



## **Water in the environment: why integrated management matters**

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The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment highlighted water as one of the two ecosystem functions under greatest threat at the global level. Normally we think of water as a benefit when it is available in sufficient quantity and suitable quality for drinking, industry or agriculture or as a threat when it floods properties and causes loss of life. However, water plays a much wider role in the functioning of ecosystems as a whole. Examples of the intricate inter-connection of land, water and people from Africa and Europe will be used to illustrate the value which we should place on water and its role in ensuring sustainable ecosystem functioning.