



9th MEETING OF THE OECD WATER GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

3-4 July 2017, OECD Headquarters, Paris

HIGHLIGHTS



The [OECD Water Governance Initiative](#) (WGI) is an international multi-stakeholder network of around 130 members from public, private and not-for-profit sectors gathering twice a year in a Policy Forum to share on-going policy reforms, projects, lessons and good practices in support of better governance in the water sector. It has gathered nine times since its creation (27-28 March 2013, Paris; 7-8 November 2013, Paris; 28-29 April 2014, Madrid; 24-25 November 2014, Paris; 26 May 2015, Edinburgh; 2-3 November 2015, Paris; 23-24 June 2016, The Hague; 12-13 January, Rabat; and 3-4 July 2017, Paris).

The OECD WGI aims to:

1. Provide a **multi-stakeholder technical platform** to share knowledge, experience and best practices on water governance across levels of government;
2. **Advise governments** in taking the needed steps for effective water reforms through peer-to-peer dialogue and stakeholder engagement across public, private and non-profit sectors;
3. Provide a **consultation mechanism** to raise the profile of governance in the Global Water Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals, World Water Forum, Habitat III, COP etc.);
4. Support the **implementation** of the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* in interested member and non-member countries by scaling up best practices and contributing to the development of indicators; and
5. **Foster continuity** on governance discussions between two World Water Fora (every 3 years), in particular by supporting the Governance Implementation Roadmap of the 7th World Water Forum (Korea, 2015) up to the 8th World Water Forum (Brazil, 2018).

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. The 9th WGI meeting was held at OECD Headquarters in Paris and gathered 115 participants (see the [list of participants](#)). In all, 22 countries were represented as well as major stakeholder groups and organisations within and outside the water sector. The 9th meeting of the WGI had the following objectives (see the [agenda](#)):

- Discuss Global Agendas' progress, including SDGs, Paris Agreement, Habitat III and the 8th World Water Forum;
- Carry out a 2nd consultation on water governance indicators building on lessons learned from the 12 pilot-tests carried out after the 8th WGI meeting;
- Peer-review analytical work on water governance in Brazil and climate change adaptation in LAC basins;
- Discuss the highlights from the 60+ water governance stories collected on the *OECD Principles on Water Governance*;
- Share knowledge and experience on water governance reforms, research and recent events; and
- Zoom on the case of water governance in France and the impact of recent territorial and other policy reforms.

2. Delegates **DISCUSSED**:

- The importance of water governance in the **Global Agenda** as evidenced by the contribution of good governance to achieve the SDGs, and particularly the role of the OECD-WGI in supporting the implementation of target 6.b on local participation of SDG 6 on “ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”; the expected Water Action Day at [COP23](#); and the cross-cutting governance thematic group of [8th World Water Forum](#), which the OECD-WGI is leading.
- Progress achieved on **water governance indicators** and **best practices**. Delegates welcomed the revised/streamlined draft indicator framework proposed as a self-assessment tool aiming at triggering dialogue amongst governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on water governance; as well as the insights provided by pilot-testers from Spain, the Netherlands, Morocco, Spain, Peru, RD Congo, Austria, Cabo Verde, Colombia and Malaysia. Delegates also welcomed the 69 water governance stories collected to illustrate how the Principles are implemented at city, basin or country levels, and foster peer learning and experience sharing.

3. Delegates **SHARED** the outcomes of **recent water-related events**, in particular the 4th Istanbul International Water Forum (10-11 May 2017, Istanbul, Turkey); the 4th Water Economics Forum (5 April 2017, Barcelona, Spain); the XVI World Water Congress (28 May-3 June 2017, Cancun, Mexico), the 6th General Meeting of NARBO (22-24 February 2017, Jakarta, Indonesia), and the 2nd Water Integrity Forum (9-10 May 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).

4. Delegates **SHARED** knowledge and information from **recent research, reforms, projects** on setting and governing water charges in Brazil; the ECOCUENCAS project on climate change adaptation in three basins of Latin America; revitalising IWRM for the 2030 Agenda, the variety of regulatory arrangements in the water sector, water governance in humanitarian contexts; the governance of water

infrastructure in Chile, water regulation in Israel; the contribution of groundwater governance to policy coherence, and water governance and financing in MENA countries.

NEXT STEPS

- **October 2017:** Working Groups' Webinars to prepare the 2nd phase of the indicators pilot-test and peer-review the first set of water governance stories.
- **20-21 November 2017:** 10th Meeting of the WGI, Vienna, Austria

SUMMARY RECORD

Welcoming Remarks

5. Peter Glas, Chair of the WGI, welcomed delegates and provided some update since the 8th WGI meeting (12-13 January 2017) particularly on the progress achieved by both Working Groups i) the Best Practices WG collected 69 water governance stories from 35 OECD and non-OECD countries, covering issues related to policy frameworks, institutions and governance instruments to be peer-reviewed; and ii) the Indicators WG completed 12 pilot-tests to discuss the robustness and relevance of the indicator framework. Both Working Groups held webinars on 15 June and summary records of both meetings are available [online](#). In addition, the Chair informed delegates that the WGI-led special issue of [Water International](#) on the OECD Principles on Water Governance was the focus of a dedicated session at the [16th IWRA World Water Congress](#) on 29 May in Cancun, Mexico, and the 5 draft papers to be included in the publication are now being peer-reviewed. The special issue will be launched at the 10th meeting of the WGI (20-21 November 2017, Vienna, Austria). The Chair also recalled that the WGI relies exclusively on in-kind and voluntary contributions from its members, and warmly thanked Suez for generously sponsoring the catering services for the 9th WGI meeting.

Global Water Agenda

Progress on the monitoring of SDG 6 [water and sanitation for all]

6. UN-Water informed delegates of the main shifts from the MDGs to the SDGs framework in terms of i) broadening the scope from a question of access to water and sanitation to an approach encompassing the full cycle of water resources management; ii) the definition of a comprehensive indicator framework and associated monitoring systems; and iii) the target countries going beyond developed economies. One of the novelty of the SDG reporting is that the process is led by countries, rather than the United Nations, meaning that national statistical offices are at the core of monitoring and have a proactive dialogue with regional organisations and international agencies that are custodians of the SDG targets and that will (or not) validate data in consultation with countries. These custodian agencies will then send validated data to the [United Nations Statistics Division](#) (UNSD) to be featured in the [Global SDG Database](#). Zooming in on SDG 6 on water and sanitation, the goal now includes two targets on water supply and sanitation, three on the whole water resources management cycle and two related to the means of implementation. To monitor these targets, the [Global Expanded Monitoring Initiative](#) (GEMI), the integrated monitoring of water and sanitation related SDG targets, addresses dimensions related to targets 6.3.1 [proportion of wastewater safely treated], 6.3.2 [proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality], 6.4.2 [level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources], 6.5.1 [degree of integrated water resources management implementation], 6.5.2 [proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation], 6.6.1 [change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time], while the WHO/UNICEF [Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation](#) (JMP) addresses 6.1.1 [proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services] and 6.2.1. [proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water] UN-Water [Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water](#) (GLAAS) addresses 6.a.1 [amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan] and 6.b.1 [proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management]. UN-Water Synthesis Report will be published as an input for the [High Level Political Forum](#) 2018 that will include an in-depth review of SDG 6. The distinctive element of this report is that it aims at integrating inputs from UN World Water Assessment Programme, the CEO Water Mandate, FAO, ILO, UNECE, UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, WMO and WHO to achieve coordinated reporting.

7. WHO focused on the water-related target monitored by GLAAS (6.a and 6.b), for which OECD, WHO and UNEP are serving as co-custodians. GLAAS aims to monitor the inputs required to extend and sustain WASH systems and services to all, especially the unserved and vulnerable groups; to support country-led processes that bring together various institutions and actors involved in delivering WASH services; to identify drivers and bottlenecks of progress; to highlight knowledge gaps; to assess strengths and challenges across countries; and to collect primary data from countries and external support agencies. Over the past year, data produced by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for target 6.a [international cooperation] showed that the annual official development assistance (ODA) disbursements in the water sector have increased, whereas as a percentage of total ODA across all sectors it has remained fairly constant (around 5% over the last 10 years). For target 6.b [local participation], the indicator used for reporting concerns the percentage of countries with legal procedures on users/communities' participation in water-related planning programmes as well as the extent of user participation in planning programmes. The [2016/2017 GLAAS](#) survey, based on 75 participating countries and 25 external support agencies, indicates that around 80% of countries report having some procedures, while the percentage is lower (ranging between 8 and 22% depending on the water function) when it comes to reporting on the level of user participation. More knowledge is needed on how to best monitor this target based on existing/available data sources in countries. An in-depth study is being carried out on target 6.b and will be launched later in 2017. The latest GLAAS survey, which focused on financing, evidenced that the number of countries providing data on government expenditure has increased steadily across the GLAAS cycles (e.g. 2 in 2009-2010, 17 in 2011-2012, 33 in 2013-2014, and 42 in 2016-2017). Available data on national budgets and expenditure indicate that government allocations and spending for WASH are increasing—annual government WASH budgets are increasing at an annual average rate of 4.9% after adjusting for inflation; yet 80% of countries report insufficient financing to meet national WASH targets, let alone the higher levels of service that are the focus of SDG 6.. Also, 50% of countries say that household tariffs are insufficient to recover operation and maintenance costs of WASH infrastructures, leading to an increase in disrepair and service failure; and while ODA disbursements for water and sanitation have increased from 6.3 to 7.4 billion USD between 2012 and 2015, future commitments declined from 10.4 to 8.2 billion USD in the same period (OECD-CRS, 2016). .

Follow-up to COP21 and COP22 outcomes

8. INBO underlined that COP21, held in Paris in 2015, marked the first time that water was included in the Global Climate Action Agenda. A key achievement of the event was the launch of the [Paris Pact on water and adaptation to climate change in the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers](#); which currently counts 357 signatories representing 98 countries committed to raise the profile of water in climate change and to move to action to deploy an effective water governance framework. The Pact triggered the implementation of five pilot projects on IWRM and adaptation to climate change in Asia (Hai River Basin), Central America (Mexico's Federal District and Valley), MENA (Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform), South America (ECOCUENCAS project) and Africa (Congo-Oubangui-Sangha basin). UNESCO and UNECE have also launched the [Network of Pilot Basin Organisations](#) to test adapting measures to climate change that exist and are in place. The "[ClimateIsWater](#)" initiative was created together with water-related NGOs in an effort to advocate for water as a priority issue in climate change adaptation. At COP21, four "alliances" were launched on basins, megacities, desalination and business to support the implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#). At COP22, a record full day was dedicated to water, during which the four alliances signed the [Global Alliances for Water and Climate](#) agreement, thus committing to work together to gather all sectors, partners, and governance levels. The "Water Action Day" of COP22 also resulted in an [outcome document building on the key highlights from the four roundtables/dialogues organised during the Conference](#). On the road to [COP23](#) (November 2017, Bonn), a Water Action Day will be organised (9 or 10 November, tbc) to scale-up global climate actions.

Preparatory process of the 8th World Water Forum

9. The World Water Council and ANA-Brazil updated delegates on the preparatory process of the [8th World Water Forum](#) to be held under the overarching theme of “Sharing Water”. The Forum is organised around five parallel processes: Thematic, Regional, Political, Citizens’ Forum, and Sustainability. The [Political Process](#) aims at bringing together representatives from parliaments, national and local governments, and judges/prosecutors responsible for water environment, agriculture, energy policies, finance, etc. The [Regional Process](#) is responsible for integrating regional contributions and place-based considerations into the Forum's programme. It also encourages regions to mobilise stakeholders, to increase political commitments and to create synergies at the local level. The [Citizen Process](#) aims to develop and stimulate actions that promote the participation of civil society in the discussions of the Forum, with activities organised around a Hydro-Café Space, a Citizen Village, and a Film Festival. The aim of the [Sustainability Focus Group](#) is to mainstream and integrate sustainability across all processes so that the Forum’s outcomes can effectively contribute to the development and adoption of more sustainable water management models and practices. As to the [Thematic process](#), it links to international processes (e.g. SDGs, Habitat III, etc.) and focuses on 6 main topics (climate, development, people, urban, finance, ecosystems) and 3 cross cutting themes (sharing, capacity, and governance). These 9 areas break down into 32 topics and 100 sessions, together with high level panels and special sessions. The Governance theme, which is led by OECD, INBO, Women for Water Partnership, CONAGUA and ANA, counts 3 topics on IWRM, transboundary water management, and effective governance. The latter more specifically is a follow-up to the 7th Forum implementation roadmap on effective governance, and coordinated by the WGI. Under this particular topic, three sessions will address multi-level governance, indicators and best practices. A call for expression of interest is opened to coordinate/contribute to the thematic sessions until 23 August. The Governance sessions are also benefitting from ideas, outputs and contributions being suggested by stakeholders worldwide via an online consultation platform called [Your Voice opened until October 2017](#).

Group discussion

10. Delegates were invited to react to the presentations on the Global Agenda and share their own contributions, as appropriate.

11. On **SDG monitoring** and the synergies with the development of water governance indicators:

- GWP pointed out that there are some common denominators between the monitoring process of target 6.5.1 on IWRM, for which UNEP is conducting a worldwide survey, and the activities of the WGI on indicators, which could be capitalised, especially for the indicators related to capacity.
- The Butterfly Effect regretted not seeing more non-state actors involved in the SDG monitoring process particularly to validate/verify data being reporting for the national plans. It was highlighted that a working group of the High-Level Panel on data collection has started working on citizen data through consultations taking place in July in Washington and in September in Geneva.
- UN-Water clarified that the two processes are distinct but synergetic given that the water governance indicators cut across SDG 6. It was recalled that the bulk of monitoring and reporting is happening at the national level, and that the global data report is only a small part of the overall process taking place at country level. It was also pointed out that mechanisms are in place to involve non-state actors in the SDG monitoring process, such as during UN-Water meetings or by opening the monitoring methodology to public review.

- WHO indicated that the indicator for target 6.5.1 also has similarities with the GLAAS process, and encouraged building synergies through communication and coordination so that data can be shared across many stakeholders.
- The Netherlands presented forthcoming regional consultations by the High Level Panel on Water. In particular, the “Valuing Water” initiative, which seeks to strengthen sustainable water management and water use by providing a set of shared principles to encourage governments, business and civil society to consider the multiple values of water (i.e. economic, environmental, cultural, etc.). These principles are subject to regional consultations in Mexico (19-25 July 2017), Bangladesh (31 July), Senegal (3 August), Peru (16 August), and Jordan (September, tbc). [Online consultation](#) was also organised in July-August 2017.
- WIN pointed out that the water governance indicators and the SDG monitoring system should both pay attention to how countries are assessing the implementation of *OECD Principles on Water Governance* and SDG 6 targets respectively, as they were designed to trigger a holistic dialogue on governance on the one hand, and sustainable development on the other hand.
- Germany mentioned that the UN is tracking human and financial resources that have been invested in the SDG monitoring process thus far to map existing gaps and overlapping engagements, as a contribution to the ongoing reflection on the possible reform of the UN architecture for water..
- Austria stressed that local officials should be part of the SDG monitoring to share data and statistics. At the same time, the administrative burden of reporting is often heavy for cities if they have to answer too many questionnaires/surveys, which should be taken into account in the methodology.

12. On the role of **water in climate change adaptation** and the COP process:

- Water Right Makers underlined that the ambition for COP23 should not only be to organise a Water Action Day as for COP22, but to also raise the profile of water during the High Level Dialogues when negotiations are taking place. Efforts should also focus on bridging the Paris Agreement and the SDGs (Goals 2, 6 and 11 in particular).
- Germany informed delegates that COP23 will include a Water Day to continue setting a precedent for future COPs and provide a platform for sharing good practices and conveying messages. A side event “From water and NDCs to banking the climate projects” will be organised and there will be additional opportunities for events in the interconnection zone of COP23, but the schedule of the High-level Dialogues is already rather full. Looking ahead, water is set to also be part of the high-level discussion during COP24 (Poland, 2018).

13. On WGI members’ contributions to the **8th World Water Forum**:

- The Butterfly Effect is leading the regional process for Europe together with other NGOs and the Portuguese Water Partnership. There is a proposal to organise a session on good governance to link the regional process, the thematic process and the Citizen process, and to involve a wide range of stakeholders and raise awareness in civil society.
- Austria supported the involvement of local stakeholders in the preparatory process of the World Water Forum and stressed that on-time information would be needed to ensure this involvement is successful. Austria also expressed interest in being more involved in WGI-related activities.

OECD Water Governance Indicators

Presentation of the revised indicator framework

14. The OECD Secretariat recalled the process that has led to the indicator framework that was pilot tested after the 8th WGI meeting. The bottom-up process started in April 2014 at the 3rd WGI Meeting, with a preliminary step having consisted in developing an [Inventory](#) to take stock of existing indicators and measurement frameworks on water governance. A first draft of the indicator framework was discussed at the 6th OECD WGI meeting (November 2015, Paris) and revised by the 7th WGI meeting (June 2016, The Hague). In November 2016, members of the Working Group on Indicators gathered into a [webinar](#) to discuss the 60+ suggestions on indicators collected from WGI members on the basis of a template prepared by the OECD Secretariat. Feedback and comments received from WGI members were included in a revised version, which was discussed in at the 8th WGI Meeting (12-13 January 2017, Rabat). At the last WGI meeting, members welcomed the pragmatic approach behind the indicator framework and the intention to use indicators as a means to an end rather than a benchmarking tool; they also called for a dynamic assessment whereby indicators can be informed throughout time and advised to streamline core vs. non-core indicators and search for visualisation of the indicators through different colour in the traffic light system.

15. Following the 8th WGI Meeting, the Secretariat worked primarily on i) better outlining the ultimate objectives of the framework, which consists in a voluntary self-assessment tool aiming at triggering dialogue amongst governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on water governance rather than providing for a systemic monitoring and reporting;; and ii) simplifying and streamlining the indicator framework by reducing the total number of indicators to 36 indicators (instead of 250+ originally) measured by means of a traffic light system; and by simplifying the complementary material for the self-assessment dialogue, which consists in a checklist of 100+ questions to guide discussions on each Principle, and 36 quantitative indicators to allow for data visualisation that will feature in country/ basin/ region/ city water governance profiles to be published in the final OECD report “Water Governance at a Glance” (2018).

16. In April 2017, a call for application was launched to pilot-test the proposed indicator framework, in order to assess, amongst others, its robustness and relevance. A total of 12 pilot testers were selected and advised to carry out the exercise through multi-stakeholders workshops. Pilot test workshops have been conducted in May/June 2017 at city, basin or national scales in Austria, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Peru, Spain, and United Kingdom (Scotland).

17. The 1st phase of the pilot-test was very successful and valuable to provide a reality check to the indicator framework. Key findings include:

- 100% of the pilot-testers agreed the Traffic Light System is a useful *methodology* to reflect the existence and the level of implementation of water governance dimensions. Pilot-testers considered it easy to understand, and relevant to help to prioritise actions, in addition to being an effective and structured form of organising stakeholders’ inputs. Some difficulties were encountered in finding a consensus amongst stakeholders for all aspects of the traffic light and guidance from the Secretariat and Coordinators was sought on that aspect (see below).
- 80% of pilot-testers agreed on the proposed 5 options in the *traffic light system* for assessing policy frameworks, institutions and instruments. Pilot-testers pointed out that there is a tendency towards the yellow option due to the intrinsic characteristics of water governance

(i.e. no dimension of governance is perfectly designed and implemented). There is a need to find a balance between how prescriptive the framework is and how open for interpretation.

- 73% of pilot-testers considered that the indicators proposed in the traffic light system are relevant for *all scales* (e.g. national, basin, regional, local), thus reflecting the multi-level nature of water governance, although for some pilot-testers dimensions related to the policy framework are often more valid at national level and difficult to apply at the local scale. What is more, 90% of the pilot-testers claimed that the indicators were relevant to all water management functions (e.g. water services, water resources, water disasters).
- 78% of pilot-testers considered the *Checklist* a useful complementary tool to the traffic light system, and 80% found the quantitative indicators relevant for *data visualisation*. Pilot-testers stressed these indicators should not require heavy data collection but build on existing databases and to the extent possible draw on global monitoring processes such as the SDGs and EU Water Framework Directive for countries subject to it.
- Most pilot-testers also considered *resources needed* to use the indicators sufficient to carry out the exercise; but a significant challenge reported included the absence of some categories of stakeholders during the workshops (e.g. private sector, hydropower).

18. The pilot-test exercise revealed an overall support for the indicator framework. Moving forward, there was a call for fine-tuning the terminology and definitions; as well as providing guidance on the process to engage (which) stakeholders and how to manage different opinions when there is no consensus on the current state of play.

Highlights from selected pilot-testers

19. The Sebou river basin agency (Morocco) explained that the pilot-test workshop gathered 28 representatives of 20 institutions and organisations from the water sector who engaged in lively debates. They found the traffic light system pertinent vis a vis the assessment of existing governance framework conditions, noting in particular that in most cases the needed legal and institutional frameworks are in place but there are gaps in implementation due to financial constraints; which is a situation that the traffic light proposed currently does not capture. The Checklist was considered a useful tool to dig deeper for some of the dimensions included in the traffic light system, although it could be shortened and simplified. Lastly, the quantitative indicators in component 3 can also be considered as indicators of results.

20. The Segura river basin agency (Spain) welcomed the traffic light system as a useful tool for stakeholder dialogue during the pilot-test workshop, although it was pointed out that further guidance and clear definitions would be helpful. Some indicators are more fitted at national level, while others are rather micro-indicators. The Checklist helps guide discussions and build consensus among stakeholders. As for the quantitative indicators, it was noted that they could include more *governance*, rather than *management*, dimensions.

21. The Jucar river basin agency (Spain) explained that a variety of stakeholders took part in the workshop, including the private sector and academia, and the method and process were well thought-out. The Checklist helped understand the meaning of each indicator, but it proved difficult to find a consensus on the colours of the traffic light system. It was suggested that the indicator framework include a section where institutions can report on the difficulties of finding consensus, so that the self-assessment process remains transparent.

22. The Netherlands carried out the pilot-test for the North Brabant province all the while including a local dimension with the participation of the city of Eindhoven. The pilot-test workshop was jointly prepared by research organisations (KRW, Deltares and the Utrecht University) and was attended by a small group of stakeholders interested in the audit-like exercise. Delegates agreed that they would not have to reach a consensus on every aspect of the indicator framework, but rather discuss their differences of opinions, which led to new insights and actions for improvement. The exercise revealed that a key challenge is to clarify the goal of the assessment and what is expected from stakeholders, typically using friendly visualisation. The revised indicator framework could also provide guidance on actions to be taken following the self-assessment and how to keep stakeholders involved.

23. GWP coordinated the pilot-test workshop in Kinshasa as part of a programme over the next 2 year to set up a new urban vision for the city. The workshop was designed as a capacity-building exercise through dialogue and a gap analysis. The pilot-test revealed that creating some synergies between the indicator framework and the SDGs would be helpful, and that it could be a useful instrument to monitor the implementation of Kinshasa's new urban agenda.

24. Austria's pilot-test highlighted that some indicators are not applicable at city level while some quantitative indicators were not easy to inform because data collection implies high coordination costs. It was also highlighted that for the case of the "key data" component, some benchmarking across countries could be possible. Moreover, in order to avoid administrative burdens, it would be important to coordinate across several international monitoring frameworks (e.g. including SDGs and EC WFD). It was suggested that the indicator framework could include a protocol section where the different views of stakeholders could be reported. It was also proposed that the self-assessment exercise be carried every three years to monitor progress.

25. Cabo Verde is currently looking at reforming its water governance framework and seized the opportunity of pilot-testing the indicator framework to organise a dialogue with 50 representatives of 15+ organisations. Stakeholders reached an agreement on the colours of the traffic light system and found the Checklist helpful to structure discussions.

Group discussion

26. Utrecht University complemented on the pilot-test carried out in the Netherlands to point out that discussions with stakeholders also addressed the link between water and land governance, and the extent to which the indicators were also useful to assess land governance. There is an on-going research project to apply the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* to the local scale and small rivers.

27. The Water Youth Network suggested that further guidance be provided on which stakeholders should be involved in the self-assessment exercise for it to be considered inclusive enough, and how they could be engaged. It was proposed that the Checklist be structured around the indicators, rather than the Principles.

28. Dundee University took part in the pilot-test carried out in Scotland where stakeholders agreed that such a self-assessment exercise should be carried out every 3 or 5 years to take stock of progress achieved. It was advised that the right group of stakeholders should be involved in such an exercise, and suggested to reduce the number of indicators from 36 to 12. Finally, discussions during the pilot-test revealed differences in opinion between stakeholders working on water resource management, and those on water service provision.

29. The Flanders Knowledge Water Centre shared that the indicator framework would be a useful methodology for an ongoing project on water "corridors" between France and two Belgium regions that

aims to put water at the centre of sustainable territorial development in the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Euro-metropolitan area, building on activities related to water and sanitation infrastructure, water-related ecosystems, wetlands and biodiversity, and waterways. It will consist in developing a local Atlas of the area inventorying the various water-related activities, and a Charter to federate various local actions.

30. Peter Gammeltoft pointed out that yellow appears to be the most used colour of the traffic light system, which may raise some questions on how to move forward and what actions would be needed to reach the green colour. There is a role to play for experts to inform the self-assessment exercise by helping prioritise actions, looking at what is feasible, and sharing international experience.

31. The University of Lisbon underlined that over-simplifying the indicator framework may lead to dead ends in the assessment process. Rather, the self-assessment exercise should embrace the complexity of water governance, and try to harmonise – instead of standardise – indicators that serve different purposes to build meta-indicators.

32. Turkey proposed to have further guidance on the kind of agreement that should be reached for each of the indicators, if any. This could help make the most of the Checklist, including prioritising some questions over others depending on the agenda of each country, basin and city. Also, it was suggested that the indicator framework should refrain from referencing conventions that have not been endorsed by all OECD countries.

33. Peru organised a pilot-test workshop and found the indicator framework useful and comprehensive. However, reaching a consensus proved difficult, especially on indicators covering several instruments, sectors and actors. Additional guidance should help end-users interpret each indicator and thus help engage stakeholders and ensure comparability. The time needed to collect the required, and sometime new, data should also be acknowledged.

34. Norway recalled that the peer-review at basin level carried out for the monitoring of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) was a very useful exercise, and the OECD indicator framework could be a valuable tool for similar peer-reviews in the future. It was suggested to highlight more the peer-to-peer aspect of the self-assessment, and to streamline the indicator framework in light of other monitoring instruments such as the WFD, the SDGs and the UNECE protocol.

35. The Butterfly Effect suggested that EU Member countries also part of OECD could help streamline the methodologies of the indicator framework and the WFD, although these are two different exercises, with different processes (dialogue v. monitoring) and objectives (self-assessment v. reporting). It was also pointed out that many existing monitoring frameworks focus on figures and numbers, while the water governance indicators also seek to collect qualitative information. Synergies between the WGI Working Groups on indicators and best practices were also called for, and it was suggested that the provider of water governance “stories” could be asked to assess their case in light of the indicator framework once finalised. It was also stressed that there is no need to find a consensus on each indicator, but rather agree on the actions that need to derive from the self-assessment.

36. WIN underlined the difference between conducting the self-assessment with the goal of reaching a consensus, or accepting that no consensus may be found, which imply different approaches and methods for the assessment exercise. It was advised to further discuss the implications of both options during the Working Group break-out session on day 2 so that more guidance could be provided on whether stakeholders should find a consensus or not.

37. The Dutch Water Authorities welcomed the revisions made to the indicator framework, which is much improved. It now reflects the opinion of different people and is conducive to a constructive

conversation between stakeholders on daily water governance practices. Moving forward, it could be envisaged to develop training material on the indicator framework for the moderators of such dialogues.

38. SIWI encouraged being practical and not consider the indicator framework only as a tool to compare over time, but rather as a mechanism that can trigger dialogue and future actions. More guidance could be provided on how to engage key stakeholders, and how data should be collected and presented to fill-in the framework

39. Ian Barker pointed out a contradiction in the group discussion, whereby delegates welcomed the indicator framework as a catalyst for getting stakeholders to discuss critical water governance challenges and ways of overcoming these, while at the same time asking for additional and somewhat more normative guidance, which can, in the end, render the indicators too prescriptive and prevent fruitful discussions. Therefore, a balance should be found between the degree of freedom and the degree of guidance expected to use the indicators effectively.

Remarks by Working Group coordinators

40. ASTEE thanks the pilot testers for their commitment, dedication and hard work before and during the workshops. It insisted that the water governance indicators are a unique tool that does not overlap with the WFD or SDG monitoring framework, as it consists in a dynamic and collective evaluation based on multi-stakeholder dialogue. The indicators allow a diversity of opinions to be shared from various stakeholders, including disagreements, which provides valuable information in itself on the state of water governance. It is also important to consider that each country's situation is unique and a homogenous representation of stakeholders would be difficult to achieve in many cases. The self-assessment should trigger expectations on actions to be taken, and policy/practice changes to be operated, which could be revisited every three years.

41. OIEau applauded the pilot-testers for their dedication and enthusiasm, and their help in showing the usefulness of the framework. It was agreed that the methodology be strengthened to better reflect the dynamic approach to the self-assessment, and to show how adaptive the indicator framework is for different situations (e.g. from urban to rural areas, etc.). However, it should also be pointed out that each governance approach is different and therefore the self-assessment exercise should use the indicator framework as a means to reflect the needs and specificities of each situation.

42. Transparency International welcomed the general acceptance of the traffic light system and the attention paid to having the right mix of stakeholders in the consultation process. For what concerns consensus building, the moderators of the process play an important role and specific guidance will be developed for them to help lead the discussion and develop an agreement on the scoring. It will also be important to secure the needed resources to carry-out the self-assessment effectively, including for stakeholders to get informed and take part in discussions.

43. INBO congratulated the pilot-testers for their dynamism and the organisation of the workshops in a short time. It was reminded that the indicator framework is ultimately meant to help improve water governance, and not rank or benchmark countries, basins or cities. The pilot-test phase also helped demonstrate the adaptiveness of the indicators to different situations and scales.

44. The OECD Secretariat thanked delegates for their support and positive feedback on the revised draft. It was clarified that the Checklist is meant to inform stakeholder dialogues, rather than be a tick-the-box exercise, and should be linked to the traffic light dimensions as per the recommendations of some pilot-testers. Also, the indicator framework should provide for a mechanism to reflect potential diverging views from stakeholders especially when consensus cannot be reached, and for laying down the actions

suggested to improve the current state of play of water governance in the short, medium and long term. As next steps, the indicator framework will be revised before the 2nd phase of the pilot-test (September) aiming to collect data within another dedicated workshop. The final indicator framework, key results from the pilot-tests, and highlights from water governance stories collected will all feature in the first edition of OECD report “Water Governance at a Glance” to be launched at the 8th World Water Forum in 2018.

Sharing knowledge on water governance reforms, events and research

Revitalising IWRM for the 2030 Agenda

45. The World Water Council and IUCN informed delegates that a Task Force was set-up together with other organisations/governments including UNESCO, IUCN, Hungary and OECD to rejuvenate the concept of IWRM and its pivotal role in the 2030 Development Agenda. The target 6.5 on IWRM of SDG 6 calls for this paradigm to deliver concrete impacts at speed and at scale, beyond planning and dialogue, thus triggering the need to revitalise IWRM for delivering the expectations of the SDGs. To this end, a paper was prepared by the Task Force and consists in an analysis/argument for expanding the traditional pillars of IWRM – built around strong enabling environment, comprehensive institutional framework, effective use of instruments, sound investment, and dialogue – to try and make IWRM more practical and easy to operationalise. The paper provides information on the means to make the transition from a static IWRM framework to a more dynamic one; and on how to manage change at different levels. IWRM has the potential to become a policy umbrella under which it is possible to bring together, align and rationalise the use of other management mechanisms and ways of integration such as the water-energy-food nexus..

46. The group discussion that followed the presentation allowed WGI delegates to share their views on the paper and the role of the taskforce:

- WIN recalled the [World Water Vision](#) report on IWRM prepared by the World Water Council and launched at the 2nd World Water Forum, which also marked the starting point for GWP to implement IWRM. It was also pointed out that IWRM tends to be interpreted in different ways and that revitalising the concept should be an opportunity to harmonise different visions
- The University of Utrecht recommended to phrase IWRM differently and to be more critical about the concept and its meaning. Indeed, there seems to be a tendency of integrating policy fields indiscriminately into each other. For instance, in the Netherlands, a reform of the environmental policy is ongoing to integrate all aspects of the environment, which raises the risk of conflicts, no longer between sectors but within the executive process. The same risk could happen for IWRM.
- The Netherlands advised to include stronger messages on the operationalisation of IWRM, particularly on cross-sectoral analysis.
- Peter Gammeltoft recalled that IWRM is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve a balanced use of water. The paper captures well the multi-scale nature of IWRM and the need for transversal national policies such as on energy, water and food. It was recommended to underline more that integration is a two-way approach consisting of finding trade-offs and win-win solutions across sectors to achieve water policy objectives in water and other sectors. The timeline of 2030 should be highlighted as a reminder that SDG targets are to be achieved by then.
- GWP welcomed the clear revival of integration in IWRM, not only across sectors but also across scales, including at city level. There was a call for caution against the proliferation of

new terms such as water diplomacy or water security, and the need to be clear on how these new concepts interact. The paper could build more strongly on the potential of SDG 17 on means of implementation, including investment, capacity building, and partnerships, as also central to IWRM.

- The University of Dundee made the point that IWRM is an umbrella concept as many other paradigms claim to be, such as ecosystem services. It was argued that the paper could strengthen the narrative on stakeholder engagement as a condition for success to better managed water resources.
- Norway mentioned a [paper](#) on the concept of decoupling water policy as a way to support IWRM and to avoid making the assumption there is an intrinsic conflict across sectors to achieve better water management. Innovation and new ways of increasing industrial/agricultural productions while reducing pressure on water resources are ways forward.

47. WWC and IUCN thanked delegates for their comments, and insisted on the need to adopt a pragmatic view of IWRM so that it delivers on target 6.5. The different concepts of nexus and water security mentioned in the paper are not conflicting but reinforcing each other. In the paper, integration refers more to coordination and aims to be more practical through approaching trade-offs and compromises. The paper is expected to help to reduce confusion, simplify and bring together different trends on integrated management in practical and pragmatic ways..

Multi-level governance in water services regulation

48. The Sorbonne University presented a recently-published article on [multi-level governance in water services regulation](#), which stems from the variety of institutional devices and mechanisms involved in the governance and regulation of water supply and sanitation. The paper builds on recent developments in institutional analysis to provide a theoretical framework and structured approach to dealing with the arrangements and mechanisms that can help identify some neglected costs related to governance (i.e. political transaction costs). In particular, the paper discusses the intermediate or “meso” level of water governance, where rules of the game defined at the macro-institutional level through laws, regulations and guidelines meet actors and operators at the micro level. The paper investigates the set of institutions that are active at meso level (e.g. public bureaus, regulatory agencies, local authorities) to help i) clarify how this complex institutional setting works and performs; ii) understand coordination challenges related to the cohabitation of centralised regulation and a decentralised system; and iii) capture the misalignment between general rules (i.e. drafted through national laws) and the operators, which often impedes the implementation of public policies. The paper builds on three country examples from France, the Netherlands and England and Wales. Future research will be conducted together with the National University in Singapore to investigate this issue in Asian cities.

Manual on water governance in humanitarian contexts

49. Action against Hunger launched the English version of its [Manual on water governance in humanitarian contexts](#). The booklet proposes a theoretical and practical analysis of water governance as a tool for stakeholders in the field to analyse the governance framework in which they operate and improve humanitarian responses. This manual targets Action against Hunger’s operational missions as well as other NGOs in the sector, water companies, decision-makers and funders with the objective to i) provide a practical tool for putting governance into practice as part of WASH projects and programmes, based on concrete examples from the field; ii) encourage other NGOs in the sector as well as water companies and partner institutions to incorporate and implement governance considerations in their projects and

programmes, based on the *OECD Principles on Water Governance*; and iii) encourage other technical sectors beyond the WASH sector, and especially humanitarian issues, to explore the concept of governance as it also impacts their fields of expertise and projects.

Governance of water infrastructure in Chile

50. OECD shared key highlights from the recently launched report [Gaps and Governance Standards of Public Infrastructure in Chile](#) that includes a specific chapter on governance of water infrastructure. At the demand of the Chilean government, the OECD investigated challenges and opportunities related to horizontal and vertical coordination of infrastructure policies, zooming in particularly on the water and transport sectors, so as to contribute to the ongoing process of developing the “Plan Chile 30/30”, the country’s long term infrastructure agenda. A dedicated chapter analyses the main trends and challenges for water security in the country, namely: population growth above the OECD average; dynamic economic growth based on water intensive sectors such as agriculture and mining; and future demands for hydroelectricity driven by desalination projects being developed in the northern Chile. The chapter argues that although investments in infrastructure are needed for the Plan Chile 30/30 to contribute to increasing water security in the country, these must be accompanied by more solid governance frameworks, including better water information systems that can guide decision-making. To achieve this, Chile will have to overcome challenges related to the high fragmentation of competencies at national level that jeopardises policy coherence across different sectors. Also, Chile has a water rights regime that limits public action in water management, and impedes solidarity across users for effective basin governance. Moving forward, water should feature higher on the sustainable development agenda of the country through an ambitious water resources consensus-based strategy that gathers all stakeholders (public, private, and non for profit). It will also be key to choose the “right” infrastructure, not only in terms of quantity but also in type, including preference for low-cost options such as green infrastructure and ecosystems.

Latest water-related events

51. The [4th Istanbul International Water Forum](#) was held on 10-11 May as a key milestone in the preparatory process of the 8th World Water Forum. For this edition, the overarching theme of the event was “Water & Peace”, with a focus on the refugee crisis. Several high-level panels addressed governance issues, including on urban water management in response to demographic pressures; cooperation over water as a means of peace; and getting the best of water relief actions. OECD contributed to the panel on implementing water-related SDGs and shared how OECD and WGI are contributing to monitoring the achievement of water-related targets as custodians for target 6.b on local participation, and with the development of water governance indicators. Many special sessions and side events were also organised, conveying key messages on the need to adapt to changing circumstances, shift from crisis to risk management, and unlock international funding mechanisms to continue assistance. An outcome report of the Forum will be prepared, and key highlights are already available [online](#).

52. The [4th Water Economics Forum](#) was held in Barcelona on 5 April as a platform to bring in new ideas to the discussion on water resources management and the urban water cycle, relying on Nobel Prize laureates and international experts, including Mohan Munasinghe, 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, for his work on climate change and sustainable development ([access summary of previous fora](#)). The focus of his remarks was on global inequality, and the role of multilateral organisations that should be more proactive towards specific actions to adapt to climate change. OECD shared some insights from water governance studies in Mexico, the Netherlands and Korea to argue that ensuring the future of water services will entail new financing models and sound risk management. Ofwat discussed the role of regulators in ensuring the achievement of policy objectives in a fully-privatised system, and the alignment of individual interests with public policy objectives. The event also addressed water regulation, tackling issues related to the independence of regulators and the complexity of adopting different regulating systems; and stressed that

regulation is part of a wider process policy process to ensure proper management of water resources and services. Important discussions were also held on the importance of meeting financing needs, policy coordination and the balance between integration and subsidiarity. Jean Tirole, the 2014 Nobel Prize in Economics discussed his recent publication "[Economics of the Common Goods](#)", and particularly his views on how new knowledge, the digitalisation of the economy and new industrial processes will challenge water policies, as well as on corporate social responsibility and climate change negotiations.

53. The [XVI World Water Congress](#), organised by IWRA was held in Cancun, Mexico, from 28 May to 3 June, with the objective to bridge the gap between policy and science and support more science-based water policy making and the dissemination of good practices.. The event gathered 300+ participants from 70+ countries. Water policy and governance were one of the main themes of the congress, under which 26 sessions were organised, including a dedicated session on the WGI-led special issue of Water International on the *OECD Principles on Water Governance*. The Congress concluded with the adoption of the [Cancun Declaration](#), a call for action to bridge science and policymaking for sustainable development, and which builds on inputs from congress participants. The Declaration calls for an urgent mobilisation of knowledge generators, governments, donors and civil society to join forces to achieve the 2030 Agenda. At a time when science feels at risk from a policy and funding perspective, the Declaration calls for more efforts to develop new interdisciplinary knowledge and better knowledge sharing.

54. NARBO held its [6th General Meeting](#) in Jakarta, Indonesia in February 2017 to discuss progress achieved for the effective implementation of IWRM approaches in Asia through capacity building and institutional strengthening at basin level. Looking ahead, NARBO is committed to support the implementation of appropriate, applicable, and proactive actions for water resources management, and to pursue active involvement in the WGI. Next, NARBO will contribute to the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit (11-12 December 2017, Myanmar) where heads of states will discuss water security and the implementation of water-related SDGs in the region. The Summit will also be an important milestone on the road to the 8th World Water Forum, and will include governance sessions where the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* can be promoted.

55. The [East Africa Water Integrity Forum 2017](#) was organised by WIN on 9-10 May in Ethiopia where 150 participants gathered. The event addressed integrity issues particularly in East African countries and discussed topics inspired by the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* and recommendations from the [Water Integrity Global Outlook](#). Discussions stressed the importance of making the 2030 development Agenda achievements sustainable over time, which requires investments in governance, integrity and capacity measures, particularly in East Africa. The event was also an opportunity to launch several initiatives on water integrity and governance, particularly aiming to build capacities, with the objective to create an East African network on water integrity. An [outcome report](#) is available online and a follow-up webinar will be organised in the coming months.

On-going projects and policy developments

56. Israel updated delegates on ongoing water policy developments including the transfer of responsibilities from municipalities to municipal corporations for the operation of water utilities, which implies that revenues from water consumers are earmarked for the management of water infrastructure and technologies to manage leakages, wastewater plants, etc. Recent reforms have also tackled the issue of water reutilisation, to aim for 90% of wastewater reuse in agriculture. The Israel Water Authority is building new infrastructure so that effluents can be used for different purposes across the country. Israel also counts on five reverse-osmosis water desalination plants to produce potable water. On 12-14 September 2017, Israel will be hosting [WATEC](#) in Tel Aviv, an international conference gathering manufacturers, researchers, investors, academics, and decision-makers representing both local and international water-related businesses. Sessions will tackle issues related to the future needs of water

utilities, how to value water, and the adoption of cyber technologies and other innovations in water companies, amongst other topics. A back-to-back side event will gather regulators to discuss challenges and share best practices on how to improve the performance of the water sector. WGI delegates were invited to provide inputs to the side event via a questionnaire distributed during the meeting on relevant challenges and issues that could potentially shape the agenda of the event.

57. IUCN presented the “[Groundwater Solutions Initiative for Policy and Practice](#)” (GRIPP), a partnership initiative of 25-30 institutions led by the International Water Management Institute. It emerged to respond to the increasing strategic importance of groundwater for water security, resilience, and climate change. The initiative looks at groundwater in relation to food security, sustainable development, climate change adaptation, transboundary management, and governance. The initiative aims to build long-term partnerships, share transferable solutions, fill-in knowledge gaps, and scale-up action. Looking at and operationalising groundwater governance will be a critical component of developing an implementation strategy for the [Groundwater Governance Framework for Action](#). As part of GRIPP’s activities, a book “Advances in Groundwater Governance” will be published by end 2017 on the state-of-the-art and latest developments regarding each of the many dimensions of groundwater governance. One of the chapters is authored by OECD and applies the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* as a useful framework to assess and monitor the specificities of groundwater governance arrangements.

58. GWP-Med updated delegates on the [Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector](#) project, which started 4 years ago and will conclude in December 2017. This project, endorsed by the Union for the Mediterranean, was designed together with the OECD and financed by the Swedish International Development Agency, the European Investment Bank and the Global Environmental Facility through the MED partnership programme. It aimed to diagnose key governance-related bottlenecks to mobilise financing for the Mediterranean water sector and to identify realistic and feasible solutions to these challenges. It includes first a national component that was implemented in Jordan and Tunisia leading to the publication of two national reports under the leadership of OECD investigating the governance bottlenecks to private sector participation (access reports through the [OECD](#) and [GWP](#) websites); then in Palestine, and Lebanon with the production of relevant national reports. For each country, reviews were conducted through in-depth technical analysis and multi-stakeholder dialogues to identify challenges and pave the way for recommendations, based on international best practices so as to align national processes with the international framework. Concomitantly, a regional component involved projects to share and compare policy experiences and best practices through dialogues between policy makers and private actors. The two components were mutually reinforcing and led to recommendations on developing appropriate regulatory framework; improving budgetary processes; and ensuring stakeholder engagement. The project also includes the preparation of two thematic policy briefs on the [gender and corporate social responsibility dimensions](#) in water management. Over the past year, a water policy dialogue has been on-going with Lebanon on the role of the banking sector in financing water projects. During the 2nd Regional Conference of the project (Tunis, 5-6 December 2016) a regional platform of stakeholders took stock of the Dialogues’ findings with the aim to identify good practices. The project will conclude with a three-day regional conference in December 2017 in Barcelona on water governance in the Mediterranean, which will be jointly organised by GWP-Med and SIWI.

Water Governance in France

Scene setting

59. Pierre-Alain Roche of the French Ministry of Environmental and Inclusive Transition provided an overview of the evolution of France’s water policy and governance over the past 25 years. For what concerns water resources management, the 1964 Water Law is the founding legal framework that structured the water governance system around six large river basins and set up consultative basin

committees with decision-making powers, and water agencies, with revenue-raising responsibilities. Most recently, important policy changes have taken place bridging water and biodiversity concerns, and restructuring public water services. Regulation in the French water sector is organised at European level through directives; at national level for rules and control; and at local level whereby local authorities are accountable to users, and operators (whether public or private) are accountable to local authorities. The French basin governance system has been stable over time, with some evolutions including the introduction of sub-basin institutions and river basin management schemes. Basin committees, responsible for designing the river basin master plan, have also adapted over time to reflect the diversity of stakeholders involved in water management, including regional and local authorities, and users. In 2016, a new decree redefined the rules of representation within basin committees so that the national government, local authorities and users would have equal weight. The following year, basin committees were adjusted once again with a law that divided users into two groups of professional and non-professional users to reflect new demands from stakeholders. Early on, key water resources problems in France concerned pollution and the need to secure finance for the sector, which led the introduction of the “water pays for water” paradigm. In 2000s, new environmental concerns emerged while water agencies were taking over certain expenditures that had been the responsibility of the national government. Today, reforms have broadened the mandate of water agencies to include other environmental and spatial planning concerns.

60. For water services, different management systems coexist in France, ranging from public operators fully integrated within municipal services, to services that are delegated to private companies, with also mixed arrangements. Recent reforms are changing the landscape for operators and organising authorities. The new law foresees that, by 2020, small water services should be concentrated and organising authorities will be reinforced so as to harmonise the structure and size of water operators.

61. This series of dynamic and adaptive policy changes demonstrates that water governance in France has evolved to factor in many of the key governance concerns of the *OECD Principles on Water Governance*. The overall framework lies on two legs: consultative bodies and appropriate scales and financial resources. Decentralisation has also gradually changed the framework to strengthen local authorities. Theoretically, policy and reform cycles are often perceived as structured around formulation/implementation/measuring steps, as a spiral of continued progress that solves a given problem by adapting. But in practice, each step is a cycle in itself and consists in addressing a new problem in a new context with new actors, debates, conflicts, tensions, etc. The evolution of water governance in France illustrate how governance systems are constantly influenced by policies outside the water sector, and need to adapt to emerging environmental and technical issues. Therefore, the capacity of a water governance system to be flexible, agile and resilient is more important than the search of the perfect solution to a particular challenge.

62. The session was organised around two lively multi-stakeholder panels addressing issues of policy coherence then territorial fragmentation that were respectively moderated by Sophie Richard and Marine Colon of AgroParisTech.

Panel 1: Fostering policy coherence at the appropriate scale for water resources management

63. Francois Mitteault, Water Director at the French Ministry for Environmental and Inclusive Transition, insisted on the threat posed by climate change and explained that France has chosen to address it by focusing on water and ecosystems, and climate change will put the robustness of the French water governance system to the test. To make this system more resilient, a reform was introduced in 2016 that brought water and biodiversity issues closer in an effort to recover biodiversity loss and improve the water cycle. In practice, this has meant that water agencies now have responsibilities on aquatic, marine and terrestrial biodiversity; biodiversity stakeholders will be represented in basin committees and boards of directors; and water agencies will be able to levy fees in the areas of terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

64. Catherine Gremillet, Director-General of the Network of Territorial and Basin Authorities explained that the French water governance system is characterised by many management structures at basin level, including groupings of local authorities voluntarily set up in the 1960s to address common water challenges, such as the public basin authorities (*établissements public territoriaux de bassin* – EPTB). Today, France counts 42 of such EPTB that are in charge of operational management at local level. A recent water reform introduced a new responsibility dealing with the management of aquatic ecosystems and flood prevention, that was allocated to local authorities, while also encouraging actions at local level through two complementary scales: that of EPTB (basin or groups of sub-basins), and EPAGE (sub-basin). These authorities now jointly develop programmes of actions for water management at the right scale. These partnerships help foster long-term local engineering, and bring about financial benefits by reducing costs, ensuring territorial solidarity across local authorities, unlocking grants from European funds as well as developing PPPs. This new responsibility covers only a part of the scope of water management and does not include river flow management, diffuse pollution, etc. By being entrusted to certain local authorities, this responsibility has also meant that other local actors have opted out which can lead to financial issues and question mechanisms of territorial solidarity such as between urban and rural areas. The French water governance system is therefore being reshuffled and new agreements, financing plans, and programs should be built at basin levels or other emerging scales.

65. Didier Marteau, a representative of the Agricultural Councils, argued that farmers are not only water consumers, but territorial actors that maintain rural areas, while ensuring economic, social and environmental development, including through the sustainable use of water resources. For instance, farmers have been involved in reducing the use of nitrates to protect water and the wildlife. They are also actively involved in advisory and consultative bodies working with public administrations to develop solutions to floods or droughts (e.g. by agreeing to water quotas). Furthermore, they have adopted a strategic plan to reduce the use of pesticides through the introduction of a specific tax. It has implied raising awareness and building capacity so that farmers would understand the costs. As a result, thousands of farms have committed to the strategic plan, while remaining competitive on the national and global markets.

66. Bernard Rousseau, a representative of the environmental NGO *France Nature et Environnement* within the French National Water Council, pointed out that, theoretically, the structure of the French water governance system can seem stimulating for law makers and administrators, but in reality, it has shown to be challenging for practitioners at national, basin and local level who are overwhelmed by the complexity of procedures and the multiplication of authorities in which they are represented. This shows the limit of the French system, which impacts the performance of actors at technical, administrative and political level. Another peculiarity of the French structure is that some categories of actors are better organised than others and can thrive in this complex system. For instance, basin committees are platforms where different interests meet to formulate common decisions. Certain groups such as elected officials or farmers are well-trained and represented. However, other actors such as users, civil society organisations, nature conservation associations, etc. are more challenged. All these actors have different economic weight, which influences the balance of power and can rig the debates. Greater efficiency is needed in these structures to foster the representation of non-professional actors. Therefore, despite a well-developed and structured institutional set-up, and concrete results in overcoming water quality challenges, environmental results are not sufficient in the water sector, as reflected by the unsatisfactory achievements of France vis-a-vis the goals of the EU Water Framework Directive.

67. Thierry Burlot, Vice-President of the Bretagne region, explained that freshwater and marine water both play an important part in the economic, environmental and social life of the region. The area has been characterised by intensive agricultural activities that led in the past to important water and soil pollution with consequences on economic and urban development. Ever since, water was considered as an essential tool for regional development and as a common good contributing to well-being. To support this

approach, the region embraced the basin governance system and developed catchment-based policies that involved national agencies and municipalities. Today, this organisation is shaken with the introduction of new players, such as inter-municipal and regional authorities, with the objective to develop policies that take account of local disparities in access to water, and link to the region's new responsibilities related to the regional sustainable development management plans and the European regional development funds. The region is committed to carry-out actions at the local level, to help manage upstream-downstream and urban-rural trade-offs, and to ensure the coherence of public policies, also working with the water agency of the Loire-Bretagne basin.

Group discussion on the first panel

68. Ps-Eau welcomed the overview of French water policy developments, particularly efforts to bring water-related policies closer to climate change and biodiversity concerns within the water agencies; and pointed out that these new environmental considerations within the water agencies will have an impact on the revenues they raise, and thus on future water tariffs .

69. The Portuguese Water Partnership reflected on the evolutions of water policy in France in light of the experience of Portugal, pointing out that while it is critical to take account of water needs for ecosystems, biodiversity should be considered in the broader spectrum of water uses and sectors. In Portugal, municipalities have played an important role in water management for centuries, and have had a tendency to appropriate too much water resources management responsibilities, while basin governance is lagging behind. The same can be said of agriculture and hydropower. Capture by a given sector raises challenges, which is why ensuring a balance between uses and users, and ensuring that water authorities are above this sectoral approach is important.

70. GWP mentioned that the OECD water governance indicators under development could be useful for France to measure local, basin and national performance in terms of reaching policy objectives related to water and biodiversity. It was also argued that fostering a culture of water has been a success factor in countries such as Australia, South Africa, or Singapore, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of water risks and act accordingly.

71. Morocco found the French experience with basin committees very interesting as platforms where different interests, powers and forces meet, and managing such fora requires finding compromises between stakeholders. Morocco is currently setting up basin councils and committees and is facing some challenges in terms of coordinating different actors and managing broad consultations.

72. Mexico is also carrying out a reform on biodiversity, including developing synergies with water management, and is facing challenges related to the role of farmers and the use of pesticides.

73. The Open University pointed out that water management in France is as much an environmental and technical issue as it is a social issue, but new paradigms currently being adopted in the country do not encompass all these dimensions at the moment. In the future, water policy paradigms would need to do so.

74. Flanders Knowledge Centre Water mentioned an ongoing partnership with the French city of St. Omer to implement a system for reducing water consumption in municipal buildings. However, despite the consultative approach that characterises the French water system, this partnership has faced some challenges in terms of mobilising stakeholders and developing a consensual approach.

75. Ian Barker argued that restructuring a water governance system in response to recognised problems raises the question of whether this system is future-proof, not only for ecological adaptation but also for more recurrent floods, diffuse pollutions, new contaminants, and other risks to water supply.

76. French representatives thanked the delegates for their constructive comments and complemented their remarks by laying down current and future priorities in the country:

- Climate change is reviving debates and dialogues among local authorities, which has been encouraged at ministerial level, and solutions will have to be found and adopted at the basin and local level. At national level, the government is committed, through a national adaptation plan to climate change, to foster bottom-up initiatives and open debates at all levels, which will require data and indicators on water quality, quantity, and biodiversity. France is now developing an open water information system that will be accessible at all levels of government. This will also be accompanied by a diversification of financial resources whereby fees will be collected from both the water and biodiversity sectors..
- Public debates will be promoted, such as the *Grenelle de l'environnement* in the past, to think collectively of the future of the water sector and involve all stakeholders, including farmers, consumers and local officials in finding solutions to address pressing and emerging water risks. To contribute to building a culture of water, and raising awareness among local actors, the association of EPTB is launching a network of local elected officials to trigger local actions. Basin committees should continue to play an important role as platforms where concerns can be voiced and addressed, and to foster a sense of coherence across actors, including on the link between water services, water resources and biodiversity.
- Current debates on water management should not focus on water tariffs but on finding new financing models that are fit for the next institutional structures, and that reflect the whole water cycle. These include synergies between water and biodiversity, financing for prevention of floods (evolution of the Barnier Fund), and also new sources of funding at municipal and inter-municipal level.

Panel 2: Addressing territorial fragmentation and implications of recent reforms for water services

77. Philippe Marest, Water Director for the metropolitan area of Nantes, introduced the city's governance approach to drinking water provision that relies on a dynamic relationship between the local public authority responsible for the service, the network operator and the users. This approach ensures that the public authority has the institutional levers and resources necessary to guarantee i) everyone's access to a high-quality public service, based on sound public expertise and control over tariffs and the management of its assets; and ii) the sustainable management of water resources, based on a holistic expertise covering the full water cycle, from drinking water production, to stormwater and wastewater management, and ecosystem protection. Nantes also pays careful attention to the performance of the public and private operators delivering water services, according to contracts setting clear long-term objectives. Users and citizens have also been central to Nantes' water management approach through neighbourhood councils, citizen workshops, and other debates. By providing platforms where citizens can exchange with private operators and public officials, Nantes Métropole has obtained positive results. These efforts will be further strengthened by the recent reform on water services (i.e. MAPTAM law), which aims to consolidate local public authorities so they have leverages, the necessary institutional skills and solid expertise to guarantee the efficiency of water services.

78. Maximilien Pellegrini, Deputy-Director of Eau France at Suez, underlined that the contractual relationship between a private operator and the local public authority is at the heart of the governance of water services. It sets the ground rules in terms of transparency, accountability, risk management and innovation to address future challenges. Suez also values collaborating with stakeholders in an effort to build a culture of water and contribute to territorial development. Today, France has a wide spectrum of management and governance models, which reflect political choices and local specificities. As a private

player, Suez aims to bring value added within the models chosen by the public authorities, whether in the form of new technologies and innovation, or service delivery according to agreed-upon performance indicators. In recent years, management models for water services in France have been increasingly opened up to the public, whereby citizens contribute to defining the modalities and objectives of service provision, including when it is delegated to a private operator. In 2010, Suez kicked-off a wide stakeholder dialogue initiative to foster open and constructive debates on the future of water provision management models. Recent reforms (Laws NOTRe and MAPTAM) have created a new dynamic around inter-municipal bodies that can facilitate tariff harmonisation, asset management, service provision modalities and smart data management. Both public and private operators have a role to play in shaping the future governance model for water provision, and thus territorial development, in France.

79. Michel Desmars, representing the national union of public operators (*Fédération nationale des collectivités concédantes et régies – FNCCR*), explained that the inter-municipal bodies created by the recent reforms face a number of challenges related first to data management (i.e. information on asset, service performance, customers). Second, these new authorities will have to build solidarities between urban and rural areas and ensure the same quality of service provision across their management area. In the metropolitan area of Nice for instance, the recently-created public operator provides water to 50 different urban, rural and mountainous municipalities with different management features. There is a tendency in France to compare the performance of public and private operators, which should be approached with caution because often, the size of the management areas and number of customers are different. For instance, a recent report published by the French Agency of Biodiversity shows that on average, private operators in charge of delegated service management provide water to 2.5 more customers than public operators. Public water operators recently came together under a new network called [*France Eau Publique*](#) (France Public Water) that fosters experience sharing and capacity building so as to ensure the best possible public service. The network is structured around thematic working groups on the social aspects of services management, collection of invoices, personnel management, data management, purchases, user participation and the improvement of governance.

80. Adrien Tchang Minh, water expert at a national consumer association called CLCV (*Consommation, logement et cadre de vie – CLCV*) shared that consumers tend to get involved in water management only when they worry about water tariffs or water quality. Users' involvement in water provision varies widely from one place to another and depends on the public authorities and the operators' willingness to be transparent and to provide platforms for consumer associations and representatives of non-professional users to be consulted. Recent reforms, such as the Law NOTRe, have created new inter-municipal bodies responsible for water provision that encompass several local authorities with different approaches to user participation. In the metropolitan area of Grenoble for instance, some authorities are taking part in a pilot case involving users to discuss social pricing, while other neighbouring authorities are not, which may lead to different tariff-setting approaches within the metropolitan area. Moving forward, local authorities and consumer associations should work together to share information and raise awareness on pricing, the state of the infrastructure network, water-related risks, etc., so as to strengthen user participation, buy-in and willingness to pay for water. This is even more important as new reforms are being implemented and citizens should understand why and what for.

Group discussion on the 2nd panel

81. Transparency International stressed that competition between public and private operators is an effective way to avoid issues of corruption in water service provision.

82. The Secretariat enquired about the impact of metropolitan reforms on water management in France; in particular in relation to their new responsibilities related to flood risk management and the expected consolidation of water services). It was also noted that many countries have reconsidered the

definition of metropolitan areas moving from a concept based on administrative boundaries, to one based on functional perimeters within which people live and work. In addition, OECD countries are undergoing a consolidation of water operators, as in the case of France, concomitantly with a reflection on alternative modalities of water regulation.

83. The Dutch Water Authorities underlined that in light of future challenges related to growing urbanisation, public authorities and institutions will have to work together to solve problems and find solutions beyond their own competencies and finances.

84. Austria was interested in the experience of Nice and how it transitioned from a delegated to a public management model, including the reasons and timing for this change.

85. Eau de Paris highlighted that often in France, the choice of a management model is the result of a political choice and local specificities. In the case of Paris, the lack of transparency was one of the reasons that led to changing from private to public management, and to including clear objectives of transparency in the public operator's contract.

86. FP2E welcomed the example of Nantes as a successful case of a strong public authority that set up clear performance objectives and competitive management models within the metropolitan area, with the objective of homogenising water service provision.

87. French representatives thanked the delegates for their constructive comments and complemented their remarks to address some of the questions raised:

- On data transparency, it was noted that more information tends to be available on private than on public water operators. However, the examples of Paris and Nantes show that performance objectives and indicators are explicit.
- On regulation, France has adopted a “moonlight regulation”, rather than a “sunshine regulation” approach, which must rely on public authorities able to produce relevant information in order to carry-out benchmark. Recent reforms leading to fewer management entities can contribute to a more active dialogue on regulation.
- On the evolution of metropolitan areas, more and more cities like Nantes, are embracing a holistic approach to water management that covers the production/distribution of drinking water, and the management of aquatic environments. As such, the metropolitan area becomes a water-based territory with greater visibility over the full water policy package. It is also increasingly the interlocutor of choice for consumers, and can provide the appropriate platforms to involve all actors in co-developing future solutions.

88. Bernard Barraqué of CNRS shared some final remarks as discussant of the two roundtables. In France, water resources management and public services of water and sanitation are performed by different sets of actors. They do not come from the same sets of laws and as such, governance indicators for these two broad paths of water policy should be different. There is a general misconception among many European NGOs that public services of water and sanitation are considered as a *common good* or property but in fact, in many countries such as Germany, Portugal, Finland, the Netherlands, and France, public as well as private operators bill consumers for water (often including sanitation) as a *commercial good*: this gives water services the character of club goods. In addition, public services are regulated by governments and not self-regulated as common property institutions. What is more, institutional development in France was built on a confrontation between the central government and local authorities/municipalities, which have retained a great degree of sovereignty. During the strong impulse of modernisation and centralisation

after the Second World War, municipalities that could not perform public services efficiently delegated the provision to private operators. In addition, the country has relied on a cross-regulation system whereby the central government requests municipalities to modernise their local public services, and in turn, municipalities asked for government subsidies, or for derogations. But under the De Gaulle period, French government pushed for a regionalisation aimed at fostering greater participation of economic sectors and of the civil society in public decisions. In the water sector, this reform sparked the creation of 6 water agencies at the river basin level, run under participative democracy, where the *comités de bassin* would vote 5-year investment plans and also the levies users would pay to fund an average 35% of these investments. Despite the institutional innovation and the initial success of this policy, politicians and civil servants kept an ongoing issue over the revenues raised by the water agencies and whether these should be considered tariffs for the services provided by the agencies, or be considered taxes under the control of the Parliament and the Treasury, which would stymie the role of the *comités*. The 2006 decision by the Parliament to consider levies as taxes, led to a paradox: water agencies are funded above 80% by domestic users in their water bills, so as to fund WSS services' implementation of EU Water Directives. But currently 10% is taken by the Treasury for non-water related purposes, and soon this could rise to 25% to fund the new biodiversity law; which raises governance issues. Conversely, the consolidation of water and sanitation services at supra-local level is hoped to help make service provision more efficient and resilient, including with economies of scale.

OECD-Brazil Policy Dialogue

Key highlights from the synthesis of the report

89. The OECD Secretariat presented the main findings of the draft report that looks at how water (abstraction and pollution) charges are designed, set and governed in Brazil. The 1997 National Water Law established water charges as one of several water management instruments, together with plans, water quality control, and permits to which water charges are linked, i.e. those granted a water abstraction or effluent discharge permit should pay water charges. As such, the federal Law links economic policy instruments and command and control instruments. It also determines that revenues collected based on these permits should be disbursed in the same watershed where they are raised. Today, water charges are used in four interstate river basins (the other two are only starting to use water charges) and six states. As a result, 5% of water users provide 95% of revenues collected by the National Water Agency (ANA).

90. Many of the challenges identified in the 2015 OECD report "[Water Resources Governance in Brazil](#)" apply to the performance of water charges, related to the poor implementation of river basin plans; the lack of capacity within basin committees to drive decisions on water charges; and the low level of water charges, which all hinder the achievement of economic and financial goals. The institutional framework for setting and implementing water charges is centred at the basin level, where river basin committees decide on water charges in a participatory way. Often, those who take part in consultation on setting water charges are users who ultimately pay charges, thus raising risks of conflicts and vested interests. All charges proposed by the river basin committees (at federal or state level) are then approved by the National or State Water Management Council. The revenues raised through water charges are managed and disbursed at basin level by delegated agencies, according to the river basin plans. States across Brazil have different levels of maturity when it comes to using water charges, ranging from pioneers that contributed to change the legal and institutional framework, to followers, newcomers and aspirants, the latter being currently discussing the relevance and feasibility of setting charges in their territories.

91. One of the key issues diagnosed in the draft report concerns the level of water charges. Currently, it is too low to drive water users' behaviour or to generate financial resources needed to implement water policies. Limitations also come from the design of water charges, and the process by which they are set and endorsed. As such, water charges have failed to achieve both economic and financial objectives. Indeed,

the design of abstraction and pollution charges does not reflect local circumstances related to scarcity, the opportunity costs of using water in specific basins, or the diluting capacity of rivers and water bodies. Water charges should therefore be better designed to reflect externalities. Beyond the level of water charges, attention should also be paid to how revenues generated by water charges are used; particularly as current expenditure programmes at basin level do not deliver clear benefits for water users.

92. Some sector-specific issues related to different categories of users are also worth considering:

- Hydropower is a significant water user and plays an important role in the country's energy mix. Hydropower generators are charged 6.25% of the value of hydropower generated. It represents a significant source of revenue for the sector, of which only a small part is earmarked at local level. This means that water users in the river basin see little benefits from the charges they pay and often tend to consider it a tax. Another part of the revenues is used by the National Water Agency (ANA) at federal level. Charges for hydropower are set nationwide and are place-blind in the sense that they do not reflect levels of scarcity across basins. As such, they do not provide incentives for hydropower generators to generate power in basins where water is abundant and where there is low competition to access the resource.
- In water and sanitation services, whenever they are in place, water charges are a significant source of revenues paid by the utilities, but these have little impact on their efficiency and that of final users in fostering rational water use.
- In the industry sector, pollutions are significant despite some progress, one of the reasons being that water pollution charges focus on BOD only, without reflecting the large range of pollutants that can be found in industrial effluents.
- Water charges are distinctively lower for agricultural users, which is not specific to Brazil but can be observed in many other countries. Farmers often claim that high water charges affect their competitiveness (e.g. typically if they are exporting on the global market), but economic analysis in the country shows that this is overstated: the impact of water charges in the sector would be minimal, and in principle, most farmers should be able to pay.

93. The draft report highlights some key take-away messages from the analysis. First, the objectives of water charges should come up clearly, specifically because federal and state authorities charge for specific reasons that need to be stated clearly and drive the discussion on water charges. Second, cheap water does not address poverty concerns. While there may be affordability issues in water supply and sanitation, as well as for some farmers, cheap water for all cannot be the answer because abstraction and pollution charges do not have such an impact on affordability and competitiveness. These water charges will have most effect when they will reflect scarcity and externalities related to water use. Concomitantly, targeted accompanying measures for poor households and farmers can be adopted so they can pay their bills. Third, water charges do not work in isolation, but in combination with regulatory and information instruments and any discussion on water charges should go hand in hand with discussion on water entitlements. Lastly, there is no sophisticated algorithm that would support the design of water charges. Rather, proxies and simple measures can be used to help move into the right direction.

94. In conclusion, OECD policy recommendations call for i) moving from pedagogical charges to charges that bite, through a progressive increase over the years; ii) reflecting local conditions and considering a broader scope of pollutants in abstraction and pollution charges so they can drive water-wise behaviour and address externalities generated by unwise water practices; iii) using water charges to fund spending programmes that can benefit users; iv) strengthening the knowledge base to guide decisions through monitoring and modelling of how much water is available, who uses it, what the quality of

effluents is and how it affects environmental sustainability and people's health; this can be supposed by economic analyses on the impact of water charges on affordability and competitiveness, and education and awareness raising to enhance the willingness to pay; v) managing charges at scale, based on experience sharing, bench-learning, and delegated agencies that manage revenues from water charges. Creating a unique water agency in large interstate basins could be envisaged to increase horizontal coordination across states; and vi) supporting more effective river basin committees and the development of binding plans that can drive decisions on charging and spending, priority users, and externalities to be addressed.

Insights from peer-reviewers

95. Gonzalo Delacámara, Spain, recalled that it is important to bear in mind the overall picture of Brazil, which is going through a critical political and economic crisis, with a GDP growth of just 1%; unemployment rate reaching 14%; a government debt of 17% of GDP and public deficit of more than 10%. The country is thus undergoing a fiscal consolidation, which has an impact on finances in the water sector. In addition, the water sector is also facing important droughts in urban areas. In this context, water abstraction and pollution charges have a financial and an economic role to play, because water revenues are still very modest even in cases such as Rio de Janeiro where charges have increased by 100%. Increasing charges cannot be enough and other elements also need to be fixed for water charges to work properly. For instance, the Brazilian planning process is both rich and complex. The impact of climate change is also part of the economic rationale to introduce water charges. However, putting emphasis on the level of water charges is misleading for the water users, because discussions focus on whether or not rates are high or low, rather than on the fact that water charges are means to meet objectives of achieving resilience, overcoming scarcity, improving water quality and preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services delivery. While cost-recovery is critical, water charges must also contribute to achieving water policy objectives.

96. Francisco Nunes Correia, Portugal, stressed that Brazil is a very complex country from a hydrological, economic development and institutional point of view, and is also a pioneer in light of the 1997 Water Law, which was implemented ahead of the EU Water Framework Directive. Brazil should not fall in the trap of considering that water charges should be universal for fairness and equity, because it can raise high transaction costs and lead to charging fragile parts of the population that do not use a lot of water. The system should charge primarily those that use large amounts of water, which requires a sound inventory of water users, and clear rules for exemptions. At the moment, there are no rules for setting water charge levels, which could be the responsibility of the National Water Resources Council. The current system tasks river basin councils with the responsibility of setting water charges, in consultation with water users, but often, those participating in the committees impede the process of charging for water and committees become places of resistance where large water users try to avoid paying for charges. Therefore, national rules and rationales for setting water charges should be adopted. Lastly, revenues raised from charges should be reinvested in the basin and serve water users. To do so, the process of setting water charges should be adjusted because deliberations within river basin committees have not proven effective on these issues.

97. Ian Barker, United Kingdom, underlined that discussing water charges should start by understanding the state of the environment, water resources, and water quality and by setting objectives for water quality that foster a sustainable aquatic regime. This implies to have an adequate monitoring regime, robust assessment and modelling, and a sound regulatory regime backed by enforcement means. As such, water charges work in combination with other instruments. They should be designed to address specific challenges and to achieve specific policy outcomes related to rivers, groundwater or coastal water, which vary from one basin or state to another. Small users also have an impact on water abstraction and pollution when they are concentrated in certain locations such as lowering up groundwater and drying up tributary springs, which justify the use of water charges in these areas to limit abuses. For what concerns the use of

water-related revenues, it should be clearly established that these can be used for maintenance and operation of assets that benefit all users, but not for water and sanitation infrastructure. In order for charges to serve their purpose, they should be set at an acceptable level, yet flexible to adjust to changing circumstances and as the knowledge base improves.

Remarks by the National Water Agency of Brazil

98. Joao Lotufo, Director of the Brazilian National Water Agency (ANA) explained that ANA's mission is to operate the water resources management system, in accordance with the national water policy. The Agency has contributed to build a stronger water agenda across ministries, including with a National Water Security Plan developed with the Ministry of Integration and an Atlas for Urban Water Supply and Sanitation prepared with Ministries of Cities, Integration and Health. As a continental country with huge hydrological differences, Brazil primarily faces challenges of water quality, sanitation, water use conflicts and exposure to extreme hydrological events. Most recently, several parts of the country have been dealing with a severe drought, including the North-East and Mid-West regions. The South-East, particularly Paraiba do Sul, succeeded in addressing the drought, including by negotiating with the States and the hydroelectric sector. This process led to a new operational regulatory framework for reservoirs. In the North-East, water scarcity has been an issue for several years, and the region has managed the related risks in a "learning by doing" approach. In the Piancó Piranhas Açu river basin in particular, major advances in integrated water resources management were achieved. In addition, a water transfer project in Sao Francisco started in March 2017 to bring water towards water-scarce areas of the North-East, such as the city of Campina Grande. In this context of high pressure on water resources, the ANA started developing strategic partnerships with several organisations including the OECD, the United States Corps of Engineers and the US Geological Survey to learn how to move from *crisis* to *risk* management. This second Policy Dialogue with the OECD provides an accurate assessment of challenges related to economic instruments as well as inter-sectoral coordination within the federal government on water infrastructure investment, and will be a stepping stone in the accession process of Brazil to the OECD.

Group discussion

99. Bernard Barraqué of CNRS noted that a major difference between the French and Brazilian water management system lies in the level of the charge, which is very high in France compared to Brazil. The initial level of the charge was already much higher, and it increased over the years in France; this allowed to develop experiments for improving water quality and reducing industrial pollution, which, together with a balanced representation of water users, has helped secure trust in the system. In France, hydroelectric companies historically abstracted more than 2/3 of the country's water resources, before energy production turned to nuclear power. Whilst the energy sector continues to use 60% of the total water volume in France, water is only used to cool down nuclear plants and returns it to the aquatic environment, which makes it a passive actor. In comparison, there are still important tensions in Brazil around water allocation, such as in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, between domestic and energy uses. If France had not turned its energy matrix towards thermal power plants, it would have been impossible to develop viable river basin institutions. The weight of the civil engineering approaches in Brazil makes it difficult to develop more sustainable governance systems. Transferring water from large reservoirs is still often preferred to demand management. For instance, in the Paraiba do Sul river basin, 2/3 of water volumes are diverted to generate electricity that ultimately benefits the city of Rio de Janeiro; but this diversion has been ongoing for many years and both the electrical company and the metropole of Rio argue that the diversion should be considered a natural flow to the sea, hence no water charge should be paid for it. Today the basin committee has managed to charge this large user, but the budget remains too small to allow for good and trustworthy water governance. It is little surprise if in a federal system, integrated water resources management is more efficiently carried out by States than by basin institutions: the State of

Ceará has a quite good and well-funded water allocation policy, but with a “damshed” rather than a “watershed” policy.

100. pS-Eau shared some guidance starting by pointing out that Brazil should not seek to transpose the French model of basin management and water charges but rather aim to develop its own model. It was also recommended to not attempt to charge all users at the same time, but rather target the small categories of users that generate the most revenues (i.e. as per the Pareto Law), which should be first industrial users, followed by households in large cities, and ultimately farmers. It was also advised to not change the *basis* for the water charge at the same time as the *rate* of the water charge, but rather one after the other. Lastly, river basin organisation should keep their operational costs as low as possible, and in any case lower than the government’s stewardship.

101. Germany underlined the importance of the political dimension of charging for water. The ability of governments to charge users for water is often closely linked to the relation between public institutions and citizens. At a time of political crisis in Brazil, the question of trust in public institutions should be an important factor in the willingness to pay of users.

102. GWP stressed that the water crisis in Brazil provides an opportunity to re-think water management in terms of regulation and sanctions, and to strengthen political will at municipal, regional and federal level. It was also mentioned that water uses in Brazil should go beyond the industry, agriculture, and hydropower to also encompass ecosystems, particularly in the context of climate change and water scarcity.

103. APDA pointed out that networks of water professionals have a role to play in times of reform, and could be an important actor in Brazil to implement new policies on water charges.

104. The Dutch Water Authorities recounted that the Netherlands are facing several water quality issues and have had to prioritise how to address these challenges, first by focusing on point source pollution, before turning to diffuse sources of pollution. Water charges should be an incentive to help manage challenges. In Brazil, charges could first target the main polluters to reduce effluents. To be effective, a reform of water charges would need to involve all levels of government, including municipalities.

105. The University of Lisbon mentioned the importance of the water-energy-land use nexus, particularly at a time of fast urbanisation, and which should be reflected in the use of water charges.

106. ANA shared some final remarks to mention that there has been strong political involvement and negotiations to establish the law on water charges, particularly in Sao Paulo. Professional networks and organisations have also played an important role in the process.

107. The OECD Secretariat concluded by stating that while water charges are a sensitive topic, ANA and other Brazilian stakeholders have discussed with OECD with an open mind, and are considering the enabling environment and the framework conditions to ensure that water charges deliver. The OECD report is set to be released in November 2017.

ECOCUENCAS project – Climate Change Adaptation in Latin America Basins

Key highlights from the draft report

108. OIEau presented the key highlights of the draft report prepared for the [EcoCuencas project](#) that looks at the current state-of-play of climate change adaptation measures at river basin level, and how water charges can contribute to fund these measures. Primarily funded by the European Union, the project also

relies on the support of Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador as pilot cases. The first component of the project consisted in a participative assessment of the initial situation, while the 2nd component developed guidelines for the implementation of financial mechanisms in Latin America, considering lessons learned in other parts of the world. Draft guidelines concern the implementation of charges for water resources (user-pays and polluter-pays principles) and payment of ecosystem services (PES). The draft guidelines follow a pragmatic approach based on theoretical economic principles that apply to these policy instruments, and are currently being reviewed by the OECD.

109. The third component looks at 3 pilot projects in the PCJ basin [Brazil], the Chira-Catamayo a transboundary basin [Ecuador/Peru], and in the city of Medellin [Colombia], focusing on PES. Zooming in on the case of the PCJ basin, the analysis highlights that Brazil shares similarities with the EU in terms of geographical scales, legal and institutional frameworks. The PCJ basin is a federal basin because it crosses across the states of Minas Gerais São Paulo, and comprises 76 municipalities and 5.5 million inhabitants over 15,000 km². It has one of the most advanced basins in terms of institutional organisation and water charge implementation. A basin committee acts as a water parliament, while the PCJ basin agency is a not-for-profit organisation that implements the committee's policies and decisions. Lastly, a PCJ consortium serves as a water users' association. In the context of the Brazilian double dominion system (federal and state jurisdictions over water resources), basin committees were set up for Minas Gerais, São Paulo and at federal level to integrate the various points of view.

110. The PCJ basin faces several challenges related to policy (i.e. how to integrate the city of São Paulo in the decision making process); planning (how to make IWRM happen, including climate change issues); and financing (i.e. how to ensure the operational budget of the basin agency). The PCJ basin is impacted by climate change with floods and droughts affecting city dwellers, industries, real estates, etc. The PCJ river basin management plan includes adaptation measures such as reducing vulnerability associated to water availability, no-regret measures, rational use linked to demand management, reducing leaks, and improving rates of wastewater collection and treatment. However, the agency lacks the necessary financial resources to make the plan happen on the ground. One option could be to increase the scope of pollution charges (e.g. by adding phosphorus). The analysis of the PCJ basin calls for better defining current conflicts; identifying environmental, technical and financial constraints (knowledge, monitoring, data management, etc.) to the implementation of adaptation measures, and conducting a financial assessment of such measures (including willingness to pay). Conclusions from the analysis for EcoCuencas echo the *OECD Principles on Water Governance* in terms of finding trade-offs between users on who pays for what, improving and speeding spending mechanisms; defining the basin as the relevant governance level, and reinforcing monitoring and data management, including on the capacity of water users to pay.

Remarks by the PCJ Basin Agency, Brazil

111. The [PCJ Basin Agency](#) informed delegates that there is a strong public perception in Brazil that water is abundant and that the tax burden is too heavy, which has generally played against the effective use of water charges. The water resources management policy is the only set of public policies in Brazil with its own financing scheme through water charges (the “cobrança”), and basin committees play an important role to build public trust in the charging system. The first PCJ basin committee was set up in 1993 and has been working since then to raise awareness within the population on water-related issues. It is a highly-urbanised basin and ensuring an effective sewage collection is therefore a priority.

112. The EcoCuencas project has provided an opportunity for the PCJ basin agency to link its activities to climate change, including a programme on the protection of water springs, and an initiative to improve river water quality. To manage risks related to climate change, the basin agency is looking for new instruments to raise funds, building on the EcoCuencas project, including through updating water use

charges (monetary/new parameters) but implies negotiations with stakeholders. To carry out these negotiations, it is important to show the impact of water charges in terms of new investments, ecosystem recovery measures so as to ensure willingness to pay. Looking ahead, it will also be important to strengthen capacities of responsible authorities to implement and execute investments, particularly at municipal level. Other opportunities could come from policy changes, such as charging for new pollutants.

Group discussion

113. The Open University pointed out that the EcoCuencas project seems to emphasise the question of costs and water charges, which could be balanced out with a discussion on payments that can also change water users' behaviour towards willingness to pay for water charges in the catchment.

114. INBO stressed that effectively charging for water is a long-term process that has taken decades in France for instance, thus Brazil should be patient with the roll-out of new funding tools. The PCJ basin is at the forefront of introducing such tools in Brazil but it will require time to have all players and water users agree on the best way to use them.

115. Peru shared the experience of the Chira-Catamayo transboundary basin shared with Ecuador, where a share of revenues from water charges is used as seed funding for the implementation of the basin management plan, which was designed by the basin council. The main economic activities of the country (e.g. fisheries, agro-exports, etc.) are located in the North where some of the large users do not pay water charges are not in place. Therefore, Peru needs to identify beneficiaries that do not contribute yet so as to determine a fair and sustainable level of water charges, and improve enforcement and revenue collection. The EcoCuencas pilot case in Peru/Ecuador is expected to end in December 2017 and Peru is considering replicating the process in basins in the South and in the Amazon, to tailor specific actions to local conditions.

116. CNRS insisted on the need for representation and a much stronger financial participation of the city of São Paulo or the SABESP in the PCJ basin committee, particularly for what concerns the design of allocation regimes and planning.

117. The Butterfly Effect stressed that water users should be actively engaged in the river basin so that they not only contribute to raising revenues but also to shaping decisions and policies. In Scotland, United Kingdom for instance, consumers were consulted on the definition of water tariffs, which led to a consensus on a reasonable, affordable and agreeable price.

118. Mexico shared some interest in the process of introducing indicators for the adaptation to climate change at basin scale, which will be one of the outputs of the EcoCuencas project.

119. The OECD mentioned that one of the distinctive features of the PCJ basin was the rather singular involvement of the mayor of Piracicaba in water resources management that has not been seen in other basins in Brazil where typically municipalities are not very engaged in water resources management despite their important prerogatives on drinking water and sanitation, environmental licensing, land-use and solid waste management. The 2015 OECD report on water resources governance in Brazil already called for a greater engagement of municipalities in water management, and part of this engagement should relate to the discussion on water charge. The National Water Resources Council could potentially play a role in setting thresholds and establishing objective criteria for water charges to be then set and adapted at different scales and in different contexts.

120. The PCJ basin agency representative shared some final remarks on water charges, pointing out that it is now time to factor in economic criteria to the water charging scheme, and that river basin plans should be explicit on how the revenues collected will be disbursed to demonstrate that charging for water is

a good investment to improve water quality and better manage water quantity. Mayors are actively engaged in improving water quality and water management, within the PCJ basin committee, which remains the relevant platform to engage all stakeholders, including water users. It was pointed out that there is often a lack of policy coherence between decisions taken at basin level and those taken by the National Water Resources Council, and that further efforts are needed to improve coordination.

121. The National Water Agency of Brazil (ANA) explained that water charges are jointly established by State Agencies and ANA through a consultative process that also includes basin committees and civil society through public hearings. A rule was adopted that divides the catchment according to different levels of scarcity and which should be factored in the water charges from now on.

122. OIEau share more information on the Peruvian case, explaining that, in recent years, Peru has realised the potential of implementing water charges in sectors such as mining, industries and the agro-industry. The current situation whereby all revenues collected by water charges are spent in administrative costs for ANA and its deconcentrated bodies is no longer sustainable and, moving forward, Peru will have to show water users that revenues are also spent in basin management and infrastructure. In the PCJ basin, efforts are dedicated to no-regret measures, beyond water charges, such as reducing leakages and better treating water as effective climate change adaptation option. Indicators are needed to measure the efficiency of these measures.

123. The Chair concluded with some reflections on the Netherlands that implement the “interest pay say” principle by which the self-interest of stakeholders is the starting point for the willingness to pay and solidarity. There is no taxation without representation in an effort to combine top-down and bottom-up approaches to decision making on water.

Remarks by Ms. Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director of OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism

124. The Director expressed her pleasure to be introduced to such a unique group within the OECD architecture, which was made possible in part thanks to the leadership of the OECD Secretary General who has always been an advocate for up-scaling OECD work on water as a critical driver for sustainable and inclusive growth. The WGI has largely contributed to producing and disseminating evidence that “most water crises are primarily governance crises”, relying on its innovative nature within the OECD as a bottom-up and multi-stakeholder platform because its members are deeply convinced that *governance* is not only about *governments*. She also thanked the Chair and the Steering Committee for their leadership and the excellent track record of the WGI in terms of sharing knowledge, experience, lessons from water-related projects and reforms; leading important streams of global agendas such as the COP, SDGs, and the World Water Forum; producing and peer-reviewing analytical work; and setting cutting edge standards through the *OECD Principles on Water Governance*, which are now part of an OECD Council Recommendation on Water and thus upgraded to the status of “Legal Instrument”. Moving forward, the development of water governance indicators will be critical to support the implementation of the Principles.

125. The Director then invited delegates to consider further work on and with sub-national governments when addressing water challenges. Cities will play a critical role, as shown by the 2016 OECD report “[Water Governance in Cities](#)” where 80% of the 48 cities surveyed emphasised climate change as a critical factor (re)shaping urban water governance in OECD countries. Therefore, building on the “Water Action Day” successfully introduced at COP21 and COP22, water should also be a critical component of the climate agenda led by cities. The ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement will not be met without shared responsibilities and complementarities across levels of government. Water is key to climate change adaptation, and is a service primarily managed locally, and as such, cities are key players in water

management. Ongoing territorial reforms also have implications in terms of the scale at which some water functions are best managed. In the case of France, for instance, metropolitan cities are inheriting key responsibilities for flood management. She called on the WGI to document the role cities can play in this area in the future, as well as to explore how to seize synergies with other OECD work on cities such as the OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth initiative that brings together 50 mayors from around the world (including Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Seoul) to bridge the inclusive growth and climate change agendas. She concluded by thanking the Champions countries who have largely contributed to the success of the WGI through their financial support, namely the Netherlands, Spain, Korea and Germany, as well as Mexico and Brazil through the national policy dialogues on water governance.

Working Groups' break-out discussion

126. Delegates gathered in parallel breakout groups (1h30 each) facilitated by their respective coordinators to follow-up on the outcomes of plenary discussions addressing in particular i) how to fine-tune the indicator framework; and ii) how to cluster water governance stories in view of the peer-review/peer-learning discussions.

Report back to plenary – insights from the working group on best practices

127. The session was moderated by SIWI, Suez, WIN and OECD. The coordinators recalled the progress achieved since the break-out discussion at the 8th WGI meeting (12-13 January, Rabat) and recent discussions at the 3rd Working Group webinar (15 June 2017). Four important shifts were underlined: first, the underlying objective of the Working Group was clarified, i.e. to act as a platform for peer-to-peer dialogues around practical experiences related to water governance, rather than as an observatory of good water governance practices. Second, the narrative around collecting best practices was shifted to collecting water governance *stories*, to better reflect the evolving rather than static nature of practical experiences on water governance, and the value added of lessons learned from failure, not only successes. Third, it was agreed that these stories will go through a selection process to ensure high-quality and relevant outputs for the Working Group, rather than follow a self-sourcing approach. Fourth, the activities of the Working Group should focus on discussing the content of the stories collected, rather than the process of developing an online database, which will be considered at a later stage.

128. Delegates agreed that the peer-review should be considered a means to an end, with the stories serving as a starting point to trigger policy dialogues on water governance among the Working Group members and story providers to share experience and learn from each other. These discussions should facilitate a reflection on how stories evolved over time and help address different types of governance challenges. Peer-review discussions are also expected to shed light on key cross-cutting messages in the form of lessons learned on reform processes, emerging challenges, new stakeholders, etc., and will be featured in the *OECD Water Governance at a Glance* publication.

129. Delegates concurred that peer-review discussions should be conducted by zooming on key water governance issues around which stories will be clustered, and engaged in a lively discussion, in small groups, on what these clusters could be:

- Delegates found that neither the 12 Principles nor the 3 pillars (i.e. effectiveness, efficiency, trust and transparency) could be used to cluster stories, as often, one story covers more than one Principle and pillar. However, the stories could be “tagged” by Principle for easy referencing, particularly when they will be made available online.
- Delegates brainstormed around possible overarching topics, including: the maturity of the story; administration/institutional changes and reforms; scales (from transboundary to local);

governance tools; types of governance impacts; financing (e.g. economic instruments, payments for ecosystem services); and capacity development. It was acknowledged that some stories may focus on one topic, and others may cover several topics.

130. Based on these suggestions, the coordinators agreed to prepare a note that would clarify the clusters, and suggest ways to link the peer-review of stories with the water governance indicators, including building on the the governance aspects covered in the indicator framework: policy framework, institutions, and instruments. The note will also suggest guidance on how to organise peer-review discussions (who, how, what, etc.).

131. Delegates volunteered to take part in the peer-review process, based on their areas of interest and expertise. Some offered to host/lead a peer-review discussion, including Israel, Flanders Water Knowledge Centre, Suez, ANA-Brazil, and pS-Eau. Others would like to take part in peer-review discussions such as GWP (particularly on transboundary management, extreme events and urban water governance), pS-Eau (on access to water and sanitation, urban water-related services); CNRS (on financing issues); University of Dundee and Austria.

Report back to plenary – insights from the Working Group on indicators

132. The session was moderated by OECD, ASTEE, INBO and Transparency International and delegates shared their views on 3 critical issues for fine-tuning the indicator framework: i) the guidance that can help countries/basins/cities fill-in the indicator framework, including on freedom of interpretation; ii) the stakeholders to be involved; and iii) and the need, or not, to find a consensus among stakeholders on the traffic light system.

133. Delegates pointed out that more guidance should be provided to help stakeholders carry out the self-assessment, such as the GLASS experience showed. For instance, depending on the final score, the indicator framework could suggest actions to be taken to improve the governance system given that the objective per se is not systematically to have a consensus. This would provide a link to the work of the Working Group on Best Practice whereby water governance stories could provide some inspirations on how to address challenges identified via the indicator framework. It was suggested that institutions leading the self-assessment processes could be trained ex ante to be fully prepared to moderate the multi-stakeholder workshops, including manage cases where stakeholders have diverging opinions; how to avoid consultation capture and give voice to all actors; and how to use the checklist as a reading template to discuss the traffic light scoring options.

134. Delegates suggested ways forward to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the self-assessment process. It was proposed to include a stakeholder mapping in the methodological note, building on the OECD report “[Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance](#)” or IWA’s [AquaRating](#), which could help the organisers check that all stakeholders at a given scale are included as early as possible in the process for the dialogue to be sufficiently inclusive and legitimate. It was also underlined that the leaders of a self-assessment process should report on the stakeholders involved, and those who did not participate for the sake of transparency. In particular, delegates pointed to stakeholders at city level that were little involved in the pilot-testing phase.

135. Delegates agreed that there is no need to reach a consensus among stakeholders on all aspects of the traffic light system, because the divergence of opinions on how a given system is performing in a democratic environment is in itself an indicator of good governance. Rather, it was underlined that whenever there are differences of opinions between stakeholders, there should be clear procedures and rules to address them so that the roots of these divergences are discussed, and no stakeholder is left behind.

Delegates proposed that divergences among stakeholders be mentioned in the reporting to also reflect the different options beyond a given colour of the traffic light.

136. Delegates insisted on the importance of considering the three components of the indicator framework holistically, and of basing self-assessment on reliable data so that results are accurate and can be revisited on a regular basis.

137. Delegates invited coordinators to consider synergies with other international framework, and particularly the SDGs, pointing out that only one water governance indicator on stakeholder engagement is echoing the SDG framework. It was also advised to reflect the different themes of SDG 6 [water and sanitation] under the third block of the indicator framework (key data for visualisation) to strengthen the legitimacy of the self-assessment exercise.

138. The coordinators concluded by indicating next steps, including the 2nd wave of multi-stakeholder workshops that pilot-testers will organise in September-October on the revised framework to collect the data. An important part of this exercise will be to document the decisions taken on each indicator (i.e. difficulties, lack of consensus, etc.), just as public policy assessment are documented. It will also allow the coordinators and the Secretariat to potentially check and discuss some results in an iterative way. It was proposed to leave the users' guide manual and training material for the next WGI phase (2018-2021), which could be combined with capacity-building workshops for dialogue leaders that will intend to use the final indicator framework. Lastly, while a consensus does not need to be reached for all indicators, stakeholders involved in the self-assessment must agree on the general status of the governance system so that its performance can be compared over time.

Closing remarks

139. Austria extended an official invitation to the delegates to attend the 10th WGI meeting next 20-21 November 2017 in Vienna. The event will be held in the Festival Hall of the Vienna City Hall.

140. The Chair closed the meeting by thanking WGI delegates for yet another excellent meeting, with informative discussions, very constructive feedback and guidance to move forward the activities on indicators and best practices. He also informed delegates that the Steering Committee held two meetings in the margin of the 9th WGI meeting to brainstorm and set forth promising activities for the future, as well as ensure that framework conditions are in place (including human and financial resources) for the WGI to continue delivering high-quality outputs and meeting internal and external expectations. The 10th WGI meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss this strategy for the future in plenary.

ACRONYMS

ANA	National Water Agency (Brazil)
ASTEE	Association Scientifique et Technique pour l'eau et l'environnement
CONAGUA	National Water Commission (Mexico)
EU	European Union
FP2E	Fédération Professionnelle des Entreprises de l'Eau
GWP	Global Water Partnership
IMDEA	Madrid Institute of Advanced Studies
INBO	International Network of Basin Organisations
IWA	International Water Association
IWRA	International Water Resources Association
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management

NARBO	Network of Asian River Basin Organizations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIEau	Office International de l'eau
pS-Eau	Programme Solidarité Eau
RDPC	Regional Development Policy Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water-Sanitation-Hygiene
WGI	Water Governance Initiative
WIN	Water Integrity Network
WWC	World Water Council

CALENDAR OF 2017/18 EVENTS

27 August – 1 September 2017 Stockholm, Sweden	27th World Water Week	SIWI
12-14 September 2017 Tel Aviv, Israel	WATEC – Israel	Mekorot - Israel
18 September 2017 Barcelona, Spain	5th Water Economics Forum	IMDEA
20-23 September 2017 Dublin, Ireland	15th "EUROPE-INBO 2017" International Conference	INBO
27-28 September 2017 Milan, Italy	“ Rules of water, rules for life ” event	City of Milan
23-25 October 2017 Rome, Italy	The Great Rivers of The World International Summit	INBO, UNECE
30 October-3 November 2017 Amsterdam, Netherlands	Amsterdam International Water Week	Netherlands Water Partnership; IWA; WC International Water Conferences
9-10 November 2017 Prague, Czech Republic	FLOODLAND Workshop	Utrecht University
6-17 November 2017 Bonn, Germany	COP23	UNFCCC
13-16 November 2017 Buenos Aires, Argentina	Water & Development Congress & Exhibition	IWA
14 November 2017 Buenos Aires, Argentina	4th International Water Regulators Forum	IWA
20-21 November 2017 Vienna, Austria	10th WGI Meeting	OECD
10-13 December 2017 Cape Town, South Africa	8th International Young Water Professionals Conference	IWA
18-23 March 2018 Brasilia, Brazil	8th World Water Forum	WWC, ANA-Brazil