

AITHER QUARTERLY LETTER | Q3 FY2021-22

On World Water Day this year, Aither team members from the United Kingdom, France and Australia met in Dubai to discuss [the future of water in arid regions](#).

Twelve of the 17 most water stressed countries in the world are in the Middle East and North Africa. Most of these countries rely on major water infrastructure investment to ensure water security. The ground breaking NEOM project, which Aither continues to advise on, is a prominent example.



World Water Day 2022 - Talking water scarcity in the Middle East

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Australia also relies on infrastructure to provide a high level of water security. This approach has increased the climate resilience of our water supplies, facilitated urban growth, supported agriculture, and enabled some environmental protection and improvement. It has helped recast water as a driver of economic, social and environmental success – presenting water security as an opportunity, not a threat.

But physical infrastructure is only part of the reason for this success. Effective water governance has also played a significant role.

This governance includes the laws, regulations, policies, institutions and processes that support better decision making around investment and use.

As presented in our [latest insight](#), instead of viewing governance as separate to physical infrastructure, Aither sees governance as an essential part of the overall infrastructure needed to achieve water security.



Governance as infrastructure for water security

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Good governance creates a cycle of better decisions and better outcomes from water infrastructure.

It can help:

- shape a decision to build physical infrastructure
- guide the nature and timing of any development
- strengthen investor confidence and the financial sustainability of the asset
- increase the effectiveness and lifespan of the asset.

Global water sector leaders have stated that poor governance is the primary reason they find tackling water insecurity **challenging – or even impossible**. At best, poor water infrastructure investments leads to inefficient and expensive decisions. At worst, it leads to a complete failure to supply safe, secure and affordable water services.

Over the last 10 years, Aither has advised clients on what good water governance looks like and how they can achieve it in practice.

Just like built infrastructure, governance requires planning, design, integration across disciplines, effective operation and maintenance, and investment in capability to deliver.

Our water challenges are going to get harder. Climate adaptation, population and economic growth are sharpening the focus on meeting demand with secure and sustainable water supply, and the scrutiny on how we steward our precious water resources.

As is the case in the Middle East, Australia will continue to need to invest. We need water infrastructure, but genuine water security won't be achieved without good governance.

Ten years on from our formation, with staff and work increasingly spanning the globe, Aither remains driven by meeting the growing demand for advice on improved water governance and decision-making.

We welcome the chance to talk with you further and to work with you on achieving better solutions for water security.

Yours sincerely

Will Fargher and Chris Olszak

Co-Founders and Directors, Aither

Dubai One interview with Will Fargher



Photo gallery from recent Middle East discussions

