



Dr Abou Amani
Secretary
International Hydrological Programme
UNESCO, Division of Water Sciences (SC/HYD)
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris Cedex 07
FRANCE

Maclean Building, Benson Lane
Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford
Oxfordshire, OX10 8BB
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0) 1491 838800
www.ceh.ac.uk

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UK COMMENTS ON THE 2nd ORDER DRAFT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE NINTH PHASE OF THE IHP (IHP-IX, 2022-2029)

Dear Dr Amani,

Further to our interventions at the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Council of IHP on 30th November and 1st December 2020, we are hereby providing written comments on behalf of the UK in relation to the 2nd Order Draft of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan. These comments incorporate feedback from the UNESCO Category 2 Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science at the University of Dundee.

We thank the Task Force, Experts of Member States and Secretariat for their efforts in producing the 2nd Order Draft. There are some strong elements of what is currently proposed but we highlight the following areas where we think further consideration is needed during development of the next draft:

- I. The structure and language of the document should be improved to provide a more coherent Strategy that can be easily understood by all. In doing so there is a need to **simplify the structure and shorten the length** of the Plan as it is currently long and overly complicated which will not aid communication with stakeholders. We note that the Strategy for IHP-VII was 12 pages long and the one for IHP-VIII was 56 pages - we would prefer that the document produced for IHP-IX be nearer the IHP-VII example.
- II. We think it is important that the Strategy is much clearer with regards to the outcomes and impacts that will be achieved over the course of the Phase. In her opening remarks to the Council, the Assistant Director General noted the need for an ambitious strategy. We agree and as part of that we need to be clear in our vision of what will be achieved by the IHP over the coming years. In places the current draft suggests possible ideas (for example on Page 30 it mentions that, "...a chain of experimental basins could be managed and researched with the help of the UNESCO Water Family as examples for similar basins all over the world.") but in a Strategy we would expect some **bold statements of what will be achieved rather than what could be achieved**.
- III. In terms of the technical content, we encourage the Task Team and Secretariat to revise the **Priority Areas to be based on Outcomes not Outputs**. The latter may lead to the former, but measurable Outcomes should form the focus of the Strategy. The linkages between the Priority Areas needs to be improved and we would like to see their content build more directly on previous IHP Phases explaining what has been achieved and what is left to do.
- IV. In line with comments by a number of Members of the Council at the Extraordinary Session, the UK encourages **revision of the Priority Areas to ensure that science remains at the core**

of all aspects of the Programme. We do not think it is appropriate for the science and innovation aspects of the programme to be largely focused in just one of the five Priority Areas and would prefer science to be more prominent in all Priority Areas.

- V. Some aspects of the Draft Strategic Plan seem to **disproportionately focus on specific aspect of hydrology**. For example, it is not clear why 'new water conservation technologies' are presented as more of an opportunity than other advances.
- VI. In developing the IHP-IX Strategy more should be done to **avoid duplication and maximise collaboration with the efforts of other UN organisations**. One specific example of potential duplication can be found in the Data and Information Priority Area where there is currently significant overlap with the support provided to Members by other UN bodies. This doesn't mean that IHP shouldn't consider this field but rather that we need to be clear where the IHP can add value. As noted in our UK response to the 2nd In-Depth Consultation in January 2020 the IHP could, for example, focus on supporting research around new innovative data sources and information technologies for hydrology, rather than directly supporting operational data collection which is covered elsewhere in the UN system.
- VII. We welcome the continued inclusion of water governance as an integral part of the IHP but feel that the sections of the document dealing with these aspects could be clearer. For example, reference to PC-CP in the 'Investing in water governance' section is too specific and the section implies that the only relevant governance frameworks are international where in fact national frameworks are more important from an implementation perspective.
- VIII. We are encouraged by the commitment to production of an **Operational Implementation Plan** for IHP-IX as we feel this will help the Council identify specific actions and delivery mechanisms for the next Phase. Such a document should be reviewed regularly by the Council as part of the IHP-IX monitoring and updated as the Phase progresses. At this stage however it is important that there is a common understanding of what will be included in the Strategic Plan and what details would be better kept for the Implementation Plan.

In relation to the scope of the next draft Strategic Plan, we suggest that the document outlines and justifies the Aims, expected Outcomes and Impacts of the next Phase, as well as provide a structure for the Programme, but we would prefer that the details of how the Phase will be implemented to be left for an Implementation Plan. For example, it is of course vital that during the planning process the Council take into consideration what individual Member States, Category Two Centres, Chairs and Major Initiatives can deliver over the next eight years. While our Strategic Plan should be mindful of what resources and tools are available, we would prefer that the details of who will do what and which mechanisms will be used are left for the Implementation Plan (which the Council can revisit and adjust over the course of the Phase). Adopting such an approach may also help us come to agreement on the Strategic Plan more rapidly. We therefore encourage the Secretariat to integrate the Implementation Plan into the IHP-IX development timetable and clearly communicate this and the scope of the two documents to Members.

- IX. The document is imbalanced in its mentions of the current **IHP Major Initiatives**. Some are mentioned (e.g. PC-CP) and others are not. In line with our above comment, we would prefer that details of what individual IHP Initiatives will contribute to the next Phase be kept for the Implementation Plan and therefore suggest that mention of these be removed from the next draft. If they are to be mentioned in the Strategy however, the Task Team needs to clearly consider the recommendations of the recent Independent Review.

Lastly in closing, when the next draft is presented to the Intergovernmental Council, we urge the Secretariat to provide specific information on how the lessons from the mid-term review of IHP-VIII have been implemented in the planning of the next phase.

I trust you will find these comments useful and we look forward to discussion of the next draft in early 2021. Please let me know if you would like the UK to provide any further input to the process at this stage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alan Jenkins', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Professor Alan Jenkins

Chair, UK National Committee for the IHP of UNESCO

Tel: 01491 692232

Email: jinx@ceh.ac.uk