



16th MEETING OF THE OECD WATER GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

20th January 2022, 12:00-15:00 CET, online meeting

HIGHLIGHTS



The [OECD Water Governance Initiative](#) (WGI) is an international multi-stakeholder network of 100+ members from the public, private and non-profit sectors gathering twice a year in a Policy Forum to share on-going policy reforms, projects, lessons and good practices in support of better governance in the water sector. Sixteen meetings have been held since its creation: 7–28 March 2013, Paris, France; 7–8 November 2013, Paris, France; 28–29 April 2014, Madrid, Spain; 24–25 November 2014, Paris, France; 26 May 2015, Edinburgh, United Kingdom; 2–3 November 2015, Paris, France; 23–24 June 2016, The Hague, The Netherlands; 12–13 January, Rabat, Morocco; 3–4 July 2017, Paris, France; 20–21 November 2017, Vienna, Austria; 12–13 November 2018, Zaragoza, Spain; 20–21 June 2019, Berlin, Germany; 9–10 January 2020, Paris, France; 2–3 November 2020, online; 27–28 September 2021, online; and 20 January 2022, online.

The OECD WGI aims 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 Water Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals, World Water Forum, Habitat III, COP, etc.);
- Support the **implementation** of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#) in member and non-member countries; and
- **Foster continuity** on governance discussions between two World Water Fora (every 3 years), currently between the 8th World Water Forum (Brazil, March 2018) and the 9th World Water Forum (Senegal, March 2022).

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Summary

On 20 January 2022, the OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) held its [16th meeting](#) online. The meeting gathered 70+ practitioners, policymakers and representatives from major stakeholder groups (see the [agenda](#), [list of participants](#), and the mapping of [Tools, publications and events from the 15th to the 16th OECD WGI meeting](#)).

The 16th meeting of the OECD WGI had the following objectives:

- Finalise the preparation of the governance sessions at the **9th World Water Forum** (21-26 March 2022, Dakar, Senegal).
- Peer-review the final draft **Capacity Development Toolkit of the OECD Principles on Water Governance**, including a 3-minute video.
- Discuss and peer-review the draft articles to be included in the **Special Issue of Water International on “Measuring the Impact of Water Governance”**.
- Follow up on the online **kick-off meeting of the OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security** (19 January 2022) and provide guidance on the ways forward.

Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), updated members on the OECD CFE’s work since the 15th meeting of the OECD WGI (27–28 September 2021, online). She shared information of the launch of the OECD report [Fostering Water Resilience in Brazil](#) on 13 January 2022 and the participation of the OECD Secretariat in water-related sessions at [COP26](#) (Glasgow, United Kingdom, November 2021), in addition to major international events such as the [Innovate4Cities Conference](#) (11 October 2021, online); the [XVII World Water Congress](#) (29 November-3 December 2021, Daegu, Korea), and [UNESCO’s Second International Conference on Water, Megacities and Global Change](#) (11-12 January 2021, online). She also updated members on OECD’s work towards the [9th World Water Forum in Dakar](#), including the forthcoming launch of the [OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#). She concluded by reiterating the OECD’s strong commitment to help address the water challenge, in particular through advancing the implementation of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#).

During the session dedicated to the [9th World Water Forum](#) (21-26 March 2022, Dakar, Senegal), **Mohamed Nbou**, Head of UCLG-Africa’s Climate Task Force, summarised the key outcomes of the [Kick-off meeting of the OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#) held online on 19 January 2022. **Bai-Mass Taal**, Special Advisor to the National Organising committee of the 9th World Water Forum, and **Khatim Kherraz**, Director of Strategy and Programmes, World Water Council, updated members on the overall organisation and programme of the Forum. **Aziza Akhmouch**, Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, CFE, OECD, shared progress on the thematic Pilot Group 4 on “Means and Tools of Implementation”.

The next steps on the road to the [9th World Water Forum](#) included:

- Finalising the Keystone Roundtable on Means and Tools; the Cities, Local and Regional Governments Day; and the 24 thematic sessions on “Means and Tools of Implementation”;

- Finalising the Special Issue of Water International on “[Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance](#)”.
- Finalising the Capacity Development Toolkit in particular:
 - Addressing the comments received from WGI members on the [video](#);
 - Including additional suggestions in the inventory of WGI members capacity development activities WGI;
 - Finalising the guide on “How to Assess Water Governance” (How-To Guide).
- Building momentum for the [OECD/UCLG Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#) to be launched during the Cities, Local and Regional Governments Day on 23 March 2022.

During the session dedicated to the [Capacity Development Toolkit](#) of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#), **Oriana Romano**, Head of Unit, Water Governance and Circular Economy, CFE, OECD, presented the components of the Toolkit, including: i) a guide on “How to Assess Water Governance” (How-To Guide), ii) two PowerPoint modules supporting the How-To Guide, iii) an Inventory of capacity-building activities undertaken by WGI members, and iv) a [video](#) on the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#), which was introduced by **Linda Lilienfeld**, Director, Let’s Talk About Water.

Finally, during the session dedicated to the Special Issue of Water International on “[Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance](#)” to be launched at the 9th World Water Forum, **Claude Menard**, Professor of Economics, the Sorbonne Economic Centre, France; **Susana Neto**, Senior Researcher, University of Lisbon, Portugal; and **Manfred Matz**, Programme Coordinator, GIZ Tunisia, presented the key findings of their respective articles as contributions to the Special Issue.

16th OECD WGI Meeting

Welcoming remarks

Peter Glas, Chair of the OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI), thanked the OECD Secretariat, WGI members and Steering Committee members connected across time zones. **The Chair** highlighted that the [16th meeting of the OECD WGI](#) primarily aimed to finalise the contribution of the WGI to the [9th World Water Forum](#) (21-26 March 2022, Dakar, Senegal). **The Chair** also reminded members that 2023 would mark the tenth anniversary of the WGI (launched in March 2013), providing opportunities to take stock of achievements and chart a new way forward for the Initiative. He announced the retirement of the WGI Steering Committee member Daniel Valensuela, Deputy Manager, International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO) *Office International de l'Eau*.

Update on activities since the 15th meeting of the OECD WGI

Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities shared the latest activities of the OECD Secretariat since the [15th Meeting of the WGI](#) (27-28 September 2021, online). First, she mentioned the launch of the report on [Fostering Water Resilience in Brazil](#) on 13 January 2022. The report calls for an approach to water security that balances supply and demand management and grey and green infrastructure, while creating a culture valuing water as a scarce resource. She congratulated the National Water and Sanitation Agency of Brazil (ANA) on [10 years](#) of fruitful cooperation with the OECD on water. **Lamia Kamal-Chaoui** highlighted that COP26 was a unique moment to raise the profile of water in the climate agenda. For the first time, the COP hosted a Water Pavilion, which is relevant considering that 80% of the consequences of climate change materialise as water-related disasters. **Lamia Kamal-Chaoui** then updated WGI members on the CFE's contribution to different global agendas, striving in particular to better connect water and urban constituencies. In this sense, CFE hosted COP26 sessions on leveraging water for national climate planning and on a net-zero circular water future for cities within the Resilience Hub and the Water Pavilion respectively.

Beyond COP26, CFE joined forces with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and UN-Habitat to host a special session on cities for a blue economy at the [Innovate4Cities Conference](#) (11 October 2021, online), to stress the role of water-secure cities in providing jobs, and the importance of cooperation with basin organisations to get water governance right. CFE also took part in the [XVII IWRA World Water Congress](#) (29 November-3 December 2021, Daegu, Korea), recalling that no country, be it developed, emerging or developing, can take water security for granted. Finally, the OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann delivered a keynote speech at the UNESCO's [Second International Conference on Water, Megacities and Global Change](#) (11-12 January 2021, online), stating that "*if we are to have a sustainable future for all, we must tackle the combined challenge of climate change, urbanisation and water security collectively, across levels of government and stakeholders*".

Lamia Kamal-Chaoui highlighted that the OECD Secretariat was preparing for the [9th World Water Forum in Dakar](#), where, amongst other outputs, the [OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#) will be launched (23 March 2022). To further support the implementation of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#), CFE will also release a **Capacity Development Toolkit** and a Special Issue of Water International on “**Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance**”. The Director concluded her opening remarks by stating that future WGI work will go the extra mile to support the implementation of the OECD Principles on Water Governance, with deepened analytical work and more granular data on specific thematic areas; a new generation of country, basin and city reviews; and closer linkages to global climate, urban and sustainable development agendas. CFE will also continue to connect water with other urban policy priorities, notably through new work on [Cities for the Blue Economy](#), to turn vulnerabilities into opportunities and make the case for enhanced water security to drive local jobs and economic growth.

Kick-off meeting of the OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security

Mohamed Nbou, Head of UCLG-Africa’s Climate Task Force spoke on behalf of **Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary-General, UCLG-Africa**, to share key messages from the Kick-off meeting of the [OECD/ UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security](#) (19th January 2022, online). Take-away messages from Mayors’ interventions include:

- African cities are facing mounting challenges such as floods and droughts, making enhancing water security an imperative.
- Local and regional governments should be endowed with the needed financial resources to develop and upgrade infrastructure, amongst others.
- Given the centralised nature of water resources and services management in Africa, coordination across levels of governments will be an important issue for the Roundtable to deal with.
- The Roundtable can act as connector between Mayors and the international water community.

Next steps include planning the activities of the Roundtable and holding the first in-person meeting at the [9th World Water Forum](#).

Countdown to the 9th World Water Forum

The Chair introduced the session, intended to provide WGI members with an update on the 9th World Water Forum, as well as to allow WGI members to share information on planned participation in the Forum.

Bai-Mass Taal, Special Advisor to the National Organising committee of the 9th World Water Forum, spoke on behalf of **Abdoulaye Sene, Executive Director, 9th World Water Forum**. He explained that the objective of the organisers was to place urban and rural water issues at the heart of the political agenda and in particular to develop an action plan for local and regional authorities to be presented at the [2023 United Nations Water Decade Conference](#). **Bai-Mass Taal** confirmed that more than 100 official sessions and high-level panels are expected to be held in Dakar, with the objective of providing concrete and innovative responses to water and sanitation challenges in Africa and beyond. Senegal, the host country, is working to ensure the best conditions for in-person participation at the [9th World Water Forum](#).

Khatim Kherraz, Director of Strategy and Programmes, World Water Council, provided more details on the different types of sessions planned at [9th World Water Forum](#). In particular:

- **90 ordinary thematic sessions** address the four thematic priorities of the Forum (water and sanitation, rural development, cooperation, means and tools), and are organised by members of Pilot and Action Groups.

- **21 special sessions** are cross-cutting and address themes that go beyond the four thematic areas of the Forum. They concern rural development, climate change, conflict and crisis management, finance, COVID-19, integrated water resource management and the preservation of non-renewable water resources, amongst others.
- **19 high-level panels** will host high-level representatives from governments and international organisations to discuss a variety of themes from financing to the water and climate change nexus or in relation to the [2023 UN Water Decade Conference](#).
- **4 keystone roundtables** are organised by each Pilot Group, one for each day of the Forum, to present key substantive messages and political actions put forward, and prepare for the concluding session of the Forum.
- **Several side events and exhibitions** will take place in the Pavilions and in the Village of Responses.

Khatim Kherraz also shared that 70 projects have been labelled as part of [Initiative Dakar 2022](#) and that the fourth batch of projects would be selected before the end of January 2022. All labelled projects will be presented in ordinary or special sessions and/or in the village of responses. **Khatim Kherraz** explained that the key political messages adopted by each Pilot Group after the [Second Stakeholders' meeting](#) held in Dakar in October 2021 and summarised in the post-event [brochure](#) will also be discussed at the Forum.

Aziza Akhmouch, Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division, CFE, OECD, and Co-Chair of Priority 4 of the Forum on “Means and Tools of Implementation” updated members on the work undertaken by five Action Groups on thematic issues related to governance, financing and science/knowledge:

- **Action Group 4.A.** led by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the African Development Bank (ADB) aims to mobilise additional financial resources and promote innovative funding as described in the SDG target.
- **Action Group 4.B.** led by the OECD aims to promote the implementation of the OECD Principles on Water Governance, including participatory decision-making.
- **Action Group 4.C.** led by the International Association for Water Law (AIDA) aims to foster a water-sensitive approach to legislation and regulation
- **Action Group 4.D.** led by the Water Integrity Network (WIN) focuses on transparent, accountable and inclusive decision-making by fostering integrity in the water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors at the local and regional level.
- **Action Group 4.E.** led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) aims to increase water efficiency and sustainable management through science, technology, innovation, and education.

Aziza Akhmouch introduced the key achievements of Pilot Group 4 and final steps toward the Forum.

- The achievements are: i) the adoption of the Key Political Messages and Actions; ii) the regular exchanges organised across Action Groups to avoid session overlaps and duplicates; and iii) the approval of all 24 session descriptions submitted by the Group by the International Steering Committee in December 2021.
- The next steps include to: i) sharpen the political messages and actions and define their use at the Forum; ii) design the 24 sessions' content and stage management; and iii) finalise high-level and keystone roundtables, panels and sessions.

Aziza Akhmouch also explained that comments received during the consultation phase had been integrated into the final versions of the messages, especially those calling for greater emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach in consultation and decision-making; digitalisation and policy coherence. She

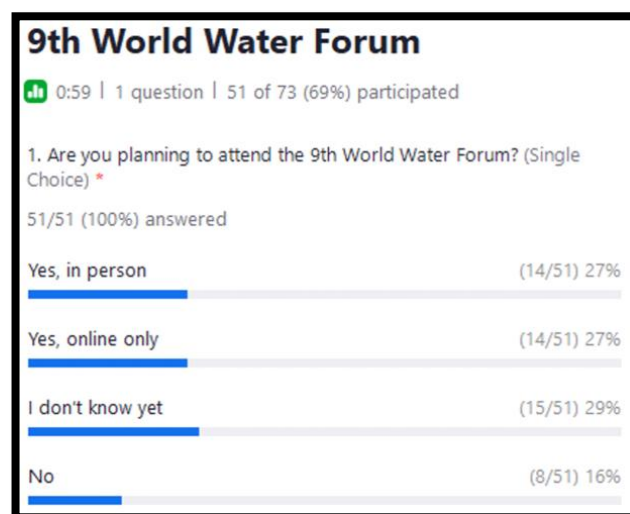
encouraged WGI members to provide additional comments and suggestions on the key political messages received prior to the meeting, as appropriate.

Aziza Akhmouch shared the expected outcomes of the Forum, including:

- **High-level political commitments** such as the OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security and the Manifesto for integrating water laws, governance and tenure;
- **Guiding frameworks** such as i) the Parliamentarian’s Handbook on the Human right to Water and Sanitation, ii) the Handbook “Financial Means & Tools for the Water and Sanitation sector”, iii) an Investor Guide on “Financing nature-based solutions”, and iv) the review or assessment of the implementation and enforcement record of water laws;
- **Awareness-raising and capacity development activities**, such as the “Clean Hands, Save lives campaign”; and
- **Evidence base and analytical reports**, such as the Special Issue of Water International on “[Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance](#)”.

Aziza Akhmouch ended her presentation by reminding members that the [Programme of the Forum](#) and the agenda of the Cities, Local and Regional Governments Day should be finalised by the end of February. She concluded by launching a Zoom poll to map attendance to the 9th World Water Forum, whose results showed that 54% of WGI members present at the meeting were planning to attend the Forum either in-person (27%) or online (27%). On the other hand, 29% were unsure of whether they would be attending in-person or virtually, and 16% did not plan to attend the Forum (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Attendee responses to the question “Are you planning to attend the 9th World Water Forum?”



The Chair opened the floor for WGI members to answer the following questions:

- Do you have comments or suggestions on the proposed political messages and actions?
- In which sessions are you engaged or would like to participate?
- Do you have any observations or questions in relation to the preparation of the Forum?

Lesha Witmer, Steering Committee member, Women for Water Partnership, raised questions on how to make sure that the Keystone Roundtables will influence the process and the outcomes of the Forum. She asked about the format of the meeting (in presence/ hybrid) and if costs would be covered for a sample of stakeholders to participate. She asked how small cities and regions would be involved in the African

Mayors Roundtable and how to ensure the connection between the outcomes of the Forum and the 2023 UN Water Decade Conference.

Cecilia Tortajada, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Water Policy, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore, noted that political messages could be extended and include lessons learnt from a decade of OECD work on water governance, as well as key data and findings from studies conducted by the OECD or WGI members.

Danielle Gaillard-Picher, Global Coordinator, Water and Climate Processes, Global Water Partnership (GWP), commented that the [International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa](#) is a priority for Action Group 4E and is led by the Africa Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the African Development Bank, African Water Facility, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA), and GWP through the Africa Coordination Unit.

Additional questions were raised in the chat about the format of the Forum format, the Head of State Political Segment and the political messages. More precisely:

- **Ignacio Deregibus, Deputy Executive Director, International Water Resources Association (IWRA)**, raised a question about whether the 9th World Water Forum format would be hybrid or in-person.
- **Angie Saleh, Partnerships Specialist**, asked for information about the Head of State event, expected declarations and its organisers.
- **Ana Nunes Sanchez, Senior Advisor, Deltares**, noted that the management of water resources goes beyond the water legal framework and includes the legal frameworks for disaster risk management, hydro-meteorology, agriculture and natural resources. She wondered if the political message of Action Group 4C could speak to the need of creating a whole of government approach synchronising national sectoral frameworks.
- **Barbara Schreiner, Executive Director, Water Integrity Network (WIN)** proposed to strengthen the political messages by insisting on the enormous benefits of investing in governance and good accountability and transparency processes.
- **Jenny Gronwall, Programme Manager, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)** reminded that 2022 is groundwater year and enquired about the OECD's focus on the topic. She noted that transboundary aquifers are addressed in one session and asked for related information.

Bai-Mass Taal clarified the following points:

- **The High-level Political Roundtable** will gather Heads of State and international organisations to adopt a Declaration on the Day 1 (22 March 2022). Directors of the World Bank and African Development Bank are also expected to take part in it.
- **The Keystone Roundtable** will be a space for discussion where different stakeholders such as ministers, parliamentarians, local authorities, and youths will discuss and react to the political messages that the Action Groups have elaborated.
- **The Forum's final Declaration** is being drafted based on the preparatory work of Pilot groups to shape key political messages and actions for stakeholders. Senegal is currently receiving inputs from agencies to propose a Declaration that will make a real impact, and could be used as an input for water-related debates at the UN 2023 conference.

Aziza Akhmouch added the following points:

- In addition to co-hosting several sessions, the OECD will launch dedicated OECD outputs including the Capacity Development Toolkit for the OECD Principles on Water Governance, the

OECD/UCLG-Africa Roundtable of African Mayors for Water Security, and the Special Issue of Water International on “Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance”.

- The Pilot 4 Group political messages and actions are not based exclusively on OECD work but stem from a much broader consultation process over the past 2 years with Senegalese and international stakeholders. In that sense, they are not meant to reflect OECD views nor work per se, nor to be considered a negotiated text as in past forums.
- **The whole of government sectoral approach** is well reflected in the content of the political messages (a summarised version of which was shown in the slides), with particular emphasis on the need to strengthen linkages between water and land, agriculture, environment, biodiversity loss, and urban development. She encouraged members to review the text of the political messages and provide comments to sharpen them as appropriate.
- **Importance of groundwater:** Alice Aureli, Chief of Groundwater Systems and Settlements Section, UNESCO, and Eric Tardieu, Secretary-General, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), were called on to contribute to the groundwater debate on the Zoom chat, since the topic will be presented by Action group 4.E.

Peer-review of the draft Capacity Development Toolkit for the OECD Principles on Water Governance

The Chair opened the session by introducing the different components of the Capacity Development Toolkit, including: i) the guide on “How to Assess Water Governance” (How-To Guide) for the 10-step methodology to carry out a self-assessment of water governance systems in place; ii) two PowerPoint presentations on content (Principles) and on process ([OECD Water Governance Indicators](#) and 10-step methodology for self-assessment); and iii) a short video on the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#). He invited members to provide final comments and suggestions for the completion of the Toolkit, to be launched at the 9th World Water Forum.

Oriana Romano, Head of Unit, Water Governance and Circular Economy, CFE, OECD, recalled that the Capacity Development Toolkit was developed upon the request of WGI members to further support the implementation of the OECD Principles on Water Governance. She described the four components of the Capacity Development Toolkit, which have been subject to consultation since the [13th meeting of the OECD WGI](#):

- **A guide on “How to Assess Water Governance” (How-To Guide)** providing governments and stakeholders with a 10-step methodology to self-assess the performance against the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework.
- **An inventory** of 40+ examples of capacity development tools and practices developed by members of the WGI, which details their scope, target audience, geographical scale, content, objectives and frequency.
- **Two PowerPoint presentations, as supporting material to the Guidance.** One of the modules provides information and examples on the OECD Principles on Water Governance and the OECD Water Governance Indicators, while the second module provides a detailed and visual presentation of the 10-step methodology.
- **The [Video on the OECD Principles on Water Governance](#)**, which is intended to raise awareness and foster the uptake of the Principles beyond the water community.

Linda Lilienfeld, Director, Let’s Talk About Water, started her presentation by sharing the preview of the video. The objective of the video was to make the OECD Principles on Water Governance more accessible by simplifying the language to reach more stakeholders. **Linda Lilienfeld** raised the following questions for discussion:

- Do you have any final observations on the Capacity Development Toolkit?
- What parts of the video do you believe are inviting or compelling to an audience to learn more about the OECD Principles on Water Governance?
- Do you like the pace, the music, and the voice of the narrator?

The Chair invited members to start the discussion and share comments.

Sharon Megdal, Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona, congratulated the OECD Secretariat for the video. She highlighted that the pace is fast and dense, especially for those who are not aware of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#). She also questioned the necessity of presenting the full wheel of the Principles and observed that while the word efficiency was mentioned, the video mistakenly showed the word “efficient”.

Manfred Matz, Programme Coordinator, GIZ Tunisia, agreed that the pace of the video was a little too fast and suggested putting more emphasis on water *resources*, as well as including references to groundwater.

In the chat, more than a dozen **WGI members** congratulated the OECD Secretariat on the video and expressed their approval.

Linda Lilienfeld commented that the language of the wheel is very technical and challenging to communicate. She took note on the comments on the pace of the video and suggested to present the words efficiency, effectiveness, trust and engagement outside the wheel. Finally, she agreed to put more emphasis on the role of water, nature and ecosystem services.

The Chair suggested sharing the link to the video preview to allow members to review it.

Colin Herron, Global Coordinator, GWP, asked about the use of the Capacity Development Toolkit by non-experts and encouraged the OECD to rethink the name of the Toolkit to better match the tool’s content, as well as to include more references to the SDGs, in particular SDG 6.

Peer-review of the draft Special Issue of Water International on “Measuring the Impacts of Water Governance”

The Chair opened the session on “Peer-review of the draft [Special Issue of the journal “Water International” on Measuring water governance impacts](#). He passed the floor to the first speaker.

Claude Menard, Professor of Economics, Sorbonne Economics Centre, Paris, France presented his article [“Institutional Challenges to Efficient Governance: Water, Sanitation, and Wastewater in Egypt”](#). The article explores institutional conditions to effectively link rule-makers and rule-takers, by looking at a case study on water, sanitation, and wastewater treatment in Egypt. The aim of the article is to analyse the impacts of the action of meso institutions on governance and performance. Claude Menard presented the institutional layers studied in his paper: macro institutions, as rules are established through laws, decrees, and directives; micro institutions, as rules are operationalised by firms, operators, businesses and civil society; and meso institutions, as intermediary institutions that bridge the gap between macro and micro institutions. These institutions translate and adapt rules to a specific context, monitor action through guidelines and protocols, and enforce rules by penalising deviant behaviours and rewarding good ones while playing a transmission role. **Claude Menard** explained that the Egyptian case is characterised by a centralised system with different agencies under the control of a central authority. The parliament and presidency are components of the macro level and ministries constitute the meso level. Ministries often have overlapping responsibilities that cause confusion, a lack of transparency and a lack of coordination. The author concluded by showing the impacts of this structure on a variety of dimensions, such as on investment capabilities, human resources and innovation.

Susana Neto, Senior Researcher, University of Lisbon, Portugal presented, her co-authored draft article [“Transparency, regional diversity, and capacity building: cornerstone trust and engagement in good water governance”](#). The article discusses how coherent policy, transparency and community involvement build trust and engagement and enable improvements in water governance in different contexts (Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean). The manuscript departed from the research question: *why are some policies or implementation actions successful in some places and not others, and how can the factors of success be assessed?* According to the author, the main reasons explaining the failure or delay towards improved water governance are: i) gaps in communication between organisations or institutional levels; ii) lack of mainstreaming and integration of water reforms in other policies; and iii) limited policy evaluation, lack of mechanisms for systematic feedback. **Susana Neto** first highlighted that a collaborative planning process is more critical to long-term sustainable water use than any individual plan because collaboration itself facilitates community learning and capacity building. Second, she highlighted that the deep involvement of water stakeholders in the co-design and co-implementation of appropriate indicator frameworks is critical to enhance water governance. The paper concludes by calling for reinforcing the aim of the indicator framework for water governance as a tool to foster dialogue at all levels.

Manfred Matz, Head of Programme, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) Tunisia, introduced his co-authored draft paper entitled [“The OECD Principles on Water Governance as a Means to Achieving Impacts in the Water Sector: A Practical Application”](#). This article proposes a practice-oriented approach for measuring the influence of the [OECD Principles on Water Governance](#) on water subsectors. The article reiterates the importance of defining impacts and their respective indicators and discusses how they are embedded in result-based planning used by GIZ in general and in the particular case of water data management in Tunisia. The authors propose a new framework to better link the OECD Principles on Water Governance with the socio-economic and environmental impact.

The Chair opened the discussion by sharing the following questions:

- Do you have any suggestions on the overall message the Special Issue should convey?
- Do you have any comments you would like to share on the draft articles presented?

Oriana Romano briefly explained that an Editorial Committee composed of the IWRA and WGI members has been involved in the peer review process since August 2021. Out of 40 abstracts received, 15 passed the first selection, and 12 papers are in the second stage of revision. The papers should be finalised by the end of February and the [Special Issue](#) is set to be launched at the [9th World Water Forum](#). The OECD will contribute through an introductory article that will provide a rationale for good water governance and for measuring its impacts, as well as present the state of the art of such impact measurements.

Aziza Akhmouch thanked the co-authors for their respective contributions and draft articles, which are consistent with the main message that the WGI has tried to emphasise over the past decade when unpacking water governance, namely the need to master complexity at all stages of policy design, implementation and evaluation. She particularly welcomed the draft article of **Claude Menard**, which stresses the very important role of meso-institutions in managing such complexity and strives to document the cost of not addressing identified governance gaps. She suggested that some of the conclusions of the article, although specific to Egypt, may actually be of high relevance to OECD countries. Regarding the paper on transparency by Susana Neto et al, she welcomed the thoughts on the process for developing water governance indicators and measurement frameworks ex ante so that they deliver intended goals ex post, and wondered to what extent some of the findings of the [Water Integrity Global Outlook](#) could be reflected to better document the cost of inaction on transparency and corruption (notably that 6% to 26% of total water costs could be lost to corruption).

The Chair passed the floor to the authors for further comments. **Susana Neto** stated that the editorial would be much welcomed to provide an overview of the challenge of measuring water governance and the importance of engagement and co-design. **Claude Menard** emphasised the unavoidable fragmentation issue, which is why it is important to define the level of “acceptable and efficient fragmentation” and to

minimise related costs. Manfred Matz clarified some points in relation to how the OECD Principles on Water Governance can be used to guide project implementation by water operators.

Closing of the 16th meeting of the OECD WGI

The Chair concluded the [16th meeting](#) noting that WGI members and the Secretariat were on track for the Dakar Forum. He thanked the Steering Committee, the OECD Secretariat and the interpreters. He also reminded members that a Steering Committee meeting would take place on 21 January 2022.