



XVI World Water Congress

International Water Resources Association (IWRA)
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@WWCongress

info@watercongressxvi.mx

Discussion Note

Thematic Framework: Bridging Science and Policy

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XVIth World Water Congress

Bridging Science and Policy

Discussion Note on the Thematic Framework

Introduction

Water is a vital resource for humanity. It is a crosscutting component of all social, economic and environmental activities. It is a condition for all life on our planet, an enabling or limiting factor for any social and technological development, a source of wellbeing and misery, and all-to-often a basis for conflict and cooperation.

While humanity has widely recognized the imperative of water and sharing, it has not always implemented sound approaches to the utilization, conservation, protection, and administration of the resource. One of the key challenges has been the disconnect between scientific knowledge and policy actions, between those making scientific and technological discoveries and advancements, and those who can mobilize governmental and societal adoption and implementation through practical and robust policies.

The objective of the XVIth World Water Congress is to bridge these gaps in knowledge, communication, and coordination. In particular, it aims to link professionals with information and experiences related to water resources at all levels, with experts working on key global water agendas and strategies. Accordingly, the Congress is targeted at natural and social scientists, practitioners, and technological innovators, as well as policy and decision-makers, financial stakeholders and investors, legal and regulatory specialists, and groups involved in capacity building. Additionally, the Congress is designed to catalyse cooperation and coordination among these professionals in order to facilitate global goals and strategies related to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to water, as well as agreements under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, thematic priorities of past and upcoming World Water Forums, and other water-related programs.

In order for us to achieve solutions for the multiple water challenges facing our world, we must strengthen the linkages between science and policy; we must facilitate active dialogue throughout the water community and learn how to translate across disciplines and professions; and we must find opportunities to align our objectives and approaches toward problem solving. By collaborating and combining all of our efforts, by bridging and fortifying relations among scientists and policymakers, we will ensure a more sound future for the world we leave to our children.

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Linkages

The WWC in 2017 takes place in the early phase of the “post-2015 development agenda” as shaped by the milestone events in 2015: the Global Risks Report of the World Economic Forum, the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Summit, the 7th World Water Forum in Korea, the Addis Summit on Financing for Development, the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) and the COP 21 climate agreement¹.

From a water perspective, the following linkages are particularly relevant for the thematic framework of the 16th WWC, allowing the 16th WWC to bridge backwards and forwards to other events, as well as the expected SDG 6 implementation mechanisms:

- The SDG’s, primarily the “water goal” SDG 6, but also other relevant goals
- The implementation Roadmaps resulting from the 16 themes of the 7th WWF in Korea, to be monitored and reported upon at the 8th WWF in Brazil in 2018
- The annual themes of UN-Water (World Water Development Report and World Water Day), and the associated themes of the annual World Water Weeks in Stockholm

Details are included in Annexes A and B to this Note.

Criteria for the proposed thematic framework

The group to be targeted for the XVIth WWC is expected to include policy/decision-makers, academics, civil society and practitioners from the public and private sectors, both within and outside the water sector. The following criteria are suggested:

- A limited number of themes, supplemented by a few cross-cutting issues (in casu 6+3)
- For each theme a limited number of sub-themes (in casu max. 4)
- Brief theme/sub-theme/issue titles, easy to remember and refer to
- Themes/cross-cutting issues linked to SDG 6 targets as the primary structure
- Initial “long-list” of sub-themes to be reduced/consolidated later in light of submitted abstracts².
- Each theme/cross-cutting issue to be introduced by a invited high-level keynote speaker

¹ To be followed up at COP 22 in Morocco and at subsequent COP meetings

² The final sub-theme structure should accommodate a reasonably even distribution of presentations across sub-themes

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THEMES

1. Water, sanitation and health

(- including implementation of SDG 6.1 and SDG 6.2, and link to SDGs 1 and 3)

- a) Safe and affordable drinking water
- b) Adequate and equitable sanitation
- c) Water and public health

2. Water quality, wastewater and reuse

(- including implementation of SDG 6.3 and link to SDG 14.1)

- a) Water quality and pollution management – from ridge to reef³
- b) Water technologies
- c) The circular economy – reduce, remove, reuse

3. Water security in a changing world

(- including implementation of SDG 6.4 and COP 21/ SDG 13, and the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework)

- a) Risk management, disaster risk reduction, and the economics of water security⁴⁵
- b) Climate change adaptation
- c) Sustainable and efficient water use – surface water and groundwater
- d) Reliability, equitability, and adaptability

4. Water policy and governance

(- including implementation of SDG 6.5)

- a) IWRM and transboundary⁶ issues at all levels
- b) Financing, tariffs and the economics of good governance
- c) Water law and regulation⁷

5. Water ecosystems and physical regimes

(- including implementation of SDG 6.6 and link to SDG 15)

- a) Ecosystem and biodiversity⁸
- b) Natural and engineered hydrological systems
- c) The hydro-climatic dimension

6. Water and sustainable growth⁹

(- including link to Addis Summit on Financing Development, and to SDGs 2, 7, 8, 11 and 12)

- a) Managing urban growth - IUWM
- b) The Water, Energy and Food Nexus¹⁰ and Green Growth
- c) Water infrastructure – investment and financing¹¹

³ Recognizing linkage to IWRA-lead effort on 7th WWF Implementation Roadmap 3.3: Ensuring Water Quality from Ridge to Reef.

⁴ Recognizing linkage to OECD-GWP Dialogue on Economics of Water Security

⁵ Encompassing migration due to water scarcity/insecurity to be considered if possible

⁶ Recognizing trans-jurisdictional, national and international concerns, including hydro-diplomacy

⁷ Recognizing linkage to OECD Principles on Water Governance

⁸ Contemplating both terrestrial and aquatic (from ridge to reef)

⁹ Recognizing linkage to World Water Development Report 2016 on “water and jobs”

¹⁰ Linking SDG 2 (food), SDG 6 (water) and SDG 7 (energy)

¹¹ Recognizing linkage to OECD-WWC Dialogue on Financing Water

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CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

A. Bridging science and policy

(- the theme of the WWC, cutting across all thematic areas)

- a) Policy-relevant science
- b) Scientifically-based policy and management
- c) Modelling and decision support systems

B. Building capacity

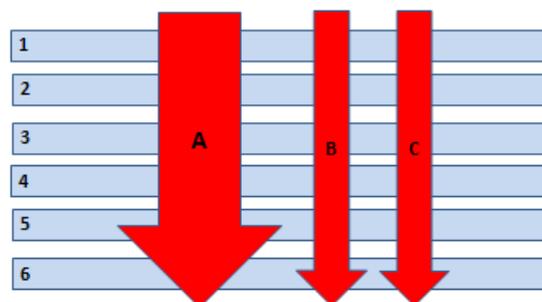
(- including implementation of SDG 6.a and links to SDGs 4 and 17)

- a) Research¹², monitoring, innovation, and education
- b) Technology transfer, information & communication technologies, water information systems and capacity building at all levels
- c) International cooperation

C. Stakeholder participation

(- including implementation of SDG 6.b and links to SDGs 3, 15 and 17)

- a) Promote multi-stakeholder dialogues that involve **all**:¹³ public, private¹⁴, civil society – women and men – young and old
- b) Bridging levels: bottom up and top down
- c) Keeping focus on culture, poverty reduction, justice, and equity
- d) Transparency, corruption, and integrity



¹² Inclusive of all relevant sciences and disciplines: water (hydrology, hydrogeology, engineering), economic, social, political, legal

¹³ Recognizing linkage to OECD Stakeholder engagement for inclusive water governance

¹⁴ Recognizing the important role of private sector to include PPP and new business models

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ANNEX A

WATER IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

THE “WATER GOAL”

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, with targets:

SDG 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

SDG 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

SDG 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

SDG 6.4: By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

SDG 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

SDG 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

SDG 6.a: By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

SDG 6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

“WATER” INCLUDED IN OTHER GOALS

Water (mostly floods/droughts and pollution) is specifically mentioned in other SDG targets, such as:

- SDG 2.4 – hunger: floods and droughts
- SDG 3.3. – health: water-borne diseases
- SDG 3.9 – health: pollution
- SDG 11.5 – cities: water-related disasters
- SDG 12.4 – production: pollution
- SDG 14.1 – oceans: land-based pollution sources
- SDG 15.1 – ecosystems: freshwater ecosystem protection
- SDG 15.3 – ecosystems: floods and droughts
- SDG 15 – ecosystems: invasive species

WATER NOT INCLUDED IN OTHER GOALS

Water (or floods/drought etc.) is NOT specifically mentioned in relevant goals such as:

- SDG 1 – poverty; SDG 3 – gender; SDG 4 – education; SDG 7 – energy; SDG 8 – growth; SDG 9 – infrastructure;
- SDG 12 – sustainable production and consumption; SDG 13 – climate; SDG 17 – implementation

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ANNEX B

WORLD WATER FORUM IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAPS

(16 themes addressed in the 7th WWF in Korea)

ACTION TYPES

1. Water Security for All
 - 1.1. Enough Safe Water for All
 - 1.2. Integrated Sanitation for All
 - 1.3. Adapting to Change: Managing Risk and Uncertainty for Resilience and Disaster Preparedness
 - 1.4. Infrastructure for Sustainable Water Resource Management and Services
2. Water for Development and Prosperity
 - 2.1. Water for Food
 - 2.2. Water and Energy
 - 2.3. Water and Cities
3. Water for Sustainability: Harmonizing Humans and Nature
 - 3.1. Green Growth, Water Stewardship and Industry
 - 3.2. Managing and Restoring Ecosystems for Water Services and Biodiversity
 - 3.3. Ensuring Water Quality from Ridge to Reef¹⁵
 - 3.4. SMART Implementation of IWRM

ACTION TOOLS

4. Constructing Feasible Implementation Mechanisms
 - 4.1. Economics and Financing for Innovative Investments
 - 4.2. Effective Governance: Enhanced Political Decisions, Stakeholder Participation and Technical Information
 - 4.3. Cooperation for Reducing Conflict and Improving Transboundary Water Management
 - 4.4. Water Cultures, Justice and Equity
 - 4.5. Enhancing Education and capacity Building

UN-WATER AND STOCKHOLM WORLD WATER WEEK THEMES

UN-WATER

Theme of year, including World Water Development Report and World Water Day
(2017 or 2018 may be replaced by “international Year for water and Women”)

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2016 | Water and jobs |
| 2017 | Wastewater (current working title: “Wastewater is Resource Water”) |
| 2018 | Ecosystems/nature-based solutions (tentative) |

STOCKHOLM WORLD WATER WEEK

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2016 | Water and sustainable growth |
| 2017 | Water and waste – reduce and reuse |
| 2018 | Water and ecosystems (presumably, title not decided) |

¹⁵ Theme coordinated by IWRA as Design Group Leader at the 7th WWF