

LINKING WATER GOVERNANCE IN CANADA TO
GLOBAL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DRIVERS

MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS ON WATER

While regional and global forces in the political and socioeconomic domain have significant implications for water governance in Canada, these factors are often beyond the purview of water managers and decision-makers. This makes it challenging to achieve long-term water sustainability goals and to adapt effectively to, and manage, water-related risks.

This project rethinks the way we govern freshwater so that we can mitigate negative impacts of social, economic and political forces that drive decisions affecting water resources, and take advantage of opportunities.

Create a framework for anticipating impacts originating outside the jurisdiction of water managers

The application of an impacts framework can assist water managers in their response to water risk.

Examples of outcomes:

- › Enable anticipation (and avoidance) of health risks in drinking water systems caused by poor land use planning
- › Reduce legal risks to water allocation systems due to court challenges from other sectors
- › Articulate the implications of large quantities of water resources being captured by powerful interest groups to ensure full information prior to decision-making



Develop approaches to incorporate external factors into decision making about water

Enhance provincial and federal policy approaches to improve the health of Canada's water resources.

With the first phase of the project focusing on Lake Erie, outcomes will include tools to help practitioners explicitly and clearly account for external drivers that influence water quality, including:

- › agricultural exports
- › renewable energy mandates
- › ethanol policies

The second phase of the project (should funding be renewed) will include case studies from across Canada.

Provide innovative and adaptive governance strategies to alleviate impacts

New tools will help public and private stakeholders successfully adapt to impacts of climate change and other socio-economic drivers.

New tools could include structures (e.g., policy tools, instruments, guidelines, contingency plans) or processes (e.g. adaptive management).

Examples of outcomes:

- › Improvements to the way monitoring and other data are collected and how information is generated
- › Experimenting with new policy tools
- › Identifying opportunities for enhancing policy coherence across sectors



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



**CANADA
FIRST**
RESEARCH
EXCELLENCE
FUND