



OECD Initiative on Water Governance

Terms of Reference

28 March 2013

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This note frames the scope, objectives, and expected contribution of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance, hosted by the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development directorate.¹ It was discussed at the kick-off meeting of the Initiative on 27-28 March 2013 (OECD Headquarters, Paris) and includes comments therein received by delegates. The Initiative builds on the process of the 6th World Water Forum (Marseille, 12-17 March 2012) and the outcomes of its Core Group on “Good Governance”, led by the OECD and other institutional partners.

The OECD Initiative on Water Governance is intended as a **multi-stakeholder network** of public, private and not-for-profit actors that gather twice a year in a **Policy Forum** to advance on the global water governance agenda and foster continuity between two World Water For a (which take place every three years).

The Initiative encompasses:

- A **Technical platform** to discuss good practices and challenges in water governance;
- An **International Inventory** (that may later become an Observatory) of good water governance practices, tools and initiatives to avoid duplications and encourage synergies across institutions;
- A **Web-based tool** aimed at disseminating key water governance features across a wide range of public, private and not-for-profit actors at different levels, within and outside the water community.

The **OECD Secretariat** hosts the Initiative on Water Governance and carries out operational activities. A **Steering Committee** composed of the founding institutions from the 6th WWF Good Governance Core Group (see table below) defines strategic orientations and sustains the activities through thematic and regional working groups.

Background and rationale

The OECD 2011 Report “Water Governance in OECD Countries: a Multi-level Approach” underlines the extent to which the current water crisis is largely a governance crisis. It also stresses that often, the technical, financial and even institutional “solutions” to the crisis are well-known. The main challenges concern their implementation on the ground – overcoming the governance gaps hindering water policy, monitoring social, environmental and economic outcomes and engaging stakeholders at all level to design and implement place-based policies, tailored to local contexts. Hence, the importance of sharing practices, tools and methodologies across countries and institutions to take stock of both what exists and works well, as well as lessons learnt from failures. In a word, how water governance “solutions” can work.

¹ The **OECD Initiative on Water Governance** may not be considered under any circumstance as an OECD body. The Initiative will be hosted within the OECD, the Secretariat of which will be assumed by the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate.

The 6th WWF offered the opportunity to launch and open such a dialogue. As part of this solution-oriented Forum, held in Marseille on 12-17 March 2012, a large community of stakeholders from different backgrounds worked together in the “Good Governance” Core Group led by the OECD to develop concrete, measurable and achievable solutions in terms of (i) effective public governance; (ii) integrated water resources management; and (iii) integrity and transparency.

From February 2011 to March 2012, six task forces gathering 300 contributors and led by six target solution group coordinators worked together in order to:

- define and agree upon **six good governance targets** to be achieved in the next decade, regarding stakeholders’ engagement, service performance, improved integrated water resources management, groundwater governance, corruption alleviation and transparent budgetary processes (see table below);
- design realistic **action plans**, based on good practices worldwide; and
- collect **pragmatic responses** to overcome governance challenges in the water sector

Good Governance Targets defined for the 6th WWF, Marseille 12-17 2012

Effective public governance	Target 1 	By 2015, 50% of countries will have adopted consultation, participation and co-ordination mechanisms allowing stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels to effectively contribute to decision-making in a coherent, holistic and integrated way. By 2021, 100% will have done so.
	Target 2 	By 2015, 50% countries will have strengthened regulatory frameworks and adopted performance indicators (service delivery) to monitor and evaluate water policies; and all countries will have put in place capacity-building processes at national and local level to foster good governance in service delivery. By 2018, all countries will have done so.
Integrated water resources management	Target 3 	By 2021, increase by 30% the number of river basin management plans (analysis of initial status and main issues).
	Target 4 	By 2015, increase the number of countries with water security diagnoses and governance tools , based on existing (local, national, international) regulatory and legislative frameworks and integrated water resources management mechanisms.
Better integrity and transparency	Target 5 	By 2018, 30 countries will have committed to promote integrity in the water sector, diagnose/map existing or potential corruption risks , and ensure that anti-corruption policies are well implemented and effective.
	Target 6 	By 2018, 30 countries will be implementing: transparent water budget processes , including information about water infrastructure investment planning and implementation (financial, technical, and socioeconomic impacts); and methods and tools for improving transparency and accountability within the water sector.

The Final Synthesis Report on Good Governance from the 6th World Water Forum can be accessed at http://www.oecd.org/gov/regional-policy/Report_CG_CS1_Good_Governance_EN.pdf

During the [conclusion of governance discussions](#) in Marseille, institutions gathered under the Core Group on “Good Governance” agreed to set up a platform that will maintain continuous links and cooperation across stakeholders between World Water Fora. The Mediterranean and America regional processes of the 6th WWF reached a similar conclusion on the necessity to go beyond Marseille 2012 in co-operation with the OECD.

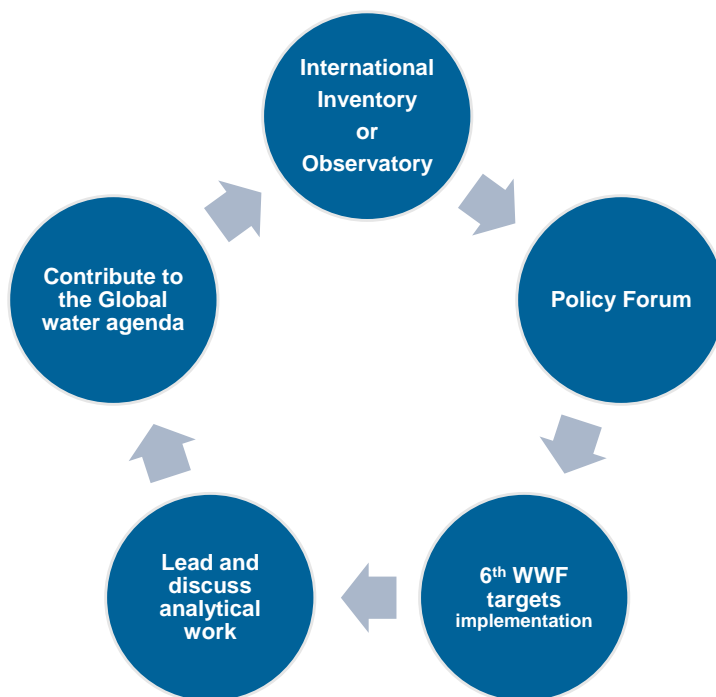
Scope and objectives

The OECD Initiative on Water Governance provides a platform to convene key stakeholders within and outside the water sector in order to share experiences and lessons learnt in improving water governance.

The objectives include the following:

- Provide a **Policy Forum across decision-makers** committed to improve water governance via policy dialogue, policy-driven analyses, scientific data, bench-learning and exchanges of experience at basin, local, regional, national and international levels (community of practice);
- Contribute to the design of **Water Governance Guidelines or Principles**, to be endorsed by the Initiative's members, building on parallel efforts in other institutions;
- Set-up an **Inventory/Observatory on water governance** in order to:
 - collect existing solutions, tools, methodologies, initiatives and programmes in support to effective governance in the water sector;
 - serve as a one-stop shop for water governance related information and projects; and
 - create the interface between existing information and communities of practices (e.g. web platforms, water governance related information systems etc.)
- Maintain continuity between two World Water Fora, by supporting users-oriented and needs-driven **implementation of the 6th WWF solutions and commitments** on water governance through the sharing of good practices and experiences across countries and institutions;
- Contribute to the **Global Water Agenda**, including the Calendar of activities for the International Water Cooperation Year, discussions on Sustainable Development Goals etc.

Objectives of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance



Stakeholders to be engaged in the OECD Initiative on Water Governance

The Initiative on Water Governance has an **open membership** and a wide **geographic, economic and institutional representation** of key water governance players at local, national and global levels. The (100 or so) members of the Initiative represent national governments, basin and local authorities (and their networks), regulators (and their networks), donors and international financial institutions, NGOs, international organisations and institutions, service providers (both public and private, and their networks), as well as academics and independent experts. The Initiative also relies on regional partners (or sub-networks) in the Mediterranean region, North America, Europe, Africa, in Latin America and Asia.

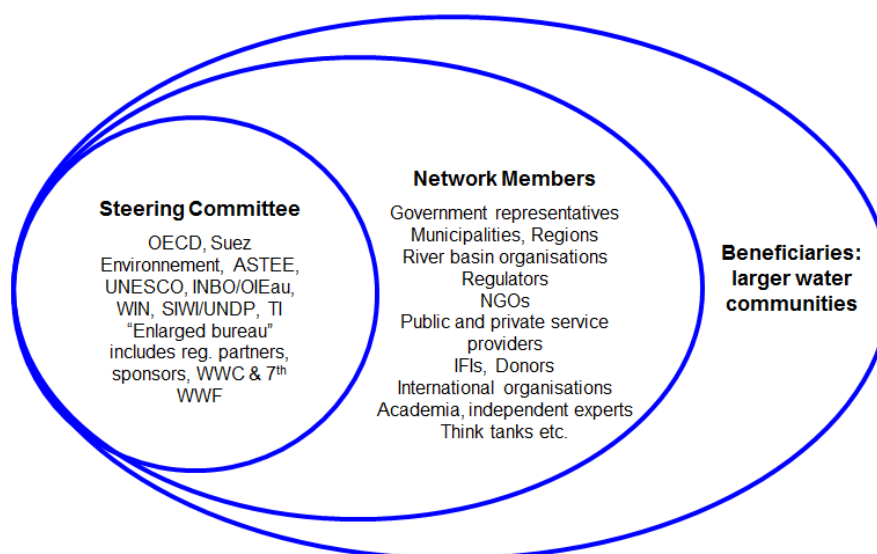
Potential outputs

Expected outputs of the Water Governance Initiative include the following:

- **An International Inventory identifying existing tools, methodologies, initiatives and programmes** in support of good governance in the water sector, to be updated on a regular basis; this inventory will be reinforcing existing tool spaces in the field (e.g. WIN, UNESCO, INBO, UNDP/SIWI)
- **A water governance Newsletter to disseminate relevant up-to-date information** on events/conferences, outcomes of reforms, publications, etc.;
- **Monitoring of the implementation of the 6th WWF governance targets**: this could take the form of annual progress reports, a matrix of key obstacles to targets' implementation in different countries, institutional partnerships across members (MoUs, cooperation framework) to support specific target implementation, collection of good practices on the ground etc.
- **Principles or Guidelines on Water Governance** to be endorsed by founding institutions/members (to be submitted to OECD relevant bodies and committees, and/or become an international voluntary instrument);
- **Policy guidance and other contributions in support of better water governance**: e.g. analytical work, technical assistance, loans/grants, enactment of laws/regulations, measure of performance, data sharing, dissemination of good practices, soft law etc.;

Organisation and sustainability of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance

Three-tier structure of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance



Subject to appropriate funding, the day-to-day operational activities of the Initiative and the bi-annual meetings will be hosted and carried out by the **OECD Secretariat**. The maintenance and operation of the Initiative will be **funded exclusively through voluntary contributions and in-kind contributions**. **Voluntary contributions could take the form of a basket of donors** from the Steering Committee Members and other sponsors, and in-kind **contributions** could take such forms as hosting some regional and thematic working groups meetings, sharing available knowledge and information, convening joint activities of the Initiative.

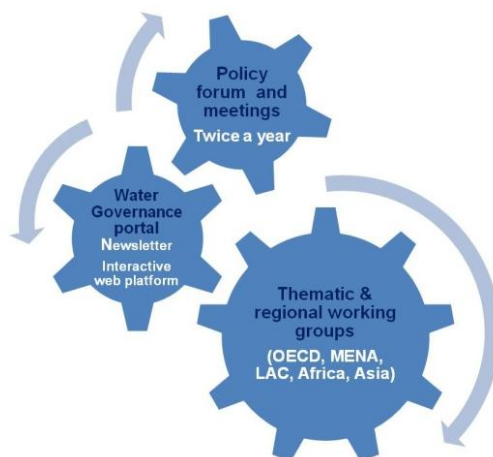
The **Steering Committee** defines strategic orientations and sustains the activities through leading the thematic working groups. It can have a rotating membership with half of the steering committee being renewed (for example) after each World Water Forum.

The Steering committee is composed of target solution groups' coordinators of the 6th WWF Governance Group (OECD, Suez Environment, UNESCO, ASTEE, INBO, SIWI, Transparency international and the Water Integrity Network). An "**enlarged bureau**" includes regional partners, sponsors and representatives from WWC and 7th WWF.

The OECD Initiative on Water Governance could be maintained through:

- A **Charter** presenting the mandate, prerogatives and contributions of the Initiative and agreed upon by the members;
- **Two meetings per year** convening stakeholders, back to back with important water-related events. Such a meeting could also be hosted by regional governance initiatives which could play the role of liaison within their respective geographic areas, or thematic coordinators depending on their respective activities.
- **Pre-listed activities building on key water governance events and commitments** from Initiative's partners (e.g. International year on water cooperation, e.g. WIN-UNESCO Integrity Conference etc., Water and Diplomacy Conference etc.)
- **Thematic working groups** around the six targets defined up to Marseille, to be linked to specific work in the different continents carried out by "**regional partners**", with cross-fertilisation mechanisms to foster exchanges, building on specialisation of communities of practice and linking with relevant network organisations;
- The establishment of an International **Inventory/Observatory on water governance** good practices, on the basis of analytical inputs/outputs, self-reporting mechanisms, quantitative/qualitative surveys and in-depth case studies; and
- The launch of a dedicated **website**, quarterly **newsletters** and interactive **platforms** of dialogue for a wide dissemination and visibility;

Organisation of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance



Duration and Tentative calendar 2013-2015

The Initiative is set up for an initial duration of two years starting the official launch (27-28 March 2013), and could be pursued, subject to the results and conclusions of the 7th World Water Forum in Korea.

- **27-28 March 2013 : Official kick-off of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance**
- **Q3 2013:** Selection of the Chair, organisation of thematic working groups, identification of regional partners.
- **7-8 November 2013 :** 2nd Meeting of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance
- **2013-2014 : Activities** (to be detailed at a later stage, within thematic working groups)
- **Q2 2014 :** 3rd meeting of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance
- **Q4 2014 :** 4th meeting of the OECD Initiative on Water Governance
- **Q2 2015 :** Inputs to the 7th World Water Forum, Korea

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