

The Founding Principles of the Blue Book

Independence: The Blue Book does not present the exclusive point of view of any one stakeholder, group or lobby. The way it is drafted, validated and funded ensures it provides an independent overview, both in terms of its form and its content.

Objectivity: The Blue Book is written as objectively as possible, using publicly available information or one that has been carefully validated. It also draws on rigorously conducted surveys of water users, to ensure their voices and opinions are heard.

Participation: The Blue Book is developed in a participative and collective manner. Its preparation is supervised by the “National Blue Book Committee” made up of people renowned for both their competence and their independence of thought.

Representation: The Blue Book is not reserved for a group of self-proclaimed specialists working in a vacuum. Each Blue Book Committee is open to all opinions and seeks to represent all stakeholders within the community.

The Blue Book aims at identifying the main driving forces within the society that is seeking to improve access to water and sanitation, as well as the forces of inertia or restrictions that must be managed or overcome. This socio-political knowledge helps in identifying opportunities for change and, in particular, the

organizational and partnership models that users may employ to ensure the sustainable use of their infrastructure.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Blue Book participates in the monitoring and evaluation of the sector by regularly analysing progress in a certain number of key areas. Ideally, the Blue Book should be updated every three to four years.

Long-term vision: The Blue Book aspires to cast a fresh eye over the sector, free of all ideological considerations. It proposes a vision for the future, highlighting the tasks deemed to be most important, not only to reach the MDGs, but particularly to ensure that access to water and sanitation be equitable and sustainable for all.

Added Value: The Blue Book is an additional tool to help in proposing actions, making decisions and monitoring. It is not intended to replace initiatives launched by other partners in the sector and focuses on aspects that are sometimes overlooked, such as the right to water, decentralisation, inequality of access and financing mechanisms.

It is the “spokesperson” of the vision and position of users and stakeholders in the sector. It offers, an opportunity for sector stakeholders to build up a project portfolio in order to create a critical mass that responds to the most urgent needs and the requirements of external partners.

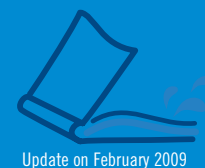


History of the Blue Book

The history of the Blue Book started officially in March 2003, at a meeting of the World Water Wisdom Forum organized by the Citizens Water House during the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto. Since then the initiative has grown, thanks to the facilitating role played by the ISW, and the Blue Book has been largely accepted by the general public.

The Blue Book, an evolving concept

Since the Blue Books of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, his concept has advanced. It integrates access to water and sanitation issues and takes into account the existing level of governance. The economic reality and the available funds are also considered. The Blue Book allows to local collectivities to get into the action like in Niger. The Blue Book's production is in course, in Benin, Senegal, Peru and Moldavia.



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blue book

water, life
and human
development



The Blue Book has been developed by and for all partners in the water and sanitation sector within a region or a country. It provides an independent assessment of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals regarding water and sanitation and casts a critical eye on sectorial policies and strategies. The Blue Book contains proposals and provides a platform for action, in order to ensure that all citizens have equitable and sustainable access to water supply and sanitation.

the blue book

The Blue Book, another Vision of the Millenium Development Goals



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are an important marker in the awareness and commitment of the international community regarding water supply and sanitation, a sector in which speeches and incantations had the unfortunate tendency to replace action and to silence the users' voices.

Increasing the current insufficient level of funding and building new infrastructures are undisputable priorities, but they will remain insufficient for the achievement of the MDGs. It is also important to improve the effectiveness of existing funding mechanisms, and above all, to ensure that the infrastructures built between now and 2015 will contribute to equitable and sustainable access to water and sanitation.

On the basis of those observations, a number of ISW partners in the North and South have considered it interesting to create a new, independent, assessment tool, which would be anchored at local level. Such tool would make it possible to assess to what extent the improvements in access to water and sanitation actually benefit all users.



Numerous initiatives to promote access to water and sanitation and to measure the effectiveness of this access already exist at national and global levels. The Blue Book does not seek to replace these initiatives. On the contrary, it builds on this effort and complements it by using an approach that is far more qualitative than quantitative.

Added Value of the Blue Book



Compared to national policies, the Blue Book is a citizen initiative, which measures the progress of these policies in an independent manner and which aims at ensuring that all users have access to services of water and sanitation, regardless of their standards of living, their capacity to pay for the services, their political weight and their distance from the country's decision making centers.

To measure the degree of equity in the access to water and sanitation, the Blue Book bases itself on a critical analysis, which is undertaken by an independent group of individuals. Whenever deemed necessary, the Blue Book develops its own assessment capacity, for example by conducting surveys among users.

The Blue Book lobbies strongly to increase the quantity and, above all, the quality of the funding tools and to ensure that the resources are available at local level. It also claims an intervention right in order to ensure that good intentions expressed by political decision makers and donors are put into practice.



How is the Blue Book developed?

Each Blue Book is drafted under the supervision of a National Blue Book Committee (NBBC), which brings together individuals known for their independence and their competencies and who do not represent any particular institution. The NBBC is responsible for promoting the Blue Book process in each country.

The Blue Book's interest is to associate the local partners to water management as well as the users. The whole process can only be credible if the National Steering Committee members of the Blue Book are experienced persons and if the national counselor is the main workforce.



The Blue Book's "label" (vision, principles, conceptual frame, etc.) is guaranteed by an **International Steering Committee (ISC)**. The ISC has a methodology support function, of information and diffusion on the international scene and of fundraising research.

