



Water Forward
FOR PEOPLE FOR FOOD FOR PLANET

Rivers at the Heart of Thriving Cities

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India International Water Week 2026 · Global River Cities Alliance · 22 September 2026



Rivers Built Our Cities And Remain Engines of Our Economies

GANGA BASIN

>40%

of India's GDP

YANGTZE BASIN

~45%

of China's GDP

WETLANDS

>7.5%

of global GDP from ~6% of Earth's surface

But Our Rivers Are Becoming Liabilities



4 billion

of people experiencing water scarcity



1.8 billion

People exposed of severe flood risk



3.4 billion

People lacking safely managed sanitation;
over 40% of household wastewater not safely treated



1,000+ rivers

Carry 80% of river plastic to the ocean



1 in 4

Freshwater species at risk of extinction

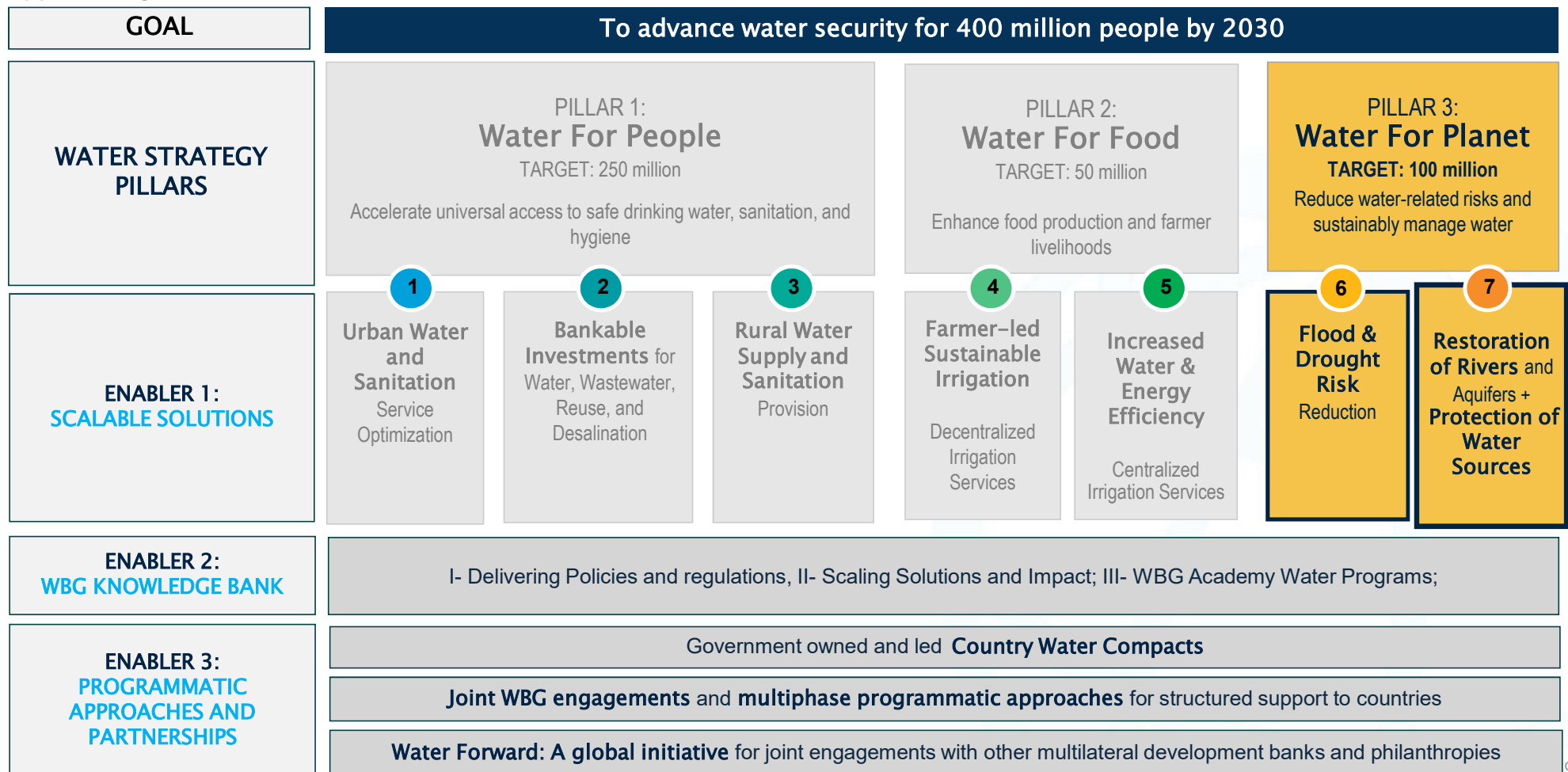


Up to 1/3 of economic growth lost downstream of heavily polluted rivers

WBG Water Strategy Implementation Plan: Our Ambition and Scalable Solutions

Where Rivers Sit in Our Water Strategy

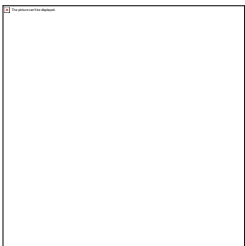
Approved by the WBG Board of Directors on Dec 23, 2025



Only

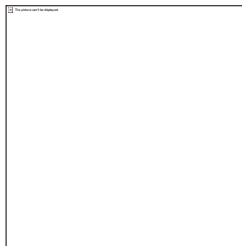
Solution 7 in Practice

About 500 projects · nearly **US\$50 billion** over two decades



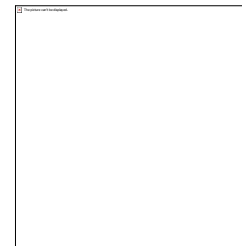
Clean up

Pollution control, wastewater treatment and reuse



Protect

Wetlands, floodplains, watersheds and water sources



Govern and finance

Basin institutions and plans, PPPs, guarantees, subnational lending

Working alongside Solution 6: reducing flood and drought risk

Delivered through the Knowledge Bank · Water Compacts · programmatic approaches · Water Forward

Healthy Rivers Drive Growth and Jobs

In India, water-dependent sectors employ nearly 70% of the workforce



Creating jobs

Building and operating wastewater, riverfront and flood-protection infrastructure.

~17 jobs per US\$1M invested in water and sanitation in emerging economies.



Enabling jobs

Restored riverfronts attract investment, tourism and business.

+30–50% land values near Seoul's restored stream.



Protecting jobs

Flood protection, wetlands and floodplains shield cities; clean water keeps workers healthy.

1% of GDP a year at risk in Colombo if its wetlands are lost.

Rivers are economic infrastructure — realizing their value takes urgency, ambition, and collaboration.



Bringing Rivers Back to the Heart of Cities

From Liability to Asset



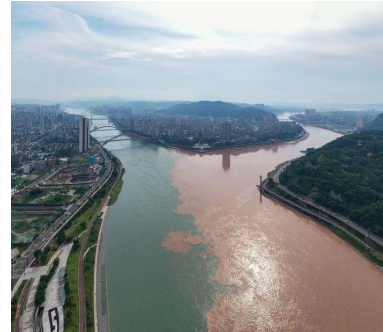
BOGOTÁ

Río Bogotá



BUENOS AIRES

Matanza-Riachuelo



YANGTZE

Wuhan · Changsha · Nanchang



DHAKA

Buriganga, Turag, Balu, Shitalakkhya

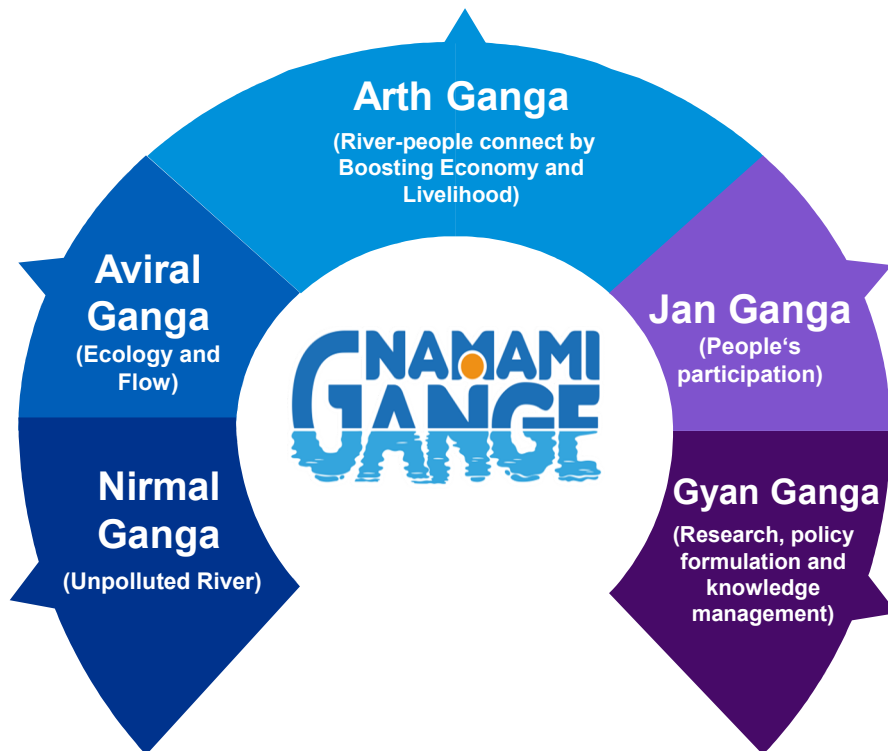
The Liability	Untreated sewage, lost wetlands and recurrent floods	Argentina's most polluted river, fed by thousands of industries	A major carrier of plastic and pollution	Rivers choked by industrial and domestic waste; canals lost or clogged
The Approach	Wastewater treatment, flood protection, and green riverside parks	A basin authority curbing industrial pollution, plus major sewerage works	Pollution control, ecological protection, and coordinated institutions	Integrated pollution control, dredging, and canal rehabilitation to restore natural flow

→ India's Ganga program brings these approaches together

India: A Lighthouse for Healthy River Cities

An integrated river rejuvenation mission for the Ganga River Basin

Five pillars of Namami Gange



Key Features



Holistic approach: pollution, flow, strengthening people-river connect, and knowledge management



Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) PPPs: private operators build and run treatment plants for 15 years and are paid only if they meet effluent standards.



A basin-wide approach to flows, water quality and pollution, backed by real-time monitoring data and urban river management plans

Partnering for River-Sensitive Cities



Share

Experience from our river programs across all regions, through the WBG Knowledge Bank



Connect

Peer learning among **country clients**, knowledge hubs like the **Singapore Water Center**, and partners like the **Murray–Darling Basin Authority**



Scale

Common approaches (river management plans, data and AI) and programmatic finance through **Water Forward**

Learning with India and GRCA partners, from liability to asset, river by river, city by city



Thank you

Water *Forward*
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Backup Slides



Water Forward

FOR PEOPLE FOR FOOD FOR PLANET

A new global coalition that brings together governments, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and philanthropies, with each contributing its comparative advantage, whether reforms, financing, or delivery

It aligns all partners behind government-led Water Compacts: government-owned action plans that connect policy reform, institutional strengthening, and investment planning in one coordinated framework



MISSION

To deliver water security for **over 1 billion people by 2030** under three pillars:



Water for People



Water for Food



Water for Planet

Private Sector Participation in Water: Why, When, and How?

Unlocking private investment in water is a critical component of Water Forward and a key lever to meet investment needs in the sector

Why It Matters

- Additional capital
- Innovation, operational efficiency, and results-oriented delivery models.
- Sovereign governments fiscally constrained,
- Cost-reflective water pricing to reduce wastage and ensure financial sustainability.

Supporting Enabling Conditions



Regulatory and Governance Clarity



Sector Financial Sustainability



Political and Social Acceptability



Tailored Approach to Market Maturity

Less Mature Markets

- Build – Operate-Transfer PPP models
- Management and performance-based contracts
- Concessional loans, viability gap funding and local currency financing to support affordability

Markets with Efficient Subnational Utilities

- Fiscal decentralization
- Policies to enable lending to subnational entities (e.g. municipalities)
- Bring in private sector know-how

More Developed Markets

- Concessions with fully commercial PPPs
- Sustainable Finance (e.g., green & blue finance, sustainability linked loans and bonds)
- Engagement with local investors to strengthen alignment