

Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

4th Extraordinary session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council
(Paris, 29 September – 1st October 2021)

UNESCO'S WATER FAMILY

Summary

This document provides a brief account of IHP's cooperation with the UNESCO Water Family, pursuing the implementation of IHP-VIII and of the strategic goals of UNESCO through its Category 2 Centres (C2Cs) and water-related Chairs, as well as the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).

The number of water-related Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO did not expand (36) while the number of water-related Chairs increased to 66, during the reporting period. Several actions were taken within the Category 2 Centres network: the cessation of activities of HidroEx (Brazil), ICCE (Portugal) and ACGCWR (South Africa), the renewal of HTC-KL (Malaysia), RC-IRBM (Nigeria), RCWH (Sudan), ICHARM (Japan), CEHICA (Dominican Republic) and IRTCUD (Serbia). APCE (Indonesia) is pending signature of its renewal Agreement. Two new Centres were approved during UNESCO's 40th General Conference in November 2019: CERTS (Uruguay), and ICIReWaRD (France), both signed, as well as IRTCES (China) and IMWBRA (Iran). Consultations on the continuation of CIH (Brazil and Paraguay) are ongoing. Negotiations were resumed for the renewal of CAZALAC (Chile. Extension until 31 December 2020 of the Agreements for CWLPS (UK), ICWRGC (Germany) and ICWC (Sweden), were approved by the 209th Executive Board Session held in July 2020 and the renewal approved by the 210th Executive Board session and all signed in December 2020. ERCE's renewal (Poland) was approved by the 210th Executive Board session and its Agreement was signed on 7 July 2021. The Division of Water Sciences continued to chair UNESCO's Intersectoral Working Group on Category 2 Centres, whose work led to the endorsement of the new Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres (40 C/79) by the 40th General Conference in November 2019.

The document provides a progress report on the following points:

- 6.1. Status and operation of the UNESCO Water Family
- 6.2. Specific actions for the management of the Category 2 Centres' network
- 6.3 UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme

Status and operation of the UNESCO Water Family (agenda item 6.1)

1. UNESCO works to build both the scientific knowledge base and capacity to help countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. This is done through its UNESCO Water Family, comprising the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO and water-related Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, and the IHP National Committees or focal points. UNESCO's Water Family operates as a global network that works together to implement the organization's and IHP's strategic goals.

2. IHP currently counts on a network of 36 established water-related Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2 Institutes and Centres) contributing to the implementation of IHP-VIII at the international regional and national level. Since the last 23rd IHP Council session in 2018, several actions were taken in the network: the 206th Executive Board Session in April 2019 was informed of the cessation of activities of HidroEx (Brazil) and the 209th Executive Board Session (July 2020) was informed of the delisting of ICCE (Portugal) and ACGCWR (South Africa). Several Centres had their Agreement renewed: HTC-KL (Malaysia), signed on 6 March 2019, RC-IRBM (Nigeria), signed on 12 March 2019, RCWH (Sudan) signed on 21 January 2020, ICHARM (Japan) signed on 13 February 2020, IRTCES (China), signed on 24 June 2020, IMWBRA (Iran) on 10 July 2020, CEHICA (Dominican Republic), in August 2020 (signed by UNESCO's DG and awaiting signature form the counterpart), IRTCUD (Serbia) on 28 September 2020, CWLPS (UK), ICWRCG (Germany) and ICWC (Sweden) in December 2020. ERCE (Poland) had its Agreement signed on 7 July 2021. APCE (Indonesia) was renewed by the 207th Session of the Executive Board in April 2019 and is pending signature of its renewal Agreement. Two new Centres were approved by the 40th UNESCO General Conference in November 2019: CERTS (Uruguay) signed on 2 December 2019, and ICIReWaRD (France), signed in October 2020. Consultations on the continuation of CIH (Brazil and Paraguay) are ongoing and should be communicated by the two Governments to UNESCO in the coming months. Negotiations were resumed for the draft renewal Agreement of CAZALAC (Chile).

3. The Secretariat continued to update its detailed mapping table, presented in document [IHP/IC-XXIV/Ref.3](#) and disclosing the governance and operational status of all Category 2 Centres. The mapping is now revealing a clear improvement in the governance status of water-related C2Cs, with a percentage of 78% centres currently aligned, as of the date of writing of this document:

Out of the 36 Centres:

28 are now fully in compliance with UNESCO rules and regulations (75%).

As for the rest:

- 5 are pending signature of their agreement;
- 1 is expired, but under renewal;
- 1 is expired;
- 1 is pending decision of its host governments.

Amongst these Centres, and at the time when this reporting was made, one centre is expected to sign the Agreement in the upcoming months (APCE, Indonesia).

4. The UNESCO Water Family currently includes 66 water-related UNESCO Chairs, and UNITWIN networks, 19 of which were established between 2018-2020 and six (6) are in the process of being established.

5. At the occasion of the UNESCO International Water Conference (13 and 14 May 2019), the Division of Water Sciences also organized a C2Cs and Chair meeting on 14th of May 2019, gathering 24 attendants, including 12 chairs, 11 centres and WWAP, from 21 Countries. The meeting was the occasion to discuss the status of the UNESCO Water Family, its role, cooperation with the Secretariat and other members of the water family. The meeting highlighted the key successes of the water family and created synergies.

Specific actions for the management of Category 2 Centres (agenda item 8.2)

6. SC/HYD continued to chair the Intersectoral Working Group on C2Cs created in June 2017, and working on the improvement of the management framework for Category 2 Institutes and Centres. The DDG sent letters in May 2019 to officials of Member States concerned, requesting actions in view of the alignment of their water-related C2Cs before 9 September 2019. This request has reactivated some of the processes and status alignment of some water Centres referred to in the above paragraphs. A whole revision of the database for all UNESCO sectors' Category 2 Centres, and the improvement of reporting processes, were also made using the experience of the water-related C2Cs network.

7. In document 206 EX/19 in April 2019, pursuant 205 EX/Decision 12, the Director-General submitted to the Executive Board a proposal for revision of the "Revised Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (2013)". Document 206 EX/19 for the revision of the 2013 Strategy and Document [206 EX/19 INF](#) presented the main proposed changes, with cross-references to the recommendations and findings of the IOS 2017 Audit ([IOS/AUD/2017/04.Rev](#)), as well as other benchmarks in the Organization. It further provided some comparative information on practices under the current 2013 Strategy.

8. The Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (Document 40 C/79), as well as its associated model agreements and annexes, were finally adopted by the 207th Session of the Executive Board in October 2019 (207 EX/decision 14), and endorsed at the 40th Session of the General Conference in November 2019.

9. The 2019 strategy (40 C/79) contains some specific requirements:

- **Eligibility of proposals:** Only existing institutions with their own legal personality and a proven track record of excellence of at least two years in UNESCO's fields of competence may be proposed for C2C status. The activities of category 2 institutes and centres must be international or regional in scope, and shall contribute to the global development agendas.
- **Timeframe for submission:** Proposals for the establishment of new C2Cs may only be submitted to UNESCO by 31 March of the first year of the UNESCO C/5 biennium (Which means, for the upcoming biennia: 31 March 2022, 2024 etc.). Feasibility studies for the establishment of new C2Cs must be completed by 15 March of the second year of the C/5 biennium (2023, 2025 etc).
- **Agreement and entry into force:** A tripartite agreement should be concluded between UNESCO, the Member State(s) concerned and the institution. Alternatively, depending on the legal requirements of Member States, two bipartite agreements can be concluded. The standard duration of agreements for C2Cs is eight years.
- **Yearly Financial obligations:** New Category 2 Centres (or the Member State(s) concerned) shall contribute US\$ 1,000 annually to the relevant programme sector to help cover costs incurred by UNESCO in administering and monitoring the C2Cs programme. C2Cs located in least developed countries (LDCs) are exempt from making this contribution.

- **Yearly reporting obligations:** All C2Cs must submit by 31 December of each year an annual report on their activities, using the standard reporting format.
- **Creation of the Intersectoral Review Committee:** the new Strategy foresees the establishment of an Intersectoral Review Committee (IRC) which has the tasks of receiving, examining screening and providing recommendations to senior management on Member States' proposals for the designation and renewal of Category 2 Institutes and Centres. The IRC will be composed of one UNESCO Staff representing each Programme Sector (Education [ED], Natural Sciences [SC], Social and Human Sciences [SHS], Culture [CLT], Communication and Information [CI]) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and one representative from each of: the Priority Africa Division; the Gender Equality Division; the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP); the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA); the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), and CAB. These staff shall act as focal points and representatives for their Sectors and Bureaux and are designated by their respective sector's ADG and DIR, for the duration of the C/5 biennium.
- **Category 2 Institutes and Centres Framework:** The framework for collaboration with Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO was created at UNESCO governing body level. The context of revision of the Strategy for Category 2 Centres has to be reminded: the number of Category 2 Centres has grown significantly over the past decade. Despite their potential, this rapid expansion has sometimes catalysed serious resource and reputational implications for the organization. These implications have been acknowledged in multiple reports, including those by UNESCO Internal Oversight Services (IOS), the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of UNESCO and the UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP). The IOS report Review of the Management Framework for UNESCO Category 2 Institutes/Centres outlined several recommendations for change, covering strategy, management and quality control. It was decided to reform the Category 2 system to improve the network's ability to contribute to UNESCO's priorities.
- **Designation process of C2Cs under the auspices of UNESCO:** This effort implies that all UNESCO's sectors and services are responsible, within the Intersectoral Review Committee, to ensure that proposed category 2 institute and centres will contribute to the implementation of UNESCO's priorities, programmes, and global development agendas during a defined period, through international and regional cooperation, research, knowledge production, policy advice, and capacity enhancement.
- **Programmatic/Advisory role of IHP:** The strategy does not foresee any decisional role for Intergovernmental bodies such as IHP but provides a role for the UNESCO Secretariat and decision-making authority for the Executive Board and/or the General Conference. Proposals for the establishment and renewal of centres will thus be carefully selected by the Intersectoral Review Committee, the UNESCO Secretariat, the Executive Board and the General Conference. In this regard, the role of the Intersectoral Review Committee will be instrumental.

World Water Assessment Programme (agenda item 6.3)

10. The United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) is one of the most visible publications of UNESCO and an authoritative source of information on freshwater. Production of the Report is coordinated by the UNESCO World Water Assessment

Programme. The Government of Italy is the major donor which finances the Programme since 2007.

WWDR2019 “Leaving No One Behind”:

11. The 2019 Report focusing on the theme ‘Leaving No One Behind’ was released on 19 March 2019 at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The WWDR2019 marked the 10th edition in the series since 2003. The launch event featured Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya, UNESCO Special Envoy for Science for Peace, who delivered a speech on behalf of UNESCO’s Director-General. Mr Leo Heller, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation, participated in the event as a panelist.

12. On 22 March 2019, WWAP organized an information session for the Permanent Delegations and Observers to UNESCO headquarters. The introduction by Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations (ADG/PAX), was followed by the speeches of the Permanent Representatives of Italy, Sudan and Bangladesh highlighting the importance of access to safe water and sanitation for national development plans, as well as for the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Until June 2019, over 40 events, including UN HQ in NY, European Parliament in Brussels and UNU Tokyo campus, focusing on the WWDR 2019 took place in all regions. These complementary events (list of which can be found at <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/wwap/wwdr/2019>) are organized by UNESCO and UN field offices, and country partners in collaboration with WWAP. The number of WWDR 2019 downloads reached over 81,000 during the period from March 2019 until May 2020.

13. WWAP is promoting the multilingual approach of UNESCO through the WWDR. The Report was launched in parallel in English, French and Spanish. The executive summary of WWDR 2019 was prepared in 11 languages (6 UN languages as well as Hindi, German, Italian, Korean and Portuguese). The China Water and Power Publishing & Media Group finished the Chinese edition of the WWDR 2018 (Nature based solutions for water) in March 2020 and the WWDR 2019 in June 2021. WWAP, with the financial support of Prince bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also produced Arabic translation of the WWDR 2017 and WWDR 2018, released in October 2018 during Cairo International Water Week and in March 2019, during the fifth Arab Water Week in Jordan, respectively. Thanks to the partnership between Univerde Foundation and UNESCO, and the collaboration with the Italian Institute for Environmental Policy Studies and Utilitalia the World Water Development Report (WWDR) 2019 is also available in Italian. Tele Ambiente aired a two-hour TV programme featuring the Report and making it the centrepiece of the discussion.

WWDR2020 “Water and Climate Change”:

14. Due to COVID19, the English and French editions of WWDR 2020 ‘Water and Climate Change’ were launched online on 22 March 2020 with video messages from the UNESCO Director-General and the UN-Water Chairperson. Close to 40 activities planned by various UNESCO Field offices and national partners were called off because of the pandemic.

15. UNESCO offices in Almaty, Cairo, Jakarta, Montevideo, Nairobi and Venice significantly contributed to the outreach of the Report by organizing national and regional webinars to which WWAP contributed through presentation of the key findings of the Report and addressing the questions. Overall, 10 webinars bringing over 800 participants were organized.

16. During the period of March to May, the 2020 Report was viewed and downloaded close to 30,000 times. This is significantly higher than WWDR 2019 and WWDR 2018 statistics in the same time period in 2019 and 2018, respectively.

17. The promotional video of WWDR 2020 has been viewed over 26,000 times until June 2021 (<https://youtu.be/WOjJtD6H8EI>). The second video (<https://youtu.be/S21Ho5nF4PA>) featuring some of the findings of the Report is available with subtitles in 8 different languages and viewed over 11,000 times.

18. The Report also got good visibility in the news media. The analysis made by DPI showed that reputable news agencies, such as The Guardian, Rai News 24, Le Monde and Reuters published pieces referring to WWDR 2020.

19. WWDR 2020 is translated into Spanish thanks to ANEAS (National Association of Water and Sanitation Companies) of Mexico and its members. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) supported printing and regional distribution of the Report. The webinar dedicated to the launch of WWDR 2020 Spanish took place on World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (17 June 2020).

20. WWDR 2020 Arabic edition is prepared with the financial support of Prince bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and launched online on 15 March 2021.

21. The Italian edition of the Report was launched by Univerde Foundation in June 2021 in an event supported by WWAP. The programme was broadcasted live on Facebook (with 36,000 view) and on TV (TeleAmbiente).

22. The Executive Summary of the WWDR 2020 is available in 11 languages in hard copy and pdf format, in addition to audio-file in Arabic, English, French, Italian and Spanish.

WWDR2021 “Valuing Water”

23. 2021 edition of the Report (both English original and the French and Italian translations) was launched on the occasion of World Water Day, on 22 March 2021 in an online event hosted by FAO on behalf of UN-Water. WWAP supported FAO in developing the high-level segment of the programme. As much as 1300 participants from all regions connected to the event.

24. The Italian edition of the Report was launched on the same day in an event organized by the co-publisher Univerde Foundation. The event was viewed on Facebook by over 26,000 people.

25. Out of 13 chapters in the Report, WWAP led five chapters and co-led three. IHP was responsible for the chapter on Socio-cultural values of water.

26. As of August 2021, more than 40 events (hybrid and online) have been organized around the world to present the main findings of WWDR 2021.

27. The media analysis showed that WWDR 2021 received coverage in top-tier media such as The Guardian, Le Monde, Thompson-Reuters, Les Echos and Tribune de Geneve. All in all, over 400 and as much as 1500 articles got published on 2021 Report.

28. The National Association of Water and Sanitation Companies of Mexico (ANEAS) translated and presented the WWDR 2021 in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the National Commission of Water Resources of Mexico (CONAGUA).

29. Arabic translation of WWDR 2021 is complete and its layout will be finalized by the end of September. The Report is to be launched at a high-level event in the Cairo Water Week in October 2021.

30. The Executive Summary of the WWDR 2021 is available in 11 languages. The audio recordings of the Summary are accessible in Arabic, English, French, Italian and Spanish in WWAP website.

WWDR2022 “Groundwater”

31. Content preparation of 2022 edition of WWDR started in February 2021 and is currently ongoing. WWAP and IHP are leading/co-leading/contributing to several chapters. The Report will be launched on World Water Day during the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

WWDR2023 ‘Accelerating Change through Partnerships and Cooperation’

32. UN Water SPM have accepted WWAP’s proposal “Accelerating Change through Partnerships and Cooperation” as the theme of the World Water Day 2023. Launch of WWDR 2023 will coincide with the Mid-term review of the Water Action Decade and the UN Water Conference 2023.

WWDR related capacity building activities

33. WWAP Secretariat prepared training manuals in English and Arabic for WWDR 2017, WWDR 2018 and WWDR 2020. The first two were utilized for national training in Cairo (co-organized on 10-11 October 2018 with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States) and in Beirut (organized on 7-8 October 2019, in collaboration with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States). The training in Tunis (16-17 March 2020) focusing on WWDR 2018 was cancelled due to COVID19 pandemic. WWAP and UNESCO Cairo Office organized an online regional training in Arabic on WWDR 2020 on 15, 16, 18 and 24 March 2021 ‘Water and Climate Change’ during which the Arabic edition of the Report was launched. 70 trainees from 17 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen) followed online courses. The trainings in Arab region are funded by Prince bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Water and Gender Toolkit

34. Developing gender responsive water policies is crucial in view of the global commitments to gender equality enshrined in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. In line with the UNESCO gender strategy, in 2015 WWAP developed the first ever methodology, and 40 gender-sensitive indicators to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated water data for national, regional and global scale assessments, and for monitoring the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In May 2019, WWAP launched the 2nd edition of the Toolkit on Sex-Disaggregated Water Data at the UNESCO International Water Conference. The 2019 WWAP Toolkit includes 105 gender-responsive indicators that not only address the SDG 5 (gender) and SDG 6 (water and sanitation), but also the interlinkages with other SDGs. This comprehensive edition includes the updated methodology as well as guidelines and questionnaires for data collection through field surveys and desk review. Its scope is to tackle the information gap on water and gender, which currently forms a major obstacle to the production of scientific evidence of gender inequality, and it is designed to help decision makers adopt data-driven water policies that can transform inequalities between men and women in the water domain. WWAP has also developed a complementary capacity development programme on gender equality and women empowerment in water management and governance. It particularly focuses on the collection and use of sex-disaggregated water data for policy analysis, as well as concrete actions for gender integration

into water policy and implementation. The training consists of seven interactive macro-modules and equips professionals with knowledge on issues related to gender and water integration and analysis. It is currently available in English and Spanish, with Arabic and French forthcoming.

Water and Gender Toolkit Capacity Development activities

35. WWAP applied the Toolkit in field work in Latin America, Africa and Central Asia, within the gender component of the Groundwater Resources Governance in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA) project implemented by the UNESCO Division of Water Sciences (IHP). Moreover, together with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), it leads the gender activities in the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resources Network (IW:LEARN) Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to disseminate its experience with regards to sex-disaggregated indicators and data in water resources management and governance in the GEF International Waters (IW) portfolio. The WWAP water and gender-responsive indicators have been also implemented autonomously by countries in Latin America with the mentorship of UNESCO WWAP. Countries in West Africa and Pacific Asia have submitted requests to also implement the WWAP Toolkit in practice.

36. Over the period 2020-2021 WWAP delivered 6 webinars (386 people: 146 male, 239 female and 1 anonymous); 10 workshops/trainings (417 people: 160 male and 257 female) reaching a total number of 56 countries, as follows: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Fiji, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, LAO PDR, Liberia, Malaysia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, (the) Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South-Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, (the) United Kingdom, (the) United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe.

37. In 2020, UNESCO WWAP started a regional capacity development programme on Water, Climate and Gender: better data for better adaptive strategies. This is a bi-annual training programme (2020-2022), that is currently being implemented in Central and South America, Pacific Small Island Development States (SIDS) and West Africa. The next bi-annual cycle will include the Arab States, Caribbean SIDS and Central Asia. The Program targets mid- and senior level officials from water and environment governmental offices.

38. The efforts undertaken by WWAP have contributed to strengthening the capacity of a wide array of stakeholders (representatives from government institutions, regional organizations, academia and research institutes, civil society, NGOs, UN, etc.) on the aforementioned topics.

Water and gender advocacy action

39. WWAP is leading a Multi-stakeholder Coalition for the widescale Call for Action (CfA) initiative: "Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: bridging the data gap and developing concrete actions". The initiative was presented to UNESCO Permanent Delegations and Observers in July 2021 through an online information session. The global launch of the CfA Initiative followed in August 2021 at the Stockholm World Water Week with messages of support from high-level representatives of 11 member states. The Call for Action initiative aims at the identification and implementation of good practices and concrete actions to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the water domain. Furthermore, the Call pursues a joint statement of numerous stakeholders, among others UN agencies, NGOs, regional organizations, academia, civil society, and supportive Member States. The initiative is set to culminate into 2030, coinciding with the completion date of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Two important milestones will be: i) The UN

Conference on the Mid-term review of the Water Action Decade in 2023, and ii) The end of the International Water Decade 2018-2028.

SDG6 Synthesis Report:

40. WWAP coordinated the UN-Water Task Force that produced the SDG 6 Synthesis Report, launched in 2018. A public dialogue on the Report was finalized in early 2019. In order to continue promoting the critical role of water for achieving the 2030 Agenda, WWAP, in collaboration with several partners including IHP regional hydrologists in Montevideo, Nairobi and Cairo Offices and the UN-Water Expert Group on the 2030 Agenda, produced policy documents for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab Region on the role of water in achieving the SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, which went through review at the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2019.