

# Identifying the top 100 global water management questions for the coming decade

May 26 2022

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Recent intense heatwaves in India and widespread US droughts have highlighted the need for a global approach to tackling chronic water shortages.

Now, new research has drawn together expert voices from across the globe to help address current and future water challenges.

Key areas identified include [water scarcity](#), sanitation and climate dynamics. But the main concern is the way governments are equipped to deal with these challenges.

"One of the key issues raised was governance," said report co-author Dr. Alesia Ofori, a Research Fellow in Water and Sanitation Governance at the University of Leeds' School of Politics and International Studies.

"In the Global South, respondents are asking why they have to listen to the Global North. Those in the Global South know what the issues are, and they are calling for big changes in access to data so they can better prepare for extreme weather."

More than 400 respondents took part in the study, in which questions about global water challenges were submitted from countries across the globe including the UK, India, Spain, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, South Africa and Tanzania.

"A recurring theme was the call for water justice," said Dr. Ofori. "They want justice for the marginalized populations who suffer from the excess consumption and pollution of the rich."

"There is also a call for justice for the local and planetary ecosystems that have been despoiled through a failure of governance on a global level."

The study, "The top 100 global water questions: results of a scoping exercise," has just been published in *One Earth* and includes co-authors from the University of York, University of Bradford and Global Water Partnership-Tanzania.

The research team collected more than 4,000 responses from the 400 respondents, which were then narrowed down to 100 crucial water questions facing the planet today.

The 100 questions were grouped under the themes of water and sanitation for [human settlements](#); water and sanitation safety risk management; water security and scarcity; hydroclimate-ecosystem-Anthropocene dynamics; multi-level governance; and knowledge production.

According to the research team, water sector partnerships are needed on a global scale to inform government decision-making on water issues that range from household to planetary levels.

Co-author Professor Anna Mdee, also at Leeds' School of Politics and International Studies, says that "the 100 top global water questions demonstrate a demand from the global water sector to address the consequences of human governance failure of water resources."

"These failures are evident on a daily basis across the planet—from ongoing droughts in the US to the catastrophic effects of heatwaves in India—and highlight the need for concerted efforts in [interdisciplinary research](#) and action."

"These 100 questions also highlight the importance of justice for marginalized human populations and the need for cooperation to ensure water and sanitation policies align with the current needs of individuals, populations at different scales."

Co-author Dr. Victor Kongo, from the Global Water Partnership Tanzania, says that "this study provides a good platform for reflecting and internalizing our research trajectory—what we know, what we don't know and what we urgently need to know."

**More information:** Anna Mdee et al, The top 100 global water questions: Results of a scoping exercise, *One Earth* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.oneear.2022.04.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2022.04.009)

Provided by University of Leeds

Citation: Identifying the top 100 global water management questions for the coming decade (2022, May 26) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-global-decade.html>

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