

UN-Water – United Nations’ Inter-agency Coordination Mechanism for Water and Sanitation

Terms of Reference Annex: UN-Water Governance

1. The Terms of Reference of the Senior Programme Managers (SPMs), Joint Steering Group (JSG) and Management Team are detailed below and will be regularly reviewed and updated by the SPMs as the needs and experience of UN-Water evolve. The UN-Water Operational Guidelines¹ further complements the Terms of Reference by outlining the operational guidance for UN-Water.

UN-Water Senior Programme Managers

2. Each UN-Water Member is represented by an SPM. The SPMs are the ultimate governing and decision-making body of UN-Water. Collectively, the SPMs:
3. Set the policies, define the long-term programmatic agenda and monitor and evaluate the products within the remit of UN-Water at its biannual Meetings and where necessary through inter-sessional electronic dialogue. In particular, the SPMs approve the work programme and budget of UN-Water.
4. Agree upon the level of delegation to the Management Team and to the JSG. The SPMs can also decide to delegate the implementation of specific projects, or the representation of UN-Water on specific occasions, to one or more UN-Water Member(s) or Partner(s) on behalf of UN-Water.
5. Give strategic guidance to the JSG, which serves to steer the operational management of UN-Water between UN-Water Meetings in keeping with its decisions. The SPMs give, together with the JSG, guidance to the UN-Water Management Team in their work of overseeing the day-to-day affairs of UN-Water, including the office-bearers (Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary) and the UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit. Individual SPMs serve as members of the JSG, as Vice-Chair and as Secretary.

¹ <http://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-operational-guidelines/>

6. Are responsible for establishing Task Forces and Expert Groups to focus on specific areas of interest, emerging issues or areas where increased coordination is desirable.

UN-Water Joint Steering Group

7. The JSG was created by UN-Water at the 12th UN-Water Meeting in February 2010 to steer the operational management of UN-Water in-between UN-Water Meetings. The JSG is accountable to, and takes its strategic guidance from, the SPMs.
8. The UN-Water Inter-Agency Trust Fund (UNW-IATF) was established in 2011 as a pooled funding mechanism that allows receipt of contributions from multiple donors and allocates these resources to UN-Water's Members for the implementation of UN-Water activities. It is administered in accordance with both the rules and procedures of the Administrative Agent and the Memorandum of Understanding between UN-Water Members and the Administrative Agent regarding the operational aspects of the UNW-IATF. The JSG has oversight over the UNW-IATF and related operations in accordance with the UN-Water work programme and budget. It has delegation of authority from the SPMs to authorise the exceptional allocation of funds up to US\$ 30,000.
9. Permanent members of the JSG shall be the UN-Water Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. Four additional rotational SPMs from among the UN-Water Members shall be appointed by the SPMs to serve on the JSG. The JSG shall thus consist of seven members.
10. Quorum requires at least four JSG members, including the Chair or the Vice-Chair. UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit staff should normally be present as observers of the meeting to ensure coordination, record keeping and follow-up. Other experts may also be invited to attend, as observers, where useful.
11. Decisions are made by consensus. They can be taken during JSG meetings or by correspondence through no-objection approval following a period of five working days.
12. Members of the JSG are appointed in their personal capacity from among the SPMs and at a UN-Water Meeting. If a member of the JSG leaves office an election shall be held at the next UN-Water Meeting to appoint an SPM from among all interested UN-Water Members.
13. JSG members commit to dedicate the necessary time and engagement for the effective functioning of the work of the JSG in support of UN-Water.

14. The term of the rotational UN-Water SPMs serving on the JSG is two years. No rotational member should serve more than two consecutive terms.
15. To select a rotational member of the JSG, the UN-Water Secretary shall call for expressions of interest before UN-Water Meetings, compile a list of interested candidates, present this at the UN-Water Meeting and seek a consensus of the SPMs or, if required, conduct a vote.
16. The UN-Water Chair shall normally convene and chair the JSG consistent with his/her TOR. If the Chair cannot attend a JSG meeting, the Chair may delegate this function of convening and chairing the JSG to the UN-Water Vice-Chair.
17. Meetings of the JSG shall normally be conducted via teleconference.
18. Any member of the JSG can call a meeting, by notifying the UN-Water Chair. Regular meetings should be organized at least two times per annum.
19. Meeting notes shall be circulated for comments to JSG members within two weeks after a JSG meeting and be finalized no later than three weeks after a JSG meeting. The meeting notes shall be circulated to all UN-Water Members by the Secretary and will serve as background documentation to UN-Water Meetings.
20. The specific duties of the JSG include to:
 - a. Provide disbursement instructions to UNOPS for budget items included in the UN-Water work programme and budget or approved separately by the UN-Water SPMs. The JSG can delegate disbursement responsibilities for operational matters to the UN-Water Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), with the CTA informing the JSG on disbursements made.
 - b. Clear extraordinary expenditures up to the threshold of US\$ 30,000 and provide the related disbursement instructions to UNOPS.
 - c. Discuss topics of immediate relevance to UN-Water that require prompt decisions.
 - d. Review applications for UN-Water Partner status and make recommendations to the SPMs in accordance with the UN-Water Partner Criteria and the UN-Water Guidelines on Partner Engagement.

UN-Water Management Team

21. Under the guidance of the SPMs, the day-to-day affairs of UN-Water are overseen by three office-bearers, namely a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Together, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and the Technical Advisory Unit compose the UN-Water Management Team and function as a single virtual team

serving under the leadership of the Chair in support of UN-Water. A Technical Advisory Unit supports the work of the SPMs, the JSG and the three office-bearers. The principal role of the UN-Water Management Team is to carry out the decisions of the SPMs and JSG. The overall objective is to foster increased collaboration and effective coordination across UN-Water and promote coherence in UN system water-related policies, approaches and activities in accordance with the Terms of Reference of UN-Water.

UN-Water Chair

22. The Chair of UN-Water is nominated among the UN Executive Heads, after consultations in the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The Chair serves in a personal capacity and not in representation of her or his Member entity.

23. In consultation with the Vice-Chair, the tasks of the Chair can be delegated to the Vice-Chair as conditions demand. They include to:

- Represent UN-Water at the CEB;
- In liaison with the Secretary, analyse and elaborate on the main UN processes and debates in order to interpret significant implications for UN entities in terms of coordination, directions and visioning that could be highlighted to the SPMs for consideration and decisions to be taken;
- Ensure regional, sub-regional and country perspectives are reflected in the work of UN-Water;
- Engage in dialogue with UN-Water Partners to elaborate on possible synergies and cooperation in addressing relevant water-related policy dimensions;
- Engage in substantive and high-level discussion with other relevant inter-agency mechanisms to seek coherence in vision, consistency of programmes, and synergy between workplans;
- Advocate and communicate UN-Water's vision and achievements (both expected and actualised) toward different "clients", including UN Member States, UN processes, donors, and the public;
- Represent UN-Water at relevant high-level events, meetings and conferences and in other relevant forms of external relations;
- Serve on and chair the JSG;
- Guide and work effectively with the Technical Advisory Unit, in accordance

with its functions, in close collaboration with the Vice-Chair and Secretary, in keeping with the overall orientation and decisions of the UN-Water Meetings and the JSG; and

- Chair UN-Water Meetings.

UN-Water Vice-Chair

24. The Vice-Chair serves in a personal capacity and not in representation of her or his Member entity. During the term of the Vice-Chair, which is a two-year period, another senior individual from the Vice-Chair's home entity represents it as SPM.

25. The tasks of the Vice-Chair are to:

- Perform the Chair's functions when invited to do so; and
- Serve on the JSG.

UN-Water Secretary

26. The UN DESA SPM serves as UN-Water Secretary *ex officio*.

27. The tasks and responsibilities of the Secretary are to:

- Serve on the JSG;
- In close cooperation within the UN-Water Management Team, liaise and promote the objectives of UN-Water with UN system intergovernmental processes such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the High-level Political Forum, as well as with inter-agency processes, including the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, Regional Coordinating Mechanisms and other multi-stakeholder fora;
- Ensure, in close cooperation within the UN-Water Management Team, collaboration with the other inter-agency coordination mechanisms, particularly UN-Energy and UN-Oceans;
- Provide substantive and procedural entry points for UN-Water to intergovernmental and inter-agency processes and mechanisms of the UN system on water-related issues;
- Oversee the succession arrangements for the Chair, Vice-Chair, and JSG members serving as ballot officer, as needed;
- Ensure the institutional memory of UN-Water decisions, activities and

procedures, and substantive outputs;

- Convene UN-Water Meetings;
- Oversee the organization and logistical arrangements for UN-Water Meetings, including preparation and distribution of agenda, related documentation and meeting reports and outcome; and
- Help build consensus between Members and Partners on common objectives and ensure a common understanding of critical points related to UN-Water management and operations.

UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit

28. The Technical Advisory Unit of UN-Water has been established to provide substantive technical support, including accounting, budget and administrative support to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, the SPMs, the JSG, and to UN-Water Members and Partners in their operations and activities on behalf of UN-Water, including to Expert Groups and Task Forces. The Technical Advisory Unit undertakes most of the core technical tasks and concrete administrative and financial actions to implement the decisions and instructions of the SPMs and the JSG, in keeping with the policies and procedures of UN-Water and the Administrative Agent of the UNW-IATF. The Technical Advisory Unit backstops UN-Water activities as defined by the UN-Water SPMs and as reflected in the approved UN-Water work programme. The Technical Advisory Unit also maintains UN-Water's long-term institutional memory under the guidance of the Secretary.

29. The Technical Advisory Unit is composed of staff as determined by the SPMs and in accordance with approved budgets. It currently comprises the following positions: a Chief Technical Adviser, a Global Monitoring Officer, a Programme Officer, a Communications Manager, and two Administrative Assistants. Any additional staff can be engaged at the behest of the SPMs, subject to budget availability. The Technical Advisory Unit may also be enhanced through staff members seconded by Member States or Associate Experts, as well as staff from UN-Water Members.

30. The location, contractual arrangements and terms of reference for staff of the Technical Advisory Unit are determined by the SPMs and consistent with agreed budgets. Unless otherwise decided by the SPMs, all the Technical Advisory Unit staff members are to be recruited on UNOPS contracts and, with the possible exception for the seconded staff, directly funded through the UNW-IATF.

31. The tasks and responsibilities of the Technical Advisory Unit are to:

General

- Provide cross-sectoral technical backstopping for UN-Water related objectives and activities, as requested by the SPMs or the JSG, and undertake additional technical work as called for by SPM decisions;
- Assist the drafting of UN-Water policy briefs, analytical briefs and other relevant documentation on key issues, including the UN-Water work programme and budget, as identified by, and for the final approval of, the SPMs;
- Follow-up, as instructed, on SPM and JSG decisions;
- Support all operational aspects of UN-Water, guided by the UN-Water work programme and budget and other internal management documents of UN-Water;
- Carry out, in implementation of SPM and JSG decisions and subject to delegation of authority by the JSG, disbursements from the UNW-IATF;
- Support all UN-Water budget matters in close collaboration with the Administrative Agent for the UNW-IATF, ensuring that all administrative, legal and financial procedures for management, disbursement and reporting of funds are correctly and effectively followed;
- Support resource mobilisation for UN-Water in close cooperation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary and maintain direct and regular contacts and communication with donors;
- Seek regular feedback from UN-Water Members and Partners and foster coordinated action from UN-Water Members and Partners;
- Promote mutual support and exchange of information regarding the actions of UN-Water among the global level and the regional, sub-regional and country levels, by seeking to engage and involve all UN-Water Members and Partners present at the regional, sub-regional and country levels, particularly the United Nations Regional Commissions and those UN funds and programmes and partner organisations with extensive networks of regional, sub-regional and country offices; and
- Organise the biannual UN-Water Meetings including logistic arrangements, preparation and distribution of agenda, related documentation and meeting reports and outcome, under the guidance of the Secretary.

Support to SPMs, JSG and Partners

- Assist in organising and supporting substantively and administratively relevant UN-Water activities and events;
- Facilitate interaction and coordination among UN-Water Members and Partners by ensuring timely communications on UN-Water activities and initiatives; and
- Respond to enquiries from external organisations and individuals in relation to UN-Water, involving UN-Water Members and Partners as needed.

Support to the Office-bearers

- Maintain, jointly with the Secretary, the institutional memory and official record of UN-Water policies and procedures, decisions, activities, finances and substantive outputs, so as to facilitate accountability and auditing;
- Draft for consideration of the SPMs, as appropriate, all necessary reports, such as Annual Reports and specific substantive, financial and administrative reports to donors; and
- Manage UN-Water's corporate communications and branding, including the UN-Water, World Water Day, World Toilet Day and Water Action Decade 2018 – 2028 websites, and support to relevant awareness raising campaigns.

Reporting lines

32. The Technical Advisory Unit is coordinated by the Chief Technical Adviser who reports to the Chair.