

9th World Water Forum, Dakar 2021

« Means and tools » priority – governance contribution

Draft proposal for the June 20-21, 2019 Kick-off Meeting¹

11 June 2019 version V1 - Aziza Akhmouch and Pierre-Alain Roche

1 Perimeter of “governance” - Major challenges

Water governance is the range of political, institutional and administrative rules, practices and processes (formal and informal) through which decisions are taken and implemented, stakeholders can articulate their interests and have their concerns considered, and decision-makers are held accountable for water management. In a nutshell, it is about who does what, at which scale, how and why, to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness in managing “too much”, “too little”, “too polluted” waters, and ensuring universal coverage to water and sanitation for all. Since the first edition of the World Water Forum (1997), “governance” has been a consistent cross-cutting theme to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing to improve water policies and decisions around the globe. Over the last decade in particular, there has been increasing awareness and consensus in local, national and international arenas that most water crises are often more related to poor governance rather than hydrology or technology. Coping with pressing and emerging water risks raises not only the question of “what to do?” but also “who does what?”, “why?”, “at which level of government?” and “how?”

The *OECD Principles on Water Governance* adopted in May 2015 by 42 countries and 140+ stakeholder groups, state that policy responses to manage water risks will only be viable “if they are coherent, if stakeholders are properly engaged, if well-designed regulatory frameworks are in place, if there is adequate and accessible information, and if there is sufficient capacity, integrity and transparency”. The Principles recall the urgent need for robust public policies, strategies, and practices targeting measurable objectives in pre-determined time-schedules at the appropriate scale, relying on a clear assignment of duties across responsible authorities and subject to regular monitoring and evaluation.

1.1 Local, national and global agendas have recognised good governance as key to achieve water-related SDGs

Over the past few years, several outcome documents or high-level platforms have emphasised that improvements in water governance are crucial in order to achieve the SDGs (more details in **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**).

The “Sustainability Declaration” closing the 8th World Water Forum (Brasilia – 2018)² stated:

“Progress in water management is not only an objective per se, but also a pivotal contribution to the global success of most Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD).[...] We consider that current water policies will not be sufficient to reach the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[...] We, together, must commit to the implementation of good practices [...] as well as a drastic improvement of water governance [...] Efforts remain to be accomplished beyond the water sector to develop holistic policies and avoid fragmented approaches.”

The UN-Water “Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation” presented a similar diagnostic and stressed that:

¹ This paper is only a draft for discussion. It will be completed by other contributions during the KoM.

² [8th WWF final statement](#)

*“The baseline data illustrates that at **current progress SDG 6 is not on track to be achieved by 2030.**[...] SDG 6 targets present challenges for all countries but **continuing with business as usual will not suffice.** Achieving sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, tackling pollution at its source will **require profound evolution of actions among policymakers and decision makers.** [...] **Good water governance provides the political, institutional and administrative rules, practices and processes for taking decisions and implementing them.** [...] A serious lack of institutional and human capacity across the water sector is constraining progress, particularly in developing countries. [...] Multi-stakeholder partnerships can unlock potential. Sharing, accessing and adapting new solutions needs cooperation. SDG 6 provides the ideal platform for multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure more effective and efficient progress on poverty reduction and sustainable development. “*

The ministerial declaration of UN HLPF July 2018, stressed that: *“progress [...] has not been at the pace required to achieve this ambitious agenda and has been uneven across countries and regions.”*

These declarations have contributed to raise the profile of water as a key enabler to inclusive growth and sustainable development given its multidimensional impact on health, poverty alleviation, jobs, energy, agriculture, environment, and territorial development amongst others. With a dedicated SDG n° 6 on access to clean water and sanitation and 18 water-related targets in other SDGs, water and sanitation should now clearly be addressed and considered beyond their “sectoral lens”. **Moving forward, a major challenge is to shift from business as usual policies to more adequate framework and practices that mobilise all energies and foster the implementation of solutions.**

1.2 Governance is cross-cutting to many other priorities of the 9th World Water Forum

Remarks :

1 The topics Financing and Knowledge (capacity building and innovation) are components of the governance priority. They are developed in separate notes, prepared by AfDB and UNESCO, respectively.

*2 The perimeter of the priority “means and tools” itself has to be coordinated with other priorities and especially priority 3: “cooperation”. For example, we assume here that priority 3 covers the topic “Peace, stability and prevention of conflicts, wise water diplomacy arrangements and alliances, as well as transboundary water cooperation based on win-win solutions embedded into international treaties” and we don’t discuss diplomatic issues here. **International political involvement has to be considered generally by the Forum.** Governance has to be understood also for international institution, the place for this topic that is not covered by the WGI has to be defined. We have to prepare 2023 international conference on water as the first step for a recurrent Heads-of-State meeting and build dedicated and open governance to prepare these events.*

1.3 Improve effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness: nine major “governance” issues to address

Taking stock of previous editions of the World Water Forum and their outcomes related to governance, and with a view to foster continuity across fora and support the implementation of identified solution, we follow with the general grid “**effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness**” of the principle. Nine axes of crucial progress in governance are herein proposed as baselines to drive collective efforts:

- **Multiscale (vertical coordination) approaches.** Water resources cut across administrative boundaries and require a functional and holistic approach to be managed properly. At the core of governance is the need to articulate the geographic scales of water across the types of water resources, the territorial and hydrographic scales, and responsible institutions. Water issues

go way beyond the terrestrial part of the water cycle (from crest to reef, including basically freshwater and groundwater). They are strongly related to the oceans and the atmosphere, as a unique cycle. To reflect the multi-dimensionality of water management, tools must be built to ensure vertical coordination and coherence, and effective, efficient and inclusive policies need to be implemented at the different watershed and territorial levels from local to global (in conjunction with priority 3 for the diplomatic aspects).

- **Multisectoral (horizontal coordination) approaches.** Articulate policy coherence between water and other themes and ensure a global vision that reconciles pressing social issues, economic growth and long-term environmental responsibility. It refers to short term (social dimensions) and long term (environmental). This requires upscaling effective cross-sectoral co-ordination, especially between policies for water and the environment, health, energy, agriculture, industry, spatial planning and land use.
- **Financing (see AfDB).**
- **Capacity** (Identifying and addressing capacity gaps to implement integrated water resources management, notably for planning, rule-making, project management, finance, budgeting, data collection and monitoring, risk management and evaluation). **How to develop** the resources dedicated to capacity building efforts and to strengthen the instances of governance and their efficiency? See UNESCO.
- **Acting local.** How to co-create solutions and implement decision-making processes which are closer to individuals (this refers to items like: local authorities, traditional structures of governance, decentralization...)
- **Conciliation and respect as a condition for stakeholder engagement.** Identify the main cultural, political or ideological conflicts which block the collective action and find ways of reconciling the stakeholders to act in a common interest (legal compromises);
- **Trust.** Build trust particularly through transparency, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and combating corruption;
- **Knowledge.** Develop knowledge, data and information, science (including human sciences), technology and innovation at large including the one from traditional knowledge, share it and organise the ways they can guide policy making (see UNESCO).
- **Innovation.** Foster sustainability-driven innovations (like nature-based and climate-friendly solutions) in constituting a legal and financial frameworks favourable to their development (see UNESCO).

2 Main objectives to be reached - Necessary results at the 9th World Water Forum

2.1 9th World Water Forum as a milestone in a long term strategy: a continuous process is implemented from Forum to Forum to promote and facilitate governance improvement

Means and tools for water governance improvement are under continuous construction. Created in the aftermath of the 6th World Water Forum (2012), the *OECD Water Governance Initiative* has provided a global multi-stakeholder forum to share best practices, peer-review reforms, co-produce guidance, and support implementation. It has also facilitated continuity and follow-up on major governance outcomes from one World Water Forum to another..

2.2 Adapt the form of the Forum to governance issues at least for this priority

General objectives of any Forum are: share views (learn), build partnerships and commit ourselves together (express common views). Due to the willingness of the organizers to have more operational and participatory processes, **five forms of events** are proposed during the Forum to fit to these objectives, **at least for the governance priority**, which is particularly adequate to innovate, but could be presumably extended to the all Forum:

- **Sessions:** take stock of progress, discuss gaps to achieve the goals, methodologies. The list in § 1.3 could give a first idea of the structure of the topics treated.
- **Masterclasses:** a few cases selected on voluntary basis. These are cases in which stakeholders consider that they face difficulties to achieve their goals. Several successive workshops (e.g. 3x1h session on 3 different days) are dedicated to each case study, the goal being to build upon and co-create tracks progress. Concerned people make conclusions. These masterclasses could be initiated in some of the preparatory meetings or milestone.
- **Fish-bowl conversations (“palabre”):** to commit ourselves and build consensus for further steps (see Annex 1). The fish-bowl is relevant to ensure equity in the share of speaking time, encourages respectful and open-minded conversation. It is proposed to experiment fish-bowl conversations for complex issues, relating to values, culture, capacity-building, traditional knowledge.
- **Challenges:** short show case studies organised thematically, closed by a general discussion to take stock of lessons learned ; this component is to coordinate with the **Dakar2021 Initiative** as well as with the “**The Economics and Governance of Water Security in Africa**” supported by OECD³ and any other initiative having put the 9th Forum at the agenda to communicate and share views.
- **Marketplace:** space to build partnerships. Face to face or multilateral private meetings are encouraged by speed-dating sessions, poster sessions, with dedicated time in the agenda. This component has to be combined with the Initiatives concerned by the “challenges”.

On the base of the choice finally made after the KoM for the form of the Forum and the topics selected, a detailed mapping of activities will be provided by the priority team.

2.3 Example of potential results of the Forum

Authors can only rely at this stage on the WGI projects, and the list of results could be extended during the preparatory process.

WGI is currently discussing in Berlin meeting the opportunity of an ambitious proposal from our bureau to set up a web-based “**Water Governance Capacity Development Lab**”, to be launched at the 9th World Water Forum. Such a Lab could:

- provide an umbrella for coordination and cooperation for partners at different levels that will be delivering capacity building modules;

³ OECD decided to dedicate USD 100k (King Hassan II Prize) to this program and some other like WWC and the Flemish Water Partnership for Development (for a pilot on Cape Town) are considering to join this movement. Should USD 1 M be secured, it is proposed to carry out the following activities within the 2-year timeframe: a **regional survey** on water governance in Africa; three **policy dialogues** at different scales; and a **repository** of solutions for better water security in Africa. An additional set of cross-cutting activities will seek to foster capacity, raise awareness, and share best practices throughout implementation. The programme will deliver concrete outputs for the 9th World Water Forum in the form of reports, infographics and user-friendly tools, a communication campaign, online datasets and toolkits. A coordination task force is under construction (OECD, WIN, INBO, Transparency International, WWC, Morocco, Senegal...) as well as a committee of partners.

- comprise the various outputs produced under capacity development;
- incubate social and technological innovations for improved water governance;
- amplify lessons learned from the capacity modules to generate effective policies and practices.

Considering the ambition of targeting various stakeholder groups and at different levels a “Lab” can be seen as a dynamic concept, pointing more directly to sharing of knowledge and peer learning.

WGI is also discussing new steps of work on indicators in Berlin:

- revisiting the 11 pilot tests that supported the development of the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework in order to carry out an actual assessment, observe the changes after three years vis a vis the expected progress as stated in the pilot assessment;
- Developing impact indicators to complement the existing OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework in order to be able to understand the impacts of water governance in addition to the state of the art and the progress that has been carried out. The impact indicators would help identify if water governance, as a means to an end, played a role in achieving water management outcomes;
- Providing guidance for multi-level governance engagement for water-related SDGs monitoring, using the ten-step evaluation assessment, developed together with the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework. For the 2030 agenda, different levels of government are called to provide Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of their progress in the achievement of the SDGs. Governments could benefit from the ten-step assessment guidance in order to provide multi-stakeholder dialogue and engage different stakeholders while carrying out the reviews.

3 The method proposed for conducting the preparatory process and the potential Forum sessions that incorporate political, technical, regional, and citizen dimensions (with the understanding that the Forum is aiming for a non-silo, integrated and multi-stakeholder process)

The WGI offers to be one of the components of the preparatory process and to consider its own agenda with respect to the ambition of delivering for the 9th World Water Forum. It will hold three plenary meetings before the Forum in **November 2019, June 2020 and November 2020.**

A list of other events in different regions has to be shortly established and other members of the priority team should commit themselves to have preparatory meetings. Events under consideration are (list to be completed):

- ANBO General Assembly, Tunisia, July 2019;
- INBO General assembly, Morocco, October 2019;
- COP 25 Climate, Chile, November 2019;
- XVII World Water Congress, Korea, May 2020;
- 23rd IHP Intergovernmental Council, France, June 2020;
- COP15 Biodiversity, China, June 2020;
- Stockholm World Water Week, Sweden, August 2020;
- 10th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference.

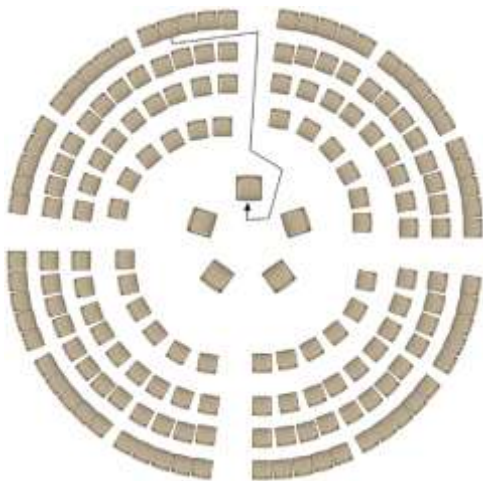
If the proposal of “masterclasses”, “challenges” or “marketplaces” is selected, these preparatory meetings should ensure the proposal of case studies and the preparation of sessions.

4 Expected milestones during the preparatory process (in particular, the activities to be organized during identified events).

A detailed planning of activities of the WGI on the basis of the WGI-bureau will be simultaneously discussed in Berlin. The priority team will provide after the Post-KoM decisions of the ISC a detailed mapping of events for the forum and agenda of activities in coherence with the WGI agenda.

Annex 1. Fish bowl conversation: a new way for meeting in the world water forum especially convenient for the “governance” component (Source: Wikipedia).

A fishbowl conversation is a form of dialog that can be used when discussing topics within large groups. Fishbowl conversations are sometimes also used in participatory events such as unconferences. The advantage of fishbowl is that it allows the entire group to participate in a conversation. Several people can join the discussion.



The arrangement of chairs in a fish bowl session. Four concentric rings of chairs surround a smaller group of five chairs. An arrow indicates how any member of the audience may enter the middle section.

Four to five chairs are arranged in an inner circle. This is the fishbowl. The remaining chairs are arranged in concentric circles outside the fishbowl. A few participants are selected to fill the fishbowl, while the rest of the group sit on the chairs outside the fishbowl. In an open fishbowl, one chair is left empty. In a closed fishbowl, all chairs are filled. The moderator introduces the topic and the participants start discussing the topic. The audience outside the fishbowl listen in on the discussion.

In an open fishbowl, any member of the audience can, at any time, occupy the empty chair and join the fishbowl. When this happens, an existing member of the fishbowl must voluntarily leave the fishbowl and free a chair. The discussion continues with participants frequently entering and leaving the fishbowl. Depending on how large your audience is you can have many audience members spend some time in the fishbowl and take part in the discussion. When time runs out, the fishbowl is closed and the moderator summarizes the discussion.

An immediate variation of this is to have only two chairs in the central group. When someone in the audience wants to join the two-way conversation, they come forward and tap the shoulder of the person they want to replace, at some point when they are not talking. The tapped speaker must then return to the outer circles, being replaced by the new speaker, who carries on the conversation in their place.

In a closed fishbowl, the initial participants speak for some time. When time runs out, they leave the fishbowl and a new group from the audience enters the fishbowl. This continues until many audience

members have spent some time in the fishbowl. Once the final group has concluded, the moderator closes the fishbowl and summarizes the discussion.