



Legal Country Mapping

For the Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation and
the link with the Right to a Healthy Environment

Singapore

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Prepared by Beatrice Ho, Crystal Nguyen, Katerina Psathas, Dr. Matthew Secomb, and Tzi Yang Seow
based on methodology from Human Right 2 Water

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INTRODUCTION

This analysis follows the mapping methodology used by Human Right 2 Water to assess the integration of the human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS) into law and policy at national level. It has been adapted and extended to give voice to the human right to a clean, safe¹, healthy and sustainable environment (HRHE), with the aim of assessing the combined advantages of recognising both these sets of human rights.

It draws upon the criteria and principles that were originally laid out in General Comment No.15² for the human right to water and sanitation, with further elaboration of the right to sanitation after it was recognised as a separate human right in 2015. Alongside this and noting that the HRHE was also recognised as a human right by the General Assembly in July 2022³, we have compared the main principles of the HRHE as related to water. For this analysis, we draw upon the Framework Principles from the paper published by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment from 2018⁴, Good Practices on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment⁵, and the paper titled ‘Human Rights Depend on Safe and Sufficient Water’, 2021⁶.

In addition to the principles of a human rights-based approach⁷, there are the normative criteria of the human rights to water and sanitation which are specific to the realisation of these rights. The substantive elements of the HRHE, as referenced in the Good Practices⁸ paper mentioned above, are also considered here, where they are linked to water, specifically element 4 on the access to safe water and adequate sanitation. Given the significant advances in the design and measurement of national indicators for the supply of clean and safe drinking water and sanitation through the Joint Monitoring Programme⁹, General Comment No.15 has been augmented, especially on the topic of sanitation, which was recognised as a separate right in 2015. For the purposes of this analysis, the criteria have been maintained as the five elements of the human rights to water and sanitation, and there are additional questions relating to specific environmental aspects that support these rights.

For reference, Annex 2 collates the two sets of human rights principles, looking at how they relate under each category.

¹ Note that the word ‘safe’ has been included in several places, including the title of the Special Rapporteur, and the framework principles, but not in the latest UNGA resolution.

² General Comment No. 15 on the Right to Water, was adopted in November 2002, by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and then explicitly recognized on 28 July 2010, through [Resolution 64/292](#), the United Nations General Assembly

³ The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, July 2022 (A/76/L.75)

⁴ Framework Principles from the paper published by the Special Rapporteur to the Healthy Environment from 2018, ARC/37/59

⁵ Good Practices on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, March 2020, A/HRC/43/53

⁶ ‘Human Rights Depend on Safe and Sufficient Water’, 2021, HRC/26/48

⁷ The elements of the HRBA are Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality.

⁸ Good Practices on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, March 2020, A/HRC/43/53

⁹ JMP, WHO and UNICEF data found at www.washtdata.org

Overview of national water governance for Singapore

General Legislation

	Supreme Law	Constitution
1.A.1	State Organization	Unitary
1.A.2	Relationship between International and National Law	Dualist
1.A.3	Name of Institution possessing regulation-making authority	Parliament
1.A.5	Popular consultation as part of governing/legislative process	No
1.A.8	Member of a regional integration organization	Yes
5.C.1	Independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)	No

Water Governance

3.A.1	Right to Water mentioned in Constitution	No
3.A.2	Right to Sanitation mentioned in Constitution	No
3.A.3	Right to a clean and healthy Environment in Constitution	No
3.A.4	A water code or a law specific to water resources	Yes
3.A.5	National Strategy, Policy, Action Plan etc. on Water and Sanitation	Yes
1.A.8	International institution for Transboundary Water Resources	NA
3.C.7	Priorities in the allocation of water for different uses?	No

Benchmark Scores¹⁰

Section	Elements included in law	Score
4.A	Availability and Accessibility	Partially included
4.B	Quality and Safety	Mostly included
4.C	Water Pollution Control	More than half
4.D	Affordability	Partially included
4.E	Acceptability	Partially included
4.F	Non-Discrimination, Equality, Universal Access	Partially included
4.G	Right to Information, transparency	Partially included
4.H	Public Participation	Partially included
4.I	Accountability, remedies and complaints procedures	More than half
4.J	Sustainability	Partially included
	TOTAL	Partially included

KEY

Mostly included
More than half
Partially included
Few references

¹⁰ Score up to 10 allowed for each element, with a score of 10 suggesting that all relevant laws are fully included, zero suggests there are no laws to fit this criterion, and scores on a scale of 1-10 represent the degree of inclusion of pertinent laws (double click to activate excel sheet for calculation).

CHAPTER 1. WATER GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

A. Preliminary questions:

1. **What type of State is the country? (e.g. Federal, Unitary, etc)**

[Unitary]

2. **Is there any division of government powers? If yes, please elaborate on their functions.**

[The Government in Singapore is modelled after the Westminster system, with three separate branches: the Legislature (which comprises the President and Parliament), Part VI article 38 of the Constitution, the Executive (which comprises Cabinet Ministers and office-holders, and is led by the Prime Minister), Part V Chapter 2 of the Constitution, and the Judiciary, Part VIII. The Legislature makes the laws of the land. The Executive administers the law. The Judiciary interprets the law through the Courts.

The Prime Minister is the Head of Government, Part V Chapter 2 article 24 of the Constitution, and the President is the Head of State, Part V Chapter 1 article 17 of the Constitution.¹¹]

3. **Which institutions and levels of government have legislative powers?**

[Parliament has the power to make laws, Part VI article 58 of the Constitution.¹²]

4. **Who has the power to ratify treaties?**

[The Executive branch can enter into treaties. Parliament must incorporate the treaties into Singapore domestic law through legislation.¹³ Part III Article 7 of the Constitution.]

Is there popular consultation as part of governing/legislative process?

[Yes. PART II article 3 of the Constitution: Singapore shall be a sovereign republic to be known as the Republic of Singapore.

PART VI article 38 of the Constitution: The legislative power of Singapore shall be vested in the Legislature which shall consist of the

President and Parliament. Article 39. — (1) Parliament shall consist of — (a) such number of elected Members as is required to be returned at a general election by the constituencies prescribed by or under any law made by the Legislature.

PART V article 17 of the Constitution: — (2) The President shall be elected by the citizens of Singapore in accordance with any law made by the Legislature.]

There is also the possibility of a referendum: President may withhold assent to certain constitutional amendments *5A (4) “the Prime Minister may at any time direct that the Bill be submitted to the electors for a national referendum”

5. **Has the country established one or several basin management agencies? Is it autonomous?**

[No]

6. **Does the country have transboundary water resources?**

[Yes. Under the 1962 Water Agreement with the State of Johor, Singapore is entitled to draw up to 250 million gallons of water per day from the Johor River.]

7. **Where transboundary water resources exist, is there an established international institution for basin management? Does it have any responsibility in relation to drinking water?**

[N/A]

B. The country is member of a regional integration organisation?

1. **Which countries form part of this organisation?**

[Singapore was one of the founding members of ASEAN when it was formed on 8 August 1967, along with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.]

¹¹ www.parliament.gov.sg

¹² www.parliament.gov.sg

¹³ www.parliament.gov.sg

2. Are the decisions of the organisation legally binding for the members?

[The ASEAN Charter is a legally binding international (intra-ASEAN) agreement, article 5 of the Charter. It imposes obligations on member States, including, for example, the principle of fair and equitable treatment Chapter 1 article 1 point 11, the principle of non-discrimination, Chapter 1 article 2 point 2 (m) of the Charter, compensation in the event of expropriation, free transfer of funds, and provisions setting out mechanisms for the settlement of investor-state disputes.]

3. What is the mandate of the organisation?

[The aims and purposes of ASEAN are:

- accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations, preamble of the Charter.
- promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter; article 28 of the Charter
- promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields; Chapter 1 article 1 point 6 of the Charter
- provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres; Chapter 1 article 1 point 10 of the Charter.
- collaborate more effectively to encourage further growth in the agriculture and industry, and trade sectors. This includes improving transportation and communications facilities and conducting studies on international commodity trade with the

overarching goal of raising the living standards of ASEAN peoples;

- promote Southeast Asian studies; Chapter 4 article 15 and
- maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves. Chapter 5 article 16 and Chapter 12 article 41]

4. Does the regional organisation have the authority to regulate or make decisions which affect water, sanitation and a healthy environment? Are there any mechanisms for enforcement?

[No]

C. Water governance and administration:

1. What is the structure of the government water administration (provide relevant organizational charts whenever available) and what power, role and responsibilities does the Government have at each level?

- a. At national/federal level? [National]
- b. At the intermediate level (state, river basin, other) [N/A]
- c. At the local level? [N/A]

2. Which government ministries/agencies are directly or indirectly involved in governance of water and sanitation and a healthy environment?

[The Ministry of Sustainability Environment (MSE), the Public Utilities Board (PUB) and the National Environmental Agency (NEA)]

3. Which national government agency is responsible for the environment? What are its responsibilities with respect to water?

[Refer to answer C2 and C4. One of MSE's¹⁴ purposes is to ensure safe and secure supply of critical resources, i.e. water and food, and to overcome global resource constraints by maximising resource efficiency & closing our resource loops. The NEA¹⁵ is also responsible for controlling water pollution.]

4. Which national government agency is responsible for drinking water? What are its responsibilities?

¹⁴ <https://www.mse.gov.sg/policies/water>

¹⁵ <https://www.nea.gov.sg/>

[The Public Utilities Board¹⁶ (PUB) is the statutory board under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, responsible for ensuring a sustainable and efficient water supply. The PUB regulates and oversees the country's entire water supply system, which comprises the water catchment systems, drainage systems, water

works, water reclamation plants and sewage systems.¹⁷]

5. **Which national government agency is responsible for sanitation? What are its responsibilities?**

[Refer to answer C4.]

¹⁶ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/AboutUs>

¹⁷ <http://www.pub.gov.sg>

CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TREATIES

1. **What international or regional treaties has the country ratified? Please insert the date of the signature/ratification/accession.**
2. **What declaration or reservation has the country entered to these instruments?**

A. Regional Multilateral/Bilateral Treaties

Table 1. Regional multilateral and bilateral treaties (Note these are limited to treaties in force as at October 2022)

Instruments	Participating States	Entry into force
Netherlands - Singapore BIT (1972)	Netherlands; Singapore;	07/09/1973
Singapore - United Kingdom BIT (1975)	Singapore; United Kingdom;	22/07/1975
Germany - Singapore BIT (1973)	Germany; Singapore;	01/10/1975
France - Singapore BIT (1975)	France; Singapore;	18/10/1976
Singapore - Switzerland BIT (1978)	Singapore; Switzerland;	03/05/1978
BLEU (Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union) - Singapore BIT (1978)	BLEU (Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union); Singapore;	27/11/1980
Singapore - Taiwan Province of China BIT (1990)	Singapore; Taiwan Province of China;	09/04/1990
Singapore - Viet Nam BIT (1992)	Singapore; Vietnam;	25/12/1992
Poland - Singapore BIT (1993)	Poland; Singapore;	29/12/1993
Pakistan - Singapore BIT (1995)	Pakistan; Singapore;	04/05/1995
Czech Republic - Singapore BIT (1995)	Czechia; Singapore;	07/10/1995
Mongolia - Singapore BIT (1995)	Mongolia; Singapore;	07/01/1996
Lao People's Democratic Republic - Singapore BIT (1997)	Lao People's Democratic Republic; Singapore;	26/03/1998
Hungary - Singapore BIT (1997)	Hungary; Singapore;	01/01/1999
Latvia - Singapore BIT (1998)	Latvia; Singapore;	18/03/1999

Cambodia - Singapore BIT (1996)	Cambodia; Singapore;	24/02/2000
Mauritius - Singapore BIT (2000)	Mauritius; Singapore;	19/04/2000
Singapore - Slovenia BIT (1999)	Singapore; Slovenia;	08/09/2000
Belarus - Singapore BIT (2000)	Belarus; Singapore;	13/01/2001
Egypt - Singapore BIT (1997)	Egypt; Singapore;	20/03/2002
Singapore - Uzbekistan BIT (2003)	Singapore; Uzbekistan;	23/11/2003
Bangladesh - Singapore BIT (2004)	Bangladesh; Singapore;	19/11/2004
Bahrain - Singapore BIT (2003)	Bahrain; Singapore;	08/12/2004
Jordan - Singapore BIT (2004)	Jordan; Singapore;	22/08/2005
Bulgaria - Singapore BIT (2003)	Bulgaria; Singapore;	10/02/2006
Singapore - Slovakia BIT (2006)	Singapore; Slovakia;	06/06/2007
Singapore - Ukraine BIT (2006)	Singapore; Ukraine;	14/07/2007
Saudi Arabia - Singapore BIT (2006)	Saudi Arabia; Singapore;	05/10/2007
Oman - Singapore BIT (2007)	Oman; Singapore;	12/10/2008
Korea, Dem. People's Rep. of - Singapore BIT (2008)	South Korea; Singapore;	18/03/2009
Mexico - Singapore BIT (2009)	Mexico; Singapore;	03/04/2011
Libya - Singapore BIT (2009)	Libya; Singapore;	22/12/2011
Singapore - United Arab Emirates BIT (2011)	Singapore; United Arab Emirates;	17/05/2012
Russian Federation - Singapore BIT (2010)	Russian Federation; Singapore;	16/06/2012
Kuwait - Singapore BIT (2009)	Kuwait; Singapore;	15/04/2013
Iran, Islamic Republic of - Singapore BIT (2016)	Iran, Islamic Republic of; Singapore;	28/02/2018
Singapore - Qatar BIT (2017)	Qatar; Singapore;	25/04/2018
Indonesia - Singapore BIT (2018)	Indonesia; Singapore;	09/03/2021
Cooperation Agreement between Member Countries of ASEAN and European Community 07/03/1980	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); EU (European Union);	01/10/1980

Investment Agreement among the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand 15/12/1987	Brunei Darussalam; Indonesia; Malaysia; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand;	28/02/1989
ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services 15/12/1995	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations);	30/12/1998
Agreement between New Zealand and Singapore on a Closer Economic Partnership 14/11/2000	New Zealand; Singapore;	01/01/2001
Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Singapore for a New-Age Economic Partnership 13/01/2002	Japan; Singapore;	30/11/2002
Free Trade Agreement between the EFTA States and Singapore 26/06/2002	EFTA (European Free Trade Association); Singapore;	01/01/2003
Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation between ASEAN and China 04/11/2002	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); China;	01/07/2003
Free Trade Agreement between Australia and Singapore 17/02/2003	Australia; Singapore;	28/07/2003
Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and the United States of America 06/05/2003	Singapore; United States of America;	01/01/2004
Framework Agreement between ASEAN and the Republic of India 08/10/2003	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); India;	01/07/2004
Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and Singapore 29/06/2005	India; Singapore;	01/08/2005
Free Trade Agreement between the Hashemite Kingdom Jordan and the Republic of Singapore 16/05/2004	Jordan; Singapore;	22/08/2005
Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Korea and Singapore 04/08/2005	South Korea; Singapore;	02/03/2006
Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement 18/07/2005	Brunei Darussalam; Chile; New Zealand; Singapore;	28/05/2006
Framework Agreement between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea 13/12/2005	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); South Korea;	01/07/2006
Trade and Investment Framework Agreement between the United States and ASEAN 25/08/2006	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); United	25/08/2006
Free Trade Agreement between Panama and Singapore 01/03/2006	Panama; Singapore;	24/07/2007

Free Trade Agreement between ASEAN and Japan 14/04/2008	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); Japan;	01/12/2008
Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and China 23/10/2008	China; Singapore;	01/01/2009
Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and Peru 28/05/2008	Peru; Singapore;	01/08/2009
The ASEAN-Republic of Korea Investment Agreement 02/06/2009	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); South Korea;	01/09/2009
ASEAN - China Investment Agreement (2009)	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); China;	01/01/2010
Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area 27/02/2009	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); Australia; New Zealand;	10/01/2010
ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement 26/02/2009	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations);	24/02/2012
Free Trade Agreement between Costa Rica and Singapore 06/04/2010	Costa Rica; Singapore;	01/07/2013
Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) 15/12/2008	GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council); Singapore;	01/09/2013
Agreement between Singapore and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on Economic Partnership 07/11/2013	Singapore; Taiwan Province of China;	19/04/2014
Singapore - Turkey FTA (2015)	Singapore; Turkey;	01/10/2017
Singapore - Sri Lanka FTA (2018)	Singapore; Sri Lanka;	01/05/2018
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) 08/03/2018	Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; Japan; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Peru; Singapore; Vietnam;	30/12/2018
Agreement on Investment among the Governments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations 30/05/2018	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); Hong Kong, China SAR;	17/06/2019
Free Trade Agreement between Singapore and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 10/12/2020	Singapore; United Kingdom;	11/02/2021

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (2020)	ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations); Australia; China; Japan; South Korea; New Zealand;	01/01/2022
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B. International Treaties

Table 2. International binding instruments relating to human rights

Instruments	signature	ratification
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	2015	2017
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	N/A	1995
Convention on the Rights of the Child	N/A	1995
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	2000	2008
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2012	2013

C. Regional

Table 3. Regional instruments

Instruments	Signature	Ratification
Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (2020)	2020	2022
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (2018)	2018	2018
ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (2009)	2009	2012

CHAPTER 3: DOMESTIC LEGISLATION ON WATER

A. Water law

1. **Is the right to water mentioned in the Constitution?**

[No¹⁸]

2. **Is the right to sanitation mentioned in the Constitution?**

[No]

3. **Does the Constitution otherwise reference water and sanitation?**

[No]

4. **Is there a water code or a law specific to water resources? Please specify.**

[Yes, Singapore has legislation specific to water resources. The Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999¹⁹ provides for and regulates the construction, maintenance, improvement, operation and use of sewerage and land drainage systems in Singapore. There are also a number of regulations specific to water resources outlined in A5 below.]

Is there national strategy / policy, action plan or similar document on water? Does it include the management of wastewater and sanitation?

[Yes, the PUB, Singapore's national water agency, produced a publication called "Our Water, Our Future" which sets out Singapore's water strategies and plans for the next 50 years. It was first published in 2016 and updated in March 2017.²⁰ The national strategy includes a strategy on managing and recycling wastewater called NEWater. The publication also explains some of the technology used to sanitise and recycle collected wastewater well within the drinking water guidelines set out by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organisation.]

¹⁸ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CONS1963>

¹⁹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/SDA1999>

²⁰

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/PUBOurWaterOurFuture.pdf>

²¹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/pua2001>

²² <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/PUA2001-RG5?DocDate=20211201>

²³ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/SDA1999-RG2?DocDate=20180329>

5. **Are there any other major regulations, decrees, orders, circulars, or similar official documents (such as pricing, water policing, utility easements, public domain occupation...etc.) related to the rights to water and sanitation?**

[Yes, these laws and regulations also relate to the rights to water:

- Public Utilities Act 2001²¹
- Public Utilities (Water Supply) Regulations 2002²²
- Sewerage and Drainage (Sanitary Works and Sewerage Works) Regulations 1999²³
- Sewerage and Drainage (Trade Effluent) Regulations 1999²⁴
- Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999²⁵

B. Environmental law

- **Is the right to a healthy environment mentioned in the Constitution?**

[No]

- **Does the Constitution otherwise reference a safe, clean and healthy environment?**

[No]

- **Is there an environmental code or law that references water?**

[Yes, the Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999²⁶ references, regulates and controls water pollution.]

- **Is there a national strategy, policy, action plan or similar document on the environment?**

[The Singapore Green Plan 2030²⁷ is Singapore's national agenda on sustainable development. It charts concrete targets over

²⁴ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/SDA1999-RG5?DocDate=20161003>

²⁵

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?Provlds=P15-#pr15->

²⁶

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?Provlds=P15-#pr15->

²⁷ <https://www.greenplan.gov.sg/>

the next 10 years, strengthening Singapore's commitments under the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Paris Agreement. It strengthens Singapore's commitment to achieving long-term net zero emissions. Key pillars of the policy include the Energy Reset, Green Economy and Green Government.]

- **Are there any other major regulations, decrees, orders, circulation or similar documents related to the right to a healthy environment (such as resource consents, public domain occupation etc)?**

[Yes, these laws and regulations also relate to the right to a healthy environment:

- **Environmental Public Health Act 1987**²⁸
- **Control of Plants Act 1993**²⁹ - The protection of plants and plant products against pests and diseases, the control of the introduction of pests into Singapore and the use of pesticides.
- **Energy Conservation Act**³⁰ - An Act to mandate energy efficiency requirements and energy management practices to promote energy conservation, improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
- **Parks and Trees Act**³¹ - Maintenance and conservation of trees and plants within national parks, nature reserves, tree conservation areas, heritage road green buffers and other specified areas.
- **Prevention of Pollution of the Sea Act**³² - An Act to give effect to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973; to make provisions for the protection of the marine environment and for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution of the sea and pollution from ships.

- **Transboundary Haze Pollution Act**³³ - The Act seeks to deter firms or entities in or outside Singapore from carrying out activities that contribute to transboundary haze affecting Singapore.]

C. Extraction and/or use of water

1. **Does the legislation regulate the right to abstract water? (Surface, groundwater etc.)?**

[Yes, the Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999 contains a general section preventing people from extracting water from "any place or sea within the territorial limits of Singapore", article 31, and requiring them to make an application for approval to extract water if they wish to do so.³⁴]

2. **Does the legislation distinguish between the extraction of drinking water and water for other uses?**

[No, the legislation does not distinguish between the extraction of drinking water and water for other uses. s 31 of the Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999 merely refers to "taking or intercepting water from any place or sea". Article 31]

3. **Is the right to use water connected to land ownership?**

[No, see answers C1 and C2. "Any place or sea" is likely sufficiently wide enough to cover public bodies of water, therefore the right to use public bodies of water which is prohibited is not connected to land ownership.]

4. **Are permits/licenses required for water use (e.g. domestic, agricultural, industrial)?**

[The PUB regulates and oversees all of Singapore's water supply. There does not appear to be a permit/licence requirement for water use in Singapore. However, if industrial entities have additional raw water demand, they can make an application to the PUB outlining what the additional water

²⁸ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epha1987>

²⁹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CPA1993>

³⁰ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/ECA2012>

³¹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/PTA2005>

³² <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/PPSA1990>

³³ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/THPA2014>

³⁴ S 31,

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvIds=P15-#pr31->

usage is for, the expected consumption and water efficiency measures in place.³⁵ The application process appears to stem from Singapore's water conservation efforts and legislation preventing hoses or sprinklers from being used to water gardens, lawns and commercial market gardens amongst other things.³⁶ Article 39]

5. **Can permits/licenses be suspended? Under what circumstances?**

[N/A]

6. **Can water abstraction licenses be transferred? Is transferability subject to restrictions?**

[N/A]

7. **Are there priorities in the allocation of water for different uses?**

[No, as a water stressed country, Singapore's water policy is aimed at providing water for all without specific priorities for different uses. Although there are no specific priorities for the allocation of water for different uses, Singapore is conscious that industrial water usage outweighs the domestic demand for

water from homes. Therefore, one of its priorities is managing industrial water use.]

8. **Are there any regulations for monitoring the volume of water extracted from groundwater?**

[No, there do not appear to be any regulations for monitoring the volume of water extracted from groundwater in Singapore. Singapore's current sources of water are the local catchment areas, imported water, desalinated water and reclaimed water.]

9. **Are there any restrictions for releasing contaminants/pesticides/fertilisers/farm animal effluent/industrial waste or other pollutants to rivers, lakes, seas, or groundwater?**

[Yes, the Environmental Protection Management Act 1999 requires written permission to be granted for the discharge of trade effluent, oil, chemical, sewage or other polluting matters into any drain or land.³⁷ Failure to obtain written permission is an offence with penalties.

³⁵

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/compliance/industry/forms?TermStoreId=6ec4137f-a118-4e12-8044-325706e6c01b&TermSetId=504af951-84b7-458b-a811-11f93e74d2e0&TermId=be8d54b2-22ae-4a4f-a981-aece9fce3660>

³⁶ S 39, <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/PUA2001-RG5?DocDate=20211201&Provs=P11V-#P11V-37>

³⁷ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?Provs=P15-#pr15->

CHAPTER 4. THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION & SDG 6 TARGETS³⁸ including elements of the Human Right to a Healthy Environment

A. Availability and accessibility (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.4)

1. **What laws or regulations ensure that a minimum essential level of water is available to all?**

[No specific laws or regulations ensure that a minimum essential level of water is available to all. However, legislation reflects water conservation policies. For example, using water in a way that is not permitted by legislation is considered wasting water and doing so may attract punitive measures.³⁹]

2. **What are the standards/policies on the amount of water to be made available?**

[No specific standard on the amount of water to be made available. However, achieving a sustainable level of water consumption is a key policy focus. This includes a 140 litres per person, per day target by 2030.⁴⁰]

3. **In cases where water is not available on premises, what mechanisms are in place to ensure collection times do not exceed 30 minutes including wait times and queuing?**

None stated. Note, Singapore has achieved universal access to affordable and high-quality water.⁴¹

4. **Does the law ensure continuous supply of water for all? [Yes, the Public Utilities (Water Supply Regulations section 11 legislates for continuous water supply.) In instances where water availability is not continuous, what measures are implemented?**

[No information found.]

5. **How is water supply availability ensured for marginalized and vulnerable groups, e.g., economically challenged or less developed rural areas?**

[The Ministry of Social and Family Development provides financial assistance with utilities to low-income families.⁴² Further, eligible public housing households receive a rebate voucher in respect to their water bill, in the form of a \$220 to \$380 credit automatically credited to their utilities account.⁴³]

6. **Does the law/policy prioritize water for domestic uses over other uses?**

[No. However, in anticipation of industrial water demand increasing from 55% to 70% by 2060, Singapore has explicitly stated its intention to focus of prioritising industrial water in its water strategy.⁴⁴]

7. **What are the grounds for disconnecting, interrupting or altering water supply and sanitation services (e.g., authorities may alter water supply in case of droughts or emergencies, in which cases are disconnections possible...)?**

[The PUB may interrupt the supply of water in cases of emergency, fire, excessive drought, repairs to mains or at any time in connection with the construction of new works or maintenance, or installations or removal of meters⁴⁵ Part III Article 27 of the Public Utilities Act. The PUB may also reduce the supply of water if it is of the opinion its supply of water is insufficient for the normal

³⁸ See Table of the Targets and Indicators of SDG 6 page 9

³⁹ See, *Public utilities (Water Supply) Regulations 2004* r 39.

⁴⁰ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/singaporewaterstory>

⁴¹

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapore Voluntary National Review Report v2.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapore%20Voluntary%20National%20Review%20Report%20v2.pdf) page 19.

⁴² <https://www.msf.gov.sg/Comcare/Pages/Short-to-Medium-Term-Assistance.aspx>

⁴³ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterprice>

⁴⁴ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/PUBOurWaterOurFuture.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act-Rev/PUA1995/19960430?DocDate=19960430&ProvIds=P1III-#pr26-> s 27.

supply to the public,⁴⁶ Part III article 28, or it if a person is responsible for the misuse or waste of water, Part III article 23.⁴⁷ PUB may also disconnect a water supply if there is a default in payment, Part III article 23.⁴⁸]

8. What are the procedural standards/criteria for permitting interruption, disconnection or alteration of water supply and sanitation services?

[No procedural standards for permitting of general interruption, disconnection or alteration of water supply or sanitation. However, the PUB may discontinue the supply of water to a person for misuse or waste of water. If the PUB believes a person is responsible for misusing or wasting water, it may give notice to the person to cease the misuse or waste by a specified date. Should the misuse or waste continue beyond the specified date, PUB may discontinue the supply of water to that person.⁴⁹ Part III article 23 of the Public Utilities Act.]

9. Are alternative ways of water supply and sanitation services provided for in case of alteration of supply and/or service?

[No.]

10. Does law/policy provide guidance on:

The number of water outlets? [No.]

The safety, distance and time from a dwelling or structure to reach water outlet or sanitation facilities (e.g., laws that specify water outlets must be available within a certain distance from a school or household)? [No.]

Technical safety of water outlets or sanitation facilities (e.g., law requiring that certain standards are applied in the construction of those facilities or of buildings)? [Minimum building plan requirements for sanitation facilities are set

out in the article 5.2 Code of Practice on Environmental Health.⁵⁰]

11. Are there any standards that protect healthy natural water bodies to guarantee sustainable sources of water for drinking or other household uses?

[No. Singapore does not have natural water bodies from which it sources its water. It sources its water from local catchment, imported water, high-grade-reclaimed water and desalinated water (known as the “four taps”)⁵¹. The PUB has developed standards to guarantee the sustainability of these sources.⁵² Catchment areas which collect rainwater are protected areas.]

12. Do groundwater sources and aquifers have an allocation of water volume protected from extraction to ensure long term sustainability? No, Singapore’s water sources do not include groundwater.

13. Is there any provision in the law/policy for the availability and accessibility of clean and healthy environmental spaces in non-domestic places such as schools, hospitals, workplaces, prisons, refugee camps, etc.?

[Yes. Part 6 of the Environmental Public Health Act 1987 contains provisions that oblige managers of publicly accessible premises to ensure the area is kept clean and in good repair.⁵³]

14. Is there any provision in the law/policy for availability and accessibility of water and sanitation facilities in non-domestic places such as schools, hospitals, workplaces, prisons, refugee camps, etc.?

[Yes. Part 6 of the Environmental Public Health Act 1987 contains provisions for the adequate public sanitation, including

⁴⁶ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act-Rev/PUA1995/Published/19960430?DocDate=19960430&ProvIds=P1III-#pr26- s 28>.

⁴⁷ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act-Rev/PUA1995/Published/19960430?DocDate=19960430&ProvIds=P1III-#pr26- s 23>

⁴⁸ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act-Rev/PUA1995/Published/19960430?DocDate=19960430&ProvIds=P1III-#pr26- s 23>.

⁴⁹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act->

[Rev/PUA1995/Published/19960430?DocDate=19960430&ProvIds=P1III-#pr26- 23\(3\)](https://www.nea.gov.sg/docs/default-source/resource/practices-/copeh-2021.pdf)

⁵⁰ <https://www.nea.gov.sg/docs/default-source/resource/practices-/copeh-2021.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/fournationaltaps#>

⁵² <https://www.pub.gov.sg/sustainability>

⁵³ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epha1987?ProvIds=P16-#pr60->

maintenance, adequacy, and sufficient availability.⁵⁴]

B. Quality and safety (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3)

1. Are there parameters of quality and safety for drinking water established under law?

[Yes, the Environmental Public Health (Water Suitable for Drinking) (No.2) Regulations 2019 set out quality requirements of water suitable for drinking.⁵⁵]

2. Is monitoring of drinking water quality or wastewater required by law/policy? If so, which actor is required to monitor it and how often (according to the law/policy)?

[Yes. A water provider must review its drinking water, under a water safety plan approved by the Director General, at least once a year and submit the report to the Director-General, Part III of the Environmental Public Health (Water Suitable for Drinking) Regulations 2019.⁵⁶ Water providers must also have a water-sampling plan in accordance with the Code of Practice on Drinking Water and Sampling Safety Plans.⁵⁷]

3. Are there any regulations to control or monitor the quality of groundwater aquifers so that they do not become contaminated?

[No, Singapore's water sources do not include groundwater.]

4. Do laws/regulations include guidance on the safe construction of water and sanitation infrastructure (e.g. to ensure no contact with excreta, ventilation, respect construction guidelines)?

[Part VI of the Sewerage and Drainage Act

1999 allows for regulations and codes of practice to be issued with respect specifications of sanitation infrastructure.⁵⁸

The Code of Practice on Environmental Health and the Code of Practice on Sewerage and Sanitary Works, contain guidance on design and construction criteria for sanitation infrastructure.⁵⁹]

5. Do laws/regulations include requirements or guidance on safe emptying of latrines as well as safe treatment and disposal of treated sludge?

[The Code of Practice on Sewerage and Sanitary Works provides guidance on the disposal of sewage and sullage water.⁶⁰]

6. Do laws/regulations establish requirements on household water treatment and storage (e.g. quality requirement with respect to water containers, rainwater harvesting limitations, etc.)

[Yes. The construction of rainwater collection systems is regulated by section 31 of the Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999.⁶¹ Certain requirements provided for in the PUB's 'Guidance Notes for the Application of Rainwater Systems' must also be adhered to.⁶²]

C. Water pollution control (SDG 6.3, 6.6)

1. Are there legislative provisions concerning waste disposal activities? Which authorities are responsible for monitoring to determine if waste has caused pollution of bodies of water?

[Yes. Part 3 of the Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999 regulates waste disposal activities.⁶³

⁵⁴ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epha1987?ProvIds=P16-#pr56->

⁵⁵ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL-Supp/S156-2019/Published/20190322?DocDate=20190322>

⁵⁶ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL-Supp/S156-2019/Published/20190322?DocDate=20190322&ProvIds=P13-#pr6-> Division 2.

⁵⁷ <https://www.sfa.gov.sg/docs/default-source/food-retailing/practices-and-guidelines/code-of-practice-on-drinking-water-sampling-and-safety-plans-sfa-apr-2019.pdf>

⁵⁸ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvIds=P16-#pr32->

⁵⁹ <https://www.nea.gov.sg/docs/default-source/resource/practices-/copeh-2021.pdf>; <https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/COPSSW2nded2019.pdf>

⁶⁰ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/COPSSW2nded2019.pdf>

⁶¹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvIds=P15-#pr31-> section 31.

⁶² <https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/GuidanceNotes.pdf>

⁶³ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvIds=P13->

The PUB has authority to investigate suspected offences.⁶⁴]

2. **Is there legislation which regulates the contamination of groundwater? How is it addressed in practice?**

[No, Singapore's water sources do not include groundwater.]

7. **Do laws/regulations provide constraints on the levels of nitrates and phosphates that are released into groundwater through agricultural land use?**

[No, Singapore's water sources do not include groundwater.]

3. **Is permission required to discharge effluents? What are the criteria used for considering applications and granting permits?**

[Yes, written permission from the Director-General of Environmental Protection is required to discharge effluents onto the land or any drain, Part V of the Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999.⁶⁵ Eligibility criteria of the effluent (what cannot contain, allowed types etc) are expressly listed in the Environmental Protection and Management (Trade Effluent) Regulations 1999.⁶⁶ Permission is also required from the PUB to discharge trade effluents into any drain.⁶⁷ The criteria considered are specified in the 'Requirements for Discharge of Trade Effluent into the Public Sewers'.⁶⁸ Broadly, these include: the physical and chemical characteristics of the effluent and an

exhaustive list of substances that must not be present in the effluent.⁶⁹]

4. **Can waste discharge permits be lost/suspended/modified during their lifespan? Under what circumstances? Is compensation payable?**

[Yes. Approval will cease to be valid where a person fails to comply with the applicable regulations or conditions imposed, article 4 of the Sewerage and Drainage Act.⁷⁰ Further, any permission granted by the Director-General may be revoked or suspended for any period with no assigned reason.⁷¹ Similarly, an approval by the PUB may also be revoked or suspended for any period with no assigned reason.⁷²]

5. **Are instances of pollution of water sources subject to penalties / fines? Which institution is in in charge of the administration of the penalties?**

[Yes. Penalties for discharging a toxic substance into any water sources which is likely to cause pollution range from SG\$50,000 (US\$36,000 (approx.)) to SG\$100,000 (US\$72,000 (approx.)) and can include 12 months' imprisonment.⁷³ Fees under the Environmental Protection and Management Act 1999 are administered by the National Environment Agency.⁷⁴ Fees under the Sewerage and Drainage Act 1999 (and Trade Effluent Regulations) are administered by PUB.⁷⁵ Any prosecution

#pr5- Part 3.

⁶⁴ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvlDs=P17-#pr39>- Section 44A.

⁶⁵ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?ProvlDs=P15-#pr15>- section 15.

⁶⁶ [file:///C:/Users/psathka/Downloads/Environmental%20Protection%20and%20Management%20\(Trade%20Eff.pdf](file:///C:/Users/psathka/Downloads/Environmental%20Protection%20and%20Management%20(Trade%20Eff.pdf) sections 7-11.

⁶⁷ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/sda1999?ProvlDs=P13-#pr16>- section 16.

⁶⁸ https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/requirements_UW.pdf

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/EPMA1999-RG5> regulation 3(5)(c);

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/SDA1999-RG5?DocDate=20161003#pr3>- regulation 4(5)(b).

⁷¹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/EPMA1999-RG5> regulation 3(5)(b).

⁷² <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/SDA1999-RG5?DocDate=20161003#pr3>- regulation 4(5).

⁷³ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?ProvlDs=P15-#pr17>- section 17.

⁷⁴ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?ProvlDs=P112-#pr51>- section 51A.

⁷⁵ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/SDA1999-RG5?DocDate=20161003#pr13>- regulation 13.

must be done so only with the consent of the Public Prosecutor.⁷⁶]

D. Affordability (SDG 6.1)

1. How does law/policy address affordability of water supply and sanitation services?

[No legislation addresses this. However, the PUB offers assistance to eligible public housing households in the form of a cash rebate on their water bill.⁷⁷]

2. What mechanisms must be established by law/policy to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services?

[Please refer to preceding question.]

3. How are tariffs established and what is the process for updating these tariffs?

[There are three components to water price. A Water Tariff which is charged based on the volume of water consumed, a Water Conservation Tax, to encourage conservation, charged as a percentage of the Water Tariff, and a Waterborne Fee which goes toward the cost of water treatment.⁷⁸ PUB reviews and updates water tariffs periodically.⁷⁹]

4. Does the tariff vary depending on the regions/circumstances?

[No. The water tariff does not vary depending on region or circumstances.]

5. Which actors are responsible for and involved in setting and/or approving tariffs for water supply and sanitation services?

[PUB reviews and water tariffs periodically,⁸⁰ and submits proposals to the government for approval.]

6. Is disconnection from water supply and sanitation services for non-payment allowed? What procedures must be followed in such cases prior to disconnecting the supply and service? Are there any further consequences (other than

shutoffs) for bill non-payment?

[Yes. If a person makes default of a payment with respect to their water bill, PUB may discontinue the supply of water.⁸¹ No specified procedures apply before disconnection. No further consequences are stated.]

E. Acceptability (SDG 6.1, SDG 6.2)

1. Is there provision in the law or contracts with service providers that relate to the need to take into account cultural and social dimensions of acceptability (e.g. colour or odour of water, or the positioning of a facility)?

[No.]

2. Is there provision in the law or contracts with service providers that relate to the need to ensure dignity and privacy (e.g., in workplaces, but also in the design of shared sanitation facilities for certain communities)?

[No.]

3. Is there provision in the law or contracts with service providers that relate to the need to ensure that people affected by the service do not suffer from a reduction in the health of their environment?

[No.]

F. Non-discrimination, equality, and universal access (SDG 6.1, 6.2)

1. Is there any legislation about the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination (on all grounds) and promotion of equality in accessing water and sanitation services?

[In fixing tariffs and making agreements for the supply of water, the PUB must not show any undue preference between consumers or exercise any undue discrimination between persons, having regard to the time, place and quantity of supply of water.⁸²]

⁷⁶

[https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?ProvIds=P15-#pr16-17\(6\)](https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/epma1999?ProvIds=P15-#pr16-17(6)).

⁷⁷ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterprice>

⁷⁸ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterprice>

⁷⁹ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterprice>

⁸⁰ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/pua2001?ProvIds=P13-#pr23-Part3>;

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterprice>

⁸¹ <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/pua2001?ProvIds=P13-#pr23-section23>.

⁸² <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/act/pua2001?ProvIds=P13->

2. **Is there provision in the law or contracts with service providers that relate to the need to ensure that people affected by the service do not suffer from a reduction in the health of their environment?**
[No.]
3. **Are there any legal measures to protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental harm, taking into account their needs, risks and capacities?**
[No.]
4. **Is there any legal recognition for women in the empowerment, leadership, decision-making and full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls, and the role that women play as managers, leaders and defenders of natural resources and agents of change in safeguarding the environment and water resources?**
[None stated.]

G. Right to information, Transparency (SDG 6.b)

1. **Is there any specific legislation about the right to seek, receive and impart information held by public authorities? Does the law expressly set out the right to seek, receive and impart information on water related issues?**
[No specific legislation, such as a Freedom of Information Act or similar is exists in Singapore.]
2. **Does the right to information require the payment of a fee? Is there a provision on the affordability of such fee?**
[Not applicable.]
3. **Are there any exceptions with regard to who or what type of water and environment related information held by public authorities can be accessed?**
[No.]
4. **Which institutions are required by law/policy to make information on water public? Does it reference only the right to**

access information or also the obligation to make public such information on water related issues (e.g., are institutions obligated to provide information only upon demand, or are they obligated to publish or make available information at certain periodic intervals, on the occurrence of certain circumstances, etc.)?

[None found. However, the PUB regularly publishes data on drinking water, including quality parameters etc. on its website.⁸³]

5. **Are there requirements in relation to the language, locations, format, timing and means used for providing water and environment related information to the public? What mechanisms are in place to ensure information is made available to all including to minorities?**
[No.]
6. **Are there any mechanisms to ensure that education on the importance of a healthy environment is included in school curricula, and that the link is made with sustainable drinking water supplies?**
[Yes. The PUB and the Ministry of Education work with schools to education children on the importance of conserving and valuing water resources.⁸⁴]
7. **Are there any legal provisions requiring certain authorities to educate the population on water related issues?**
[No.]
8. **Are there any requirements in relation to access to information in contracts with water and sanitation operators?**
[No.]

H. Public participation (SDG 6.5.1, 6.b)

1. **Is there a law/policy which addresses public participation?**
[No legislation which addresses public participation. However, PUB seeks opinions from the public through a customer satisfaction survey conducted once every three years, dialogue sessions and feedback forms.⁸⁵]

⁸³ #pr23- section 20(6).

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/watersupply/waterquality>

⁸⁴ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/savewater/atschool>

⁸⁵

<https://baselgovernance.org/sites/default/files/2020>

2. **What are the criteria listed in the law/policy in relation to participation in water-related issues (e.g. allocated time to provide comments, invitation to public hearings, etc.)?**

[N/A]

3. **Do the contracts between governmental authorities and operators of water and sanitation services impose upon the operators an obligation to ensure or provide for public participation at any levels at which the applicable services are**

1. **How does legislation/policy ensure that water and sanitation services are delivered in an improved and sustainable manner, considering the availability of water resources, competing demands and generally the needs of present and future generations?**

[Singapore has a policy dedicated to sustainability and ensuring the availability of water resources in the future, considering projected population and economic growth. The PUB has developed standards to guarantee the sustainability of water sources via the 'four taps', discussed above. The policy also focuses on managing water demand through a multi-faceted approach of: pricing water to reflect its scarcity, mandating water efficiency standards and encouraging water conservation practices.⁸⁶]

2. **How does legislation/policy ensure that water and sanitation services are delivered in a sustainable manner to rural and deprived urban areas?**

[N/A]

3. **How does the legislation/policy ensure that delivery of water and sanitation**

delivered?

[No.]

4. **Is the establishment of an IWRM mechanism including regional or local associations or other groupings of water users provided for and regulated by laws or regulations? How do they interact with or connect into other agencies or regulators?**

[No.]

I. Sustainability (SDG 6.4, 6.5, 6.6)

services are economically sustainable, with sufficient expenditure for operation and maintenance and the protection of the environment?

[Over the past 20 years, Singapore has worked on achieving long-term water sustainability, due to its lack of natural resources. To assist in achieving this PUB is undergoing a research and development effort aiming at halving energy requirements for its used water treatment and desalination.⁸⁷ There is also legislation which provides for the protection of water catchment areas.⁸⁸]

4. **How does the legislation/policy reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity by optimising water use efficiency across all sectors, and ensuring sustainable withdrawals?**

[Singapore has achieved universal access to affordable and high-quality water.⁸⁹ A strong focus on water conservation is still a key pillar of the PUB.]

5. **Is there any legislation/policy to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes?**

[No.]

⁸⁶ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/Documents/PUBOurWaterOurFuture.pdf> page 139.

⁸⁷ <https://theconversation.com/how-singapores-water-management-has-become-a-global-model-for-how-to-tackle-climate-crisis-162117>;

⁸⁸ <https://www.pub.gov.sg/SL/PUA2001-S401-2006?DocDate=20180329&ProvlDs=P1II-#pr5->

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/resources/publications/research>

⁸⁹ See, for example,

<https://sso.agc.gov.sg/SL/PUA2001-S401-2006?DocDate=20180329&ProvlDs=P1II-#pr5->

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapores Voluntary National Review Report v2.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapores%20Voluntary%20National%20Review%20Report%20v2.pdf) page 19.

J. Accountability/ Remedies and complaint procedures

1. **Are there remedies provided by law/regulations to file complaints or other ways of accessing justice in reference to water, sanitation and a healthy environment? Who may file them? Are the decisions appealable?**

[General consumer complaint mechanisms are available via the Consumers Association of Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board. However, none are water / sanitation specific.]

2. **Are there possibilities for financial assistance for legal counsel in cases concerning water, sanitation and a healthy environment?**

[No.]

3. **Who monitors water & sanitation service providers?**

[The PUB is monitored by the Ministry of Environment.]

4. **Is there a possibility to appeal against the decisions of service providers? With whom would such an appeal be lodged, and under**

which conditions is such an appeal possible?

[Yes. The National Environment Agency provides for an internal appeals process.]

5. **Are there any protective mechanisms to ensure that there is a safe and enabling environment in which individuals, groups and organs of society that work on human rights or environmental issues can operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation and violence?**

No.

6. **Is there any legislation to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in relation to environmental matters?**

Article 14 of Singapore's Constitution guarantees citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression, peaceful assembly without arms, and association. However, Human Rights Watch reports severe restrictions on this right.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/asia/singapore>

CHAPTER 5. JUDICIARY SYSTEM

A. Preliminary questions

1. **What is the relationship between international law and national law (i.e. is the state a monist or dualist system--how is international law interpreted in relation with domestic law)?**

[Dualist system.⁹¹]

2. **What is the hierarchical structure of the legal system?**

[The Singapore court system is made up of:
 - The Supreme Court, comprising the Court of Appeal and High Court article 94 of the Constitution
 - The State Courts]

3. **Has the State ratified the relevant international conventions establishing regional or international complaint mechanisms?**

[No.⁹²]

B. Remedies and complaint procedures/accountability

3. **Are there remedies provided by law to file complaints or other ways of accessing justice in reference to water and sanitation and a healthy environment? Who may file them? Are the decisions appealable?**

[General consumer complaint mechanisms are available via the Consumers Association of Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board. However, none are water / sanitation specific.]

4. **Are such complaint procedures required to be provided in conformity with human rights principles (such as non-discrimination, equity)?**

[No.]

5. **Does the law provide for financial assistance for legal counsel in cases concerning water and sanitation or access to a healthy environment?**

[No.]

6. **Who monitors the administrative level bodies and/or service providers?**

[The Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (“MSE”) has oversight over the PUB and the National Environment Agency (“NEA”).]

7. **Is there a possibility to appeal against the decisions of service providers? With whom would such an appeal be lodged, and under which conditions is such an appeal possible?**

[Yes. The NEA has an internal appeals process.]

8. **What remedies are available at an administrative level?**

[See Chapter 3 above.]

9. **Who monitors these administrative level bodies?**

[See A7 above.]

10. **Are such administrative bodies legally independent entities according to the law?**

[Yes.]

11. **Is there any evidence (e.g., case law) that courts in the country have (or may have) jurisdiction to enforce any economic, social or cultural rights?**

[Yes, the Singapore courts hear cases to determine the scope of citizens’ rights under the Constitution, including the human rights contained in it.]

12. **Do courts in the country have jurisdiction to hear cases regarding the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights to water, sanitation and a healthy environment? Is there any existing case law?**

[Note that the Constitution does not reference water, sanitation or a healthy environment as human rights. There has also been no litigation brought against the government in respect of such issues, “due largely to the fact that Singapore has a good environmental management system”.⁹³]

⁹¹ See generally *Vong Vui Kong v PP* [2010] SLR 489.

⁹² See https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=157&Lang=EN.

⁹³ See chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://law.pace.edu/school-of-law/sites/pace.edu.school-of-law/files/IJIEA/Heng_Singapore_3_16.pdf.

13. **Do courts in the country have jurisdiction to hear cases regarding the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights to a healthy environment? Is there any existing case law?**
[Yes, the courts have jurisdiction, but see B13 above.]
14. **Provide a brief overview of the judicial procedure involving a human rights violation case.**
[A claimant may bring a judicial review claim before the High Court, and then further appeal to the Court of Appeal, in respect of any government action that allegedly violates any constitutionally protected human rights.]
15. **Is there a Constitutional /Supreme Court? Are cases heard as the last appeal or may cases be referred directly?** [The Court of Appeal is the highest court and is an appellate court. Constitutional challenges against newly enacted laws can also be referred by the President to the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore Tribunal to determine whether such newly enacted law is consistent with the Constitution.]
16. **Have domestic courts applied international human rights law in past cases or have they referred to decisions from international human rights bodies (with reference to water, sanitation and the environment)?**
[There has been no litigation in Singapore with respect to water, sanitation and the environment. See B13 above.]
17. **Are court proceedings conducted in only one principal language, or are they also conducted in local languages, including minority and indigenous languages? Does the law require that information is made available in local languages?**
[Proceedings are conducted in English with translators available in multiple languages, including Chinese, Bahasa Melayu and Tamil, Singapore's other official languages.]
18. **Have domestic courts applied (or referenced) recommendations of national human rights institutions?**
[Yes, domestic courts have referenced recommendations of national human rights institutions.]

C. National human rights institutions

1. **Is there an independent national human rights institution?**
[No.]
2. **Does the mandate of the national human rights institution cover the entire human rights framework, including economic, social and cultural rights?**
[N/A]
3. **Is the national human rights institution authorized to receive and adjudicate complaints of violations of human rights to water, sanitation and a healthy environment?**
[N/A]
4. **Does the national human rights institution have a legal basis or authority to initiate an action to address systemic human rights violations?**
[N/A]
5. **What type of remedies does the national human rights institution have the authority to impose?**
[N/A]
6. **Is the institution allowed to initiate investigations/hearings?**
[N/A]
7. **Does the national human rights institution have the authority to monitor how remedies for violations of rights to water, sanitation and a healthy environment are implemented by governmental authorities, service providers or other agencies/entities?**
[N/A]

D. Regulation

1. **Is there a water regulator established by law?**
[The PUB.]
2. **Is the water regulator an independent entity?**
[Yes, PUB is an independent statutory board, albeit established by the government.]
3. **What are the oversight mechanisms and responsibilities related to drinking water supply and sanitation services of the regulator?**

[The Ministry of Environment has oversight over PUB.]

ANNEX 1: TARGETS AND INDICATORS OF SDG 6

TARGET	INDICATOR (CUSTODIAN AGENCIES)
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF))
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1a Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (WHO/UNICEF) 6.2.1b Proportion of population using a handwashing facility with soap and water available (WHO/UNICEF)
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated (WHO/United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)/United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)) 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality (United Nations Environment Programme/UNSD)
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) 6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources (FAO)
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	6.5.1 Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0–100) (United Nations Environment Programme) 6.5.2 Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE))
6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time (United Nations Environment Programme/Ramsar Convention)
6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	6.a.1 Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan (WHO/United Nations Environment Programme/Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD))
6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management (WHO/United Nations Environment Programme/OECD)

Source: Sustainable Development Goal 6 - Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation (2018), Table 1

ANNEX 2: THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION AND THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT COMPARED

Table 1: Comparison of the human rights principles

Principles of the Human Right to a Healthy Environment (from Framework Principles)	Principles of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation (from General Comment No.15)
Human Rights	
<p>Principle 1. States should ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in order to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.</p>	<p>GC 1. Water is a limited natural resource and a public good fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.</p> <p>GC 20. The right to water, like any human right, imposes three types of obligations on States parties: obligations to respect, obligations to protect and obligations to fulfil.</p>
Sustainable environment	
<p>Principle 2. States should respect, protect and fulfil human rights in order to ensure <u>a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment</u></p>	<p><i>Respect:</i> GC 21: The obligation to <i>respect</i> requires that States parties refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right to water. The obligation includes, inter alia, refraining from engaging in any practice or activity that denies or limits equal access to adequate water; arbitrarily interfering with customary or traditional arrangements for water allocation; <u>unlawfully diminishing or polluting water</u>, for example through waste from State-owned facilities or through use and testing of weapons; and limiting access to, or destroying, water services and infrastructure as a punitive measure, for example, during armed conflicts in violation of international humanitarian law.</p> <p><i>Protect:</i> GC 23. The obligation to <i>protect</i> requires States parties to prevent third parties from interfering in any way with the enjoyment of the right to water. Third parties include individuals, groups, corporations and other entities as well as agents acting under their authority. The obligation includes, inter alia, adopting the</p>

	<p>necessary and effective legislative and other measures to restrain, <u>for example, third parties from denying equal access to adequate water; and polluting and inequitably extracting from water resources, including natural sources, wells and other water distribution systems.</u></p> <p><i>Fulfill:</i> GC26. The obligation to fulfil requires States parties to adopt the necessary measures directed towards the full realization of the right to water. ... and facilitating improved and <u>sustainable access to water, particularly in rural and deprived urban areas.</u></p> <p>GC.11. The manner of the realization of the right to water must also be <u>sustainable, ensuring that the right can be realized for present and future generations.</u></p>
<p>Non-Discrimination</p>	
<p>Principle 3. States should <u>prohibit discrimination</u> and ensure equal and effective protection against discrimination in relation to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.</p>	<p>GC. 15. With respect to the right to water, States parties have a special obligation to provide those who do not have sufficient means with the necessary water and water facilities and to <u>prevent any discrimination</u> on internationally prohibited grounds in the provision of water and water services.</p>
<p>Safety and freedom of expression</p>	
<p>Principle 4. States should provide <u>a safe and enabling environment</u> in which individuals, groups and organs of society that work on human rights or environmental issues can operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation and violence</p>	<p>GC, 44,b Violations of the obligation to protect follow from the failure of a State to <u>take all necessary measures to safeguard persons</u> within their jurisdiction from infringements of the right to water by third parties.</p>
<p>Principle 5. States should respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in relation to environmental matters.</p>	

Public Awareness and education	
<p>Principle 6. States should provide for <u>education and public awareness on environmental matters.</u></p>	<p>GC, 25. The obligation to fulfil can be disaggregated into the obligations to facilitate, promote and provide. The obligation to promote obliges the State party to take steps to ensure that there is <u>appropriate education concerning the hygienic use of water, protection of water sources and methods to minimize water wastage.</u></p> <p>Article 24, para. 2, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States parties to “To ensure that <u>all segments of society [...] have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of [...] the advantages of [...] hygiene and environmental sanitation.</u>”</p>
Access to Information	
<p>Principle 7. States should provide <u>public access to environmental information</u> by collecting and disseminating information and by providing affordable, effective and timely access to information to any person upon request.</p>	<p>GC 48. The formulation and implementation of national water strategies and plans of action should respect, inter alia, the principles of non-discrimination and people's participation. The right of individuals and groups to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their exercise of the right to water must be an integral part of any policy, programme or strategy concerning water. <u>Individuals and groups should be given full and equal access to information concerning water, water services and the environment, held by public authorities or third parties.</u></p>
Accountability	
<p>Principle 8. To avoid undertaking or authorizing actions with environmental impacts that interfere with the full enjoyment of human rights, States should require the prior assessment of the possible environmental impacts of proposed projects and policies, including their potential effects on the enjoyment of human rights.</p>	<p>56. Before any action that interferes with an individual's right to water is carried out by the State party, or by any other third party, the relevant authorities must ensure that such actions are performed in a manner warranted by law, compatible with the Covenant, and that comprises: (a) opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected; (b) timely and full disclosure of information on the proposed measures; (c) reasonable notice of proposed</p>

	<p>actions; (d) legal recourse and remedies for those affected; and (e) legal assistance for obtaining legal remedies</p> <p>GC 24. Where water services (such as piped water networks, water tankers, access to rivers and wells) are operated or controlled by third parties, States parties must prevent them from compromising equal, affordable, and physical access to sufficient, safe and acceptable water. To prevent such abuses an effective regulatory system must be established, in conformity with the Covenant and this General Comment.</p>
Public Participation	
<p>Principle 9. States should provide for and facilitate <u>public participation in decision-making related to the environment</u> and take the views of the public into account in the decision-making process.</p>	<p>GC 48. The formulation and implementation of national water strategies and plans of action should respect, inter alia, the principles of non-discrimination and people's participation. <u>The right of individuals and groups to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their exercise of the right to water must be an integral part of any policy, programme or strategy concerning water.</u> Individuals and groups should be given full and equal access to information concerning water, water services and the environment, held by public authorities or third parties.</p>
Remedies	
<p>Principle 10. States should provide for <u>access to effective remedies for violations</u> of human rights and domestic laws relating to the environment</p>	<p>55. Any persons or groups who have been denied their right to water should have <u>access to effective judicial or other appropriate remedies</u> at both national and international levels</p>
Standards and Indicators	
<p>Principle 11. States should establish and maintain <u>substantive environmental standards</u> that are non-discriminatory,</p>	<p>53. To assist the monitoring process, <u>right to water indicators should be identified in the national water strategies or plans of action.</u> The</p>

<p>non-retrogressive and otherwise respect, protect and fulfil human rights.</p>	<p>indicators should be designed to monitor, at the national and international levels, the State party's obligations under articles 11, paragraph 1, and 12. Indicators should address the different components of adequate water (such as sufficiency, safety and acceptability, affordability and physical accessibility), be disaggregated by the prohibited grounds of discrimination, and cover all persons residing in the State party's territorial jurisdiction or under their control.</p>
<p>Violations</p>	
<p>Principle 12. States should ensure the effective enforcement of their environmental standards against public and private actors.</p>	<p>GC 55. All victims of violations of the right to water should be <u>entitled to adequate reparation</u>, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction or guarantees of non-repetition. National ombudsmen, human rights commissions, and similar institutions should be permitted to address violations of the right.</p>
<p>International Cooperation</p>	
<p>Principle 13. States should cooperate with each other to establish, maintain and enforce effective international legal frameworks in order to prevent, reduce and remedy transboundary and global environmental harm that interferes with the full enjoyment of human rights.</p>	<p>GC 30. Article 2, paragraph 1, and articles 11, paragraph 1, and 23 of the Covenant require that States parties recognize the essential role of international cooperation and assistance and take joint and separate action to achieve the full realization of the right to water.</p> <p>GC 38. For the avoidance of any doubt, the Committee wishes to emphasize that it is particularly incumbent on States parties, and other actors in a position to assist, to provide international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical which enables developing countries to fulfil their core obligations indicated in paragraph 37 above.</p>
<p>Non-Discrimination</p>	
<p>Principle 14. States should take additional measures to <u>protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental</u></p>	<p>16. Whereas the right to water applies to everyone, States parties should give <u>special attention to those individuals and groups who have traditionally faced difficulties in exercising</u></p>

<p><u>harm</u>, taking into account their needs, risks and capacities.</p>	<p><u>this right</u>, including women, children, minority groups, indigenous peoples, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, migrant workers, prisoners and detainees.</p>
<p>Principle 15. States should ensure that they <u>comply with their obligations to indigenous peoples</u> and members of traditional communities, including by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing and protecting their rights to the lands, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied or used. Consulting with them and obtaining their free, prior and informed consent before relocating them or taking or approving any other measures that may affect their lands, territories or resources. Respecting and protecting their traditional knowledge and practices in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of their lands, territories, and resources. (d) Ensuring that they fairly and equitably share the benefits from activities relating to their lands, territories, or resources. 	<p>GC 7. The Committee notes the importance of ensuring sustainable access to water resources for agriculture to realize the right to adequate food (see General Comment No.12 (1999)). Attention should be given to <u>ensuring that disadvantaged and marginalized farmers, including women farmers, have equitable access to water and water management systems, including sustainable rain harvesting and irrigation technology</u>. Taking note of the duty in article 1, paragraph 2, of the Covenant, which provides that a people may not “be deprived of its means of subsistence”, States parties should ensure that there is <u>adequate access to water for subsistence farming and for securing the livelihoods of indigenous peoples</u>.</p> <p>GC 16 (d) 16... In particular, States parties should take steps to ensure that:</p> <p>...(c) Rural and deprived urban areas have access to properly maintained water facilities. Access to traditional water sources in rural areas should be protected from unlawful encroachment and pollution. Deprived urban areas, including informal human settlements, and homeless persons, should have access to properly maintained water facilities. No household should be denied the right to water on the grounds of their housing or land status; (d) <u>Indigenous peoples’ access to water resources on their ancestral lands is protected from encroachment and unlawful pollution. States should provide resources for indigenous peoples to design, deliver and control their access to water;</u> (e) Nomadic and traveler communities have access to adequate water at traditional and designated halting sites; (f) Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees have access to adequate water whether they stay in</p>

	<p>camps or in urban and rural areas. Refugees and asylum-seekers should be granted the right to water on the same conditions as granted to nationals;</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	
<p>Principle 16. States should respect, protect and fulfil human rights in the actions they take to <u>address environmental challenges and pursue sustainable development.</u></p>	<p>11. The elements of the right to water must be adequate for human dignity, life and health, in accordance with articles 11, paragraph 1, and 12. The adequacy of water should not be interpreted narrowly, by mere reference to volumetric quantities and technologies. Water should be treated as a social and cultural good, and not primarily as an economic good. The manner of the realization of <u>the right to water must also be sustainable, ensuring that the right can be realized for present and future generations.</u></p> <p>26. The obligation to fulfil requires States parties to adopt the necessary measures directed towards the full realization of the right to water. The obligation includes, inter alia, according sufficient recognition of this right within the national political and legal systems, preferably by way of legislative implementation; adopting a national water strategy and plan of action to realize this right; ensuring that water is affordable for everyone; <u>and facilitating improved and sustainable access to water</u>, particularly in rural and deprived urban areas.</p>