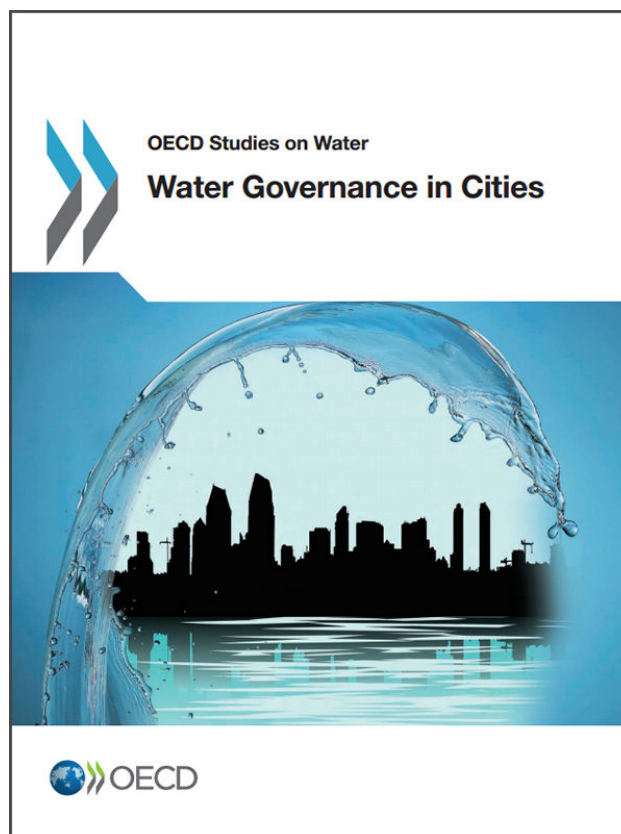


Urban water

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Too much, too little, too polluted: these are three water risks facing many urban areas. By 2050, worldwide water demand will increase by 55%. This will mean fierce competition across different water users—farmers, industries, households, etc. Whether containing flooding in Paris, drought in San Francisco or groundwater contamination in Mexico City, cities everywhere are asking how to anticipate, avoid and overcome future water crises.

Water Governance in Cities analyses the weakness of urban water governance systems. Building on a survey of 48 cities, the report finds that significant progress has been achieved over the last decade.

Among cities surveyed, the average share of wastewater treated was 90% in 2012 compared to 82% in 1990, while per capita domestic water consumption decreased by 20% between 2000 and 2012. However, social and territorial inequalities in access to water services remain high in some urban areas: the

lowest access rates to sanitation services are reported in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte–75%–and Veracruz in Mexico–79%.

Although 75% of cities identify water pollution as a challenge, more than 90% cite ageing or a lack of infrastructure and support as the main challenge. This is a capacity issue: 65% of cities surveyed decried a lack of staff and managerial competencies as a challenge.

Water Governance in Cities showcases best practices to foster good urban water governance on three fronts: policies, people and places. On the policies front, favouring inter-sectorial action is the key to efficient response to water crises. The German city of Cologne, for instance, co-ordinates water and spatial planning for new building areas to prevent flood damages due to heavy rainfalls. Technology also helps, and the report describes how it is used to display water quality and quantity data in Marseille, which citizens can consult. Communication campaigns such as “Max 100” in Copenhagen also raise public awareness and helped generate water savings as well.

References

Water Governance in Cities <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251090-en>