

UN-Water

Guidelines on UN-Water Partners

Introduction

1. As per its Terms of Reference, UN-Water is the inter-agency mechanism that promotes coherence in, and coordination of, water-related UN system actions aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant policy frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and the New Urban Agenda. Its scope of work encompasses all freshwater related matters, including sanitation. It includes surface and groundwater resources and the interface between fresh and sea water, and freshwater resources in terms of their quality and quantity, their development, assessment, management, monitoring, and use (including, for example, domestic uses, agriculture, and ecosystems requirements). The scope of work related to sanitation encompasses both access to and use of sanitation by populations and the interactions between sanitation and freshwater. UN-Water's scope of work further includes water-related disasters, emergencies and other extreme events and their impact on human security.

2. The Terms of Reference of UN-Water further state that “advancing the implementation of this complex and ambitious international agenda is a collective responsibility and challenge which calls for coordinated action – beginning with the UN system but also progressively involving other concerned partners and stakeholders, including among them organisations from public and private sectors, civil society and labour – towards a global, comprehensive effort.” The Terms of Reference identify the need for the United Nations system to work with partners in relation to policy development and implementation and, in particular, in thematic initiatives.

3. Since UN-Water's inception in 2003, its number of Partners has steadily increased. Throughout the years, UN-Water Members and Partners have reflected on how Partners could best engage in and contribute to UN-Water's work. The process led to the approval in 2015 of UN-Water's Guidelines on Partners' Engagement, which were subsequently revised and resulted in the present document.

Guidelines on the role of Partners and their expected contributions to the work of UN-Water

a. What is a Partner?

4. A Partner is any organisation, professional union or association or other civil-society group actively involved in water and sanitation issues that has the capacity and willingness to contribute tangibly to the work of UN-Water. The organisation should operate at the global level and not with a single region focus. However, organisations with a single region focus are encouraged to engage with relevant Expert Groups. The organisation should focus on the improvement of global welfare, rather than primarily the advancement and interests

of its members (if a member's organisation). Partners are organisations outside of the United Nations system. The procedure for applying for partnership is set out in this document and its annex application form.

b. What UN-Water expects of Partners

5. Partners should bring their expertise, knowledge and networks to UN-Water in support of UN-Water and the internationally-agreed agenda on freshwater-related issues, including sanitation.

6. Partners should participate, as appropriate, in coordinated actions and thematic joint initiatives to be pursued through Expert Groups, Task Forces, and other UN-Water initiatives. They should also participate in discussions at UN-Water Meetings to monitor progress in relation to such initiatives. UN-Water may also seek to facilitate ways to ensure the involvement of key Partners in the interagency dialogue on major issues of common concern.¹ Partners provide diverse views and input that improve the quality of outputs and deliverables as well as their acceptability.

7. Partners may also work with the UN-Water Chair – in cooperation with the coordinators of Task Forces and Expert Groups – to elaborate possible synergies and cooperation in addressing relevant water-related policy dimensions.²

8. Partners will be requested to provide regular feedback on their work in UN-Water activities and initiatives to UN-Water through the UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit and, if necessary, with the support of the Unit, coordinate action with UN-Water Members, other Partners, Task Forces, Expert Groups or other initiatives.

9. Partners present at the regional, subregional and country levels should engage – in cooperation with the Task Force on Country Level Engagement and the Expert Group on Regional Level Coordination – in providing mutual support and exchange of information regarding the actions of UN-Water between the global level and the regional, subregional and country levels.

10. UN-Water Meetings are held twice each year, once typically in the first quarter and a second time in the third quarter³. UN-Water Members are represented in those Meetings by Senior Programme Managers (SPMs). For each UN-Water Partner, the designated focal point and one alternate contact will be invited to participate at UN-Water Meetings, but some parts of each Meeting's agenda may be closed to Partners. The Management Team will maintain an updated list of Partners' designated focal points and alternates including full contact information. It is the responsibility of the Partners to inform the Management Team of any changes.

11. A lack of participation in UN-Water Meetings does not necessarily equate to a lack of interest in UN-Water. However, Partners expect other Partners to be active in UN-Water in

¹ Terms of Reference of UN-Water.

² Terms of Reference Annex: UN-Water Governance.

³ Article IV on UN-Water Meetings of Members and Partners in UN-Water Operational Guidelines.

some way; this is a reflection of the UN-Water partner criterion that indicates that prolonged inactivity can be a reason for UN-Water to terminate the partnership (see annex, criterion number 17). A passive Partner may harm the reputation of UN-Water and become an irritation to those Partners who invest actively in UN-Water's activities.

c. Opportunities for Partners

12. Partners can:

- Reach all United Nations system organisations interested in water and sanitation; build relationships with individual Partners and Members; and access UN-Water networks and media to receive and disseminate information.
- Collaborate with UN-Water Members in delivering UN-Water's mission by contributing with its knowledge, skills, experience and networks.
- Participate actively in the work of UN-Water Expert Groups and Task Forces, in their meetings and in consultations convened by them. Partners can review and comment on their outputs and can help to finalize recommendations for UN-Water.
- Provide substantive technical input and information to the activities of UN-Water, including UN-Water reports. Their role can be significant, particularly at the practical level where they have greater flexibility than UN-Water Members; this may include leading an activity if approved by the SPMs.
- Contribute to the formulation of the UN-Water biennial Work Programme and can execute specific and time-bound tasks as assigned.
- Raise awareness, strengthen communication and disseminate information. They can play an advocacy role that is sometimes closed to UN-Water Members.
- Coordinate with other stakeholder communities and particularly at the country level. Support fundraising and provide financing.
- Contribute to the preparation of strategic advice documents and events.
- Engage in World Water Day and World Toilet Day campaigns.
- Promote its meetings and events among UN-Water's constituency.
- Suggest joint activities and initiatives.
- Gain a better understanding of the strengths and knowledge of UN-Water Members and of political and institutional pressures at the international level.

Criteria

13. Any organisation that is actively involved in freshwater- and sanitation- related issues, has the capacity and willingness to contribute tangibly to the work of UN-Water and operates at the global level and not with a single region focus may request Partner status with UN-Water. Such an organisation should have registered legal status.

14. The organisation should have extensive global networks of members or partners or a high global presence or visibility, through regional or country offices, on ground project activities or globally recognized events/publications.

15. The organisation should have specific expertise with a strong emphasis on water-related issues in their organisational mandate.

16. Partner status will not be granted to any political party or state or government agency.

17. Partner status will not be granted to organisations dominated by single-issue advocacy or single country focus.

18. Partner status can only be granted to non-profit organisations. “Non-Profit” in these criteria means that the organisation is not established for the purpose of distributing profits to employees, owners or shareholders. This does not exclude umbrella or network organisations related to for-profit sectors from applying for Partner status as long as they themselves are non-profit organisations and do not act as advocates for for-profit organisations.

19. The organisation should be committed to diversity and inclusivity and not exclude any groups or individuals on the basis of age, gender, gender identity, disability, race, caste, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or any other status.

Application process

20. An organisation interested in applying for Partner status should send the application form in the Annex to the UN-Water Management Team for consideration by UN-Water. The organisation should stress in particular how it will contribute to the work of UN-Water and certify that it will fully support and adhere to the [UN-Water Operational Guidelines](#) and the guidelines for Partners as defined in this document.

21. The application must include letters of support from two UN-Water Members, provided by these Members’ SPMs.

22. Applications are reviewed and discussed during the regular scheduled Meetings of UN-Water and should reach the UN-Water Management Team at least four weeks prior to the next UN-Water Meeting in order to be included in the agenda. Organisations requesting Partner status will be informed of UN-Water decision within two weeks after the decision is made in a UN-Water Meeting.

After admission as Partner

23. The Partner organisation should appoint one focal point and one alternate as principal contact persons for UN-Water matters. The full contact information of the focal point and the alternate should be provided to the UN-Water Management Team at unwater@un.org. Each Partner will be responsible for providing information regarding any changes in relation to focal points or contact information.

24. Both the focal point and the alternate of the Partner will be invited to UN-Water Meetings. A maximum of two representatives per Partner can attend each UN-Water Meeting.

25. Partners may not invite individuals from other, non-Partner organisations to participate in UN-Water Meetings.

26. No fees are associated with the UN-Water Partner status. Partners are expected to cover their own expenses associated with the Partner status with UN-Water, including the participation in UN-Water Meetings, Expert Groups, Task Forces and other activities.

27. After clearance from the UN-Water Management Team, each Partner may display on its own web-site the UN-Water visual identifier both to inform about its Partner status with UN-Water and in relation to activities that are part of the agreed UN-Water Work Programme. Partners can also include a link to the UN-Water web-site on their own web-site.

28. Each Partner will have its logo on the UN-Water web-site with a link to the Partner's web-site. Partners will have an opportunity to display information on the UN-Water web-site, but only if it is directly related to activities that are part of the UN-Water Work Programme. Such information will need to be cleared by the UN-Water Management Team.

29. Partners are encouraged to provide – and regularly update – content on their work for the UN-Water Inventory.

30. A Partner can be part of UN-Water Expert Groups and Task Forces and any other activities that are part of the UN-Water Work Programme.

31. Any Partner may at any time give up its Partner status with UN-Water by giving notice to that effect to the UN-Water Management Team by email to unwater@un.org. Any such notice shall take effect from the date specified in the notice or, if no such date is specified, after receipt of the same by the UN-Water Management Team.

32. If the Partner is a network of individual members or organisations, its designated focal point and alternate contact represent the full network vis-à-vis UN-Water. Individual network members can participate in UN-Water's work, although they represent the partner network and not their own individual organisations.

33. If a Partner fails to meet the conditions indicated herein or in the UN-Water Operational Guidelines, it will be notified to comply with these requirements within a well-defined period of time, otherwise its status will be terminated.

34. If a Partner did not attend UN-Water Meetings or engage with any UN-Water Expert Groups/Task Forces or in any other UN-Water activity for more than two years, UN-Water will evaluate the partnership, preferably in collaboration with the Partner itself, to verify the continued interest of the Partner. If in spite of confirming its interest the Partner remains inactive for additional six months, UN-Water can terminate the partnership.

Annex. Partner status application form

1. Name and address of organisation:

2. Brief corporate history:

3. Brief information on the governance of the organisation:

4. How do you see your mandates and objectives in line with those of UN-Water?

5. Which areas of UN-Water Work Programme are you most interested in?

6. How do you see your organisation contributing to UN-Water activities?

7. Provide a brief description of current major water related activities your organisation is engaged in and which you feel would be relevant for UN-Water.

8. Provide reference letters from two UN-Water Members's Senior Programme Managers and fill out the table below with their contact details:

Name	Title	Email	Address

Certification: It is certified that we have read the UN-Water Guidelines on Partners and the [UN-Water Operational Guidelines](#). We agree to abide by the procedures and conditions indicated in the above documents and understand that failing to meet these conditions could lead to termination of our partnership status with UN-Water.

Signed and sealed:

Date:

Please submit this form by email to: UN-Water Secretary, unwater@un.org.

Mailing address: UN-Water Secretary, c/o UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit, 7bis Av. de la Paix, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland