Early Recognition of Droughts
Drought monitoring, early warning, and forecasting is only a promising investment if it provides true benefits to water users. This is the starting point of the project “Early recognition of critical drought and low-flow conditions in Switzerland” (DROUGHT-CH).

The project links the characterization and early recognition of critical drought and low-flow conditions in Switzerland with the identification of the needs of end users, stakeholders and decision makers for developing a drought information platform (cf. figure 1).

Research Focus: User Needs & Potential Benefits
The main objectives of the user and stakeholder-oriented work packages are:
- to assess the specific information needs of Swiss water user groups (WP1)
- to investigate potential benefits from early recognition for selected economic sectors (WP6).

First Results on User Needs (WP1)
Drought information needs
First results of the study give a rough picture of the most important variables for early recognition from the point of view of Swiss user groups (cf. table 1). The user-specific spatial and temporal characteristics of information which are necessary for benefiting from early recognition will be investigated in the further research.

Effective communication of drought information
Most user groups prefer an internet-based information platform which displays different variables in multiple spatial scales and time spans. Additionally, the information should be “tailored” to their specific needs and communicated via already existing sector-specific information products e.g. bulletins or newsletter.

Data and Methods
- questionnaire survey
- stakeholder workshop
- interviews

Representatives involved from the following sectors: agriculture, forestry, energy production, water supply, shipping, fishing, nature conservation.

Collaborations
- Exchange with IWAGO on water policies
- AGWAM on drought impacts on agriculture

Conclusion & Next Steps
A diverse set of variables needs to be included in a comprehensive information platform which considers information requirements of all user groups. In a next step we will differentiate the user needs conducting an in-depth analysis for selected user groups (i.e. agriculture, forestry, water management). The focus lies on possible adaptation options and potential benefits of early recognition (WP6).

DROUGHT-CH Project Information
Project Title: Early recognition of critical drought and low-flow conditions in Switzerland
WP1: Critical drought indicators for different water users
WP6: Economic benefit of early recognition of drought
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Table 1: Most important information for drought affected user groups (WP1)