# P227 / Waters under climate pressure: policy innovation and cross-level coordination

**Topic :** Governance, Policy Networks and Coalition

**Chair :** Manuel Fischer (Eawag)

**Second Chair :** Nicolas Jager (Technische Universität Berlin)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Water is essential to life on our planet and the functioning of our societies and nature in many ways (water for irrigation, cooling, drinking, support for biodiversity, hydropower, etc.). These different functions are politically dealt with in different policy sectors (e.g. environment, health, energy, or agriculture) that are structurally separated or even in conflict with each other. With increasing pressures on water resources through e.g., climate change, coordination and problem-solving across sectoral demands for water is becoming increasingly important affecting a wide diversity of interests and stakeholders. For instance, demands for the protection of water resources compete with flood protection measures, while in turn having consequences for drinking water provision, agricultural land use, or the state of ecosystems.

But these demands and concerned interests and stakeholders are not only spread across diverse policy sectors, but often need to be coordinated across administrative and political boundaries between countries or sub-states. Thus, spanning multiple sectorial, territorial, social and political boundaries, water governance provides a key challenge to the functioning of political coordination and problem-solving.

Water has traditionally been a key policy sector for studies of the policy process, public administration, and environmental governance. Research on the governance and management of water resources has thus traditionally contributed to new developments in these broader fields. Examples for this emblematic potential of water policy and governance include several landmark studies in policy theories such as the Advocacy Coalitions Framework or the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework. More recently, for example, network approaches have been advanced in this field providing new insights in the governance of complex systems beyond the water realm. The objective of this panel is to continue this tradition and to discuss the current complexity of water governance. The panel will provide new ways of analyzing this complexity, linking these up with broader theories, approaches and methods of governance and the policy process.

More specifically, this panel deals with the general question of how water governance, and governance of complex issues more generally, can find new ways to much needed policy innovation and cross-sectoral coordination. Our focus includes both, structural aspects of the design, adaptation and innovation of institutions, policies and governance structures, as well as procedural aspects of how actor interactions unfold and play out in dealing with these multi-faceted complexities and the production of innovative policies. Potential aspects to be explored include:

i) the exploration and analysis of important trade-offs between different sources of complexity and their consequences for governance systems;

ii) the capacity for policy innovation (or the absence thereof) in the face of increasing problem pressure and complexity;

iii) the establishment of nascent, boundary-spanning policy problems and the responses of actors and policy systems;

iv) the multi-scalar challenges of water spanning multiple environmental and political boundaries;

v) water as a key policy sectors connecting other sectors, demanding new coalitions and new forms of collective action.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Spanning multiple sectorial, territorial, social and political boundaries, water governance provides a key challenge to the functioning of political coordination and problem-solving. Policy innovation and cross-sectoral coordination are needed to address increasing pressure on waters from climate change.

Papers submitted to this panel should deal with complex interactions among the different levels of

governance (from the international to the local), different stakeholders (from public administrations to research to private industry), or different sectors (from agriculture and land use to biodiversity and energy, and so forth), and should aim at describing and understanding the interactions among (some of) these different dimensions. Papers should combine these elements with, or put a focus on, the design, adaptation and innovation of institutions and policies capable of dealing with this multi-scalar complexity, in a situation of increasing problem pressure.

In terms of substantive issues, relevant papers could deal, among many others, i) reforms in urban water infrastructure, related trends of digitalization an AI, and needs for information sharing among levels and actors, or decentralization of infrastructure and services, and interactions with other services such as energy, communication, etc.; ii) emerging issues in water quality protection, micro-pollutants, pesticides and drinking water issues across borders and sectors, and related policies and policy mixes; iii) reform and implementation of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) as an (evolving) institution dealing with holistic water management and governance, related challenges of harmonization and local specification of WFD policies, institutional adaptations and cross-border governance issues; iv) challenges related to climate change, flooding, biodiversity loss, urbanization, and related mitigation and adaptation policies and institutional innovations.

The panel aims to provide a platform to discuss new and innovative conceptual approaches and methods to understand the design and implementation of integrated modes of water governance. We thus specifically invite contributions relying on interdisciplinary approaches, new and innovative concepts, methods and empirical research, and contributions opening up the research agenda for the future.