

# **Review of Phase 1 – 4 of WEPA activities (Changes in governance/policies in member countries)**

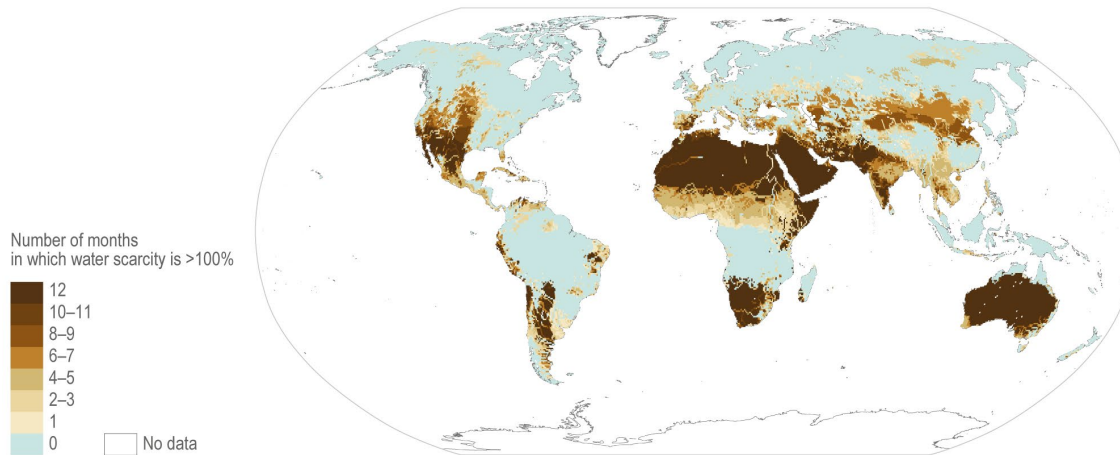
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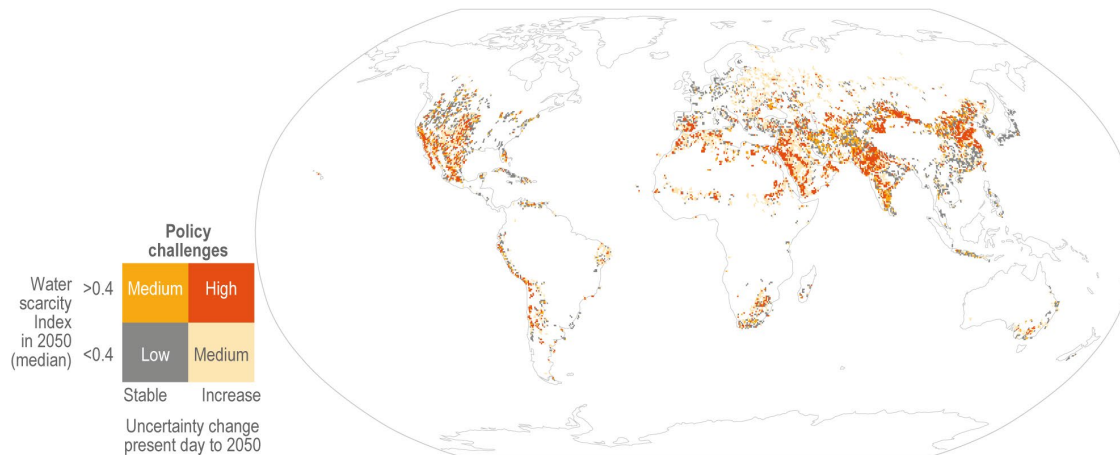
**International Workshop**  
**31 January 2024**

# Background

## Geographical distribution of current water scarcity and level of challenges for policies addressing future change



**a) Number of months per year with severe water scarcity**



**b) Local levels of policy challenges for addressing water scarcity by 2050**

(IPCC AR6, 2023)

**Average per capita water availability is sufficient enough but spatio-temporal asymmetry is great, which is a matter of concern for policy makers.**

# Background



Climate change



Population increase

- In lieu of triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution) and land degradation, freshwater plays a limiting factor for human well-being.



Land use change



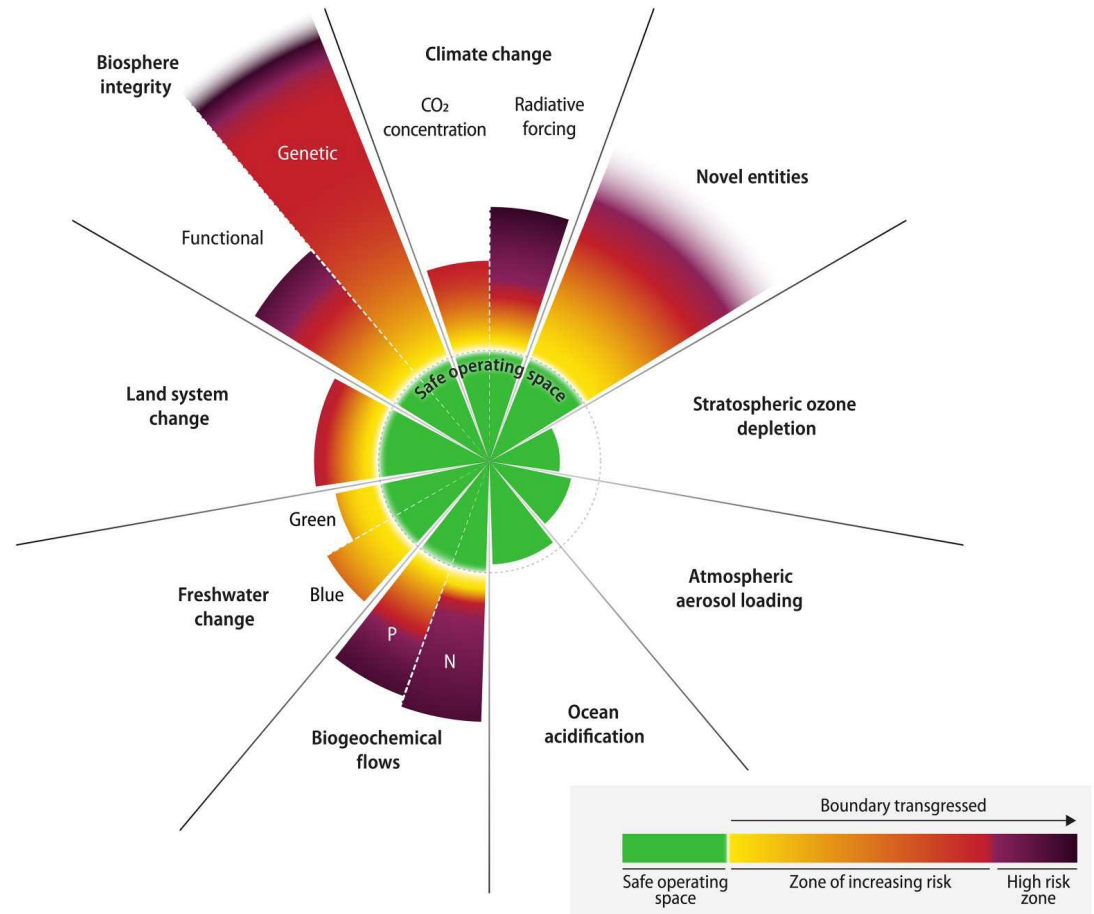
Development plan

- Importance of holistic management of policies and governance for achieving long term sustainability in any region or country never been greater.



# Background

## Environmental changes and its impact on water resource and livelihood



**Fig. Earth reaches beyond six of nine planetary boundaries (Richardson et al., 2023)**

# Key objectives of WEPA

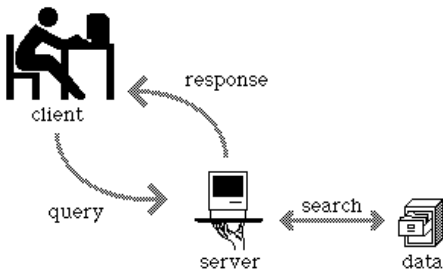


• Knowledge for problem identification, policy planning and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, organizing dialogues on water environmental issues and its management aspects in the partner countries

## Knowledge sharing

## Capacity building

Capacity building of relevant key officials/stakeholders using state of art knowledge/techniques about monitoring and assessment of water environment; proven best practices about implementation, evaluation and rectification of policy elements for water policies and governance



## Data and outreach

## Enhance bilateral/multilateral constructive cooperation

• WEPA database  
• WEPA Outlook/Policy Brief  
• Annual report

• Enhance cooperation within WEPA partner countries and with international organizations and donor agencies to resolve existing water environmental issues and to improve water environmental governance



# Main issues related to poor water environment in WEPA countries

All WEPA partner countries gave similar examples of challenges for institutional issues and policy related issues, but had different capacity-related challenges.

## Institutional issues

- Overlapping roles among government ministries/agencies
- Lack of coordination and legal arrangement
- Multiple ministries enforce water-pollution related legislation

## Policy related

- Conflicting interests among diversified stakeholders as well as between different laws
- Uncertainty of introducing a new policy (due to lack of feasibility analysis)
- Lack of environmental centric policies
- Lack of policies balancing economic development and environment
- Necessity of comprehensive planning considering multi disciplines
- Facing opposition to environmental policies by agencies responsible for economic development

## Capacity related

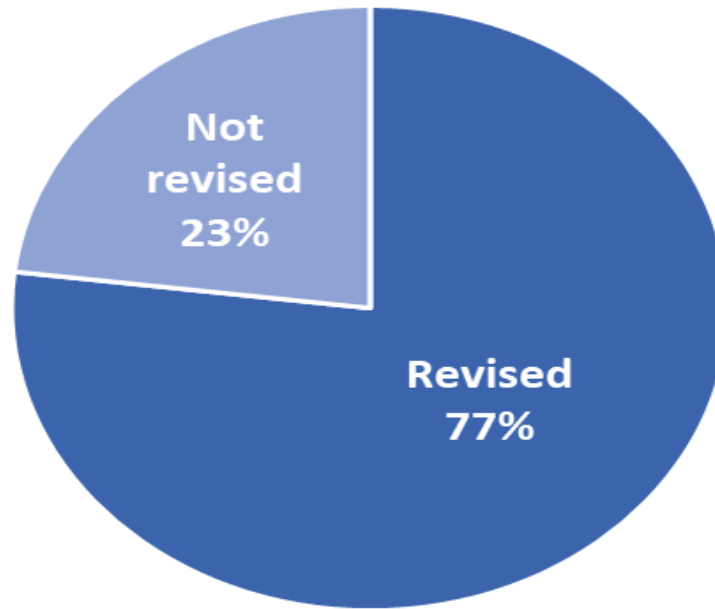
- Lack of budget, human resources, public awareness, monitoring and analysis systems, proper technologies in industries to treat wastewater, awareness and skills of employees at the subnational level, enforcement officers, willingness to comply, and training opportunities
- Limited laboratories and experts in terms of technical capacity
- Low interest in environment

# Changes in governance/policies in member countries

- In the last 20 years, WEPA has initiated several activities and acted as a catalyst, which directly or indirectly helped to improve the water environment by strengthening governance in the partner countries.
- To track these changes, we have analyzed its critical vehicle (i.e. changes in national or regional policies or ordinances) while considering new drivers and pressures with time to make it more robust for managing its water environment.
- We have assessed the change in water environment governance through following four elements:
  1. Legal framework
  2. Monitoring framework
  3. Enforcement framework
  4. Institutional framework

# Changes in governance/policies in WEPA partner countries

## 1. Regulatory framework

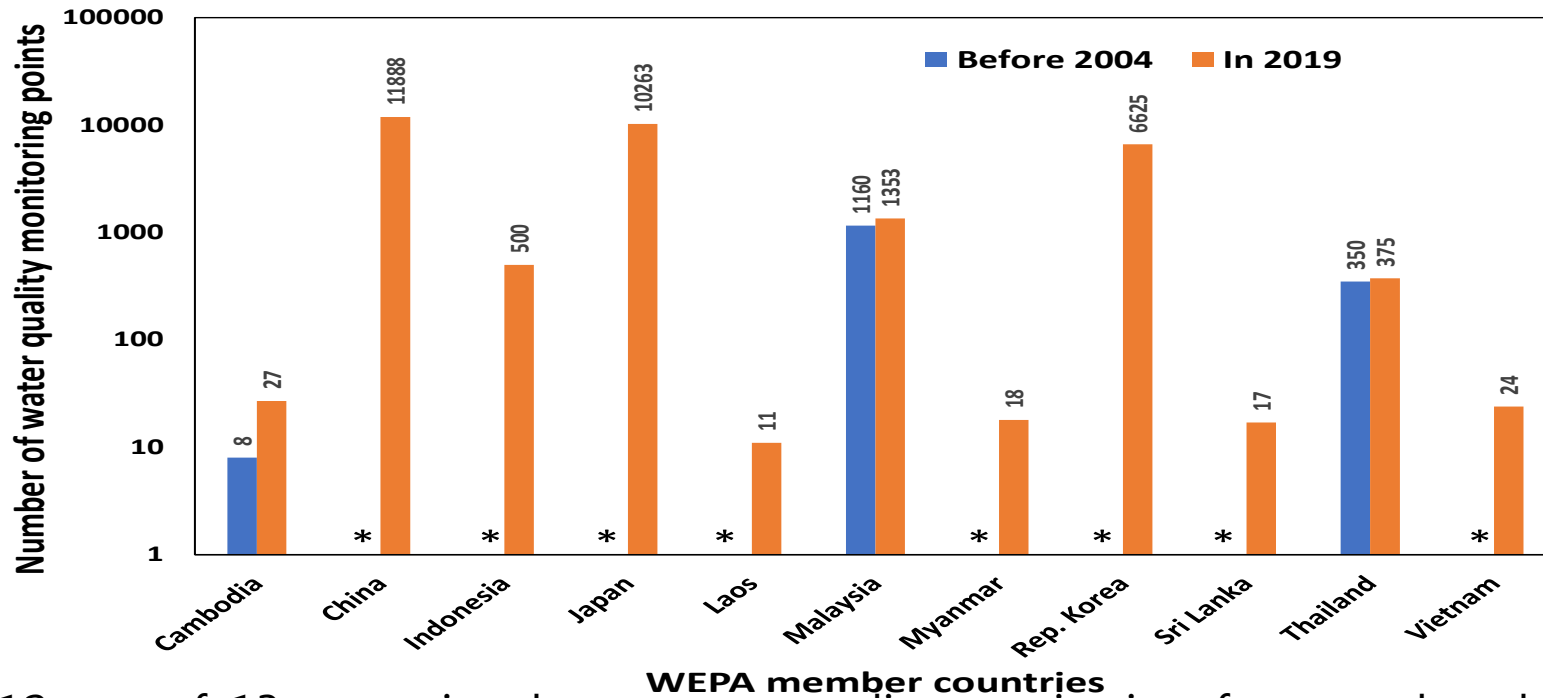


- Status (its first enactment and amendment) of basic legislation on environmental protection
- 10 out of 13 WEPA countries had enacted basic environmental legislation before 2004 (WEPA established), while three countries enacted it after 2004.
- Many WEPA countries (10 out of 13 countries) have amended legislation according to the situation of water environment.



# Changes in governance/policies in member countries

## 2. Monitoring framework and enforcement mechanism



- 12 out of 13 countries, have water quality monitoring frameworks where six of them established their framework before 2004.
- With a collaborative efforts, WEPA countries have also strengthened their efforts to monitor water quality by increasing the number of water quality monitoring stations.
- As of 2020, China has the highest number of monitoring stations (11,888).
- Frequency of monitoring varies from twice in year in Indonesia to 24 times in a year in Sri Lanka.

# Changes in governance/policies in member countries

## 3. Institutional framework

- Effective institutional arrangements is one of the key factors for achieving sound water environment governance.
- For WEPA partner countries, number of key ministries or agencies responsible for water governance ranges from one agency (Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam) to many (remaining eight countries).
- The scope of responsibilities among these key ministries also varies and is mainly based on local environmental and socio-economic conditions. For example, Cambodia mandates its ministries to take care of environmental impact assessment, inventory development for pollution, development of sub-decrees to prevent and reduce pollution, executing management and conservation plans and so on.

# Summary

WEPA activities mainly revolves around the different global goals like MDGs and SDGs which has a clear mandate on healthy water environment. Striving towards these goals, WEPA activities can be summarized as follows:

1. WEPA database of the 13 partner countries has been a vital source of information and opened a new window for sharing information among the stakeholders on water environment.
2. A strong human network, including policymakers, experts, and practitioners dealing with water environmental management in the Asian region has been built.
3. Sharing regular updates on water environment management by organizing regular meetings such as the annual meeting and workshops, carrying out questionnaire surveys, and conducting expert interviews helps to strengthen the database and network.

# Summary

(continued...)

4. Publication of its flagship report “WEPA Outlook on Water Environmental Management in Asia” has provided the most up-to-date and useful information on the state of water environment, its management, progresses and initiatives, and challenges in the 13 partner countries in Asia since 2009 (a target audience: policymakers, experts, and others in the water sector of the region).
5. Action Program (AP) was launched based on requests from WEPA partner countries to resolve specific problems regarding the water environment.
6. All WEPA countries have made every effort to renew and renovate their policies, institutions, and other instruments, and thereby upgrade their management strategies to deal with the complex and evolving issue of sustainable management of water environment

**Thank you so much**