A photograph of a river with white water rapids, surrounded by dense green forest. The water is turbulent and white with foam as it flows over rocks. The surrounding trees are lush and green, creating a natural, scenic background for the text.

# Institutional, financial and legal frameworks for improved water allocation

**Virtual Technical Workshop**

**Improved Water Allocation for Agriculture in the Arab Region**

**Dubravka Bojic, FAO Rome**

**4 October 2022**

# Water allocation is at the heart of water legislation

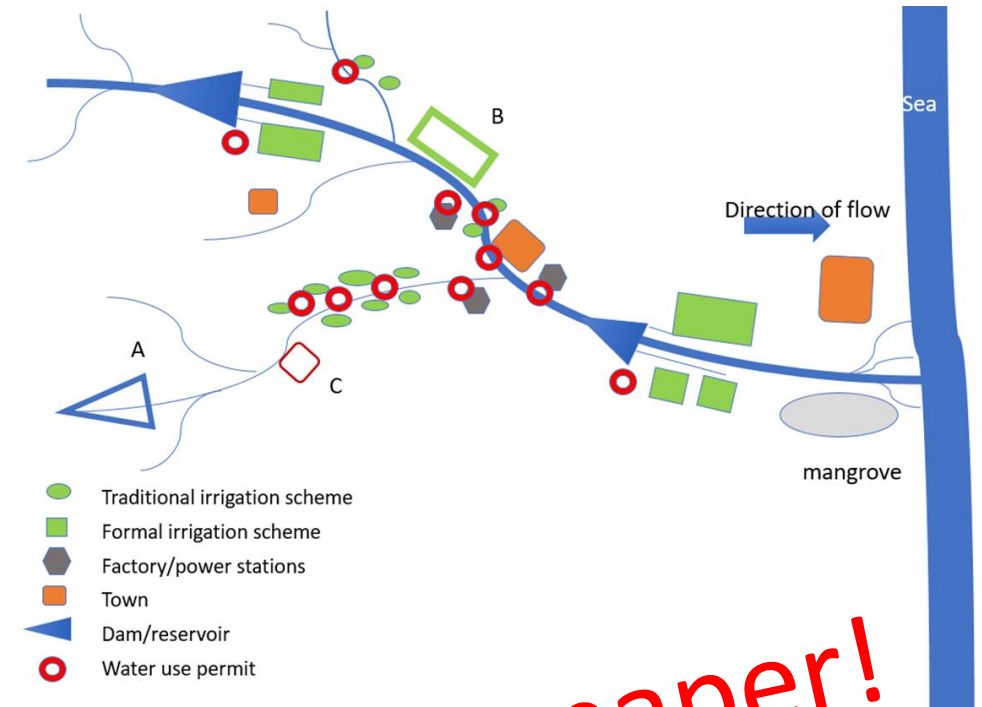
Since ancient times all societies have had rules relating to water resources and their use.

Around the world, allocating water between different sectors and individual water users is a major task of national and sub-national water laws.

Allocation rules define *who* can use water, *how*, *when* and *where*

# Water use planning and permitting systems

- Water resources commonly placed in *public domain*
- Permitting system
- How to allocate
  - Link to management plan at national/river basin level
  - Priorities
- Recording allocation
  - Permit register
- The fundamental value of water allocation is the respect for all uses and the balance between different users.



Looks good on paper!

# Implementation and enforcement challenges

Securing sufficient water for agriculture, while reconciling the competing demands of other economic activities and preserving environmental needs and water quality

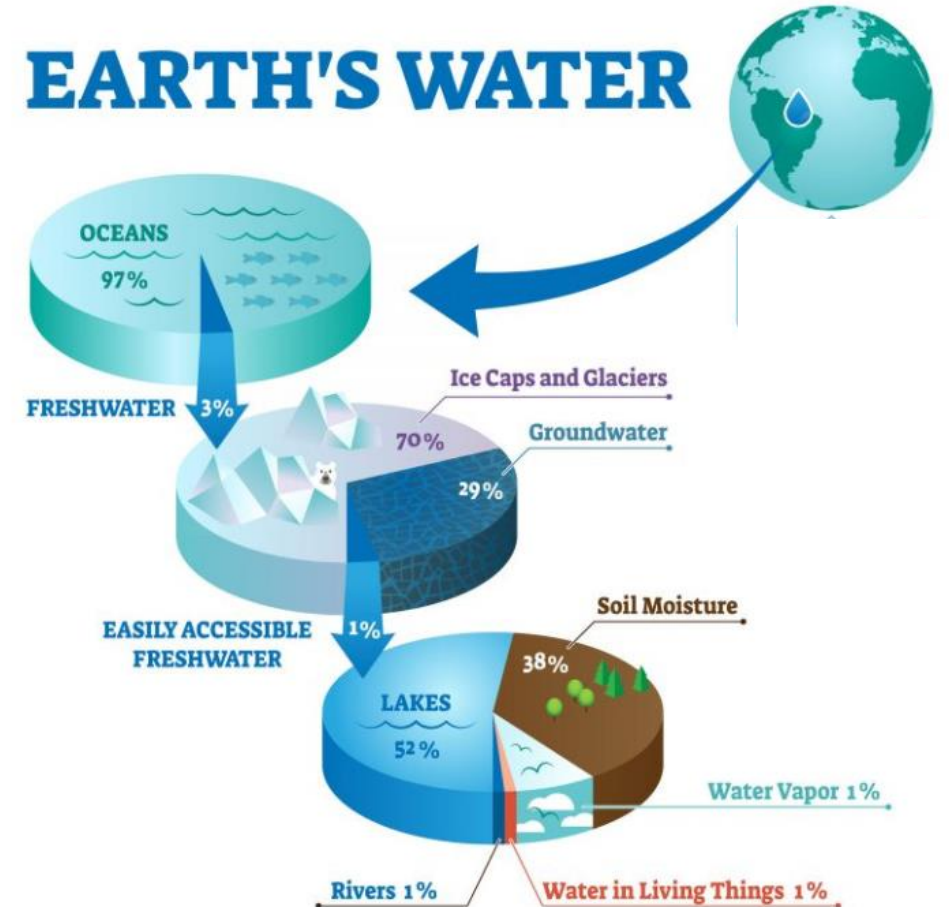
Coordination within and across sectors

Monitoring water use and compliance with permitting regime

Shared holistic and strategic vision of all water resources within their ecosystems and the broader socio-economic development



Water allocation can be a key method of addressing water challenges and moving towards more sustainable, more equitable and more effective water governance.



# Guidelines on Improved Water Allocation for Agriculture. Way forward

The guidelines recognize that water allocation and distribution in practice is a dynamic governance process.

Aspects such as social differentiation of irrigators, influence, access to information and resources, changing socio-economic factors and equity will influence legal and financial instruments for allocation and the functioning of institutions put in place to ensure their operation and respect.

There is no institutional or legislative ‘best practice’ or model that would fit all situations for an effective, sustainable and equitable allocation regime.

Water allocation should have unique features and reflect specific country/basin characteristics and the historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts of land and water tenure and use.

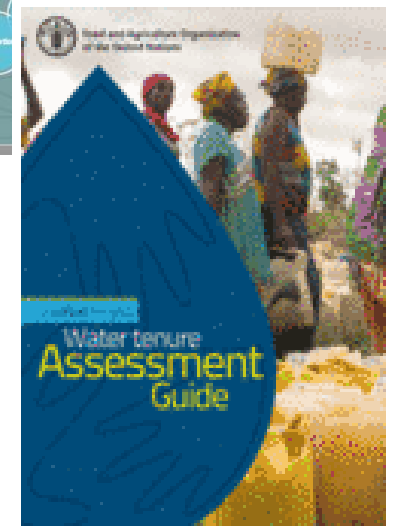
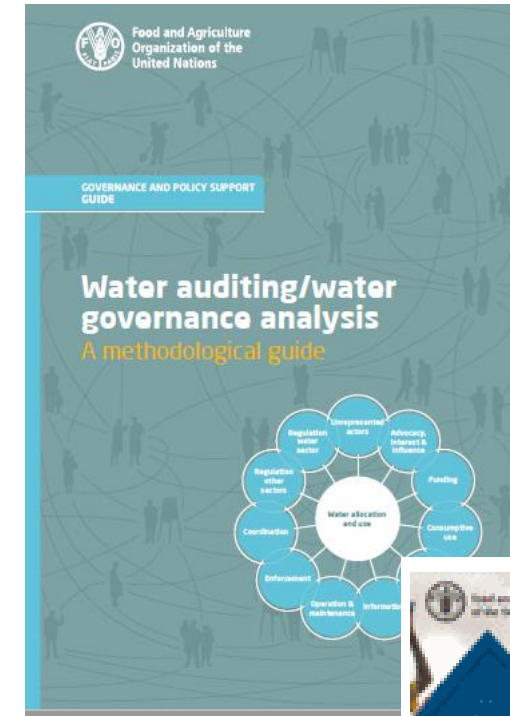
Governance analysis can help in facilitating this.



# Governance analysis and water tenure assessment as a basis for water allocation

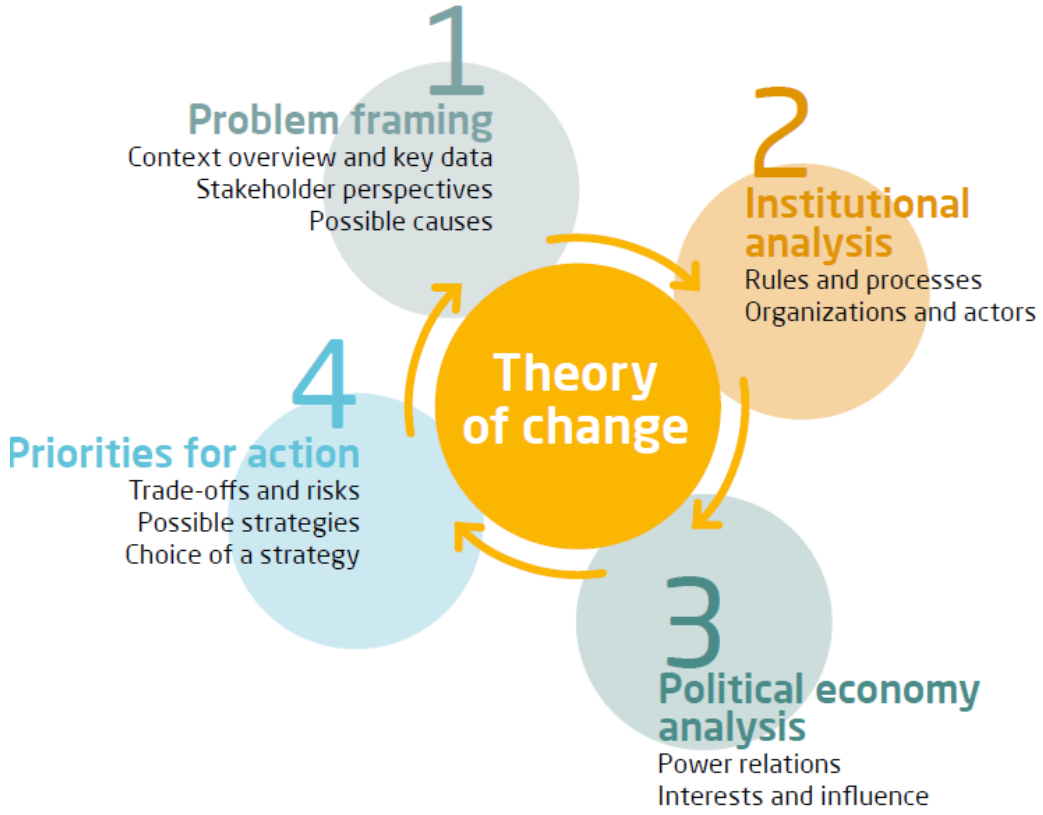
FAO has worked with a number of countries in MENA region in piloting the recent water auditing/governance analysis methodological tool, that can be used when engaging in improving water allocation regimes, in line with the Guidelines, together with the water tenure assessment guide.

*Water Efficiency, Productivity and Sustainability Project (WEPS) in 8 countries*





# Governance analysis and water tenure assessment as a basis for water allocation



# Formal and informal water tenure

- Control of access and use of water resources

State

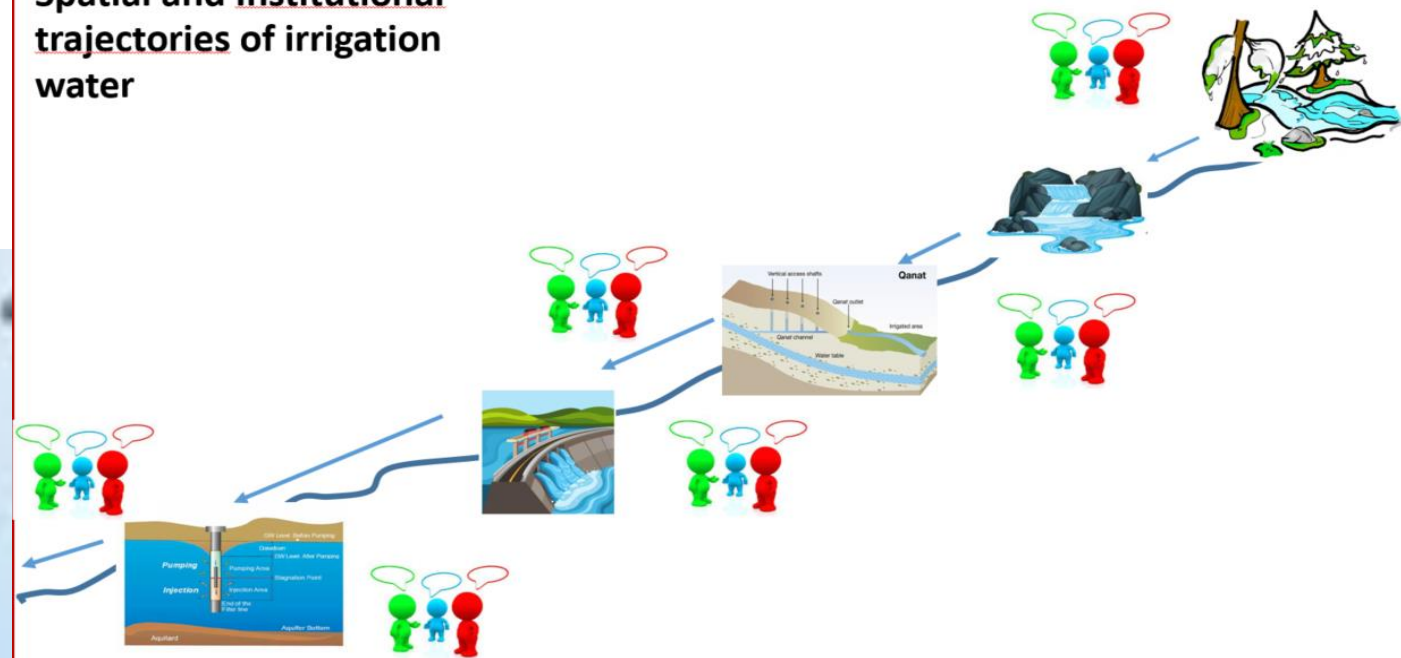
Public sector agency

Individual / entity

Local community

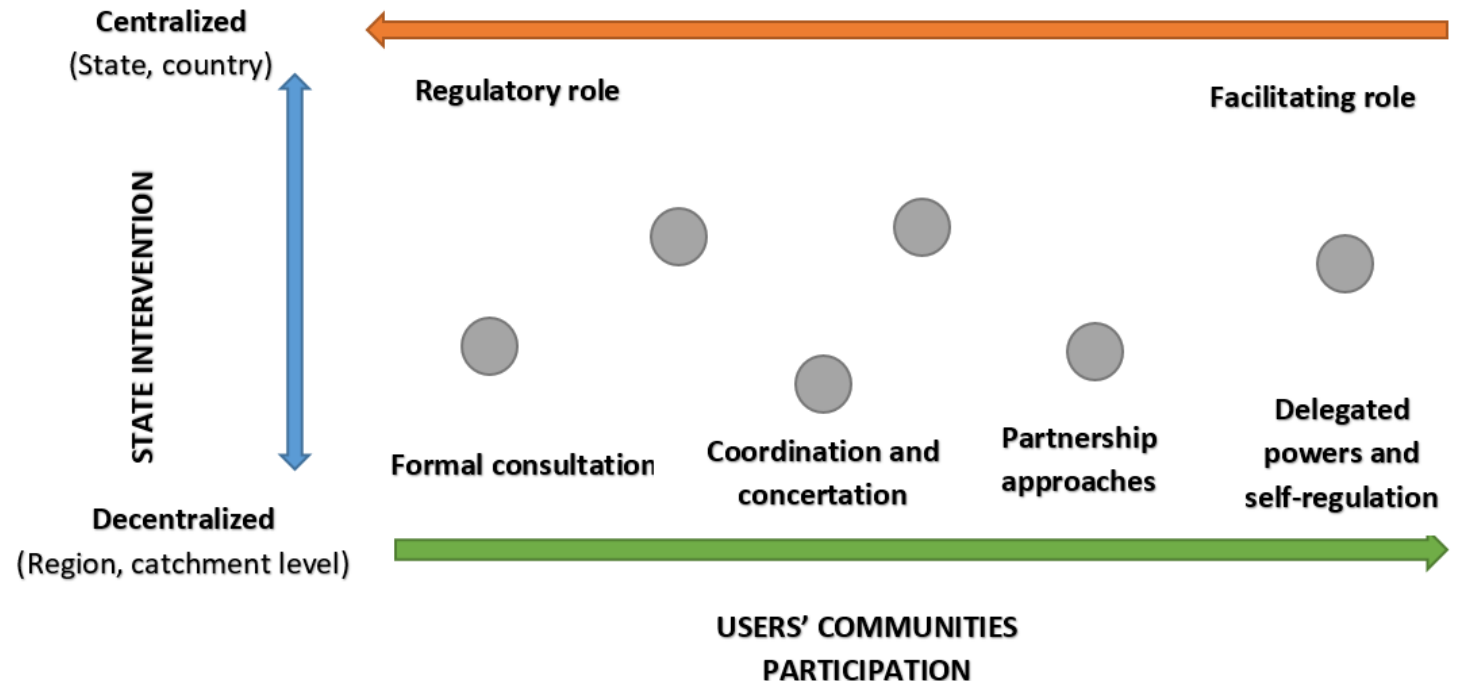
Community of irrigators

## Spatial and Institutional trajectories of irrigation water



# Role of authorities and user communities in allocation decisions

- Farm structures
- Dynamics of farmers behaviour
- Equity in water distribution and access to water
- Internal governance and managerial skills of WUOs
- Users' ownership of allocation rules
- Relationships between actors (central/local; local agencies/WUOs; agencies/farmers; different categories of irrigators..)



# Reflections for going forward

- Broadening the scope of allocation rules
  - Environmental 'reserve'
- Trend towards separate legislation for water resources and on irrigation
- Unified water accounting and governance analysis for informed allocations and reallocations
- Water allocation regimes within broader socio-economic development context – economic and other incentives for coherence



**Thank you for your attention!**