

Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

24th session of the Intergovernmental Council
(Paris, 28-30 June 2021)

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Summary

This document provides a summary of the implementation of the Programme, in particular pertaining to the following sub-items of the Provisional Agenda:

- 3.1 Strategic Planning of the 9th Phase of IHP (IHP-IX, 2022-2029)
- 3.2 Guidelines for the review of IHP Programmes and Major Initiatives
- 3.3 Mid-Term evaluation of IHP-VIII and management response

STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE 9th PHASE OF IHP (IHP-IX, 2022-2029; Agenda sub-item 3.1)

1. Resolution XXIII-6 of the Intergovernmental Council of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) at its 23rd session (Paris, 11-15 June 2018) focused on the development of the ninth phase of the Programme, IHP-IX 2022-2029.

2. In the second half of 2018, Member States identified the experts that were to comprise the two main bodies responsible for developing the draft document for the consultation of the UNESCO Water Family: the Task Force (TF) and the Experts of Member States (EoMS). All experts are serving on a voluntary basis, cover complementarily the relevant scientific disciplines, represent geographical balance and, to the extent possible, gender balance. For this endeavour, both bodies, TF and EoMS, rely on the assistance of two senior consultants, as well as on the support of the IHP Secretariat.

3. The Secretariat facilitated two sessions of the IHP-IX Task Force (TF). The first one, in January 2019, when the zero-order draft document of IHP-IX was developed. The document, which reflected mainly the contents of the new IHP Phase, was presented during a special technical session of the Bureau Members (January 2019) and received their feedback. Subsequently, it was shared with the Experts of Member States. Comments of the EoMS were incorporated to the extent possible and a full-fledged consultation with UNESCO's Water Family Members followed.

4. The Members of the TF met for a second time at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, in April 2019, to review the consolidated comments received and to develop the 1st-order draft of IHP-IX. This draft was then circulated to the Experts of Member States in July 2019 and, in October 2019, was shared for a full consultation with all Members of the UNESCO Water Family. The consultation process lasted till the end of December 2019.

5. The 1st Extraordinary session of the IHP Council (28 November 2019) agreed to the timeline/workflow of the finalization of IHP-IX, including a third face-to-face meeting of the Task Force; a technical session of the members of the IHP Bureau to review the document and consider its submission to the 24th session of the IHP Council (then planned for spring 2020) for further review, and, possibly, agreement in principle; a subsequent, larger consultation with the UNESCO Water Family and the intergovernmental and non-governmental partner organizations of IHP. After consolidation of the final inputs received through the larger consultation, finally, the IHP Council shall be consulted electronically regarding the IHP-IX strategy's submission to the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference in autumn 2021, for approval.

6. Due to the effects of the COVID-19, the scheduled third face-to-face meeting of the Task Force took place via teleconference from 2 to 4 March 2020, involving EoMS. It aimed at further improving the 1st-order draft of IHP-IX and incorporating the contributions received during the 2nd in-depth consultation with the UNESCO Water Family that ended on 31 December 2019, with the help of the IHP Secretariat and two senior consultants.

7. The meeting of the Task Force resulted in the improved 1st-order draft Strategy of IHP-IX to reach Water Security through Achieving Sustainable Water Management, by the means of the following five principal paths of action, which are systematically interacting and reinforcing each other:

- Water Education in the fourth industrial revolution
- Sciences: Research and Innovation
- Bridging the data and knowledge gaps
- Inclusive water management under conditions of Global Change

- Water Governance based on science for mitigation, adaptation and resilience
The improved 1st-order draft took the shape of five separate draft documents, each describing one of the paths of action of IHP-IX.

8. The improved 1st-order draft of the IHP-IX Strategy was scheduled to be submitted to a Technical Meeting of the IHP Bureau and subsequently to the 24th session of the IHP Council, initially planned for March and May 2020, respectively. Both meetings were postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Thus, the improved 1st-order draft of the IHP-IX Strategy was reviewed and endorsed by the members of the IHP Bureau by electronic consultation.

9. Based on the IHP Bureau's review and endorsement, the Secretariat, with the support of the two Consultants accompanying the process, complemented the five paths of action with the necessary elements to constitute a unified, structured draft strategic plan for IHP-IX. This consolidated document constituted the 2nd order draft of IHP-IX and was presented to UNESCO's Member States in an information meeting held on 29 October 2020.

10. Due to the persisting movement restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused globally, the 24th session of the IHP Council was postponed and the Council agreed to meet in an extraordinary session to discuss in detail and provide guidance on the 2nd order draft of IHP-IX.

11. The 2nd Extraordinary Session of the IHP Council was held from 30 November to 1 December 2020. During the session, the Council Members decided the next steps and timeframe of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan preparation. The deadline for Member States' comments on the 2nd order draft was extended to 4 January 2021. The IHP-IX Task Force (TF) and the Experts of the Member States (EoMS), with the support of the Secretariat, were to integrate all comments on the 2nd order draft provided by the Member States and other partners and prepare a 3rd order draft of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan by 31 January 2021. On that date the IHP Secretariat was to circulate the 3rd order draft of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan to all Member States, inviting them to further comment on it by 15 February 2021.

12. Following up to the decisions of the Council, the Secretariat facilitated five meetings of the TF and EoMS members in January 2021, where the comments made during the 2nd Extraordinary Council meeting and the received written comments were discussed and consolidated. A small drafting team, consisting of the Task Force Members, Members of the EoMS and the Secretariat, was deployed to incorporate the results of the discussions in the text. The 3rd order draft of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan was presented to the last meeting of the combined groups (TF and EoMS) on 28 January 2021. After receiving their approval, it was edited to improve the language used, translated and transmitted to Member States and partners on 31 January 2021 as planned, in English. A French version of the document was circulated on 3 February 2021.

13. The IHP Intergovernmental Council held its 3rd extraordinary session from 22 to 24 February 2021 to examine the 3rd order draft of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan and decided to convene an Open-Ended Working Group of Member States on IHP-IX, open to both IHP Council member and non-member countries with a view to provide convergence in parts of the document where divergent opinions were observed.

14. Following the 3rd Extraordinary IHP council meeting, the task force and the experts of member states met twice to discuss and incorporate the comments received until 5th March 2021 on the 3rd order draft, which led to the production of the draft IHP-IX Strategic Plan shared with member states on 31st March and 3rd April both in English and French for the discussions of the open-ended working group.

15. The Working Group met three times from April to June 2021, discussed the elements of the IHP-IX text that required convergence and edited and approved paragraph by paragraph the Draft IHP-IX Strategic Plan.

16. The Draft IHP-IX Strategic Plan (add link to the document) will be discussed during the 24th session of the IGC of IHP with a view to approve it and commence the necessary work related to the preparation of an Implementation and Financial Plans that will help realize the objectives of the IHP-IX.

GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF IHP PROGRAMME AND MAJOR INITIATIVES (Agenda sub-item 3.2)

17. In accordance with the Resolution XXII-6 “The monitoring and review of IHP programmes and major initiatives” of the 22nd Intergovernmental Council of the IHP-, the Secretariat made an international call for proposals to evaluate the 15 IHP Flagship initiatives. A team of consultants was hired and the evaluation report was presented during a January 2019 special technical session of the Bureau Members.

18. The evaluation of the current Initiatives identified knowledge gaps and requirements to further increase the added value of IHP’s initiatives and to ensure their alignment with the priorities of UNESCO and IHP, and to reinforce the commitment of Member States.

19. Following the evaluation and the request of the Bureau draft “Guidelines for Priority Initiatives of the IHP” (IHP/Bur-LVIII/Ref. 7) was developed and presented to the Bureau of IHP at its 58th session (September 2019). The main objective of the guidelines is to ensure that IHP Initiatives are well structured and harmonized, so as to increase their impact, visibility and contribution to the Programme. Furthermore, the guidelines are to serve as the basis for the discussions of the dedicated Intergovernmental Working Group that will evaluate it, edit it and present it at the IHP’s Intergovernmental Council for its approval.

20. A Working Group composed of six experts identified by the IHP’s Bureau (one expert per Regional Group), met twice in May 2021 to examine the proposed document

21. The Working Group decided that further to the Guidelines, a Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Flagship Initiative Framework, aligned with the IHP-IX Strategic Plan and its Implementation and Financial Plans, would be required. Such framework could provide information on the requirements for the establishment, operation and evaluation of new Initiatives.

22. A proposal to this extent will be provided to the Council at its 24th session for its decision.

**MID-TERM EVALUATION OF IHP-VIII AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
(Agenda sub-item 3.3)**

23. The IHP Bureau recommended at its 56th session to start the planning process of the 9th Phase of IHP (IHP-IX, 2022-2029).

24. In view of the upcoming planning for the next Phase, it is recommended to receive feedback from the gaps and challenges that have been identified during the implementation of IHP-VIII. The results of such activity can then be used as an input to the formulation of the new strategic plan.

25. The IHP Secretariat informed the Council at its 23rd session that there is an opportunity to have the evaluation of IHP-VIII go further than examining the effectiveness of the Programme and contribute to the design of IHP-IX. The Secretariat informed the Council on the status of the process and requested UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) to present the proposed evaluation.

26. IOS presented the main purpose of this evaluation; the overall methodology; the questions to be addressed (scope); and a timeline for the proposed evaluation, which would provide results that would feed in the proposed time frame for IHP-IX. IOS informed the Council that they have developed the ToRs for the IHP-VIII evaluation in cooperation with UNESCO's Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP), the Division of Water Sciences (HYD) and the Executive Office of the Sector for Natural Sciences (SC/EO); and that they will advertise the ToRs to seek proposals and finalise the administrative process upon the approval by the Council of the proposed Draft Resolution on the item.

27. The Council via its Resolution XXIII-7 requested the IHP Secretariat to carry out an external evaluation of IHP-VIII, taking also into account the discussions at the 23rd session of the Council, and to submit it directly to the IHP Council upon its completion, using it as an input to the preparation of IHP-IX and invited Member States to make voluntary financial and in-kind contributions

28. A representative of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) presented the midterm evaluation process, during the 58th session of the IHP Bureau (Paris France, September 2019). The evaluation ([IHP/Bur-LVIII/Ref. 5](#)) showcased the uniqueness of IHP's intergovernmental nature and its science/policy interface. The findings of the report as well as its eleven recommendations were also presented.

29. The Mid-term Evaluation of Phase VIII of the International Hydrological Programme (2014-2021) was then presented to UNESCO's Executive Board at its 207th Session ([207 EX/5.II.B](#)). The document contains in Annex the Management Response to the 11 recommendations. All of them, with the exception of the first recommendation referring to the title of IHP-IX have been accepted (as this is a decision of the member States) and the Secretariat has commenced activities responding to them.

30. An update of the Management Response document, IHP/IC-XXIV/Ref.5, was presented by IOS' update on the status of open evaluation recommendations to the Oversight Advisory Committee in November 2020.