Programs

Held every three years since 1997, the World Water Forum is the largest gathering of the global water community. Its 11th edition takes place in Riyadh from 21 to 25 March 2027 under the theme “Action for a Better Tomorrow”. It is the first Forum hosted in the Gulf, in the year the Forum process turns thirty. It is co-hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, and the World Water Council, which launched the Forum and carries its process from one edition to the next.

Three interlinked processes structure the 11th World Water Forum. The Political Process sets policy direction with four segments: Ministerial, Parliamentarian, Local & Regional Authorities, Basin & Watershed Authorities. The Thematic Process, divided into six themes and thirty topics, five per theme, turns technical knowledge into evidence for political commitment. The Regional Process brings regional priorities and solutions into the global agenda. Two programs run across all three: the Youth Program and the Intersectoral Collaboration Program. Each concept note sets out the foundations of one part of this architecture.

This concept note explains the architecture of the 11th World Water Forum Concept Notes.




*“Our goal is to create not just a forum for discussion, but a powerful platform for collaboration, innovation, and action.”*

**Abdulrahman Al Fadley**
**Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture**

*“The 11th World Water Forum must be a platform for action—not just dialogue.”*

**Loïc Fauchon**
**President of the World Water Council**

# How the Concept Notes are organized

Every concept note belongs to one process and one level. Moving down the page, the scope narrows from the whole 11th World Water Forum to a single topic, region or segment.

## Concept Notes Framework

| | Political Process Framework | Thematic Framework | Regional Framework |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Process Framework** | Policy direction through four segments. | Organizes global knowledge into six themes and thirty topics, five per theme. | Sets objectives, regional configuration, deliverables and coordination. |
| **Component Concept Notes** | **4**<br>**Segments**<br>Ministerial<br>Parliamentarian<br>Local & Regional Authorities<br>Basin & Watershed Authorities | **6**<br>**Theme concept notes**<br>Water Security<br>Water Finance<br>Water for People and Ecosystems<br>Water Governance and Diplomacy<br>Innovation for Water Management<br>Value of Water | **4**<br>**Regional concept notes**<br>Arab Region<br>Africa<br>Americas<br>Asia and the Pacific |
| **Programs** Run across all three processes | **Youth Program**<br>Brings young people into themes, regions and political dialogue. | | **Intersectoral Collaboration Program**<br>Enables structured collaboration between the water sector and key economic water-dependent sectors |

### How to read the map

Read across to compare processes at the same level. Read down to trace how a theme, a region or a segment breaks into detail. The two programs sit below the three columns because they draw on all of them.

### How the processes interlink

Themes supply the global, analytical frame. Regions translate it into local priorities and practice. The political process turns the result into commitments. The deep dive that follows shows how themes, regions and the two programs are organized.

# Deep dive: the Thematic Process

**Six themes, each with a theme overview concept note and five topic concept notes**

## 1 Water Security

- **1A** Groundwater and Surface Water
- **1B** Water-Related Disasters
- **1C** Integrated Water Resource Management
- **1D** Closing the Loop in Water Resources Management
- **1E** Securing Water for Food Security

## 2 Water Finance

- **2A** Applying Innovative Water Financing Mechanisms
- **2B** Private and Public Sectors Engagement: Opening New Corridors
- **2C** Funding for Water Resilience and Climate Adaptation
- **2D** Funding and Loans for Multiscale Projects
- **2E** Enabling Conditions for Scaling up Strategic and Inclusive Water Financing

## 3 Water for People and Ecosystems

- **3A** Enhancing Access to Safe Drinking Water Services for All
- **3B** Developing Access to Sanitation Services and Improve Wastewater Collection and Treatment
- **3C** Protecting and Restoring Water Ecosystems and Aquatic Biodiversity
- **3D** Improving Water Quality in a One Health and Multi-Sectoral Approach
- **3E** Water-Energy-Food-Health-Ecosystems-Education Interlinkages

## 4 Water Governance and Diplomacy

- **4A** Adopting Policy, Regulatory Frameworks, and Institutional Mechanisms
- **4B** Strengthening Political Will and Coordination
- **4C** New Instruments for Water Sustainability Policy Consensus
- **4D** Towards Holistic Water Advocacy and Public Awareness Programs
- **4E** Engaging Unheard and Vulnerable Voices

## 5 Innovation for Water Management

- **5A** Hydro Informatics and AI Tools for Water Management
- **5B** Deploying Cutting-Edge Water Technology
- **5C** Data and Overcoming the Lasting Challenge
- **5D** Engaging Citizen Science and Community-Based Knowledge
- **5E** Knowledge Sharing

## 6 Value of Water

- **6A** Valuing Water for Sustainable Economic Growth
- **6B** Advancing Efficiency in Water Management in Different Sectors
- **6C** Pricing Water for Sustainable Management
- **6D** Valuing and Footprinting Water to Drive Efficient Water Policies
- **6E** Water Resources as a National Natural Capital: Towards a Paradigm Shift

# Deep dive: the Regional Process and the two Programs

Regional Process: four regions, each with an established governance structure

**Arab Region** | **Africa** | **Americas** | **Asia and the Pacific**

| Forum-wide | Region | Sub-region | Session |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Regional Process Commission**<br>Sets the common concept and arbitrates between regions. | **Regional Coordinating Group**<br>Writes the regional concept note and the regional report. | **Sub-regional Coordinators Group**<br>Identifies sub-regional priorities and solutions. | **Session organizers**<br>Develop content, prepare speakers and deliver outcome briefs. |

## Deliverables expected from each region

- Innovation and initiatives portfolio
- Regional concept note
- Regional report
- Regional showcase at the 11th Forum
- Voluntary regional commitments

**Programs**
Run across all three processes

### Youth Program

Brings young people into themes, regions and political dialogue.

The Riyadh Water Youth Committee (RWYC) is the primary platform coordinating youth participation.

### Intersectoral Collaboration Program

Enables structured collaboration between the water sector and key economic water-dependent sectors.

**Seven clusters**

- Greening, Environment & Drought
- Agriculture & Food
- Industry & Petrochemicals
- Digital & Artificial Intelligence
- Mining & Metals
- Energy & Hydrogen
- Urban Development, Construction & Tourism



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# 11th World Water Forum – Riyadh 2027

21–25 March 2027

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

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