

SecureWater Decision Support Tool (DST)

SecureWater

SecureWater is a research project led by ODI with partners overseas and in the UK.



The Project aims to improve understanding among interveners of the linkages between water, poverty and livelihoods in order to enhance the planning and implementation of demand-based approaches to water supply development.

Project outputs will support demand-based programmes through highlighting the challenges faced at different levels and in different environments. Project materials also help decision-makers adopt the most appropriate measures to meet these challenges.

The Decision Support Tool (DST)

The Decision Support Tool (DST) is a web-based forum for the sharing of Secure Water related knowledge and practise to support Secure Water projects.

Anyone with an internet connection can view all the DST content. Users that choose to register can actively participate in the development of the tool, contributing their own experiences and information.

Using the Decision Support Tool

The DST is intended to be used by as wide a group of people as possible. Below is a brief introduction to using the DST.

DST Structure

The DST contains pages which are formatted to be displayed in a web browser. The structure of the DST encourages navigation between concepts in a non-hierarchical way.

Pages can be created, edited and added to by Registered Users. The DST automatically creates links to a page wherever the text of its title appears in the text of another page, creating a highly navigable and evolutionary information structure.

Registration

Anyone with an internet connection can browse the DST. However to contribute to the content of the DST, users must register to become a Registered User. This protects the content from being defaced or maliciously altered.

To register, please follow the Register link from the DST.

Writing Style

The DST has a form-free structure, enabling registered users to enter information without being subjected to a pre-designed format.

Registered users are encouraged to write freely and expressively, yet to be mindful of the risk of misunderstanding that exists in any form of electronic communication. Though it is possible to directly edit previous user's contributions, this is not encouraged, since it may offend that user. Add to what has been written rather than change it.

All changes are logged, and the identity of the Registered User making those changes is recorded. In the event of serious or persistent abuse of the system, all of the offending User's changes may be removed from the DST. In the event of serious abuse, that User may be barred from further use of the system.

Page Options

Registered Users see the following menu at the bottom of each page:

[EditThisPage](#) [BackLinks](#) [PageInfo](#) [attachments](#) last changed on Mon Jun 7 17:23:19 2004

EditThisPage	Edit the text of the current page
BackLinks	View pages that link to the current page
PageInfo	View previous versions of the current page, details of their creators etc.
Attachments	View and upload digital documents that have been linked to the current page

Entering Information

Information is entered through a web based form, in a way similar to a webmail interface such as Hotmail.

To edit an existing page, click the "EditThisPage" link (see under Page Options above). The existing page text can now be edited. Having completed the desired changes, a preview button gives a formatted preview of the page without saving these changes. The Save Changes button commits the changes to the DST.

A simple *mark-up* language is used to format text, meaning that most text will be displayed exactly as typed, but certain characters are interpreted by the DST, and rather than being displayed verbatim, affect the appearance of other text. For example, by typing "The **following** text", the DST would display "The **following** text" – the DST interpreting the asterisks as mark-up for bold text.

A "sandbox" page has been included, in which new users are encouraged to experiment. A link to this is included in each edit page, along with a link to a brief language reference.

The syntax of the language is outlined in the following sections. The core section covers the key syntax needed.

Core Syntax

Effect	Keystroke	Usage	Effect
Paragraph	Return or Enter Key	At end of paragraph	Single paragraph break
Line Break	%%%	At end of line	Inserts line break (can be used to force multiple breaks)
Top Level Heading	!!!	At beginning of line	Top Level Heading
Second Level Heading	!!	At beginning of line	Second Level Heading
Third Level Heading	!	At beginning of line	Third Level Heading
Bold Text	**	Before and after bold passage	Enclosed text appears bold
Italic Text	"	Before and after italic passage	Enclosed text appears italic
Larger Text	##	Before and after enlarged passage	Enclosed text appears larger
Smaller Text	μμ	Before and after shrunk passage	Enclosed text appears smaller
Bulleted List	*	Start list lines with *	Bulleted List
Numbered List	#	Start list lines with #	Numbered List

Pages and Links

Creating a new page is very simple. To create a new page:

- Edit an existing page
- Create a link to the new page by inserting the name of the page to be created within square brackets "[...]". For example, typing "The [water scarcity] issue", would create a link to a page named "water scarcity".
- Save changes.
- A question mark "?" will appear after the new link. (If the page already existed, a link to that page will appear instead).
- Click on the question mark to edit the new page.

Insert simple Link to DST page	[...]	Enclose name of link within square brackets	Link created to page of given name. Page created if not already existent.
Insert link to external page	http://www.google.com	Type full url	Link created to external page. URL displayed in text

Advanced Syntax

Table		Start and finish rows, and separate elements with Leave blank line before and after tables.	Renders a Table
Picture (aligned left)	[http://www.example.com/pics/image.gif]	Include a link to a picture within square brackets	Displays picture.
Picture (aligned right)	[http://www.example.com/pics/image.gif]	Include a link to a picture within square brackets and trailing space	Displays picture aligned to right of page.
Picture (centred)	[http://www.example.com/pics/image.gif]	Include a link to a picture within square brackets and leading and trailing spaces	Displays picture aligned to centre of page.

Attachments

Any digital file can be uploaded to the DST. However to enable the widest audience to view your file, users are **strongly** encouraged to use the following file types:

File Type	Suitability
Jpeg	for photographs or pictures
GIF	for diagrams or drawings
.doc (Microsoft Word Document)	for documents

Microsoft Paint (a component included with Windows XP) can be used to convert between image file types.

Files are uploaded into a page via the "Attachment" option. Files can be linked to other pages by inserting a copy of the file link in that page. Please give files a logical name and description when uploading as this simplifies identifying the file.

Complications may be encountered when downloading documents from the DST due to the way different web browsers handle embedded content. This can be overcome by saving the attachment to the local computer and opening it directly from the operating system of host application.

Users are urged to take precautions when opening downloaded files on their computer. Uploaded files are not scanned for viruses, so should be treated with care befitting files download from the internet. Users should take particular care to check the extension of downloaded files to ensure they are the file type expected. Users are also advised against enabling macros in Microsoft Office documents.