

Cooperation in International Waters in Africa

# CIWA 2.0

Advancing Cooperation on Transboundary  
Water Management in Africa



HOSTED BY  
**WORLD BANK GROUP**  
Water

© 2025 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank  
1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433  
Telephone: +1 (202) 473-1000  
Internet: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

## Rights and Permissions

The material in this work is subject to copyright. Because The World Bank encourages the dissemination of its knowledge, this work may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for non-commercial purposes as long as full attribution to this work is given.

Any queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to World Bank Publications, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA; fax: +1 (202) 522-2422; email: [pubrights@worldbank.org](mailto:pubrights@worldbank.org).

## Photo Information

Cover page: Men walking on a bridge in Mulanje, a town in the Southern Region of Malawi, close to the border with Mozambique. Credit: RCRP Team, World Bank

# Contents

<b>A decade of cooperation on climate-resilient development</b>	<b>1</b>
• CIWA's Impact	4
• 2022 Mid-term Review	5
<b>CIWA 2.0</b>	<b>6</b>
• What remains the same	6
• Six ways that CIWA is evolving	7

# Tables and Figures

<b>Figures</b>	
<b>Figure 1.</b> CIWA ToC, 2017	<b>2</b>
<b>Figure 2.</b> CIWA Pathways to Impact	<b>8</b>
<b>Figure 3.</b> CIWA 2.0 Theory of Change	<b>10</b>
<b>Tables</b>	
<b>Table 1.</b> CIWA Results Framework, 2017	<b>3</b>

# A decade of cooperation on climate-resilient development

Regional challenges and their causes require regional cooperation to solve, especially in transboundary waters, which are shared by so many countries.

In 2011, Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries and development partners came together with the vision of sparking greater cooperation among nations sharing transboundary waters. The Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) program was founded as a multi-donor<sup>1</sup> trust fund managed by the World Bank.

CIWA was created<sup>2</sup> to foster cooperation, protect biodiversity, help countries beset by conflict and fragility, and spur climate resilience to achieve shared prosperity and growth. It accomplishes this by advancing its three pillars known as the three Is: information—to understand risks, make better decisions, and monitor resources; institutions—to build trust, coordinate planning, and manage shared resources; and investments (formerly infrastructure)—to manage watersheds, develop groundwater resources, and build storage.

**Information:** CIWA supports shared data, knowledge, and analytical tools to enable timely, transparent, and regionally beneficial decision making and effective information platforms for risk management and water resources management (WRM).

**Institutions:** CIWA strengthens adaptable regional institutions that provide WRM services to countries amid growing weather variability and climate change. Effective institutions enable riparian countries to manage shared risks and harness the benefits of cooperation.

**Investments:** CIWA influences investments by improving technical and resource mobilization capacity, coordinated investment planning, and inclusive stakeholder engagement to enhance and advance equitable regional projects. Regionally beneficial investments generate socioeconomic benefits and inclusive poverty reduction.

CIWA assists riparian governments to address constraints to cooperative water resources management and development, with the goal of unlocking the potential for sustainable, climate-resilient growth. By supporting countries to work together to share information, strengthen institutions, and advance sustainable investments, CIWA enables them to use their transboundary water resources more productively and equitably, protect people and property from water-related shocks, and ensure sustainability of the resource. Its investments help spur economic growth that creates jobs and improves livelihoods, and its technical assistance strengthens water resources governance and policies that can create the enabling conditions for further economic development and job creation.

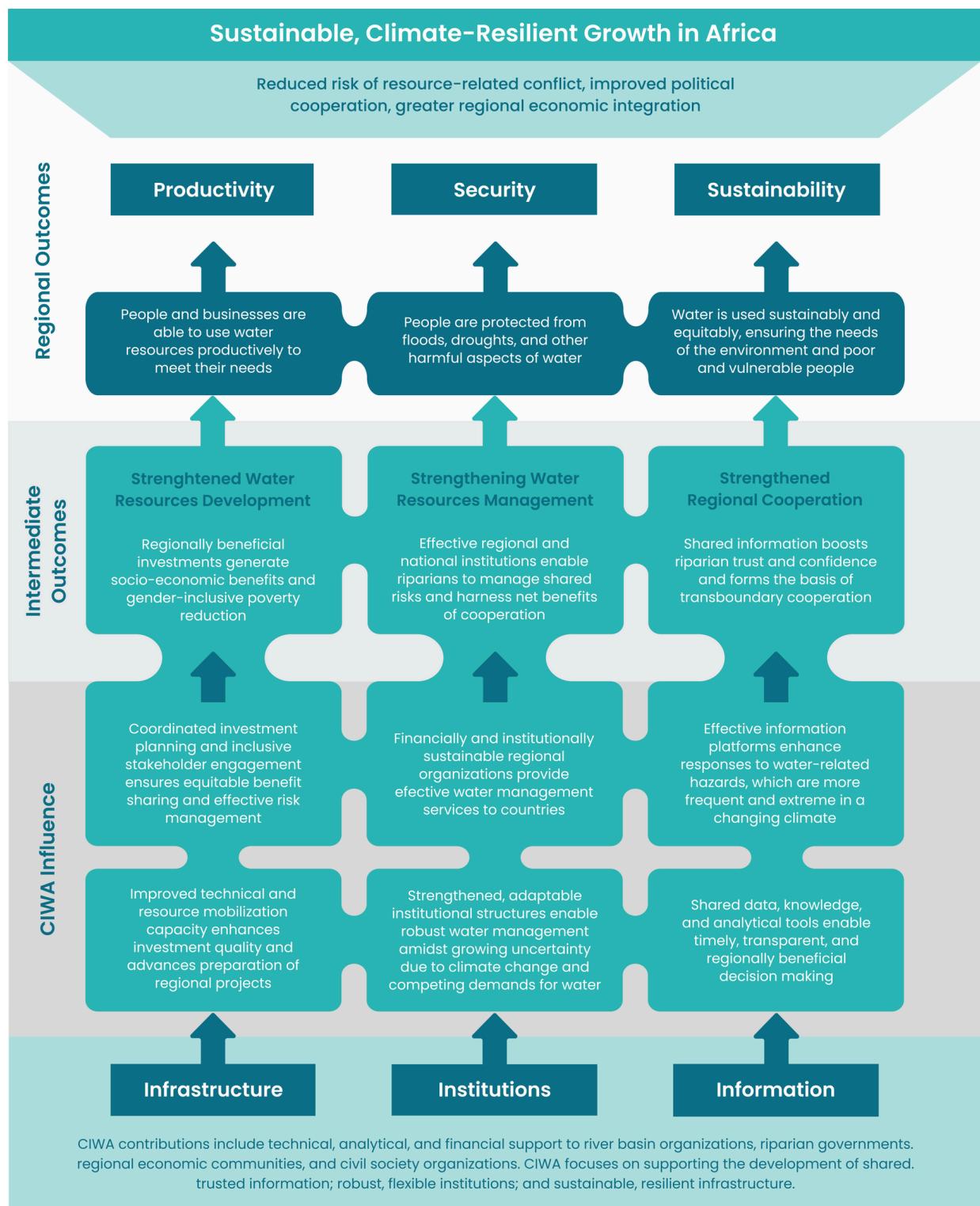
A cooperative approach to managing collective risks and equitably sharing socioeconomic benefits presents countries with opportunities to reduce resource-related conflict and strengthen regional integration, which contribute to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and resilience to climate change. CIWA has three modalities to fulfill its mandate: (i) sustained engagements with priority basins to help strengthen foundational elements such as data, agreements, institutions, and investment and operation plans; (ii) strategic engagements to contribute to high-impact outcomes through analytical effort, capacity building, and technical assistance; and (iii) knowledge generation and management initiatives to strengthen the evidence base to create tools to manage international waters.

<sup>1</sup> Contributing partners include the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the European Commission, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID)/ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

<sup>2</sup> CIWA is the successor to the Nile Basin Trust Fund.

Regional outcomes include reduced risk of resource-related conflict; improved cooperation; greater economic integration; more sustainable and equitable use of water resources to meet the needs of people and businesses; and resilience to floods, droughts, and other water-related harms.

CIWA's 2017 Theory of Change (ToC) (Figure 1) and Results Framework (RF) (Table 1) focused on the three Is and delivering on the Program Development Objective.



**Figure 1.** CIWA ToC, 2017

By dollar value, recipient-executed grants dominate the cumulative portfolio. These have been implemented by river basin organizations (RBOs), regional economic commissions (RECs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) in all SSA regions. Additional resources are spread across catalytic grants and regional Advisory Services and Analytics (ASAs) to influence policies and underpin programming.

The program development objective (PDO) is to strengthen cooperative management and development of international waters in Sub-Saharan Africa to aid sustainable climate-resilient growth. The 2015 mid-term review (MTR) produced a revised RF to coincide with the ToC launched in 2017:

**Table 1.** CIWA Results Framework, 2017

<b>Program Development Objective: to strengthen cooperative management and development of international waters in Sub-Saharan Africa to aid sustainable climate-resilient growth</b>						
<b>PDO Indicator 1:</b> US dollar financing mobilized for cooperative management and development of international waters projects supported by CIWA						
<b>PDO Indicator 2:</b> Number of people directly benefiting from improved water resources management and development in target basins through projects supported by CIWA						
<b>Intermediate Results 1</b>		<b>Intermediate Results 2</b>	<b>Intermediate Results 3</b>		<b>Intermediate Results 4</b>	
Cooperation and Integration Strengthened		Water resources Management Strengthened	Water Resources Development Strengthened		Stakeholder Coordination and Engagement Strengthened	
<b>IR1.1</b>	<b>IR1.2</b>	<b>IR2.1</b>	<b>IR3.1</b>	<b>IR3.2</b>	<b>IR4.1</b>	<b>IR4.2</b>
Number of relevant transboundary institutions strengthened to improve regional cooperation	Number of strategic analyses and knowledge products used to illustrate the evidence base for cooperation, needs, and challenges.	Number of relevant transboundary institutions using improved analytical tools, knowledge products, data, forecasting, and/or capacity for improved water and climate risk management or investment operation coordination	Number of investment opportunities with regional benefits that have been advanced through CIWA support	Number of relevant transboundary institutions with an improved approach to sustainable <sup>7</sup> investment planning and bankable investment preparation	Number of basins with improved engagement of civil society, private sector, and academia; percentage of engagements where improved stakeholder engagements explicitly support the incorporation of gender issues into the design and implementation of water management and development activities	Number of basins with increased water resources management and development information in the public domain

## CIWA's Impact

Between 2011 and 2023, CIWA has mobilized investments worth US\$6 billion that are estimated to benefit 15.5 million people. The total value of CIWA's mobilized and potential investments is more than US\$17 billion; 1.7 times larger than the target of US\$10 billion. CIWA has influenced six major hydropower investments (four of which are mobilized) that could result in the avoidance of up to 26.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e) annually.

CIWA has been a core funder of the production and use of regional African river basin modeling and hydromet data, groundwater information systems, and other public data tools. Operations and analytical products have directly influenced regional investment plans (e.g., Niger Climate Resilience Investment Plan [CRIP], Nile Equatorial Lakes Investment Program [NELIP], the Multi-Sector Investment Opportunity Analysis [MSIOA] of the permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission [OKACOM]) and over US\$4.2 billion in World Bank-funded projects.

CIWA has also made major contributions to core national capacity and policies, water charters, regional technical capacity, inclusion, strategic planning, and resource mobilization in every region. A total of 20 SSA regional institutions have implemented CIWA activities and benefited from CIWA technical assistance. Partnerships have included the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Nile Basin Discourse (NBD), Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), OKACOM, Southern African Development Community Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI), Niger Basin Authority (NBA), Volta Basin Authority (VBA), Limpopo Watercourse Commission (LIMCOM), two transfrontier conservation area management boards (Parfuri-Sengwe and Greater Limpopo), Organisation pour la mise en valeur du fleuve Sénégal (OMVS), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC).

CIWA has influenced over 47 climate adaptation investments and promoted regional cooperation on flood-risk reduction, provided WRM training and expertise to RBOs to improve the climate resilience of water systems, and supported the supply side of water management by expanding storage and improving cooperation on shared water resources.

Over this period, CIWA projects have implemented internship and Young Professional programs that actively recruit women and people affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) to expand the equitable representation in the male-dominated water sector. These efforts have benefited people from over 20 countries; approximately one-third have been women.

By the second MTR (2022), CIWA had shifted in response to the 2015 MTR, various context changes, new opportunities, and client demand. During the first 10 years, stakeholders shaped CIWA programming to be more purposeful in various dimensions, and CIWA delivered on its results, targets, and programs. A new pipeline was needed with a renewed approach to programming that better represented CIWA's comparative advantage for supporting sustained regional cooperation on water resources management and development. In 2024, the World Bank and CIWA partners (the Advisory Committee) extended the CIWA Multi-Donor Trust Fund to 2031, coinciding with a new Advisory Committee-endorsed program pipeline. The CIWA 2.0 pipeline is an exciting approach to building on and leveraging results from the first 10 years to expand the benefits of regional cooperation deeper into basin and institutional partnerships; however, 90 percent of the new pipeline needs new funding over the extended period.

The following summarizes the 2022 Mid-Term Review to provide context for the development of CIWA 2.0 and how that is reflected in the revised Theory of Change and Results Framework.

## 2022 Mid-term Review

CIWA's 2022 MTR assessed impact and provided key recommendations based on 112 stakeholder consultations and six case studies. The evaluation concluded that, in its purpose and design, CIWA has been a highly relevant and responsive source of financial, knowledge-based, and technical support in both individual countries and regions across Africa. It found that CIWA is highly relevant for the realization of the World Bank's regional Integration strategies (World Bank Africa Strategy 2019–2023 and updated Regional Integration and Cooperation Assistance Strategy 2021–2023), given that water is a key resource for bringing people and countries together. The review concluded that CIWA has been a highly flexible and adaptable partnership, working in many countries and offering versatile funding to respond to emerging needs. Despite its strong focus on regional activities, such flexibility has allowed CIWA to provide targeted support to individual low-capacity countries to enable their engagement in transboundary water issues. Long-term engagement is also a key feature of CIWA's implementation model, which has been particularly important for achieving results in FCV environments (even if nascent, in some cases).

The MTR also concluded that CIWA, as the only World Bank regional trust fund focusing on transboundary waters in Africa, has a well-defined niche. It has a clear comparative advantage in capacity building and institutional development and, unlike many other development partners, finances core costs in addition to project costs. Finally, CIWA's strong networks in the region provide a comparative advantage, although partnerships with CSOs vary across basins and those with the private sector remain limited.

The 2022 MTR provided 11 key recommendations, including three that pertain to program design:

- **CIWA's ToC and Results Framework should be further aligned.** The Results Framework should capture the regional outcomes and indicators associated with the intermediate outcomes and be able to measure actual outcomes in addition to processes. To reflect CIWA's narrative (including different theories of regional collaboration in WRM and development), the ToC should integrate additional and/or more nuanced narrative text on results pathways in its sphere of influence. It should be developed to include more specific water(-related) cooperation and change-related pathways and outcomes, while being explicit about underlying assumptions and risks. It should better reflect the program's focus on cross-cutting priorities appropriately. Communications priorities and outcomes should also be considered for inclusion in the Results Framework. CIWA should decide if the development of the ToC and Results Framework needs to be accompanied by a commensurate development indicator.
- **CIWA should monitor the actual implementation of the policies, strategies, frameworks, and plans it has supported to understand their contributions to an improved enabling environment for regional cooperation and WRM planning.** CIWA should provide a description of CIWA's contributions<sup>3</sup> to WRM management and development over the lifetime of the program's engagements, beyond individual projects (for example, where there are clear linkages to influenced projects or investments).
- **CIWA should diversify the stakeholders with whom it works. Specifically, it should engage with diversified national actors (beyond Water Ministries).** It should also identify and build on opportunities to work with the private sector and CSOs across all basins and regions (informed by its extensive work in the Nile River Basin) to realize its multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder objectives.

The following CIWA 2.0 program formulation addresses these recommendations, the AC-endorsed pipeline, and client priorities.

# CIWA 2.0

CIWA supports the provision of regional public goods for prosperity on a livable planet. Cooperation on transboundary waters management is a prerequisite for achieving such key regional public goods as conflict prevention, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience and for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for economic development, poverty reduction, and human health. Regional challenges (e.g., climate change, population growth, migration) that put pressure on regional public goods require regional solutions.

## What remains the same

CIWA seeks to enable countries to use their transboundary water resources productively and equitably, protect people and property from water-related shocks, and ensure sustainability of the resource. CIWA advocates for cooperative approaches to managing shared risks and sharing socioeconomic benefits, which presents countries with opportunities to reduce resource-related conflict and strengthen regional integration, all of which contribute to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and resilience to climate change.

- The program development objective is to strengthen cooperative management and development of international waters in Sub-Saharan Africa for sustainable climate-resilient growth.
- CIWA's regional outcomes and related CIWA's vision indicators are the same: (i) reduced risk of resource-related conflict, (ii) improved cooperation, (iii) greater economic integration, (iv) people and businesses using water resources to meet their needs, (v) greater resilience to floods, droughts, and other water-linked harms, and (vi) sustainably and equitably used water for the good of the environment and people.
- The definition of PDO indicators is unchanged, however, they will be further disaggregated by types of investments and their outcomes. For example, if reporting on a mobilized watershed rehabilitation investment, CIWA will include the estimate of hectares of protected terrestrial or aquatic areas and track climate resilience outcomes.
- The 2.0 Results Framework will continue to represent all 2017 intermediate results indicators (although not necessarily verbatim); however, methodologies, definitions, and disaggregation are changed.
- CIWA recipient-executed operations will continue to dominate the portfolio.

# Six ways that CIWA is evolving

## 1 Renewed strategic orientation

CIWA will refocus its approach to maximize its impact on investments. It will do this by harmonizing diagnostic work (that focuses on the four cross-cutting themes of biodiversity, climate resilience, GESI, and FCV support) with previously identified lending pipelines, particularly regional WRM investments. Activities should link to WB lending pipelines. This strategy is based on CIWA's central action— to create the enabling environment to carry out long-term cooperation, which is essential for the successful implementation of regional WRM investments. These investments will provide equitable benefits and productive water use, resulting in the above regional outcomes.

## 2 Enhanced use of, and approach to, FCV, GESI, biodiversity, and climate resilience

CIWA 2.0 builds on the progress of the four cross-cutting themes that are the pathways for change to deliver results on the three Is. This means that every investment will have core results pertaining to one or more pathway. In the original CIWA program, core cross-cutting sectors were not specified, and these are now key themes because of client demand. To this end, CIWA has now completed its FCV framework, GESI framework, biodiversity framework, and a whole-of-program climate resilience assessment. The GESI and biodiversity frameworks identify sub-theories of change and results frameworks that inform and connect to the CIWA-wide ToC and Results Framework. The FCV framework and climate resilience assessment do not have their own ToC or results framework but are used to create pathways for change in the overall CIWA 2.0 ToC.

In CIWA 2.0's new ToC, FCV, GESI, biodiversity, and climate resilience are the pathways to achieving impact on the three Is.



## 3 Diversified investment portfolio

CIWA's original focus on infrastructure as its third pillar, which centered on gray infrastructure (mostly large dams), is too narrow to meet current needs on the continent and now focuses more broadly on investments. In CIWA 2.0, operations are being designed to influence more diversified investments that include groundwater resources management, NBS, biodiversity, and livelihoods and jobs. This change is not intended to eliminate either large dams or other grey infrastructure from CIWA's portfolio, but rather to recognize that different types of investments are needed in different basins or aquifers and that the solution for water insecurity is a regionally optimized and diversified portfolio. Most countries have limited resources and must look for efficient approaches to increase their storage capacity. These include leveraging and maximizing natural storage resources; evaluating opportunities for reoperating, rehabilitating, or retrofitting existing storage; building new storage; and reforming storage management (e.g., investing in institutions to manage storage better); and considering alternatives to storage, ranging from managing how much water is used to alternative supply measures such as wastewater reuse.

## 4

## Scaling up influence and leveraging regional projects

One of CIWA's major advantages is that it is nimble and flexible in its partnerships; however, scaling up CIWA's results depends on additional IDA financing and lending. In line with change #1, CIWA is committed to ramping up results and having its investments mobilized such as through World Bank lending or other funding streams. However, until recently, the IDA has not directed much financing for regional integration to water projects. The World Bank is now funding (through national and regional integration funds) two large CIWA-influenced Multiphase Programmatic Approaches (MPAs)— the HoA Groundwater for Resilience (GW4R) and the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP). There is pipeline scaling up of regional integration financing for two more programs (the Development Resilience and Valorization of Transboundary Water for West Africa [DREVE] and Lake Victoria Basin Sanitation programs) that were heavily influenced by CIWA. CIWA 2.0 will prioritize work that can be readily scaled up through pipeline lending.

## 5

## Enhanced bottom-up approach.

CIWA will double down on its approach to subsidiarity, further expanding its work to elevate the role of communities and civil society in peace building, water management, and security and democratizing information about climate resilience and regional public goods. CIWA has an excellent track record of partner diversification and stakeholder vertical integration. CIWA has supported the NBD through both Bank-executed and recipient-executed grants for over a decade, and in 2022 began taking steps to expand the work with civil society to West and Central Africa. Recent support to the large MPAs brings activities on community engagement for groundwater management to the Horn of Africa Borderlands and to a new program in Southern Africa under the RCRP involving a regional community cooperation platform on flood preparedness.

## Regional Climate Resilient and Inclusive Development



Figure 2. CIWA Pathways to Impact

**6**

## Revised theory of change, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

As noted in the MTR, the 2017 ToC overall is still relevant and broadly effective at representing the results pathways; CIWA 2.0 includes more specific change-related pathways and outcomes, while being explicit about underlying assumptions and risks and better reflecting CIWA's focus on cross-cutting priorities.

To that end, the CIWA 2.0 ToC elevates the cross-cutting sectors as the pathways for change that deliver the regional outcomes (Figure 2). This new formulation also anticipates aligning where possible with the new World Bank Scorecard.

With the new World Bank Scorecard FY24–FY30 placing results in the development context of client countries, CIWA shifted its 2.0 ToC and RF to align with these principles. The Scorecard comprises four building blocks: vision indicators, client context indicators, World Bank results indicators, and results narratives. Vision indicators reflect the new vision of the World Bank, showing its ambition and providing high-level measures to gauge the direction and pace of progress in tackling global challenges. Client context indicators reflect the circumstances in client countries, including multidimensional aspects of poverty, and are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, quantitative World Bank results indicators alone do not present the total landscape of results. Results narratives complement the indicators by connecting results to broader World Bank-influenced outcomes and linkages to IFC and MIGA.

For CIWA, results narratives describe the many impactful operations it funds that support policy reforms, institution building, and other impacts that CIWA operations influence. CIWA's process- and output-level indicators measure results that can be directly attributed to a CIWA operation, while impact and higher-outcome indicators usually measure CIWA's *contribution* as having influenced delivery of the result.

The GESI and biodiversity framework ToCs organize results according to the three Is and whether they are a direct action or an influence of CIWA. The FCV framework and climate resilience assessment do not have specific ToCs, but the overall CIWA 2.0 ToC and RF capture relevant actions and results in those areas. Figure 3 shows CIWA's pathways to impact and a description of how results are tracked with respect to each of the three Is.

The CIWA FY24 Annual Report provides details on how CIWA's work on climate resilience, biodiversity and conservation, GESI, and support to FCV-affected regions manifest in the CIWA 2.0 ToC and RF.

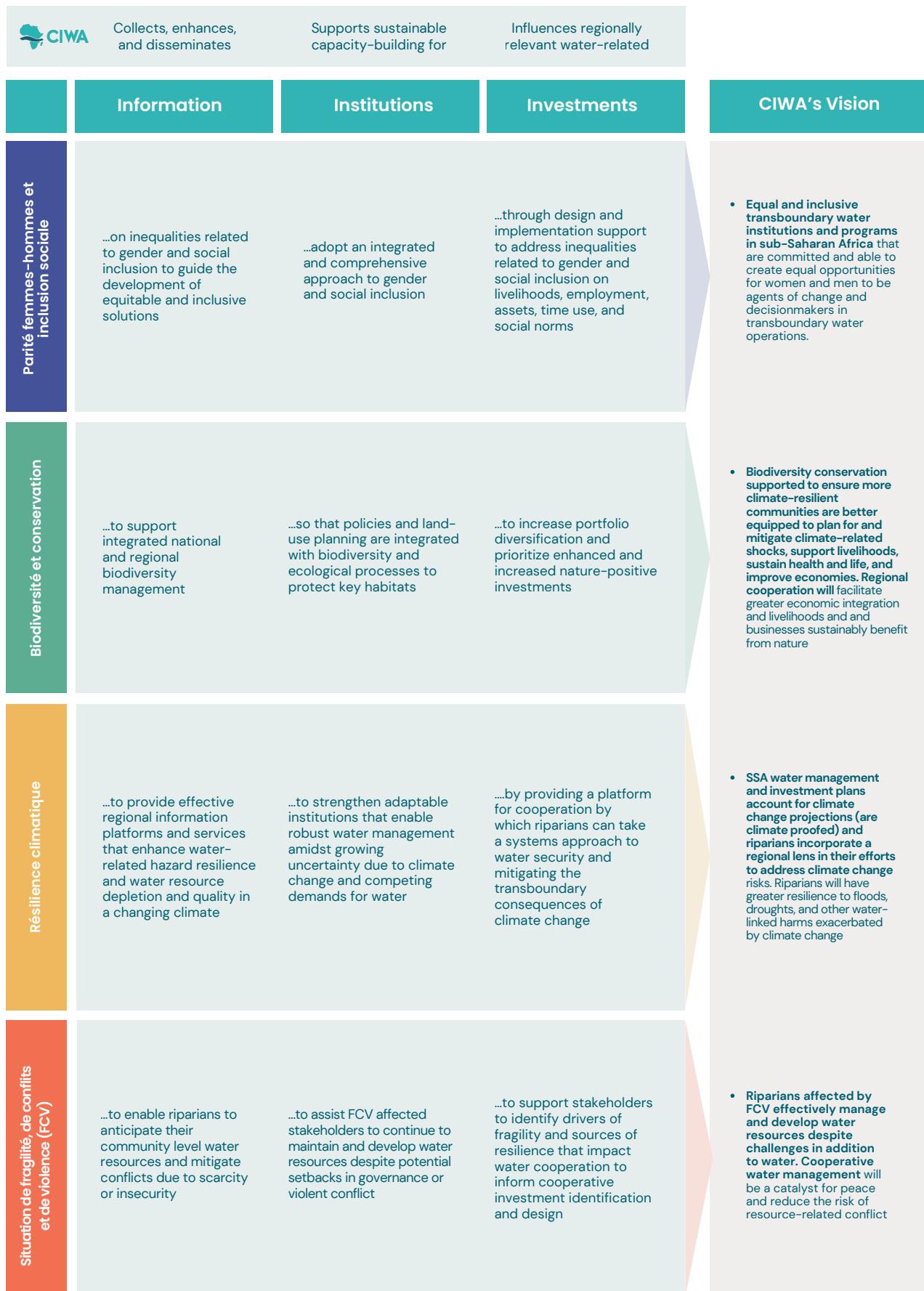


Figure 3. CIWA 2.0 Theory of Change



@CIWApogram



[www.ciwaprogram.org](http://www.ciwaprogram.org)



[linkedin.com/company/cooperation-in-international-waters-in-africa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cooperation-in-international-waters-in-africa)

Austrian  
Development  
Cooperation



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs



MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK  
Danida



Sweden  
**Sverige**



from the British people