

Glossary

Abstraction: The capture, diversion, taking of water for any purpose including an environmental purpose.

Allocation: An amount of water that an entitlement holder has been granted permission to abstract within a specified time period in a manner that is in accordance with pre-specified conditions.

Allocation regime: The combination of policies, mechanisms, and governance arrangements (entitlements, licenses, permits, etc.) used to determine who is allowed to abstract water from a resource pool, how much may be taken and when, as well as how much must be returned (of what quality), and the conditions associated with the use of this water.

Consumptive use: Water abstracted from a source such as a river, lake or aquifer, which is no longer available for use because it has evaporated, transpired, been incorporated into products and crops, or consumed by man or livestock.

Environmental flows (e-flows): The quantity, quality and timing of water flows required to sustain the ecological health of a water body.

Groundwater system: A connected body of water located beneath the earth's surface in soil pore spaces and/or in the fractures of rock formations.

Non-consumptive use: Water uses that do not substantially deplete water supplies, including swimming, boating, water skiing, fishing, maintenance of stream related fish and wildlife habitat, and hydropower generation.

Over-allocated: A water body with entitlements which if fully exercised would result in a level of abstraction that is greater than that which can be sustained.

Over-used: A water body where the quantity being abstracted is greater than that which can be sustained. See water stress.

Prior appropriation: A legal doctrine where the interests of the first person in time to take a quantity of water from a water source for a beneficial (agricultural, industrial and household) use has the right to continue to use that quantity of water for the same or similar purposes. Typically, this right is transferred along with the land associated with the use of this water and/or can be sold to others able to use it for a beneficial use without change in its priority status. The next user in time obtains a similar right provided its actions do not impinge on the rights of those with a more senior right. This is also known as a seniority regime, as the interests of most senior entitlement holders are met before any water is allocated to a more junior entitlement holder.

Public trust doctrine: Is a common-law principle of property law, held by states in some countries such as the United States, which establishes public rights in navigable waters and on their shores for the benefit of the public. The government is hence required to preserve them for the public's reasonable use, mainly for food, travel and commerce.

Resource pool: A water resource that can be managed as a single entity by issuing entitlements that are similar in form. Within a pool, all allocations are defined usually in a similar manner. In some cases, the pool is described as a management zone.

Return flow: The water physically withdrawn from a system and returned back to the same or a different water body following use.

Riparian entitlements: Under the riparian principle, all landowners whose property adjoins a body of water have the right to make reasonable use of it. If there is not enough water to satisfy all users, allotments are generally fixed in proportion to frontage on the water source. These rights cannot be sold or transferred other than with the frontage and water cannot be transferred out of the watershed.

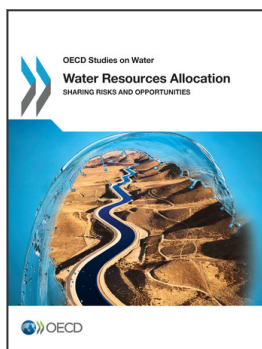
Surface water: All water naturally open to the atmosphere, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs, streams, impoundments, seas or estuaries. The term also refers to springs, wells or other collectors of water that are directly influenced by surface waters.

Water body: A collection of connected water resource pools that can be managed as a single entity.

Water entitlement: The entitlement to abstract and use water from a specified resource pool as defined in the relevant water plan. In some countries, this may be referred to as “water rights”, “water users’ rights”, “water contracts”, abstraction license or permit.

Water scarcity: An imbalance between the supply and demand of freshwater as a result of a high level of demand compared to available supply, under prevailing institutional arrangements (including price) and infrastructural conditions.

Water stress: A measure of the total, annual average water demand of a river basin (or sub-basin) compared with the annual average water available (precipitation minus evapotranspiration) in that basin. Typically, these are grouped into four categories: less than 10% = no stress; 10-20% = low stress; 20-40% = medium stress; and more than 40% = severe stress.



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