***Agenda Item:*** **World Water Quality Assessment (incl. Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater)**
**Background Brief**
**30th UN-Water Meeting – 31 January and 1 February 2019 – Rome, Italy**

Please send this document and any annexes to leanne.burney@unwater.org
**no later than 28 December 2018**

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**Main Issues of this Agenda Item:**

- Inception Phase of WWQA started,
- Inception Workshop, November 28/29, 2018, Geneva, hosted by WMO
- Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater
- Current resources

**Introduction / Background / Rationale** (less than 200 words please)**:**
The World Water Quality Assessment (mandated by UNEP EA3/Res10), building on recommendations of the UN-Water Analytical Brief (2016) and Snapshot report (UNEP 2016) is being implemented as a collective effort coordinated by UNEP, aiming towards an Alliance of UN Water and external partners based on expressions of interest. Assessment and services to countries are in focus.

The inception phase started off in, i) the call for expression of interest (ca 80 organisations approached, 50 positive responses), ii) a first remote (TelCon) Meeting of the Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater* to introduce the concept, plans and timelines and plan collectively for the inception workshop in Geneva and iii) the Inception workshop itself hosted by WMO and UNEP.

In Geneva over 40 participants from different organizations refined their interest and outlined possible contributions to various segments of the programme. The presence of governments (supporting and observing) allowed discussions on country needs, programmatic embedding and options for future resource mobilistaion.

Main objectives were to:

- compile current water quality related activities of the partners and how these could feed into the assessment
- overview data sources and identify gaps to be filled to deliver global assessment and tailored services

- discuss a convincing narrative on water quality raising donor and partner interests
- build a community of practice with the strong desire to raise the global profile of ambient freshwater quality and its strong links with 2030 Agenda goals

**Progress Update** (less than 200 words please)**:**

THEMATIC COMMITMENTS
The workshop participants were asked and agreed to express potential commitments by their respective organization to contribute to three Nexus topics

- Water quality, health and cities
- Water quality and food
- Water quality and ecosystems

An overview over the received thematic commitments (Draft to be subject to refinement) can be found in the annex. UNEP would like to thank WMO for hosting the workshop and is enthused by the commitment and eagerness of UN-Water members, external institutions and countries to contribute to the World Water Quality Assessment. Feedback received since is encouraging.

Resources:
In addition to the initial 200k USD funding for the inception phase by Switzerland an additional 200k CHF has been mobilized. This second commitment will be utilized to address one of the key recommendations deriving from the Workshop: i.e. to demonstrate the value added for of an Alliance effort of such a kind illustrating the universality and relevance of the 2030 Agenda on country and system scale. The proposal approved will investigate three “use cases” in Africa (Cape Town, Volta basin, Lake Victoria) in order to demonstrate the translation of water data into operational services, policies and action.

Additional discussions with further potential donors and partners are ongoing. Next steps will summarize the findings, provide a water quality activity inventory, identify from that key building blocks and a workplan for assessments, data innovation, modelling and scenarios and implements the demonstration cases till Mid 2020. The assessment in a draft global baseline is due for review by UNEA 5 (March 2021).

**Proposed Action by UN-Water, if any** (less than 100 words please)**:**

UN Water participated in the Inception and shall consider participation in the Strategic Advisory or Technical Advisory Committee. (levels can be active and/or observing). The UN-Water shall receive regular updates and may be instrumental in further promote the WWQ Assessment and Alliance initiative; its Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater is and shall be instrumental as a hub for remote meetings of the Alliance and identifying priorities, implementation steps etc.

**Proposed Draft Decision, if any** (less than 100 words please)**:**

The SPMs take note of the work on the World Water Quality Assessment and its international and multidisciplinary Alliance and invite UNEP as well as UN-Water Members and Partners to continue sharing information as necessary, ensuring appropriate synergies with the Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 and water quality related work that can be mutually supporting.

***Annexes** (if any)**:**

- WWQA inception workshop – thematic commitments
- A full report of the Expert Group Consultation as well as the presentations introducing the programme at the inception (PDF) can be made available upon request to kilian.christ@un.org