



OECD WATER GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE:

Terms of Reference for the period 2022-24

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Acronyms

AEAS	Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation
ASTEE	Association Scientifique et Technique pour l'Eau et l'Environnement
CFE	Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities of the OECD
COP	Conference of the Parties
GOV	Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate of the OECD
INBO	International Network of Basin Organisations
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIEau	International Office for Water
RDPC	Regional Development Policy Committee
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
WGI	Water Governance Initiative
WIN	Water Integrity Network

Background

The launch of the OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) in 2013 stemmed from the observation that water crises around the world are often primarily governance crises as they tend to relate to who does what, at which scale, how and why. Since 2009, the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee has been producing a body of evidence taking the form of data, thematic analysis, benchmarks, local and national policy dialogues as well as policy standards stressing that policy responses to water challenges will only be viable if they are coherent; if stakeholders are properly engaged; if well-designed regulatory frameworks are in place; if there is adequate and accessible information; and if there is sufficient capacity, integrity and transparency. This requires breaking silos across ministries, co-ordinating across levels of government, articulating private, public and non-profit interests, and engaging with those who have an interest or stake in water-related outcomes in addition to policymakers. Setting up a multi-stakeholder platform to share experiences was therefore a necessity to enhance cross-fertilisation of knowledge and scale up best practices with a view to shape better policy guidance.

The OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) was launched on 27-28 March 2013 as a multi-stakeholder network of 100+ members from public, private and civil society sectors gathering twice a year in a Policy Forum. It was created as a follow-up to the 6th World Water Forum (Marseille, 2012)¹ with the objectives to:

- Provide a multi-stakeholder technical platform to share knowledge, experience and best practices on water governance across levels of government;
- Advise governments in taking the needed steps for effective water reforms through peer-to-peer dialogue and stakeholder engagement across public, private and non-profit sectors;
- Provide a consultation mechanism to raise the profile of governance in the Global Agendas;
- Support the design and implementation of the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* ; and
- Foster continuity between World Water Forums (every 3 years).

Over the past 9 years, the activities of the WGI have delivered tangible results, which in addition to dozens of peer-reviews of technical work and analysis on water governance, consisted in several co-produced outputs as “public goods”:

- During its first phase of activity (2013-15), the WGI co-produced the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#), in a bottom-up and multi-stakeholder fashion. Since their adoption by the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee (May 2015) and their backing at ministerial level (June 2015), the Principles have been endorsed by 170+ stakeholder groups gathered within the [Global Coalition for Good Water Governance](#).
- During the second phase of activity (2015-18), the WGI developed an [indicator framework](#) to support multi-stakeholder dialogues and self-assessment of water governance in interested cities, basins and countries, and facilitated the peer-review of over 50 concrete water governance stories from across the Globe. These findings were summarised in the report [Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance](#), as well as in an [online map](#), which were both released at the 8th World Water Forum (Brasilia, 2018).
- During its third phase of activity (2019-2021), the WGI produced a [How-To Assess Water Governance Guide](#), advanced the measurement of water governance impacts through a [Special Issue](#) of the Journal Water International, and devoted particular attention to Africa in light of the 9th World Water Forum held in Dakar (March 2022) with the completion of two reports on [Water](#)

¹ The OECD co-ordinated the thematic group on governance and set-up a taskforce of 300+ participants to prepare discussions during the Forum. Setting-up a multi-stakeholder platform under OECD leadership was recognised as a means, amongst others, to foster governance continuity in between World Water Fora.

[Governance in African Cities](#) and Water Governance in Cape Town, and the launch of a new [Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#).

Since its creation, the WGI has gathered sixteen times in plenary meetings to carry out the above-mentioned activities and to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing and several contributions to global agendas.

Terms of Reference, 2022-2024

OECD Water Governance Initiative

Objectives

The OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) is an international multi-stakeholder network of members from the public, private and non-for-profit sectors gathering twice a year to share best practices in support of better governance in the water sector. The WGI Secretariat is hosted within the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) as part of the activities of the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC).

As was the case for its nine years of operation (2013-2021), the WGI is conceived as a network of experts, policymakers and practitioners that should, under no circumstance, be considered as an OECD subsidiary body. The WGI has no decision-making prerogatives vis-à-vis OECD documents and processes. The five proposed overarching goals of the WGI for the period 2022-24 are as follows:

- Provide a **multi-stakeholder technical platform** to share knowledge, experience and best practices on water governance across levels of government;
- **Advise all levels of governments** in taking the needed steps for effective water reforms through peer-to-peer dialogue and stakeholder engagement across public, private and non-profit sectors;
- Provide a **consultation mechanism** to raise the profile of governance in the Global Agendas (Sustainable Development Goals, World Water Forum, World Urban Forum, COP etc.);
- Support the implementation of the **OECD Principles on Water Governance** in interested cities, basins and countries by promoting the uptake of the Indicator Framework and peer-learning from concrete water governance stories; and
- Facilitate the implementation of the **Mayors Action Plan for Water Security** from the 9th World Water Forum (Dakar, 2018) up to the 10th World Water Forum (Bali, 2024).

Structure

The WGI will continue to operate according to a three-tiered governance structure, in close co-operation and co-ordination with the OECD Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC):

- The **Secretariat** is ensured by the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities of the OECD (CFE), subject to appropriate funding through voluntary contributions. The Secretariat is mainly responsible for the day-to-day operational activities of the WGI, the drafting of the material discussed at the meetings, the analytical work subject to consultations within the platform, the co-ordination of partner institutions, and the organisation of WGI meetings.

- The **Chair**, to be renewed in 2022 for 3 years, spearheads the strategic orientations and presides over biannual WGI meetings and quarterly Steering Committee Meetings. He ensures the recognition of the multi-stakeholder network, strives to raise the profile of the WGI and its contribution to different processes, supports fundraising efforts, and ensures that the compliance with the terms of reference pay due regard to the opinion of all members.
- The **Steering Committee** supports the implementation of the strategic goals of the WGI and contributes to fundraising efforts. It is composed of co-founding institutions, namely the *International Network of Basin Organisations* (INBO), the *International Office for Water* (OIEau), *Transparency International* (TI), the *Association Scientifique et Technique pour l'Eau et l'Environnement* (ASTEE), *Suez*, *Stockholm International Water Institute* (SIWI) and the *Water Integrity Network* (WIN), as well as by the *Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation* (AEAS) that joined the Steering Committee in 2016, after a call for applications among WGI members.

Composition and membership

The WGI has an open membership and large geographic, economic and institutional representation at local, national and global levels. All members participate in WGI discussions and consultations either through written contributions or through physical presence at the meetings and related events.

- The **100+ members** include national and subnational governments, river basin organisations (and/or their networks), public or private service providers (and/or their networks), economic or environmental regulators (and/or their networks), donor agencies, NGOs, international organisations, industry, associations of water users, the scientific community and academia, amongst others;
- Membership of **national governments** from OECD and partner countries is subject to their interest in the topic and capacity to engage in the activities. All water focal points of OECD member countries systematically receive an invitation to join the Network, as well as focal points from partner countries that have shown an interest in the water topic;
- The WGI cooperates with **regional partners** (or sub-networks) in the Mediterranean region, North America, Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia, which provide a bridge to non-OECD countries as appropriate and link the WGI to broader regional initiatives and activities.

Funding

The maintenance and operation of the WGI relies essentially on voluntary and/or in-kind contributions. **Voluntary contributions** can come from countries or institutions that are supportive of the WGI and willing to fund its activities through specific grant agreements. **In-kind contributions** from WGI members can take the form of hosting meetings, liaising with non-Members for outreach and communication, contributing to seminars, workshops or surveys, and/or mobilising a range of expertise as needed.

Activities and expected deliverables

Subject to available funding, the activities of the WGI will be organised as follows:

- The WGI will gather in a **Policy Forum** every six months at OECD Headquarters or outside when meetings are hosted by WGI members. Drawing on COVID-19 lessons, whenever possible, online meetings should also be considered to maximise attendance and minimise the carbon footprint. WGI meetings will be organised back-to-back to RDPC or major water-related global events. The Highlights (or Summary Record) of WGI plenary meetings will systematically be shared with WGI members and RDPC delegates.

- WGI members will share knowledge and experience on water governance, foster the dissemination of best practices, be part of the water **leaders community** to co-organise events with high level impacts, co-produce research and concrete outputs to foster water security worldwide and carry out peer-to-peer dialogue to support water reform processes as appropriate.
- A **Water Governance Lab** will provide a space to support the implementation of the OECD Principles of Water Governance in a concrete manner, through collecting and discussing solutions at national, basin and local level, as well as by type of stakeholders (e.g. women, youth). Findings will take the form of a web map, profiles and/ or snapshots, and will be launched at the 10th World Water Forum. The Steering Committee of the WGI will provide strategic guidance, facilitate the co-production of joint outputs in synergy with WGI members' activities. Members of the Steering Committee will act as Champions of the OECD Principles of Water Governance in international events and support **communication and outreach** of WGI tools at different levels to ensure greater impact and co-ordination with other initiatives.
- The WGI will provide a **consultation and engagement mechanism across stakeholders** to contribute to the Global Agendas. In particular, it will strive to foster continuity on governance discussions in between the 9th and the 10th World Water Fora and foster linkages, as appropriate, to other global processes such as the Sustainable Development Goals, World Urban Forum, and COP.

Terms of Reference for the WGI Steering Committee

The [OECD Water Governance Initiative](#) (WGI) is an international multi-stakeholder network of members from the public, private and non-for-profit sectors gathering twice a year in a Policy Forum to share good practices in support of better water governance.

Objectives

The Steering Committee:

- Provides guidance on the strategic orientations and activities in accordance with the WGI Terms of reference for the period 2022-24
- Participates in quarterly steering committee meetings and regular interactions with the Chair and the Secretariat as appropriate;
- Contributes to the analytical content to the WGI's core activities, in synergy with Steering Committee members' own activities and within the strategic framework of the WGI for 2022-2024.
- Contributes to the sustainability of the network by identifying fundraising opportunities, and reaching out to potential donors in a concerted and co-ordinated fashion, and considering in-kind contributions where relevant;
- Co-leads the activities of the WGI to support the implementation of the Principles on Water Governance, in co-operation with the Secretariat; and
- Ensures maximum visibility and impact of WGI activities through co-ordination with other relevant networks and activities.

Steering Committee members are not remunerated for their tasks and the financial expenses incurred by the function are not covered by the OECD.

Composition

The Steering Committee is composed of the co-founding institutions of the WGI, i.e. the co-ordinators of the 6th World Water Forum Good Governance target solution group, namely INBO, OIEau, TI, ASTEE, Suez, SIWI and WIN, as well as AEAS that joined the Steering Committee in 2016 after a call for application extended to all WGI members.

Members have fixed terms of office over the duration of the programme of work, with a possible rotation of one-third of the Steering Committee every 3 years.

The possibility of changing the composition and/or enlarging the Steering Committee or the filling of vacant seats should be subject to a call for applicants among all WGI members.

Methods of work and activities

The Steering Committee is responsible for the design and implementation of a proactive communication and outreach strategy, and the mobilisation of necessary resources to that effect. The objectives of this strategy are to disseminate WGI findings outside the network, raise awareness on current and forthcoming activities, and bridge membership gaps as appropriate.

The Steering Committee should also explore opportunities to implement the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* or to use the indicator framework in interested countries, cities or basins, for example through policy dialogues or other activities different levels.

For each WGI plenary meeting, the Steering Committee provides support to the Secretariat for the preparation (agenda, invitations, and communications), execution (content and logistics) and follow-up (summary records and dissemination) of the meeting.

In between biannual plenary meetings, the Steering Committee supports the continuity of the work through regular exchanges with the OECD Secretariat, and links up with WGI members' strategies, networks, products and activities.

The Steering Committee also contributes to ensuring the continuity of the work between biannual plenary meetings by feeding relevant media platforms with up-to-date information about the WGI (dedicated website and newsletters, partners' websites and/or newsletters, specialised journals, etc.), mobilising relevant networks and identifying complementarities with parallel initiatives.

Eligibility & Competencies

The application to the Steering Committee is both an institutional and personal commitment and should be conveyed by the highest representative of the organisation applying. A prerequisite is that the candidate brings tangible evidence of an active contribution to the WGI's activities since its creation, beyond the participation in the plenary meetings. The vacant seat(s)[if applicable in 2022-24-tbc] is/are primarily seen as an opportunity for the most active WGI members to up-scale their contribution in a more visible and strategic way in the future. Proofs of such commitments could be for instance: having commented on draft papers; having provided analytical inputs to the design/implementation of the Principles on Water Governance; having taken an active role in the working groups or co-production activities in the past; having submitted case studies; having hosted a WGI meeting; having provided financial resources; and/or having used the Principles in project work, technical assistant programmes, etc.

The candidate should be fluent in English (with additional languages beneficial), and be/have been a water professional with solid policy/project experience with water matters at international, national, basin or local level. The candidate should show strong potential to mobilise networks and constituencies to contribute to WGI activities, good prospects for fundraising to sustain the activities of the WGI, and solid connections with decision-makers (governments, at different levels) or contributions to the global agendas.

The eligible candidate will be selected by the current members of the Steering Committee, after an open discussion and based on consensus.

Terms of reference of the Chair of the OECD Water Governance Initiative

The [OECD Water Governance Initiative](#) (WGI) is an international multi-stakeholder network of members from the public, private and non-for-profit sectors gathering twice a year to share good practices in support of better governance in the water sector.

Responsibilities & Tasks

The Chairmanship of the WGI is an honorary, non-remunerated position. Financial expenses incurred by the Chairmanship function will not be covered by the WGI.

The Chair will represent the WGI within and outside the OECD, and preside over biannual plenary meetings as well as Steering Committee meetings. S/he will be assisted in this task by the OECD Secretariat in the form of background briefing prior to the events, and technical assistance during the meetings.

The Chair will represent the WGI in high-level events and ensure an effective recognition of the multi-stakeholder network activities, and its contribution to the Global Water Agenda through the following actions:

- Sharing the WGI's priorities, activities and results with OECD bodies and delegations, as well as other relevant institutions and networks;
- Raising the profile of the WGI in water-related events at different levels;
- Supporting the fundraising efforts of the OECD Secretariat to make the activities of the WGI sustainable;
- Taking an active role in the Steering Committee's strategic orientations and discussions;
- Ensuring that the mandate, relevant decisions and practices of the WGI are complied with;
- Paying due regard, in carrying out his/her duties to the opinion of all members of the WGI;

Eligibility & Competencies

The Chair should be a national from an OECD country; s/he should be nominated by a high-level government representative, and be fluent in English (with additional languages beneficial).

The Chair should be/have been a high-level policymaker or manager with at least ten years of experience with water matters, and in dealing with international counterparts and multi-stakeholder settings. An active role in making water reform happen (at basin, local or national level) would be an advantage.

The Chair should have accumulated experience and skills in the following areas

- Designing and/or implementing water policies at different levels with clear results;
- Chairing or leading decision-making bodies comprised of diverse stakeholders;
- Organising and facilitating discussions, and building consensus among diverse stakeholders;

- Demonstrating discretion and professional ethics with respect to confidential matters;
- Communicating clearly, concisely and persuasively;
- Listening attentively and respectfully to other stakeholder views; and
- Showing ability to act, think and speak independently with conviction and confidence;

Designation

The term of office of the Chair will cover a maximum of three years and shall not exceed two consecutive terms.

The selection of the Chair will stem from a transparent and open process, after an official call for applications to the OECD permanent delegations, all the members of the WGI and the water community at large, based on the above description of tasks, responsibilities and competencies. The new WGI Chair will be selected over July-September 2022 by the Steering Committee of the WGI after an open discussion and based on consensus.