

The Regulatory Gap in Achieving the Goals of Africa's Agenda 2063

Executive Summary

Africa's Agenda 2063 envisions a prosperous, integrated, and peaceful continent by 2063. However, achieving these goals is hindered by significant **regulatory gaps**, particularly in critical sectors such as energy, water, and food. National and local policies often lack coherence, are fragmented, and are poorly implemented, which undermines progress toward both global and continental targets. This policy brief draws on the ONEPlanET project's analysis of key regions to highlight these regulatory gaps and offers recommendations for strengthening policy coordination and improving implementation to achieve more effective outcomes.

Introduction

Adopted by the African Union (AU) in 2015, Africa's Agenda 2063 provides a comprehensive framework for the continent's socio-economic and political development. It emphasizes the importance of improving policies related to **Water-Energy-Food (WEF)** as fundamental pillars for sustainable development. Despite these ambitious goals, many African countries struggle to turn them into concrete actions due to policy and governance deficiencies, as well as a lack of coordination between national and local levels.

The ONEPlanET project analyzed the legal frameworks in three key regions—the Bani River Basin (Mali), the Songwe River Basin (Malawi-Tanzania), and the Inkomati-Usuthu Water Management Area (South Africa). This analysis identifies regulatory gaps and challenges and proposes recommendations to better align policies with the objectives of Agenda 2063.

Methodology

The analysis conducted by the ONEPlanET project used a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the WEF nexus in the three river basins. Qualitative data was collected through workshops and interviews with key stakeholders from the WEF sectors, while secondary data was gathered from policy documents at the international, regional, national, and local levels.

Approach and results

Through desk research analysis and stakeholder workshops, the study identified 125 relevant legislations, policies, strategies, and plans at a national level for the water-energy-food sector, of which **31 directly addressed the WEF nexus**.

Regional policies play a crucial role in tackling water scarcity, energy poverty, and food insecurity, and integrated approaches to managing these resources can significantly improve efficiency, resilience, and sustainability. The analysis revealed that regional policies primarily focus on food security, with energy and water infrastructure development addressed at national or basin levels.

Key findings include:

- National water policies show high alignment with key policy objectives, such as conservation, pollution control, and stakeholder participation, but exhibit low coherence with other sectors of the WEF nexus (0.2)
- Regional water policies are poorly aligned with effective policy instruments (0.4), hindering the achievement of integrated WEF goals.



- National energy policies are more aligned with WEF objectives, promoting incentives, technology, and energy access.
- Agriculture policies show inconsistent alignment, particularly in areas like climate-smart agriculture and agroecology, limiting the integration of economic pathways across regions.

The sustainable management of water, energy, and food (WEF) resources faces significant challenges due to growing populations, climate change, and limited resources. The WEF Nexus framework highlights interdependencies between these sectors, but integration is hindered by institutional silos, conflicting policy objectives, and regulatory discrepancies.

At the **national level**, challenges include unreliable data, limited technical capacity, entrenched interests, and a need for adaptable frameworks to address environmental variability.

At the **regional level**, issues like harmonizing policies across countries, particularly in transboundary water management, create complications due to differing national priorities, governance structures, and capacities. Financial constraints also hinder the implementation of integrated policies at the regional level.

Addressing these differences requires a holistic approach, focusing on improving data collection, enhancing technical capacities, engaging stakeholders, and fostering regional cooperation and investment for sustainable WEF management across Africa.

Conclusions

The analysis reveals significant gaps in integrating WEF policies, with fragmented governance and sectoral silos being key obstacles to effective management. The absence of a coordinated approach undermines efforts to address interconnected challenges like water scarcity and food insecurity. To improve governance and policy effectiveness, better alignment between national and regional policies is needed, alongside increased coherence across sectors. Overcoming institutional barriers and creating stronger

incentives for integration are essential for achieving sustainable outcomes in the WEF nexus

Recommendations

To enhance the **governance** and management of water, energy, and food resources in Africa, the following actions are recommended:

1. Strengthen Institutional Framework
 - Establish regulatory bodies to manage the WEF Nexus and enforce integrated policies.
 - Form cross-sectoral committees for coordinated action across water, energy, and food sectors.
2. Implement Integrated Planning
 - Mandate the consideration of nexus impacts in all resource-related decisions.
 - Require integration of water, energy, and food security strategies in government planning.
3. Enhance Data Collection and Sharing
 - Build comprehensive national databases for real-time WEF sector data.
 - Invest in technology partnerships for shared analytical tools.
4. Promote Stakeholder Inclusion
 - Implement public engagement processes for community input in policy formation.
 - Create platforms for dialogue among policymakers, industry leaders, and communities.
5. Adopt and Scale Innovative Technologies
 - Support research on sustainable technologies for water and energy efficiency.
 - Offer incentives for businesses and farms to adopt efficient technologies.
6. Build Resilience to Environmental Changes



- Integrate climate adaptation strategies into nexus planning.
 - Develop emergency response plans to ensure continuity during disasters.
7. Foster Regional Cooperation
- Negotiate transboundary agreements for equitable resource sharing.
 - Establish regional monitoring centers to track WEF Nexus health.
8. Increase Investment in Nexus Governance
- Create investment funds for projects enhancing WEF Nexus integration.
 - Encourage international agencies to prioritize nexus-related investments.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can move beyond policy formulation to actual, effective implementation, leading to meaningful improvements in the governance and sustainable management of water, energy, and food resources. It is crucial to align national and regional policies to avoid fragmentation and ensure that development efforts are coordinated across Africa. Achieving this coherence will tackle the interconnected challenges of the WEF Nexus, foster stronger regional cooperation, and ultimately drive progress towards a resilient and prosperous future for the continent.

