Webinar of WGI's Working Group on "Indicators"

25 April 2016 – 2 to 4pm, CEST

****

Highlights from Discussions

****

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

1. The webinar gathered **37 participants** (5 in person and 32 online) from **13 countries** (see list of participants in Annex I) to kick-off the activities of WGI's working group on indicators. The Working Group is led by **OECD, ASTEE, INBO and Transparency International**, which are all members of the WGI's steering committee. The Webinar aimed at scoping the activities to be carried out over 2016-2018 and seek guidance from members on the proposals made by the Secretariat in the background scoping note on water governance indicators. This note, which was discussed in previous WGI meetings and revised to include comments received, was shared with registered participants to frame the discussions on how the development of indicators can support the implementation of the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* in interested countries, basins and cities.

2. The webinar started with a presentation of the objectives, composition and role of the Working Group. It is expected that the Working Group contributes to help **better assess water governance**, but that can also be used as a **tool for dialogue**. The Working Group is composed by WGI members willing to participate on a voluntary basis. Their contributions mainly consist in assisting with the development of metrics/proxies for each of the 12 Principles and reflections on where/how to collect data; commenting on working documents based on their policy, practical and/or academic experience; and helping identify/engage pilots for testing the robustness and relevance of the indicators.

3. The **ten questions** from the scoping note were used to guide the Webinar's discussions:

- Indicators to measure what?
- Which type of indicators?
- Whose views?
- At which scale?
- Which process?
- Who are the beneficiaries?
- How will indicators be used?
- Who will collect and produce the data?
- How to ensure replicability?
- How to disclose results?

4. The participants were invited to react one-by-one to the questions posed by the Secretariat in the Agenda (see Agenda in Annex II). Overall, **strong support was provided to the proposals** made by the co-ordinators in the scoping note. In addition, several valuable suggestions were made to fill some of the gaps or flag selected issues that should receive more attention.

Key insights from discussions

A consensus on the scope and approach proposed

5. Participants agreed with the overall objectives, framework and steps suggested in the scoping note. The ultimate objective of indicators should be to **improve the water policy cycle** in a shared responsibility across policymakers and stakeholders. The indicators should help understand what

works or does not in different contexts, given that governance is primarily a **means to the end** of managing "too much", "too little" and "too polluted" waters.

6. The indicators should first seek to measure whether **framework conditions** are in place for achieving the standards behind the *OECD Principles on Water governance*. But, they should also help assess **progress** in water governance at different scales against baselines. Lastly, to the extent possible, indicators should contribute to measuring the **impacts** of governance mechanisms on water-related outcomes (e.g. in terms of water quality, water quantity, access etc.). This three-step approach implies using a range of **input, process, output** and **impact indicators**. It was agreed that such indicators should primarily be based on **factual data** and complemented as need be by **perception-based** indicators. Given the place-based nature of water management and the high degree of decentralisation, the indicators should reflect the **multi-scale** dynamics of water governance, which may imply collecting data and information at different scales. The very process for building indicators should benefit from **technical** and **policy experience-sharing** within the WGI and relevant OECD bodies. The end **beneficiaries** include governments, river basin organisations, service providers, donor agencies, NGOs, civil society, emerging actors. Finally, it was underlined that an assessment framework consisted not only in a set of indicators, but also in a set of **criteria** as well as in-depth and comprehensive **analyses** at different levels of government. Here, criteria can be understood as a baseline against which policy responses and reforms can be assessed, while indicators specify how to measure each criterion. In this sense, baselines and counterfactual scenarios are an integral part of the assessment process. This also highlights the need to reach consensus on definitions, which will also facilitate data collection later on. A first synthesis of results from the indicators should be published in an OECD "**Water Governance at a Glance**" report to be launched at the 8th World Water Forum (2018, Brasilia).

7. It was also agreed that the exercise of collecting and analysing data from such indicators would rely on a **voluntary approach** across countries, basins and cities. In order to ensure the replicability of the indicators in different contexts, **pilot-tests** should be carried out at different scales, for different water management functions, and in different regions to provide "**reality-checks**" on data applicability and availability. Synergies should be sought with those countries that have volunteered to pilot test some **SDGs** water-related targets (e.g. France, the Netherlands) and some countries enquired about resources needed and the timeline for pilot testing to be able to volunteer (Israel, New Zealand).

Participants diverge on the sequencing of the process in terms of what should be measured

8. **Some divergences** were noteworthy in terms of **how to get there**. While several participants recognised the value added of having indicators for the three levels (framework conditions, progress and impact), some stressed the difficulty to measure impacts and suggested to focus on framework conditions or to combine framework and progress together in the short term and to look at the impacts in the long run. Others considered that the working group should work on all fronts keeping in mind that there may be gaps for some principles where impacts are hard to measure or a baseline is not easily accessible, but that it was worth trying. The issue of the frequency of data collection, update and dissemination was also raised. While the scoping note mentioned that the RDPC, in consultation with the WGI, could provide a snapshot every three years about the state of play of water governance of interested countries, basins and cities, some participants considered that the frequency may be too low.

9. Indicators should also embrace a **dynamic approach** to also show the risk and cost of inaction and the achievement of reforms linked to defined objectives so as to **go beyond status quo** (e.g. climate change has considerable impact on water management, regardless of whether governance structures are performing or not). Indicators should therefore be able to indicate over the **long term** to what extent governance systems should be adjusted to cope with pressing and emerging trends/challenges.

Some insisted that the indicators should look very broadly at what has been done in a specific place and could be interpolated, up-scaled or replicated in the future. Some information available at national and local/metropolitan/regional level might not be available at river basin levels and vice versa Organising the indicators by water management function is also a means to **trigger action** since the implementer of each function is the one able to act based on the assessment.

10. To the extent possible, the Working Group should follow the framework of targets 6.1 to 6.5 of the **Water Sustainable Development**. In particular, target 6.b on local participation and SDG 16 on inclusive institutions, justice and peace provide good avenues for cooperation between the OECD and monitoring institutions/custodian agencies, though the SDG process looks more at outputs and somewhat differs from the WGI undertaking. Notably, Transparency International indicated that it could support the working group through its involvement on developing indicators for SDG 16. A preliminary step forward may consist in the development of a template/framework/grid with the **12 principles**, **4 or 5 water functions**, **3 levels of indicators** (conditions, progress, outcomes), and **3 scales** for basin, city/metropolitan areas and national levels.

The stock taking exercise should go beyond mapping indicator datasets and framework

11. Participants agreed that the **Inventory of indicators and measurement frameworks** prepared by the Secretariat and available online was very helpful to take stock of what exists and ensure that efforts are not duplicated across institutions. The Inventory basically shows a wide array of projects or initiatives to measure parts of governance in the field of water (e.g. corruption, or basin organisations) but no systemic framework that can help assess different dimensions of governance in a coherent and complementary way. Part of the added value of the Working Group would then be to brainstorm on indicators that can cover and cut across the OECD Principles on Water Governance to provide for such a holistic approach. A first step forward could then be to **reorganise the Inventory around the 12 Principles** to better capture what exists and/or needs further development. Such a reorganisation could also feature **distinctions across water management functions.**

12. In addition, some participants underscored that a link with broader governance indicators was much needed even when they are not water-specific. For example, understanding the **social, economic and environmental impacts** of governance systems on water outcomes can partly be appraised through the lens of compliance with **existing environmental or social laws**. The same holds true for the economic dimension when looking at the share of **tariffs, taxes and transfers** in the overall financing of the sector in line with broader principles or indicators of cost-recovery. However, some participants emphasized that even though necessary, evaluations like compliance assessment and indicators of cost-recovery were not sufficient conditions for better environmental or social outcomes. For instance, cost-recovery is a relevant financial objective but does not necessarily include the incentive dimension of economic instruments that aims at changing behaviours.

The OECD Principles should provide the systemic framework to organise the indicators

13. Participants agreed that the OECD Principles provide the **consistent framework** for organising the indicators in order to keep the **systemic view** even in areas where the indicators do not yet exist at country or other levels yet. Some participants pointed out that it may be **challenging to cover all 12 Principles** due to information gaps and also given the fact that some Principles (e.g. on trade-offs) are not easy to measure. Ultimately the Working Group may then have to focus on the Principles that are the easiest to be measured but a first attempt at mapping out proposals for each Principle would help understand better what is doable or not in the short, medium and long terms.

A combination of fact-based or perception-based indicators may be needed

14. The choice of **fact vs. perception-based** indicators raised important points regarding data collection and the underlying trade-offs. A prominent concern is whether the working group should be developing indicators only in areas where information/data is available or also consider that the very development of indicators can spur the collection of data in areas that are not currently subject to measurement. **Data availability** varies from one country to another, and so is its relevance to guide public action and decision-making. Participants emphasised that even if perception-based indicators can be costly and subject discussions, some dimensions of water governance will need to be measured through **experts or subjective judgments**. Moreover, some enquiries may produce non-factual but prospective information for indicators, as the quality of governance will often appear during crisis situations (floods, droughts, accidental pollution etc.). In practice, factual data and perception based indicators can be **combined** because the latter can be informative in terms of on how the Principles function and are dealt with in practice. It is also important to translate the Principles to the specific context in which they are applied. This can help **support quantitative information by qualitative research** to make the assessment tool a way to reflect upon and improve actual water programs and policies. In any case, it is important to explain how the indicators are built and link related data to underlying practices, which implies seeking synergies with the other working group of the WGI.

Several synergies can be foreseen with ongoing efforts, processes and WGI members

15. Several members offered to contribute in line with their ongoing activities. **Aqua Publica Europea** is working on transparency and benchmarking of operators, at EU level which links well to the cluster on efficiency of the Principles. **Veolia** is carrying out benchmarks throughout 5,000 treatment plants, which can provide outcome indicators for the process. **CEEP** is also discussing benchmarking strategies and is willing to share the knowledge gathered so far. In addition, the **German Water Industry** created a five-pillar benchmarking concept, which is related to several aspects of the Principles. **AECID** is selecting comprehensive indicators to assess the results of the Spanish cooperation at the national level and in particular on water supply and sanitation. Through the Spanish Water Fund, AECID is also carrying out 67 programmes on water and sanitation in 18 countries in LAC where the framework provided by the OECD Principles is being featured. AECID is also working on measuring the achievement of Human Right to Drinking Water and Sanitation through their programs, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. **WIN** is working on indicators for assessing the social and economic costs of corruption. A good example of how the indicator development can foster dialogue is to be found in the Netherlands where **Erasmus University**, together with **Deltares** and **KWR** Water are currently assessing the Dutch National Flood Protection Program against the OECD Principles based on an online survey, interviews with key players, a focus group with internal experts. It was reported that this undertaking helped identify weak or blind spots.

The final results should be disclosed in a user-driven fashion to foster accountability

16. WGI members can help engage with **regional networks** to co-develop the indicators, pilot-test them but also to disseminate the final results to different beneficiaries. Thinking upstream about the way data will be presented is crucial as the idea is not to underline "**failures**" (name and shame) but rather to support a **longer-term journey** to develop more robust governance frameworks. Therefore most participants agreed that the intention is not to rank countries, basin or cities based on a composite index but rather to **cluster them in homogenous groups** to foster peer-to-peer dialogue and experience sharing that can help identify **common solutions to common problems**. While a **global dataset** available online would help shed greater transparency on water governance worldwide, related costs and capacity needs should be considered. The indicators and resulting data can represent an

inspiration for developing countries and stakeholders but for this to happen, they should be neither **jargon-driven** nor **too technical**. It is important to target the audience with the right communication vehicles and possibly think about different languages to reach out to rural areas and different types of policy makers or stakeholders.

Next steps

17. Three types of follow-up activities were proposed and participants are invited to signal to which one they want to contribute more directly by clicking here.

- The Secretariat will **reorganise the inventory of water governance indicators** along the 12 Principles, trying to the extent possible to include breakdowns by water management function, by scale and by relevance to measure framework conditions, progress and impact. This revised version will be shared with members at the 7th meeting of the WGI (23-24 June 2016). A **revised scoping note on Indicators**, including the inputs from the Working Group over May-June will also be prepared and shared ahead of the 7th WGI Meeting.

- It was proposed that co-ordinators work in parallel to prepare a first **mapping of indicators**, and a **synthesis note** providing the rationale.

    - **Each co-ordinating institution will oversee a cluster** of the *Principles on Water Governance* in cooperation with the OECD. ASTEE will cover the cluster on **efficiency** (i.e. Principles on data and information, financing, regulation, innovation); INBO will work on the cluster on **effectiveness** (i.e. Principles on roles and responsibilities, scale, policy coherence and capacity). Transparency International will be in charge of the cluster on **trust and engagement** (i.e. Principles on integrity/ transparency, stakeholder engagement, trade-offs, monitoring/evaluation).

    - Members are invited to signal their preferences on the Principles they wish to contribute to more directly by clicking here. A template will be developed by each cluster's co-ordinator so that the bottom-up work can be carried out in the coming 3 weeks.

- A first **discussion on the draft** framework will be held at the 7th meeting of the WGI, both in breakout sessions and plenary. It is expected that a robust framework subject to broader discussion and consultations be ready in fall 2016.

ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

IN PERSON IN OECD PREMISES

First name	Last name	Institution	Position	Country
Laura Amelie	Braun	Permanent delegation of Israel	Water and SME Adviser	Israel
Dominique	Gatel	Veolia	Director of Public Affairs for Water	France
Elsa	Favrot	ENGIE	Environment Project manager	France
Callum	Clench	International Water Resources Association (IWRA)	Executive Director	France
Alice	Colson	International Water Resources Association (IWRA)	Project Officer	France

ONLINE

Milo	**Fiasconaro**	**Aqua Publica Europea**	**Executive Director**	**Belgium**
Annette	Jantzen	Aqua Publica Europea		Belgium
Alejandro	Jimenez	Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)	Program Manager	Sweden
Johanna	Sjodin	Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)	Programme officer	Sweden
Pilar	Avello	Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)	Integrity Specialist	Sweden
Daniel	Valensuela	International Network of River Basin Organisations (INBO)	Deputy	France
Andrew	Allan	University of Dundee, Centre for Water Law, Policy & Science	Senior Lecturer	UK
Thomas	Hartmann	Utrecht University	Assistant Professor	Netherlands
Nick	Haigh	UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Lead Analyst, Floods & Water	UK
Christina	Christopoulou	Central Europe Energy Partners (CEEP)	Member of CEEP Water Task Force / Policy Adviser	Germany
Donal	O'Leary	Transparency International	Sr. Advisor	US
Lucia	De Stefano	Water Observatory, Botin Foundation - Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Senior Researcher	Spain
Andrea	Mancini	Water Industry Commission for Scotland	Senior Analyst	UK

Katherine	Russel	Water Industry Commission for Scotland	Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs	UK
Manfred	Eisenhut	Austrian Association for Gas and Water	Head of Water Department	Austria
Ian	Barker	Water Policy International	Managing Director	UK
Osman	Tikansak	Turkish Water Institute	Expert	Turkey
Tadashige	Kawasaki	Japan Water Agency / Network of Asian River Basin Organizations (NARBO)	Deputy Director	Japan
Gari	Villa-Landa Sokolova	Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation (AEAS)	Head of International Affairs	Spain
Scott	Rodger	Shepherd and Wedderburn	Analyst: Regulation and Markets	UK
Teun	Bastemeijer	Water Integrity Network (WIN)	Chief advisor strategy and outreach	Netherlands
Binayak	Das	Water Integrity Network (WIN)	Programme Coordinator	Netherlands
Lotte	Feuerstein	Water Integrity Network (WIN)	Programme Coordinator	Netherlands
Maria del Mar	Requena Quesada	Spanish Cooperation - Water & Sanitation Fund (AECID)	Technical Assistance	Spain
Natalia	Gullón	Spanish Cooperation - Water & Sanitation Fund (AECID)	Technical Adviser	Spain
Gonzalo	Delacámara	Madrid Institute of Advanced Studies (IMDEA)	Senior Research Fellow, Coordinator of the Water Economics Group	Spain
Pierre-Alain	Roche	Association Scientifique et Technique pour l'eau et l'environnement (ASTEE)	President	France
Sophie	Richard	Agroparistech	Head of Water management unit	France
François	Guerber	Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Energy	Counsellor	France
Arwin	van Buuren	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Associate Professor	Netherlands
Sandrine	Winant	Ville de Paris	Section politique des eaux	France
Lifeng	Li	World Wildlife Fund International (WWF)	Director, Freshwater	Switzerland

EXCUSED

Maggie	White	Eau Vive Water Right Makers	Founder (WRM) / Board member (Eau Vive)	France
Hendrik Jan	IJsinga	EurEau	member-delegate	Netherlands
Chris	Seijger	Deltares	researcher	Netherlands
Lucy	Bolton	Ministry of Environment	Manager	New Zealand
Josefina	Maestu	Ministry for Agriculture, Rural and Marine Affairs	Former Director of UN Water Decade Programme	Spain
Gordon	Downie	Shepherd and Wedderburn	Solicitor	UK

ANNEX II: AGENDA OF THE WEBINAR

- **Setting the scene** by OECD Secretariat **(15 min)**
  - Objective, composition and role of the Working Group
  - Presentation of the 10 proposals from the scoping note

- **First round of discussion** with participants on the content and scope coordinated by OECD Secretariat (50 min)
  - Do you agree with the approach and strategy proposed in the note?
  - Is any item missing in the scoping note or inventory?
  - Should indicators be developed
    - ✓For each of the 12 Principles?
    - ✓For some principles only?
    - ✓By block (effectiveness, efficiency, trust/engagement?
    - ✓By water management function (drinking water, flood management etc.)?
  - Should we focus on measuring
    - ✓framework conditions for governance
    - ✓Progress in governance
    - ✓Impact of governance
    - ✓All three? And if be so sequentially or simultaneously?
  - Should we stick to fact-based indicators or also feature perception-based indicators?
  - How to make synergies with
    - ✓different governance data producers, building on the inventory/mapping ?
    - ✓different/parallel processes including SDG 6 monitoring
  - What should the final output look like to be most useful?

- **Reactions/responses from the co-ordinators** (20 min)
  - ASTEE
  - INBO
  - Transparency International
  - OECD

- **Process, timeline and tasks** (35 min)
  - Proposed clusters and lead institutions
  - 25 April – 27 May: tasks of the working group for the coming month and call for volunteers
  - Draft indicator framework to be discussed at the 7th WGI meeting (23-24 June)
  - Group discussion on who can do what and how
  - Wrap up