

## Workshop on Industrial Water Use Policy in Bangladesh

### Concept note

The Bangladesh Vision 2021 and the perspective plan 2010-2021 envisages further deepening of Industrial sector of Bangladesh and creation of a strong and globally competitive manufacturing sector.<sup>1</sup> This industrial expansion is expected to put pressure on natural resources, including water resources, which needs to be sustainably managed to realize the vision of a *Transformed Bangladesh* by 2021 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Industrial water demand in Bangladesh, in terms of direct water withdrawals, is expected to increase by two-fold by year 2030. It is projected that to meet the anticipated growth of textile and leather sectors alone, water demand could increase by 250% by 2030. The water demand from the textile industry alone is projected to be almost three times the future domestic water demand in Dhaka. At the same time, many industries like textiles and tanneries discharge highly polluted effluents without treatment. Industries having effluent treatment plants are reluctant to operate the plants for the purpose of reducing operational costs<sup>2</sup>. Industrial water uses, as well as consequent water pollution from thermal power plants, automotive industry, paper and pulp processing are also on the rise and creating major threats for water related ecosystems.

SDG target 6.6 seeks to halt the degradation and destruction of water related ecosystems, and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Bangladesh is committed to achieve the goal by 2020. National Action Plan for SDG implementation highlights the need for an 'Industrial Water Use Policy' for SDG 6.6 implementation. National Water Policy (1999) of Bangladesh delineates four policy principles regarding industrial water use: a) Establishment of zone regulations for location of new industries in consideration of fresh and safe water availability and effluent discharge possibilities; b) Monitoring of effluent disposal by relevant agencies; c) Setting of the standards of effluent disposal (in consultation with the Department of Environment); d) Following the 'polluters pay' principle for cleaning up of water-bodies. Section-23 of Bangladesh Water Act, 2013 puts directive of water zoning for industrial and other uses. The strategic concern is whether to go for a separate "Industrial Water Use Policy", or to review, amend and integrate industrial water use concerns dispersed in different policy documents. The need for an integrated industrial water use policy is driven by the envisaged growth in industrial sector, competing uses of water resources against the backdrop of growing population and affluence level as well as climate change related vulnerabilities.

In the making of "Industrial Water Use Policy", the afore-mentioned aspects need to be considered, along with a detailed review of the existing policy landscape, state of water pollution from industrial effluents, alternative water sources, market potential for water efficient productions and industry involvement. To this end, multi-stakeholder consultation founded on systems thinking approaches is required to find the right leverage from the

---

<sup>1</sup> Making Vision 2021 A Reality, Perspective Plan Of Bangladesh 2010-2021, [https://bangladesh.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bangladesh.gov.bd/page/6dca6a2a\\_9857\\_4656\\_bce6\\_139584b7f160/Perspective-Plan-of-Bangladesh.pdf](https://bangladesh.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bangladesh.gov.bd/page/6dca6a2a_9857_4656_bce6_139584b7f160/Perspective-Plan-of-Bangladesh.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> WRG (2015), An analysis of industrial water use in Bangladesh with a focus on the textile and leather industries, 2030 Water Resources Group, <https://www.2030wrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/WRG-Bangladesh-Report.pdf>

different aspects of water use efficiency, pollution control, responsible consumption, industry demands, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is pursuing to do that. ESCAP, as the regional development arm of the UN, has been promoting regional collaboration and mutual learning between member States on tackling industrial water pollution and promoting efficient water usage<sup>3</sup>.

In this context, the first multi-stakeholder workshop on 'Industrial Water Use Policy in Bangladesh', jointly organized by WARPO and UNESCAP, scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup> 2019, will have two main objectives:

- a) Identification of challenges and opportunities to design and implement Industrial Water Use Policy for limiting water use and pollution in the industrial sector of Bangladesh.
- b) Initiate a platform of collaboration for ensuring environment-friendly and efficient water use in the industrial sector.

The workshop will bring together a broad range of stakeholders including representatives from relevant Government Ministries, private sector, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations as well as from the UN system and other development partners in an interactive setting.

**Contact :**

Md. Mahmudul Hasan, Director General, Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO), MoWR, mahmud6330@gmail.com

Md. Taufiqul Islam, Director (Technical), Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO), MoWR, taufiq28@gmail.com

Arun Jacob, Environmental Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), jacob@un.org

---

<sup>3</sup> Peter Rogers. 2015, "Should there be an Industrial Water Policy?", at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266046476>

<sup>6</sup>See more details on the project run by ESCAP in tackling industrial water pollution : <https://www.unescap.org/events/escap-workshop-strengthening-national-policies-improving-water-use-and-limit-water-pollution>