

Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

24th session of the Intergovernmental Council
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TERMS OF REFERENCE/GUIDELINES for National Committees of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

Summary

This document contains the Draft Terms of Reference/Guidelines for National Committees of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme as of March 2002, as modified and adopted by the 24th session of the Intergovernmental Council.

As adopted by the 24th session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE/GUIDELINES
for National Committees
of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme**

In 1974, the General Conference of UNESCO approved the creation of the International Hydrological Programme, since 2019 named the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (hereafter “IHP” or “the Programme”) and the statutes of its Intergovernmental Council. It then recommended that Member States establish “*permanent national committees relevant to the Programme [...] that should contribute to the general co-ordination of hydrological activities at the national level relating to international programmes in hydrology*” (Resolution 2.232, Records of the 18th General Conference 1974¹).

Today, the IHP National Committees play a crucial role in the functioning and implementation of the Programme, by providing a direct link between governments and the IHP. The present draft Terms of Reference (ToR) shall constitute guidelines for UNESCO Member States to establish and/or strengthen their respective IHP National Committee. Those ToRs are based on several recommendations and decisions approved by the IHP Intergovernmental Council – such as in working documents IHP/IC-XIII/11² and IHP/IC-XIII/3, and Resolution XIII-2³.

1. Purpose and functions of the IHP National Committees

Set up by their countries’ respective governments, the IHP National Committees operate on a permanent basis for the purpose of associating their governmental and non-governmental bodies on hydrological sciences and water resources management with the work of the IHP. Indeed, their function is to involve in the IHP’s activities the various ministerial department, agencies, institutions, organizations, and individuals working for the advancement of water resources management and hydrological sciences, within UNESCO’s mandate and competence in those areas.

The IHP National Committees constitute the backbone of the UNESCO Water Family, as a network of stakeholders, partners and experts. Acting as national antennas of the IHP, they constitute entities of consultation, liaison and information, as well as mobilization, coordination and implementation of activities and partnerships with national entities, including the civil society. As such, the IHP National Committees make substantial contributions in the implementation and promotion of the IHP, and in the overall advancement of UNESCO’s water-related objectives and report on them during the IHP Council sessions.

For this purpose, IHP National Committees:

- Cooperate with their governments and with services, organizations, institutions and individuals concerned with water-related questions within the IHP’s competence;
- Encourage participation of national, governmental and non-governmental institutions and various individuals in the formulation and execution of the IHP;
- Disseminate information on the objectives and activities of the IHP and endeavour to arouse public interest in them.

In addition, and depending on the requirements and arrangements of each Member State, IHP National Committee may:

¹ Records of the General Conference, 18th session, Paris, 17 October to 23 November 1974, v. 1: Resolutions: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001140/114040e.pdf>

² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000113323>

³ See the Final Report of the 13th session of the IHP Council, p. 7 and Annex VII: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000123515/PDF/123515engo.pdf.multi>

- Participate in the planning and execution of activities entrusted to UNESCO, which are undertaken with the assistance of other international programmes;
- Participate with other IHP National Committees in joint studies on matters of interest to the IHP;
- Undertake on their own initiative, activities related to the general objectives of the IHP.

IHP National Committees collaborate with each other, with UNESCO's Regional Offices, and with Centres and Chairs under the auspices of UNESCO in fostering regional, sub-regional and bilateral co-operation in water resources management, hydrological sciences and water education. This cooperation may bear upon the preparation, implementation and evaluation of activities and may take the form of joint activities, surveys, seminars, meetings and conferences, as well as exchanges of information, material and visits.

2. Role of IHP National Committees in their relations with Member States

Each Member State defines the responsibilities of its own IHP National Committee. In general, IHP National Committees:

- Follow the developments of the IHP and ensure their country's effective participation in the management and implementation of the IHP, including the strengthening of UNESCO Water Family through the establishment of and/or support to existing water-related Centres and Chairs under the auspices of UNESCO;
- Coordinate and contribute to national activities related to the implementation of the IHP and to its evaluation thereof;
- Foster close liaison between state agencies and services, professional and other associations, universities and other centres of research and education, as well as other institutions concerned with hydrology and water resources management;
- Cooperate with the delegations of their respective governments at the IHP Intergovernmental Council and at other intergovernmental meetings convened by the IHP or UNESCO, inter alia by preparing the contributions of their governments to the work of these meetings;
- Provide a channel for disseminating information on matters of domestic interest in water resources management and hydrological sciences;
- Encourage, at the national level, interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral dialogue and cooperation between institutions concerned with education, the sciences, culture and information, with a view to helping to bring intellectual resources to contribute to the sustainable management of water resources for development.
- Collaborate with other IHP National Committees at the regional and global levels to achieve shared international water-related objectives;
- Promote partnerships with and call the attention of the appropriate agencies and institutions to the potential benefits of international co-operation in the framework of the implementation of the IHP;
- Raise funds for and implement national and international water-related initiatives and projects in the framework of the IHP;
- Encourage and support the establishment of new IHP National Committees and the strengthening of existing ones in partner countries.

3. Services rendered to the Programme by IHP National Committees

In each Member State, the IHP National Committee ensures the permanent presence of the IHP in its country and contributes to the Programme's effort to promote cooperation in the field of its activities. IHP National Committees are important sources of information for the

IHP on national needs and priorities concerning water resources management, thereby enabling the IHP Intergovernmental Council to fully consider Member States' needs when preparing its strategies. They also contribute to the Programme's standard-setting work and to the orientation and/or execution of the IHP work plans and activities, by expressing their views when surveys or inquiries are carried out and by replying to questionnaires.

IHP National Committees must be able to contribute effectively to the implementation of the Programme:

- By mobilizing on its behalf the assistance and support of the country's specialized communities;
- By assuming operational responsibility for some of IHP's activities.

As per the [Final Report](#) of the 22nd session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council⁴, IHP National Committees actively contribute to implementing the IHP Communication and Outreach Strategy and to this end:

- Prepare and transmit to the IHP Secretariat reports on national activities prior to each Council session;
- Actively participate in and take ownership of the platforms for communication and collaboration at their disposal, such as but not limited to, the [Water Information and Network System](#)⁵, the Twitter account [@unescoWATER](#)⁶, and distribution lists;
- Undertake communication actions to mass media, the general public, as well as and institutions, on IHP's objectives, strategy, and activities, including via developing and maintaining a website or a webpage, consistent with the principles outlined in the above-mentioned strategy;
- Systematically generate and transmit relevant content on activities to the IHP Secretariat for mass diffusion, using the appropriate templates and/or available platform.

4. Constitution of an IHP National Committee

It is incumbent upon each Member State to provide its IHP National Committee with the status, structure and resources necessary to enable it effectively to discharge its responsibilities to the Programme and to the Member State.

Each IHP National Committee should include representatives of ministerial departments, services and other bodies interested in matters of water resources management and of hydrological sciences, as well as representatives from the relevant specialized communities (i.e. scientists, academic institutions and universities, professionals associations, local communities, civil society).

It is recommended that the Chairperson of the National Committee of the IHP be appointed by the competent governmental authority, taking into account, to the extent possible, the required expertise for this position. For representational purposes and participation to meetings, an alternate Chairperson may be appointed.

IHP National Committees may include executive and standing committees, coordinating bodies, sub-commissions and any other subsidiary body, as appropriate.

For their effective operation, IHP National Committees require:

- Some statutes defining the responsibilities vested in the IHP National Committee, its membership, the conditions governing its operation and the resources on which it may draw;

⁴ link: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245126>

⁵ link: <http://ihp-wins.unesco.org/>

⁶ link: <https://twitter.com/unescoWATER>

- A permanent secretariat, provided with: (i) a Secretary who should be appointed for a sufficiently long period to ensure the necessary continuity of experience; (ii) sufficient means to enable it carrying out efficiently the functions specified in this document and to ensure its participation in the activities of the Programme. The IHP National Committees or its members should not bear expectation of any financial support from UNESCO.

It is important to establish close collaboration between the permanent delegation to UNESCO and its IHP National Committee in each Member State.

5. Functioning of the Committee

Members of each IHP National Committee are expected to meet on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly) and as required, aligned with the functioning of the IHP statutory bodies. It is strongly recommended that relevant documentation be always distributed among members of the IHP National Committee before meetings, in order to allow for maximum interaction and decision-making during the meeting itself.

The IHP National Committee should establish working relationships and coordinate its actions with:

- The relevant regional Vice-Chairperson (or the Chairperson) of the IHP Intergovernmental Council;
- The relevant UNESCO National Commission;
- The IHP Secretariat Regional Hydrologist and/or the representative from UNESCO Natural Sciences sector at the relevant UNESCO field office;
- The focal person for the region in the IHP Secretariat at UNESCO HQ.

Additional information

[Governing bodies of the International Hydrological Programme⁷](#)

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⁷ link: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology/about-us/governing-bodies>