

C4W: Collective Action for a Water-Secure World

The water security crisis

Water security is the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems, and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments, and economies. ([Grey and Sadoff, 2007](#))

It is essential to understand the meaning of water security because **water insecurity impacts all aspects of development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**. Investing in water security creates benefits across the Sustainable Development Goals, including community health and resilience; food and nutrition security; access to energy; education; gender equality and youth inclusion; creating and sustaining employment; reducing conflict over resources; stemming migration; and improving biodiversity and ecosystems.

Many parts of the world are deeply water insecure. The climate crisis is exacerbating water risks, whether through droughts, floods, extreme and more variable rainfall, melting glaciers or rising sea levels. At the same time, demand for water – for food, energy, livelihoods and biodiversity – is increasing rapidly in both rural and urban areas. Despite this, **efforts to address these intersecting challenges are split across sectors**, with different organizations focused on pieces of the puzzle rather than the bigger picture. Fragmented and isolated interventions continue to be the norm.

C4W's ambition

Collective Action for a Water-Secure World (C4W) is devoted to driving urgently needed collaboration and coordination. We will demonstrate that enhanced collective action, supporting locally led development, can greatly improve water security for all. Transformative change is only possible through collective action built on the knowledge of key regional, national and international actors.

To accomplish this, **C4W will fund scalable, science-based solutions implemented through collective action** – both within and across development sectors and with diverse stakeholders – to create a more water-secure world. C4W will partner with other organizations also working through collective action. As a **US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**, C4W will convene complementary and aligned organizations to harness their combined expertise and capacity to implement large-scale water security interventions.

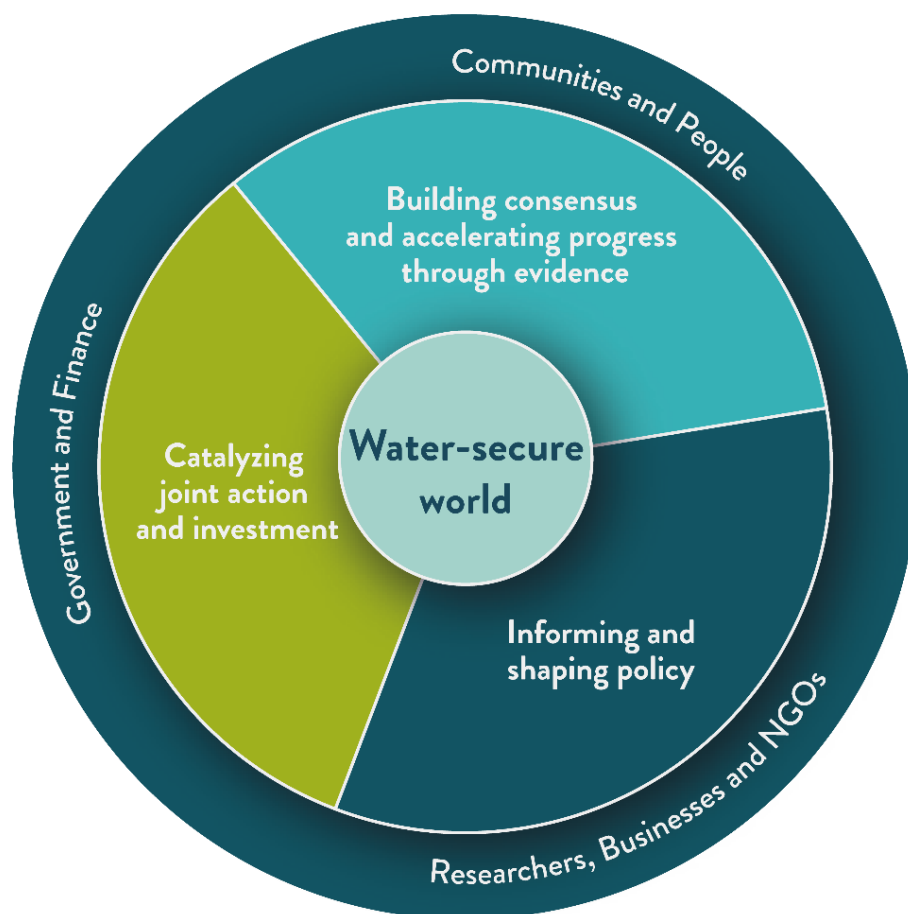
C4W's leadership and governance

C4W was founded with the support of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a research-for-development organization that solves a broad range of water problems. IWMI is a member of CGIAR, an international research network addressing the transformation of food, land and water systems. IWMI has a proven track record of working with governments, farmers, water managers, development partners and businesses to create scalable solutions to the

world's water challenges. As a founding partner of C4W, **IWMI will provide initial financial, strategic and implementation support** as well as technical excellence and insights from 40 years of cutting-edge research, innovation and learning. C4W will benefit from IWMI's presence, partner networks and portfolio of interventions across Africa and Asia.

C4W is governed by a **three-person founding Board of Directors**. The Board has decades of experience leading collective action as well as technical expertise across the WASH, public health, and water resource management sectors. As C4W grows, the Board will expand and further develop C4W's governance structures and operational mechanisms. An Executive Director will be appointed in 2024.

C4W's strategic priorities



Catalyzing joint action and investment

We will support governments, researchers, implementers, beneficiaries and diverse partners to jointly assess water risks and vulnerabilities. We will combine their expertise through collective action to fund large-scale, high-quality interventions at the national and local levels to address these risks and vulnerabilities.

Building consensus and accelerating progress through evidence

We will promote cooperation among policy, business, development, science, finance and participating user communities to promote far-reaching investment and implementation. Capitalizing initially on IWMI's and other partners' evidence, expertise, knowledge and networks, we will support the development and implementation of solutions to water insecurity. C4W values diverse knowledge, skills and capacities, recognizing that multiple sectors and stakeholders are needed to address the complexity of water security.

Informing and shaping policy

We will welcome and value the use of evidence-based, effective and inclusive solutions to improve national water security policy and governance. C4W recognizes the interconnected needs of water security policy and the importance of influencing change through multiple channels while working collectively.

C4W's collective action approach

C4W was established to create stronger, more strategic and more investible collective action on water security. **It will not implement projects directly. Rather, we will fund collective action partnerships to implement large-scale interventions.** To achieve this, C4W will catalyze development actors to collaborate on policy, program development and funding to support governments and communities with a focus on scaling evidence-based and investment-ready interventions. An advisory panel will support robust program and project selections to develop an initial portfolio of investments and partnerships.

Global South-led program approach

C4W's initial programs will be informed by IWMI's Transformative Futures for Water Security Initiative. This year-long South-South dialogue engaged over 1,000 stakeholders from 400 organizations in and beyond the water sector – including hundreds of youth representatives – in 2022. The initiative ultimately identified eight missions for water security. C4W will focus initially on the first of these eight missions: **building farmers' resilience to climate change and water risks by scaling climate-smart interventions to raise water productivity in East Africa.**

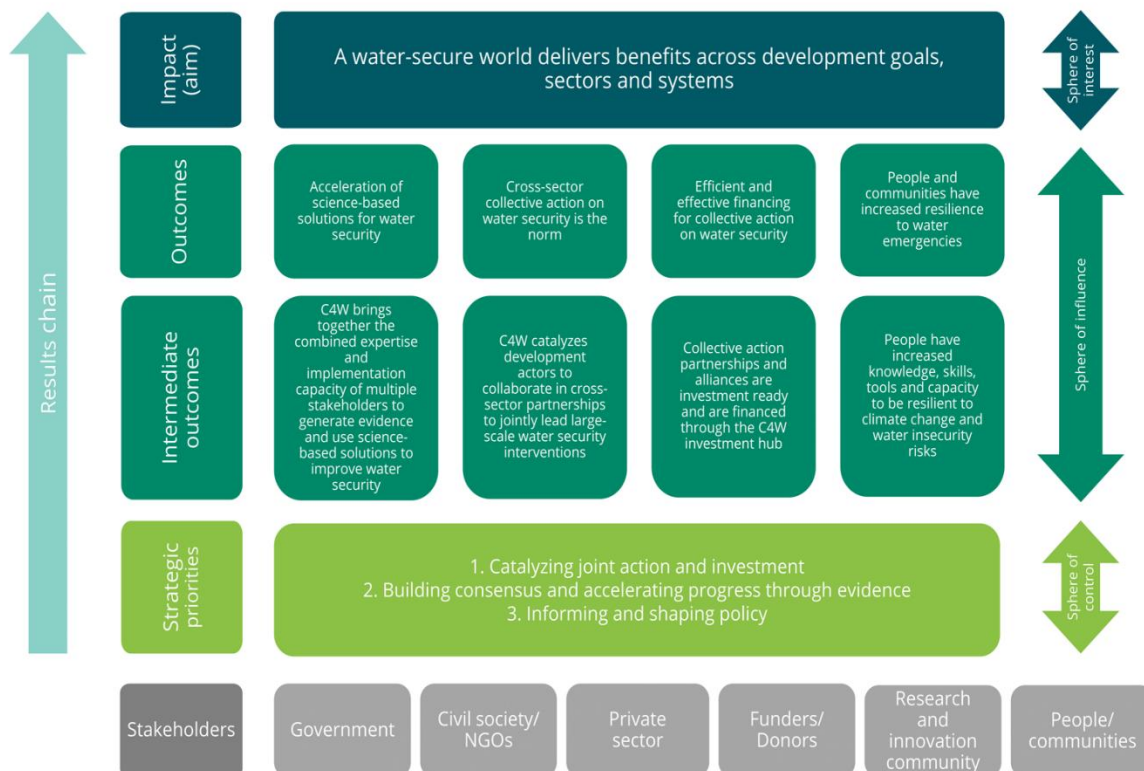
This mission has informed C4W's first program, Changing Lives in East Africa (CLEA), which will scale innovations to build farmers' resilience. The program will be implemented between 2024 and 2028. **CLEA will improve water security for 500,000 vulnerable small-scale farmers on the front lines of the climate crisis in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.** Through multi-stakeholder partnerships, CLEA will build on and influence sound national policy in each country, drawing in implementation partners to engage with governments and communities. The program will leverage existing innovations and catalyze new ones to unleash the full potential of farmer-led irrigation, a promising tool for **making farmers, their families and communities more water secure**, but which is currently held back by fragmented policy design and project implementation.

C4W growth and strategy plan

From 2024 to 2028, C4W will solidify its fundraising and program selection operations, expand to other regions including West Africa and South Asia, actively engage with the health and education sectors, and become financially self-sufficient. **By 2029, C4W expects to be a fully established organization** enhancing the resilience and water-security of communities. With the financial support of its funders and implementation partners, the expertise of relevant stakeholders, C4W will transform lives by helping to make people more water secure.

	2024 Laying the groundwork Co-design phase	2025–2028 Scaling up phase	2029– Full-scale operations
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlist the support of 3+ founding donors for initial East Africa program (2024–2029) \$600,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official launch Expanding C4W's circle of philanthropies Additional funding: \$20 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-scale and fully staffed operation Additional funding: \$50 million+
Collaboration with philanthropies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and co-design of the C4W approach together with philanthropies Advocacy and learning webinar series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be defined in the co-design phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be defined in the co-design phase
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IWMI Exploring strategic partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IWMI Bringing partners on board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the number of coalition partners
Program development/grant-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joined program development (IWMI and C4W) 1–2 additional implementing partner(s) Development of operational systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for IWMI and other implementors (50/50) Grant-making advisory board in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for any C4W implementer and partner Leveraging \$500 million in private sector co-finance
Geographic focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Africa, East Africa and South Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Africa, East Africa and South Asia

Theory of change



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