

GWP SPONSORING PARTNERS

18th Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners
to the Global Water Partnership Organisation

Stockholm, Sweden

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introduction, Apologies Received, Approval of Agenda & Reflections on Discussion of the New Strategy

The Chair of the GWP Sponsoring Partners Meeting, Ms. Inger Buxton (Sweden), opened the Annual GWP Sponsoring Partner Meeting. Welcoming all participants, she reflected on the event that had just concluded right before the meeting - a joint session for the GWP Sponsoring Partners, Steering Committee and Financing Partners to jointly brainstorm and discuss about potential challenges and opportunities with implementing the new GWP Strategy 2020 - 2025, noting how valuable participants had found this session and that the format is worthwhile keeping for future meetings.

Ms. Buxton noted that apologies for the 12th Sponsoring Partners meeting had been received from Denmark, Jordan and the WMO. In addition, the Ambassador from Pakistan had to cancel his participation at the very last minute. She noted that with six Sponsoring Partners in attendance (Argentina, Chile, Sweden, Hungary, Netherlands, World Bank) the quorum for the meeting was reached.

The attendance list is appended to these Minutes.

The participants approved the agenda.

Decision: The meeting Agenda was approved.

The GWP Executive Secretary, Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr, gave updates on the development of the new GWP Strategy 2020 - 2025. The Steering Committee's discussion about the draft strategy on Tuesday June 11th had been overall positive. There will be one short (4-6 pager) version and one longer version (20 pages) of the strategy to meet the different needs of various stakeholders and audiences. The formal step for GWP Partners around the world to adopt the new strategy will be taken by the GWP Network meeting, set to take place on June 25th and 26th. The format will be the same as for 2018 - when, for the first time, a "follow the sun" concept had been developed and introduced, offering the Network meeting in the format of a 29-hour non-stop video-conference based meeting (2 hours per region, plus one session from New York and a global wrap up session in the end), connecting partners in 40+ countries in languages adjusted to specific regions (English, Spanish, Chinese, French and Russian). As for the draft strategy document, the Executive Secretary offered to the Sponsoring Partners that they may provide comments up until June 24th.

2. Matters arising from Minutes from the 17th Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners in Stockholm on 13 June 2018

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners noted that, according to the procedure of electronic approval of the Sponsoring Partner Minutes on a no objection basis after each meeting, the Minutes from the 17th Annual SP Meeting in June 2018 had been approved as of August 10th, 2018.

The Chair referenced, for further discussion, the potential broadening of the Sponsoring Partners group. She pointed to the opportunity for such discussions under agenda item 5.4.

2.1: Update on decisions taken since last SP meeting

The decisions made electronically by the Sponsoring Partners since the last SP meeting were noted.

3. Information and Approval of GWP Reports

3.1: GWP Annual Activity and Financial Reports 2018

Steven Downey, GWP Head of Communications, presented highlights from the Annual Activity Report *GWP in Action 2018*.

Catharina Sahlin-Tegnander, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Financial Report for 2018. GWPO's income for 2018 was €14,4m (compared to €15m in 2017). The locally raised funds came to €4,2m (compared to €3m in 2017).

Decision: The GWP Annual Activity Report 2018 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2018 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved by the Sponsoring Partners.

3.2: GWP Audit Report 2018

The Chief Financial Officer noted that GWPO has received an unqualified Management Letter and Audit Report. However, the Eastern Africa Auditors qualified the report for GWP Eastern Africa. The Auditors pointed to an issue - the host organization's non-payment of social security tax for their employees to the National Agency in Uganda. This is rooted in a contradiction between the local law in Uganda on Social Security payments, requiring every agency in the country to pay social taxes and dues for their staff, and the Headquarters' Agreement between the host of GWP Eastern Africa, Nile Basin Secretariat and the Government of Uganda, exempting the host organization from tax and other payments. GWP's Auditors, PwC, sees this issue as a concern but not as major as to qualify the GWPO Audit report. The GWPO Management is in dialogue with the Eastern Africa Chair to support finding a solution to the problem with the Host Institution.

The GWP Audit Report and Management Letter 2018 was received and considered by the Sponsoring Partners.

3.3: Discharge of liability of the Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary

Decision: The recommendation of the GWP Auditors to discharge the GWP Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary of liability for 2018 was approved by the Sponsoring Partners.

The Financial presentation made is appended to these Minutes.

4. GWP Chair's Annual Report

The GWP Chair, Mr. Howard Bamsey, reported back from his first 6 months into the job. He said that with Monika Weber-Fahr as the new Executive Secretary since a little more than one year back, the number of GWP activities have increased and the profile of the organisation has been raised. The GWP Chair noted that during his trips, 'wearing his GWP hat', he has encountered some interesting dynamics. Some people told him that GWP should continue to stay within its original mandate, and others said they see a need for GWP to change, to be able to achieve its mission and vision. The GWP Chair sees the water world as being very fragmented and full of competition and therefore sees that GWP needs to change over time. He would like to see GWP become the vehicle for improving coherence and collaboration and to achieve that, GWP needs to be more influential to get the "right

doors" to open. Still, GWP should continue on its path to improve water security through IWRM.

The GWP Executive Secretary concluded by thanking the Sponsoring Partners for appointing such an inspiring and thoughtful leader as Howard Bamsey to be the Chair of GWP. Mr. Bamsey has already made a huge difference in opening up doors, specifically in the "Climate World" and GWP considers itself privileged to be able to count on Mr. Bamsey as the Network's Chair.

5. GWP Governance - update and discussion

The GWP Executive Secretary noted that further proposals to improve the GWP Governance are under way. Documents had been provided to the Sponsoring Partners to this end on an "FYI" basis.

Sponsoring Partners would be involved in decisions relating to changes to the GWP Statutes; the Steering Committee would be accountable for changes to the Steering Committee and Nomination Committee By-laws. However, also those changes might be interesting to the Sponsoring Partners - which is why documents are made available. There are no decisions required by the Sponsoring Partners at this stage.

In the meantime, the dialogues on proposed changes to the Steering Committee and Nomination Committee Bylaws are ongoing with the Steering Committee, to further clarify the rationale and implications.

The Executive Secretary expects to reach out to the Sponsoring Partners on related matters later in the coming year.

The representative from the Embassy of Argentina, Minister Silvia Cao, noted concerns regarding changes that would make the Steering Committee the ultimate supervisory body. The GWP Chair clarified that the changes proposed in regard to the role of the Steering Committee were to address overlaps currently existing between the Secretariat and the Steering Committee. The current GWP statutes assign to the Steering Committee supervisory functions vis-à-vis the Secretariat - and these are functions that indeed are assigned typically to such governance bodies such as; an organization's members set up a Steering Committee or a similar body so that the Committee supervises, on behalf of the members, what the organization does. However, the statutes also assign some executive functions to the Steering Committee - that typically would be rather vested with the organization's leadership than with a supervisory body. To this end, changes to the statutes are being developed which aim to reduce the *executive* functions of the Steering Committee.

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners said that hopefully more vibrant discussions and a stronger sense of ownership will evolve when the various governance bodies' roles and responsibilities have been further structured and decided upon, and the links between the various bodies be further strengthened.

The Argentinian representative also noted that the Sponsoring Partners need to receive proposals for decision well in time, since it takes time for the various Ministries to process the proposal and make decisions. The Executive Secretary acknowledged the request and confirmed that typically all materials are sent to Sponsoring Partners at least two weeks ahead of a meeting; she apologized for the fact that this time, the timeline had been

compromised and explained that late changes in the draft strategy document had prevented the more timely delivery of documents.

5.1 Network Governance

a) Reform of the SC By-laws

Updated proposal will be presented to the Steering Committee during the Autumn; the Sponsoring Partners will be kept up to date.

b) Reform of the NC By-laws

Updated proposal will be presented to the Steering Committee during the Autumn; the Sponsoring Partners will be kept up to date.

c) Proposed Reform of the GWP Statutes

The GWP Executive Secretary noted that after the Steering Committee has decided on what changes in the statutes should be presented to the Sponsoring Partners, a proposal for refining the GWP Statutes will be sent to the Sponsoring Partners, probably during the later part of this year or early next year. An extraordinary Sponsoring Partners meeting, or call, may then be set up to discuss the proposed changes. If the proposal will be approved by the Sponsoring Partners, it may well take approx. 18 months before the updated GWP Statutes will come into force. Two major things that are being looked into are:

a) the statutory accountability for *the adoption of the GWP Strategy* (presently with the GWP Network Partners Meeting, a body comprised of over 3000 members; one of the suggestions currently discussed is for this accountability to move to the 13 Regional Chairs); and

b) the statutory accountability for decision on *expelling partners* (presently this decision is vested with the GWP Network Partners Meeting, a body comprised of over 3000 members; one of the suggestions currently discussed is for this accountability to move to the 13 Regional Chairs, or, to avoid any conflict of interest dynamic, to the Steering Committee).

Furthermore, the current statutes do not recognize a formal role for Financing partners. Consultations with the Financing Partners to this end are currently ongoing.

The GWP Executive Secretary concluded the agenda topic by confirming that all suggested changes will be provided to the Sponsoring Partners in a coherent and easy-to-read format.

5.2 The GWP Technical Committee

The GWP Executive Secretary explained the purpose of reforming the GWP Technical Committee was to better structure and organise collaboration between the Technical Committee on the one hand and the Secretariat and Regional Water Partnership organizations on the other hand. Importantly, the work of the Technical Committee

members needs to influence and align with Network-wide strategic opportunities and priorities.

5.3 The Regional Organisation incl. Regional branches

The GWP Executive Secretary explained the context of the governance reform efforts that relate to establishing Regional Branches. Preliminary indications from an internal working group point to the fact that discussions about establishing Regional GWP branches should only be pursued where there is good potential for strong government ownership. To this end, informally and light, discussions have been begun with South Africa. As soon as there is a concrete example and proposal on the table, it will be presented to the Sponsoring Partners.

5.4 Expanding the Sponsoring Partners' Group

The GWP Executive Secretary noted that the question of opening up the present Sponsoring Partners group for additional members has been discussed during the Annual Sponsoring Partners Meeting in June 2018 and since then, during several gatherings that had brought together Sponsoring Partners' Ambassadors. The GWP Chair sees a larger Sponsoring Partners group to be potentially beneficial for a fuller exchange; also, since GWP works globally, an increased number of Sponsoring Partners would create an opportunity to create a broader global spread.

Countries that have been, or are about to be approached, with the proposal to join GWP as a Sponsoring Partner include Japan (good weight internationally), Australia and South Korea, as well as South Africa. Ross Hamilton, GWP Steering Committee member from Australia, has committed to work with the GWP Chair to help moving the Australian Government in that direction. Also, possibly New Zealand could become more involved with GWP.

During the last 12 months, the GWP Executive Secretary has further engaged with all Sponsoring Partners Ambassadors (during 3 lunches and a number of bi-lateral meetings) to reinvigorate their knowledge about GWP and the role of being a Sponsoring Partner. Also, the GWP Executive Secretary traveled to Argentina, Chile, Hungary, Jordan and the Netherlands to further raise awareness of the countries' engagement with GWP; in Jordan, in addition to the Executive Secretary's meetings with the Ministry for Public Works, also the GWP Chair made himself available and met with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Visits with Pakistan and Denmark are to follow in the coming 12 months. During these meetings the topic of enlarging the Sponsoring Partners group was also discussed and Japan and South Korea came up as countries to approach; during the dialogue with Chile and Argentina, it was suggested to also consider adding a further country in Latin America.

The representative from the Embassy of Argentina, Minister Silvia Cao, said that Argentina would be in favour of enlarging the group of Sponsoring Partners, but that criteria of geographical diversity and equity would need to be considered; also the process would have to be transparent.

The GWP Executive Secretary suggested that the GWP Chair and Executive Secretary should continue their informal discussions and update the Sponsoring Partners as things evolve into something more concrete, to only then discuss and decide upon. An invitation to a formal annual meeting should only take place once a country has decided to join. However, the GWP Chair and Executive Secretary may reach out to Sponsoring Partner representatives

in case their support was needed in engaging with a particular country. The Sponsoring Partners had no objections to this approach.

6. Any other business, date for SP meeting 2020 and Summary of discussions and decisions

AoB:

The GWP Executive Secretary informed the Sponsoring Partners of two events of global relevance coming up shortly where GWP will be visibly represented:

* the UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters and the 13th HELP Meeting in New York in the week of June 24th; the Executive Secretary and the TEC Chair will speak at both events.

* the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York in the weeks of July 8th and 15th - the Executive Secretary will be able to "soft launch" the new strategy at various occasions. The GWP Secretariat had reached out to various missions - including Argentina, Netherlands and Hungary - to see whether they could co-host a related event; in the end, this was not possible and the "soft launch" will take place at the margins of an event hosted by the German Ministry of Environment and at the margins of a UN Water Event.

Date for SP Meeting 2020:

The proposal from the Chair of the Sponsoring Partners was to have a similar set up of the 2020 meetings as was done this year, i.e to conduct a joint Steering Committee, Sponsoring Partners and Financing Partners meeting and a two-hour formal Sponsoring Partners meeting by mid-June. The participants commented on their positive experience with the joint session with the other groups and confirmed their agreement with the timing and the set-up.

Summary of discussions and decisions:


1. The meeting Agenda was approved.
2. According to the procedure of electronic approval of the SP Minutes on a no objection basis after each meeting, the Minutes from the 17th Annual SP Meeting had already been approved as of August 10th, 2018.
3. Five decisions had been taken electronically by the Sponsoring Partners since the last SP meeting (see document provided to the Sponsoring Partners as part of the meeting documentation).
4. Decision: The GWP Annual Activity Report 2018 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2018 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved.
5. The GWP Audit Report and Management Letter 2018 were received and considered.
6. Decision: The recommendation of the GWP Auditors to discharge the GWP Steering Committee Members and the Executive Secretary of liability for 2018 was approved.

Meeting closure

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners Meeting thanked everyone for their constructive and active participation and the GWP Chair, Executive Secretary and GWP Secretariat staff for well-prepared meetings during the day.

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners extended her gratitude and recognition, on behalf of the Meeting, specifically to Jacques Rey, GWP Chief Operations Officer, as he will step down from his present position as of July 1st, while continue working for GWP as a Special Adviser in different capacities. She noted in particular Mr Rey's long-standing and very valued contributions to GWP and to the Sponsoring Partners Meetings. All Sponsoring Partner representatives joined in expressing their thanks and appreciation of Mr. Rey's contributions and work.

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners thereafter closed the meeting.



Inger Buxton

Chair of the Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners