

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**RWANDA WATER RESOURCES BOARD**

**P.O.Box 6213 KIGALI**

**WATER USE PERMITTING  
GUIDELINES**

**March 2022**

## 1. Background

Water resources in Rwanda are under increasing pressure. People need to use water resources efficiently, effectively and wisely if we want to build a sustainable bright future for upcoming generations and ourselves. In order to do this, it is needed to know how much water is used, by whom, and where. Once this is known, it will be possible to do measurements against how much water is actually available for use. In some areas, it will then be found that there is still extra water that can be made available for use. In other areas, it will be found that there is already more water being used than the water resources can provide without considerable damage to the aquatic ecosystems.

The water Law n°49/2018 of 13/08/2018 Determining the Use and Management of Water Resources in Rwanda, stipulates that *“the use of water resources in different activities and installations susceptible to modify the flow or the level of water or to degrade their quality, or to threaten water related ecosystems, wetlands and the environment are subjected to water use permit”*.

The water permitting is one of the tools to gather the information that we need for the optimal management of our water resources and contributes to the mission of Rwanda Water Resources Board which is to ensure the availability of enough and well managed water resources for sustainable development.

## 2. Why Water Permit?

- **To manage water resources:** Managing the water resources effectively and efficiently for optimal beneficial use of water for economic development of the country.
- **To ensure equitable allocation:** To be able to allocate water, the water resources managers must know both how much water is available, and how much is on demand/required by different users sharing the same source.
- **To protect the environment:** water resources managers must ensure that water use is efficient, is well planned, and that pollution is reduced to a minimum. When allocating water resources for different uses, water resources managers have to make sure that water for environmental flow remains available.
- **To enable cost recovery of water resources investment:** Water Users registration, and monitoring of their activity serve as basis of establishing fees and levys that in return improve the availability, accessibility and sustainability of the resources in space and time.



**3. What are the benefits of having a water permit?**

- Holders of water use permit are lawful users of the resource and their claims will be duly considered in case of water use conflicts. Permit holders will not have to face sanctions and prosecution for non-compliance.
- Water allocation plans privilege known and registered water users: unknown/unregistered water users run the risk of losing their share / abstraction point/ concession area.
- In case of water shortage or hazards, permit holders will be eligible to public support or advocacy where applicable.

**4. What is the general information to provide while applying?**

- Identification of applicant
- Source of water and location
- Proposed use of water and needed quantity
- Project description and relevant attachments (EIA certificate and EIA report if required)
- Payment information (proof of payment)

**5. What are the key activities and works subject to water use permit and what are the specific documents for each activity?**

| <b>Activities/Water use</b>   | <b>Documents required</b>  |
|---|--|
| 1. Irrigation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale (1-10 ha): no specific attachment</li> <li>• Large scale (&gt; 10 ha): EIA certificate and feasibility study</li> </ul> |
| 2. Construction of the infrastructures on banks, in rivers or lakes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA certificate</li> <li>• Feasibility study</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Construction of dam  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA certificate</li> <li>• Feasibility study</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Fish farming in lakes  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation Letter from MINAGRI/RAB</li> <li>• Polygon area map</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Fish farming in ponds  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation Letter from MINAGRI/RAB</li> <li>• Hydrological report</li> </ul>  |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 6. Domestic Water supply  | • Feasibility study                        |
| 7. Coffee washing station | • Hydrological report                      |
| 8. Industries             | • EIA certificate<br>• Hydrological report |
| 9. Hydropower             | • EIA certificate<br>• Feasibility study   |
| 10. Mining                | • EIA certificate<br>• Hydrological report |
| 11. Navigation            | • Routing map                              |
| 12. Recreation activities | • EIA certificate<br>• Polygon area map    |
| Others                    | • Project descriptive note                 |

**6. What is the specific information on key water use? (to be filled on the Application Form)**

*a) Irrigation*

- Type of crop;
- Type of Production System;
- Type of irrigation technology;
- Total irrigation area;
- Total expected water demand and water to be abstracted.

*b) Construction of infrastructures on banks, in rivers or lakes*

- Brief description of the construction project;
- Expected period of time required for construction;
- Plans or maps showing proposed alterations and/or constructions at the end of construction works.

*c) Aquaculture (in ponds and dams)*

- Pond Surface;
- Pond Capacity;
- Frequency of refilling water in ponds;
- Amount of water to be used.

d) Aquaculture (in natural lakes)

- Name of the lake;
- Number of cages;
- Capacity of each cage;
- Concession area;
- Coordinates of the concession area.

e) Domestic Water Supply

- Population to be served;
- Water demand per capita per day;
- How much water will be abstracted per day?
- Total storage capacity.

f) Coffee Washing Stations

- Quantity of abstracted water;
- Washing capacity.

g) Industries

- Type of industry (Food processing; Horticultural packaging; Chemical Manufacturing; Mineral Water; Brewing or Beverage manufacturing; Fruit and vegetable canning or pickling, etc);
- Quantity of abstracted water.

h) Hydropower

- Quantity of abstracted water;
- Is there any water user along this distance?
- Capacity of Power Plant (Megawatt).

i) Mining

- Quantity of abstracted water;
- Type of minerals;
- Production capacity (tons/year).

j) Navigation

- Brief description of the project;
- Coordinates of the navigation route.

k) Recreation activities

- Brief description of the project;
- Coordinates of the recreation area.



## **7. What is the difference between domestic water supply and Domestic use of water resources?**

Domestic water supply means potable and non-potable water provided to households, schools, hospitals, etc... by a public water supplier (Service provider) and serves to supply to individual or collective residential houses or farms with water sourced from a surface or ground water body.

Domestic use of water resources refers to use of water directly from a surface or ground water body without the intervention of a service provider, for drinking, cooking, bathing, washing, cleaning or maintenance of houses and surroundings and other domestic equipment in a quantity limited to the amount needed for the satisfaction of individual or family needs.

Domestic water supply is subject to a water use permit whereas the use of water resources for domestic purposes is not subject to water use permit. However all economic and social activities, whether domestic or not (farms, schools, hospitals, all group settlements), are subject to water use permit.

## **8. How to apply for water use permit?**

### a) Offline application

- Write an application letter addressed to the Director General of Rwanda Water Resources Board, through the Mayor of the District in which the activities will be carried out;
- Fill the application form (the form can be downloaded at [www.waterpermit.rw](http://www.waterpermit.rw));
- Attach all the necessary supporting documents as mentioned in the form;
- Payment of application fee of 35,000 Rwf on account number 1000010924 opened in BNR, or account number 400374425010189 opened in BPR (both are FONERWA accounts);
- Send your application to [info@rwb.rw](mailto:info@rwb.rw)

### b) Online Application

Application can be done solely through the online water permit system ([www.waterpermit.rwb.rw](http://www.waterpermit.rwb.rw)).

## **9. How long does a water use permit remain valid?**

A water use permit is valid for an initial period not exceeding fifteen (15) years or the estimated lifetime of proposed activity. Such water use permit may be renewed for further periods.

## 10. How to make an extension of the duration of a water use permit?

The holder of a water use permit who wish to extend the duration of the water use permit, in at least three (3) months before expiry of the initial duration do the following:

- Write an application letter addressed to the Director General of Rwanda Water Resources Board, through the Mayor of the District in which the activities have been carried out;
- Fill the application form (the form can be downloaded at [www.waterpermit.rw](http://www.waterpermit.rw));
- Submit an overall report of activities done during the elapsed period;
- Attach a proof of Payment of application fee of 35,000 Rwf on account number 1000010924 opened in BNR, or account number 400374425010189 opened in BPR (both are FONERWA accounts);
- Send your application to [info@rwb.rw](mailto:info@rwb.rw)

The extended water use permit must be subject to the same conditions of the initial water use permit.

## 11. How to transfer or modify a water use permit?

*Transfer:* A water use permit holder may, in writing, apply for the transfer of a water use permit and stating the reasons for the transfer and the written agreement from the new holder. The new water use permit holder has the same rights and obligations as the previous water use permit holder and must fulfil the same terms and conditions.

*Modification:* The Director General of Rwanda Water Resources Board may, at the written request of the holder of a water use permit, modify the permit, after an assessment of the reasons for the request.

## 12. How to make an application for water use permit for rural water supply networks owned by the Districts?

For existing rural water supply networks owned by the Districts, a single application combining all the existing networks/sources will be submitted. The applicant (District) shall attach a list of sources applied for in their application, and a single document reflecting the permits for all those networks/sources will be issued accordingly.

For new rural water supply networks, each network shall have its own application and the permit will be issued accordingly.



**13. How is the water use permit issued?**

Upon reception of an application for water use permit, Rwanda Water Resources Board organizes a field visit to assess and verify the provided information. Thereafter, a technical report indicates whether the requested permit can be issued. Feedback to the applicant is provided within 30 days upon application.

**14. Who has the priority for permit among water users?**

All persons are entitled to an equitable and reasonable share on the water resources available.

However, in allocating water resources the priority is given to: 1° domestic needs; 2° environmental protection; 3° economic activities.

In case a water source has been historically occupied by a user, the priority is given to that existing user provided that they comply with the rules and regulations relating to these guidelines.

**15. What are the water use fees?**

The holder of a Water Use Permit shall pay annual fees for the use of water according to tariffs described in the Ministerial Order.

**16. What are the offences and penalties?**

Any person who uses water or carries out a water-related activity without a water use permit as required commits an offense. Upon conviction, he or she is liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than two (2) months and not more than three (3) months and a fine of five hundred thousand Rwandan francs (FRW 500,000) or only one of these penalties.

Done at Kigali, on *04/04/2022*

*Emmanuel Rukundo*  
**Dr. Emmanuel RUKUNDO**  
**Director General**



**Annex:** Law N°49/2018 of 13/08/2018 determining the use and management of Water Resources in Rwanda.