

UN-Water Operational Guidelines

Background

These Operational Guidelines have been established in September 2008 by UN-Water as a follow-up to its 9th meeting held in Stockholm, 16-17 August, 2008. They provide operational guidance to the Senior Programme Managers (SPM) from the member agencies and organizations of UN-Water and complement the UN-Water Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference are attached in Annex 1.

Article I. Objective, organization of work and budget

Section 1. UN-Water objective and scope of work

UN-Water is an entity composed of the UN agencies and organizations engaged in work related to water and sanitation. The goals of UN-Water are to promote and provide an efficient, coherent and proactive mechanism for coordination of the UN System agencies and programmes, and to contribute substantially to the achievement of global water and sanitation related targets and goals. Emphasis is given to targets and goals articulated through the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) from the United Nations General Assembly Millennium Summit in 2000 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg, South Africa 2002). The expected outcome is improved system-wide coordinated actions and coherence, as well as increased effectiveness in the support to Member States in their efforts towards the achievement of agreed goals, targets and actions in the water sector.

Section 2. Organization of work

UN-Water is not an organization with legal entity and activities outlined in the Work Programme are implemented through members and partners. UN-Water has a Secretariat located at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and a Chair and Co-Chair rotating among its members. Although the SPMs of UN-Water have no direct authority to resolve issues of gaps, overlaps or duplications between the mandates of members, they are expected to highlight the scope for rationalisation and play an influencing role to improve accountability and delivery in water-related activities.

UN-Water also operates through UN-Water programmes and their respective offices. The programmes/offices are administered by the UN-Water member hosting the programme. The work plans of the programmes/offices are developed for securing specific coordinating functions and supporting tasks of UN-Water in agreement with the UN-Water SPM. A steering group, consisting of Senior Programme Managers of UN-Water is to be established to provide overall strategic direction to the offices/programmes¹. Currently three programmes are operational:

- (1) World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), hosted and led by UNESCO in Perugia, Italy;
- (2) UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC), hosted and led by UNU in Bonn, Germany;
- (3) UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) implemented by the United Nations Office to support the International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005-2015, hosted and led by UNDESA in Zaragoza, Spain.

The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), led by the two agencies in Geneva and New York, is an associated UN-Water programme, but has an independent governance structure.

¹ The decision to establish the steering group was made at the 9th SPM UN-Water meeting held in Stockholm in August, 2008. The steering-group will become operational only after the Terms of References have been agreed upon by all UN-Water members

Section 3. UN-Water Budget

Members and partners to UN-Water pay no membership or partner fees. A Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) has been established to strengthen the UN-Water activities and programmes. This MDTF is used to support the core functions and activities of UN-Water and specific projects and Task Forces that are initiated through UN-Water but executed by members. Members and partners need to cover their own expenses associated with UN-Water, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon in the case of specific activities. The management of the Trust Fund will be guided by an internal planning group. This arrangement is further elaborated under Article III, Section 4.

Article II. Membership

Section 1. UN-Water membership

Any UN agency, programme or other UN entity with water-related issues, including sanitation and natural disasters, as part of their mandate may become member in UN-Water by contacting the Secretariat of UN-Water. The member's name will be entered/listed on the UN-Water web-page and other relevant UN-Water printed material as a full member, and such member will have full decision-making rights at the UN-Water SPM meetings. Each member will appoint one designated focal point and one alternate as principal contact persons.

Section 2. UN-Water partner status

Any organization, professional union or association or other civil-society group (jointly referred to as organizations) actively involved in water, that has the capacity and willingness to contribute tangibly to the work of UN-Water, and are active internationally and/or multinational in structure and membership may request partnership status with UN-Water. Such an organization should request registered legal status. In order to initiate the membership process the organization needs to send a written request to the Secretariat of UN-Water. Such request will be considered by the SPM of UN-Water or its designee, following the established partner criteria, and if approved the applicant may be registered as a UN-Water partner. Upon approval the name of the organization will be included on the UN-Water web-page and other relevant UN-Water printed material as a partner. The partner status criteria are listed in Annex 2.

Each partner shall appoint one focal point and one alternate as principal contact persons.

Section 3. Cancellation or refusal of partner status

The SPM of UN-Water may cancel the partner status of any partner or refuse such a status to an applicant, when the integrity of UN-Water, in their judgment, justifies such action. If a partner fails to meet the requirements for UN-Water partner status as stipulated in Annex 2, it shall be notified that it must meet said requirements within an allotted period of time or else its membership status with UN-Water will be terminated

Section 4. UN-System hosted entities

Entities that have entered into an agreement with a UN-Water member agency or organization for their legal hosting but maintaining independent governance may also apply for special partner status with UN-Water. High level Advisory Boards / Panels / Committees which are legally connected to the United Nations system will also be eligible for special partner status. Such entities can request, on a case by case basis, to participate in any UN-Water SPM meeting. Their rights and obligations are in all other matters regulated through the UN-Water Partner Criteria.

Article III. Governance

Section 1. Meetings of members and partners.

The designated focal point and/or one alternate of a member will be invited to participate in all UN-Water meetings. The Secretariat will maintain an updated list of designated focal points and alternates of members, including full contact information. It is the responsibility of the focal points and alternates to inform the Secre-

tariat of any changes.

The designated focal point and/or one alternate of a partner will be invited to participate at the UN-Water meeting organized normally in conjunction with the World Water Week in August each year. The Secretariat will maintain an updated list of designated focal points and alternates of partners, including full contact information. It is the responsibility of the focal points and alternates to inform the Secretariat of any changes.

UN-Water meetings are further addressed under Article IV.

Section 2. Chair and Co-Chair of UN-Water

A Chair and Co-Chair will be elected from among UN-Water members on a rotating basis. The Chair and the Co-Chair will commence their service with the first annual meeting following their election. The service period will normally be 2 years.

An advisor, financed through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, will support the work of the Chair provided the necessary financial resources are available.

The terms of reference of the Chair and the Co-Chair are outlined in Annex 3.

Section 3. Secretariat

A permanent Secretariat is provided by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) in New York. The Secretariat consists of a Secretary. An assistant, financed through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, will support the work of the Secretary provided the necessary financial resources are available. The terms of reference for the secretariat are outlined in Annex 3.

Section 4. UN-Water work programme, budget and reporting

The work of UN-Water is described in the biennial work programme. The work programme contains two parts. One part is an open, publicly-accessible document, posted on the UN-Water web-page. It provides a summary of UN-Water activities and present more general information on UN-Water. The second is a more detailed, internal document, used primarily by the UN-Water members (and in particular the Secretariat and the Chair) and outlines planned activities, expected outcomes, timelines, lead organisation(s) for each activity, performance indicators, budget if relevant, and sources of funding. The funding sources could inter alia include the UN-Water Multi-Donor Trust Fund or resources provided through UN-water members and partners. The internal work programme may contain, as annexes, separate plans for the UN-Water Task Forces as well as for other activities, as needed.

The development of the work programme and budget is supported by an internal planning group, comprising the Chair, Secretariat and a number of SPMs from UN-Water members. The draft work programme and budget will be submitted, for discussion and final decision, to the annual UN-Water meeting held in the first quarter each year.

An annual report of activities will be prepared by the Chair/Secretariat and should be finalized by March each year. The annual report will be available through the UN-water web-site.

Section 5. Cover of expenses.

Each member and partner needs to cover individual costs associated with the participation in UN-Water meetings and other activities. Certain activities under UN-Water have separate budgets and some support for specific activities and projects are also available through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund "Strengthening of UN-Water Partnership Programmes". The organisation hosting UN-Water meetings is expected to cover relevant logistical meeting costs for such meetings.

Section 6. Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability will guide the operations of UN-Water. The minutes and decisions from UN-

Water meetings as well as other documentation will be, to the greatest extent possible, made available not only to all members but also to partners and be posted on the UN-Water web-site. The biennial work programme and annual report will be available through the UN-Water web-site.

Section 7. Reporting to the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)

UN-Water was established by the HLCP at its meeting held on 18-19 September 2003 and later the same year endorsed by the Chief Executive Board (CEB). The Chair of UN-Water, or someone designated by him/her, should report back to HLCP on progress when requested. The Work Programme and Annual Report will be sent to the Secretariat of HLCP.

Article IV. Meetings of members and partners

Section 1. Time and place of regular meetings

Under normal circumstances, two UN-Water SPM meetings will be organized annually. One meeting will be hosted by a UN-Water member, following the principle of rotation, and will generally be held in the first quarter each year. Only UN-Water members will be invited to this meeting which, beyond more substantive issues, will have a particular focus on governance related matters. Provisions should, as much as possible, be made to secure as wide a participation of members as possible, if so required through telephone or video conference facilities.

The second UN-Water meeting will usually be organised in the third quarter in conjunction with the World Water Week in Stockholm, normally in August. Both UN-Water members and partners will be invited to this meeting and it will focus more on substantive discussions related to UN-Water collaboration with partners.

Section 2. Notice of meetings

The Secretariat shall include in the minutes from each meeting a notice of the time and place of the next two bi-annual meetings.

The Secretariat shall send a request to each member and partner to inform the Secretariat and Chair of any issue they wish to be reflected on the agenda, at least 2 months prior to each meeting. A draft final agenda shall be sent by the Secretariat at least six weeks prior to the meeting and the final agenda and all necessary other documentation shall be sent no later than four weeks prior to the meeting. A number of aspects should to be included as part of the final agenda:

- a) Items listed on the agenda should be supported through relevant material (if appropriate) which should be made available at least 4 weeks prior to the meeting;
- b) Items requiring that specific decisions are made by the UN-Water members should include a list of potential draft decisions for members to consider prior to the meeting;
- c) Supporting documents should be as short as possible, normally not exceeding 2-3 pages, and contain all relevant information. Additional information can be included as annexes;
- d) Proposals for publications through UN-Water need to be supported by a brief (2-3 pages) but clear description. These proposals shall follow the agreed format .

The member hosting the meeting shall send logistical information to all members and partners (directly or through the Secretariat) at least 8 weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Conditions of quorum and decision making at UN-Water SPM meetings

When specific decisions are required at a UN-Water SPM meeting, 51% of the designated member delegates (or their alternates or any other person empowered to act on behalf of a member), in person or by proxy, will constitute a quorum.

Decision making at SPM meetings shall be sought through consensus among all attending members. If consensus is not reached, the meeting may delegate to the Chair and Secretary to draft a decision and seek consensus through electronic mail which will then be sent to all focal points of UN-Water members.

The final notes from UN-Water SPM meetings will be sent for final comments and clearance to all members within one month after a meeting. These notes should capture the key points from the discussions and clearly outline decisions and the responsibility to implement those decisions.

Article V. Task forces and regional un-water arrangements

Section 1. Task Forces

The majority of the work of UN-Water is carried out through time-bound Task Forces in order to draw on the varied expertise of the UN system and of UN-Water partners. The Task Forces are established by the UN-Water SPM to focus on a specific area of interest, an emerging issue or an area where increased co-ordination is desirable. As such, they form the core activity of UN-Water in efforts to increase cooperation and coherence within the UN system. After being established, each Task Force needs to produce its own terms of reference and work-plan, respectively, considering the overall mandate and terms of reference of UN-Water. These will be submitted for final approval by the next UN-Water SPM meeting.

Task Forces will be formed by members and partners of UN-Water but may also invite other stakeholders or individuals if deemed useful. Task Forces should produce a short annual report on their activities, which will be included in the UN-Water Annual Report, no later than 1 February each year

Section 2. Regional UN-Water arrangements

The terms of references of UN-Water encourages effective system-wide action and inter-agency collaboration at the regional and sub-regional levels as an integral part of UN-Water's functions. Regional UN-Water arrangements, to be led by the UN Regional Commissions, should operate based on terms of references and work plans that are coherent with those of UN-Water itself. The terms of reference and work plans of regional UN-Water arrangements should be discussed and endorsed at a UN-Water SPM meeting and they should report back, at least once a year, on progress and challenges. The Chair and/or Secretary of UN-Water should attend meetings of the regional UN-Water arrangements. Similarly, the Coordinator or the Secretary of regional arrangements is/ are expected to attend the UN-Water SPM meetings.