

## **WATER AND ECOLOGY**

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Water is essential to all life. Humans use water directly for domestic needs, growing food, generating power and for industrial processes. Ensuring sufficient water for people is an important ethical question. People also use water indirectly by benefiting from valuable products (e.g. fish), and services (e.g. water regulation) provided by aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, it satisfies the growing belief amongst many people that humans have a moral duty to protect wildlife, through providing sufficient water to maintain flora and fauna. Many decisions on water allocation are made on economic grounds. However, traditional cost-benefit analysis does not consider other ethical, political, social, historical or ecological issues, which cannot be given a monetary value. Wider decision-making frameworks, such as multi-criteria analysis are thus required that incorporate other factors, such as ecological support systems that keep the planet fit for life.