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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Webinar to discuss the Scoping note of WGI's Working Group on Indicators

Programme of work 2019 - 21

20 May 2019 – 16h-17:30h CET

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Key Highlights

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Welcome and scope of the webinar

1.   The Secretariat opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and informing them of the work that has been done between the [11th OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) meeting](#) (12-13 November 2018, Zaragoza), and the upcoming 12th WGI meeting in Berlin on 20-21 June 2019.

2.   The Secretariat highlighted three key objectives for the webinar:

- Getting member inputs on the Scoping Note with regard to objectives, proposed activities and outputs.

- Collecting member contributions to map who could work on what in the Working Groups, the possible synergies that members could provide with activities being carried out within their own institutions, with the aim of connecting the dots instead of duplicating work.

- Developing a clear roadmap of what is to be done and that the Working Group delivers tangible outputs in time for the next World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal. The Working Group should work collectively in order to focus on realistic deliverables and achievements.

Highlights from discussions

Introduction and presentation of the Scoping Note by the OECD Secretariat

3.   The OECD provided an overview of the Scoping Note by highlighting the three main proposed objectives of the Working Group on Indicators:

- **Facilitating the use and the uptake of the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework**. This objective consists in applying the [OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework](#) at different scales (local, regional, basin and national) and to different water functions. Recently, the OECD Principles on Water Governance have been used as guiding framework in the case of flood through the forthcoming Flood Governance Report that will be launched at the next WGI meeting in Berlin on 20-21 June 2019. A similar exercise could be carried out using the traffic light, the checklist and the action plan as part of the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework. In addition, the OECD Secretariat added that facilitating uptake and use of the Indicator Framework could also be done by revisiting the 11 pilot tests that supported the development of the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework in order to:

  o Carry out an actual assessment, since the available assessment was part of a pilot test;

  o Observe the changes after three years vis a vis the expected progress as stated in the pilot assessment and graphically visualised through the spider web graphs. Some mentoring and coaching activities could be implemented in order to carry out this exercise and link to the Working Group on Capacity Development.

- **Developing impact indicators** to complement the existing OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework in order to be able to understand the impacts of water governance in addition to the state of the art and the progress that has been carried out. The impact indicators would help identify if water governance, as a means to an end, played a role in achieving water management outcomes. Impact indicators could be linked for instance to issues of climate change affecting water service, costs of good governance, SDGs and transparency and anticorruption. The development of these impact indicators was already discussed at the [11th WGI Meeting](#), 12-13 November 2018, Zaragoza, Spain, and has been confirmed as an important activity over the next two years. However, further

questions regarding their development and the level of ambition need to be discussed such as on the terminology, methodology and types of impacts foreseen.

- **Providing guidance for multi-level governance engagement for water-related SDGs monitoring, using the ten-step evaluation** assessment, developed together with the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework. For the 2030 agenda, different levels of government are called to provide Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of their progress in the achievement of the SDGs. Governments could benefit from the ten-step assessment guidance in order to provide multi-stakeholder dialogue and engage different stakeholders while carrying out the reviews. A mapping of existing monitoring framework and tools in place to coordinate with stakeholders, including for the SDG6 specifically could be carry out, in addition to a survey investigating on the needs and gaps in relation to the existing methodologies for reporting on the SDGs achievement. The Working group could eventually support the preparation of a guidance for multilevel governance of the SDG 6 and water-related targets reporting in the VNRs.

Remarks from Working Group coordinators

4.   The OECD Secretariat invited the lead organisations of the Steering Committee members (ASTEE, Transparency International, INBO and AEAS) on Indicators for their initial comments and inputs.

5.   ASTEE stressed the importance of revisiting the indicator pilot case studies. They also asked to update the timeline that appeared in Figure 6 of the Scoping Note.

6.   Transparency International gave input from the perspective of a non-water-sector-specific organisation that is more focused on governance (integrity, accountability and integrity). They suggested that given the fact that the water-sector is a capital-intensive sector, especially taking into account that addressing many of the climate changes issues will involve increased capital expenditures, that indicators should be created so that these expenditures can be identified and implemented following transparency, integrity and anticorruption principles. In their experience, looking at other related sectors such as the construction and the energy sector, specifically in electricity and construction of multi-purpose dam project, could be a step in the right direction.

7.   AEAS raised some concerns related to the practical side of the work to be developed. In relation to objective number 1, it is very interesting to do a follow-up of the pilots, but also remaining aware of the challenges, because the action plans may in some cases be difficult to follow up due to lack of or less developed action plans. Another possibility is to look into actions in relation to the indicator framework and how it has been used. With regard to the second objective on piloting impact indicators, it would be ideal to pilot those who have implemented their action plans, but not all of the pilots have well-developed plans and some do not even have one. Keeping this in mind, AEAS wondered if the third objective of the Scoping Note related to aiding in SDG assessment is too ambitious, stressing the need to make sure that the objectives are achieved with good quality.

Suggestions, inputs and comments from WGI members

8.   Participants were overall comfortable regarding the three types of objectives, though there may be uneven emphasis on these objectives. **They may not necessarily require the same level of work, absorption capacity and level of ambition** but the OECD is cautious to manage expectations and deliver by ensuring quality of work. Overall, it makes sense to combine the broadening of the self-assessment framework in the sense of inviting more pilots to join and dig into the issue of impact measurement. It was suggested that this could be done by carrying out an inventory with other external initiatives such as the

fitness check of the EU Water Framework Directive, the Flanders Water Policy Note to be finalised by December 2019 and the German National Water Dialogue.

9.   Some concerns raised by the webinar participants included:

- Objective 1:

    o   Data availability for several indicators of the Indicator Framework. If the pilot cases will accept to carry out the assessment, the responses provided during the piloting phase will represent a basis. However, for the impact indicators new sources of data (quantitative or qualitative) will be needed. Several participants echoed the possibility of reviewing the impacts of the Evolving water governance practices as one basis for the development of the indicators. Links may be also be made to the Working Group on Capacity Development and possible illustrative stories/practices collected in order to mitigate data shortcomings.

    o   Need of supporting the self-assessment with external facilitators. This would reduce the risk of subjectivity of self-assessments. Participants pointed to the need to build on the legitimacy of the self-assessment process through a multi-stakeholder approach and a spirit of consensus, peer reviewing and good collaboration between stakeholders.

- Objective 2:

    o   Some participants expressed a need to ring-fence work in the Working Group so that these indicators do not become as work-intensive to develop as the development of the self-assessment indicator framework. In order to ensure the methodology and the causality links, it was suggested that it might be useful to approach the methodology of the impact indicators in terms of smaller subgroups and to evaluate the indicators that have already been developed to see how they can drive impact. Another suggestion put forward was to focus only on a few Principles (or even only some aspects of the Principles) to measure impacts.

    o   A question was raised about who would actually be measuring the impacts: would it be each agent through the framework indicators or would each agent report their performance to the OECD (or another neutral organisation), who would in turn carry out the assessment? Considering that capacities are low to measure impacts within organisation, the first alternative could raise further concerns about the robustness of the methodology.

    o   The need to clarify exactly what the Working Group is focusing on through the impact indicators: is it a way to evaluate uptake of the Principles or is it a way of assessing the impact of governance changes on water management? Furthermore, a suggestion was made about the possible use of proxy indicators in case actual impact indicators could not be found. In addition, the need for demand-driven indicator development was pointed at and the question was raised which audience the work on impact indicators will target.

- Objective 3:

    o   Most participants commented on the merits of making sure the WGI's work is connected to relevant global processes such as the 2030 Agenda. However, several concerns were raised about the objective linked to the SDGs in terms of it actually being achievable in the time-frame proposed. Other participants hinted at the need of linking not only with SDG 6, but also to other relevant SDGs such as SDG 16.5 on bribery and corruption.

10.   The OECD Secretariat clarified that the intention is to use the methodology of the 10-step assessment for allowing multi-stakeholder views when carrying out national voluntary reviews (NVR). Therefore, this does not imply to measure SDGs achievements nor the actual water governance component of the SDGs. In this sense, this activity of the Working Group (objective 3) is more about methodological support guidance rather than an assessment.

11.   Participants also noted the importance of making sure that water policy is linked across sectors to climate change, raw materials and energy transition.

Wrap-up and next steps by OECD Secretariat and Working Group coordinators

12.   Transparency International stated that it agreed with most comments, but stressed that it would prefer to focus more on developing impact indicators, especially through the four indicators in the framework that are linked with trust and engagement. In terms of linkage with the SDGs, they recommended to focus on SDG 6 and the important components of SDG 16.

13.   AEAS stated that its understanding of the impact indicators is unclear and recommended the Working Group to avoid going as deep and extensive as what has been done by the WGI up until now. AEAS echoed comments about the fact that water has an impact on most SDGs and that perhaps other SDGs should be looked into.

14.   The OECD Secretariat explained that 9 out of the 12 pilot cases had developed action plans, even though in some cases these were designed as brief checklists. In response to questions from participants about having more background information of the pilots, the OECD Secretariat agreed that it would be a good idea to include the full list of the pilots in the next draft of the Scoping Note on Indicators to be discussed at the next WGI meeting in Berlin.

15.   In relation to discussion about the three objectives, the OECD Secretariat stressed the following:

- In regards to objective number 1, most members have welcomed the idea of going back and checking the situation after a few years have passed after the self-assessment of the pilot cases. The idea is not to check against the action plan because these were designed at the end of the self-assessment process. What can be checked is the response in relation to the expected progress in the next three year from the baseline assessment, which is represented by a spider web graph. This would help to understand the gaps that may exist, signal if the methodology works, and if the indicators and the methodology should further adapt to specific scales and water functions.

- In regards to objective number 2, the same issues and concerns that have existed since the beginning of the water governance indicator development were raised again on the complexity of the work, ambiguous terminology and choice of methodology. In this sense, the Secretariat noted that for the moment there needs to be further clarification on what kind of impact that should be measured, for whom and what should be measured and which methodology should be used. Further guidance is thus needed on the scope of impact indicators and it was suggested that a relatively small "sub-set" of the Principles could provide basis for impact indicators. The mapping of existing governance impact indicators will provide further guidance on selecting the ambitious but doable entry-point to impact indicator development.

- In regards to objective number 3, clarification was provided on the fact that this objective is not about measuring the impact of water governance on the realisation of the SDG goals, but rather about using a methodology that allows a multi-level approach through policy dialogues.

16.   The OECD Secretariat concluded that further guidance is needed from members in relation to the definition of priorities and activities to be carried out within the working group. Based on comments received the Secretariat will update the Scoping Note on Indicators and circulate to the entire WGI membership ahead of the next WGI meeting in Berlin (20-21 June 2019).

Annex I: List of participants

Institution	Name
Action Contre la Faim	Andrea Angioletti
AEAS	Gari Villa-Landa Sokolova
Aqua Publica Europea	Milo Fiasconaro
ASTEE	Pierre-Alain Roche
BDEW	Jörg Rehberg
Cap-Net UNDP	Damian Indij
ENGIE	Elsa Favrot
Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR)/ BMZ - Germany	Michael Eichholz
Fundación AQUAE	Pilar Gracia de Rentería
IHE Delft	Ellen Pfeiffer
International Water Resources Association	Alice Colson
Japan Water Agency & NARBO	Naoki Kido
Royal HaskoningDHV	Erik van Lith
Suez	Joannie Leclerc
	Maélis Monnier
The Nature Conservancy	Aparna Sridhar
Transparency International	Donal O'Leary
Turkish Water Institute (SUEN)	Burcu Calli
UNHABITAT / GWOPA	María Pascual Sanz
Veolia	Dominique Gatel
VITO/Vlakwa (Flanders Knowledge Center Water)	Dirk van der Stede
Water Integrity Network	Teun Bastemeijer
	Umrbek Allakulov
Water Policy International	Ian Barker
Water Research Commission – South Africa	John Dini
Water Youth Network	Parth Kamath
Waterpreneurs	Brieux Michoud
WBCSD	Tom Williams

Annex II: Agenda of the webinar

- **Introduction and presentation of the Scoping Note by the OECD Secretariat (10 min)**

- **Remarks from Working Group Coordinators (5 min)**

- **Suggestions, inputs and comments from WGI members (65 min)**

- **Wrap-up and next steps by OECD Secretariat and Working Group coordinators (10 min)**