

## GWP SPONSORING PARTNERS

19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners  
to the Global Water Partnership Organisation

Stockholm, Sweden

Monday, June 29, 2020

### MINUTES

*(approved as of August 7th, 2020)*

### 1. Welcome and Introduction, Apologies Received & Approval of Agenda

The Chair of GWP, Amb. Howard Bamsey, opened the Annual GWP Sponsoring Partners meeting and welcomed all participants, both those connecting remotely via Zoom and those on site at the GWP office in Stockholm.

The Chair of the GWP Sponsoring Partners Meeting, Ms. Inger Buxton (Sweden), continued by also welcoming all participants, and invited everyone for a "round the table" introduction.

Ms. Buxton noted that apologies for the 19<sup>th</sup> Sponsoring Partners meeting had been received from The World Bank. However, it is noted that The World Bank had provided written input prior to the meeting, including approval of the GWP Annual Activity and Financial Reports. In addition, the Ambassador from Pakistan and the representative from Netherlands had to cancel their participation at the very last minute. Denmark did not at all respond to the meeting invitation.

*The attendance list is appended to these Minutes.*

The participants approved the agenda.

**Decision: The meeting Agenda was approved.**

### 2. Matters arising/updates from Minutes from the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners in Stockholm on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners noted that, according to the procedure of electronic approval of the Sponsoring Partners Minutes on a no objection basis after each meeting, the Minutes from the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual SP Meeting had been approved as of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

No further comments related to the Minutes were raised.

#### **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. In relation to the approval of a Youth-dedicated seat on the GWP Steering Committee, the GWP Chair said that GWP will be one of the few organisations having an appointed Youth seat on its Steering Committee. This will have a very positive impact and help the whole Steering Committee to take better informed decisions in relation to a number of topics going forward.

### 3. Information and Approval of GWP Reports

#### **3.1: GWP Annual Activity and Financial Reports 2019**

Steven Downey, GWP Head of Communications, said that the GWP Annual Activity Report 2019 marked the end of our previous Strategy period as well as including some highlights for

the new Strategy 2020 - 2025. Two specific highlights from 2019 which Mr. Downey pointed to were:

- Towards the end of 2019 GWP became an approved official delivery partner to GCF, which will allow GWP to further support countries in strengthening their capacities for the mobilisation of finance, including attracting collaboration with the private sector.
- Actions taken and ongoing under the SDG6 Support programme. GWP works in partnership with UNEP-DHI and UNDP Cap-Net to assist Governments and other key stakeholders to evaluate, diagnose and improve water governance policies. By the end of 2019, the programme was supporting planning and implementation activities in 10 countries, while negotiating collaborations with 60 countries around the monitoring process.

A question was raised by the representative of Chile in relation to if there is a limit to how many actions/region will be reported on in the GWP Annual Activity report? The Chilean representative said that it seems some of the more significant actions taken place in the South American region is not published. He referred specifically to the severe drought problems in Chile and the many actions taken place within this area. The Head of Communications responded that all actions around the network can't make it into the report and it is respective region who decides which actions they want to get published. If requested, actions that didn't get published in the annual report can always be uploaded to the "governance map" on the GWP web page.

Catharina Sahlin-Tegnander, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Annual Financial Report for 2019. GWPO's income for 2019 was €14,7m (compared to €14,4m in 2018). The locally raised funds came to €4,386m which is the highest amount ever in the history of GWP. The in-kind support was calculated to €4,9m (based on information received from the Regions and the Secretariat, not audited).

**Decision: The GWP Annual Activity Report 2019 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2019 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved by the Sponsoring Partners.**

### **3.2: GWP Audit Report 2019**

The Chief Financial Officer noted that GWPO, yet again, has received an unqualified Audit Report and Management Letter.

A question was raised by the Sida representative in relation to the Regional Management Letters and what the issues were that had been noted (with no impact on the Audit report)? The CFO responded that the issues mostly relates to late reporting from the Countries to the Regions. GWPO is constantly trying to find ways of supporting the Countries in their reporting process and progress being made, even though in a slow pace. The issues with our host in Eastern Africa, NBI, is moving ahead to be solved but we are also searching for an optional host if it becomes necessary to change in the end. The Interim Executive Secretary added that through the StRONG Programme (Strengthening Regional Operations and



Network Growth) we are scaling up our support service to the Regions and Countries, with a specific focus on Countries during 2020. A part of this is to support building financial capacity, in collaboration with building other skills and capacities.

*The GWP Audit Report and Management Letter 2019 were 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 2019 was approved by the Sponsoring Partners.*

*The Financial presentation made is appended to these Minutes.*

## **4. GWP Chair's Annual Update**

The GWP Chair, Amb. Howard Bamsey, began with thanking Ms. Inger Buxton, Chair of the Sponsoring Partners, for her very much appreciated personal support and engagement during the 5 years she has led the Sponsoring Partners meetings. Amb. Bamsey extended his best wishes for Ms. Buxton's new assignment as Ambassador to Latvia but also said she will be missed by GWP and the Sponsoring Partners. Amb. Bamsey added that he hopes for Mr. Masoud Hashemi's continued support and engagement, together with the new Chair of the Sponsoring Partners (name to be announced later on).

As part of his Annual Update the GWP Chair said that GWP is in a period of transition, not only due to the present COVID19 situation, and touched upon:

- ✓ The COVID19 situation and that reduced travel has had an impact on the continued building of fundraising relationships, which efforts have been partly put on hold. Governments need to squeeze their funding budgets for other/new emerging priorities to respond to the COVID19 crisis and we don't know yet how that will affect GWP, it can go in any direction.
- ✓ The recruitment of a new GWP Executive Secretary where the search process is progressing very well, with some extremely qualified candidates identified. 14 candidates have been identified for a first round of interviews and the Selection Committee will then establish a short list of candidates for deeper interviews. Final interviews with 2-3 candidates will take place during, or back to back, with the virtual GWP Steering Committee meeting in September, where a decision for the successful candidate will be taken. Hopefully the new Executive Secretary will be in place latest by early January 2021. In the meantime, GWP will be in good hands with Mr. Peter Repinski taken on the position as Interim Executive Secretary and CEO, in addition to his role as Chief Operating Officer.
- ✓ The high stress level of the Secretariat staff during the last 2+ years was brought to the attention of the GWP Steering Committee and was discussed during the Steering Committee meeting in Bratislava in December 2019. The Steering Committee sees

this as a serious matter and are following up on progress within the Secretariat to make things better.

- ✓ The importance of the StRONG Programme, in the efforts of strengthening the GWP Network, with the focus on Countries and Regions during 2020 was emphasized. The Network is GWP's greatest asset, it is unique for an organisation to have such a network, and is of the highest value for GWP's continuous work.
- ✓ The renewal process for GWP Steering Committee memberships. The process is ongoing and the GWP Sponsoring Partners will receive recommendations of new members electronically, for approval, towards late September. An important area for the Steering Committee members to focus on going forward is fundraising.
- ✓ The Governance process that has been on the agenda for quite some time. This is an extraordinary cumbersome process with a lot of layers. At the moment focus is not on continuing this process within the near future, due to other pressing matters.
- ✓ Key challenges looking ahead. It seems water as an issue is fading out globally as other problems have evolved, which have been considered more urgent. Governments as well as people in general seem to think that the water issues have been solved but this is not the case by far. Water issues are slipping off political agendas. Water lacks a strong central global voice and GWP should play a central role here. We have a strong Network, but further consolidation is important, also for other key stakeholders. GWP needs to find the basis for a stronger voice globally and in that process, we need to find other organisations who want to work with us. This can mean collaboration in more informal or formal ways. The GWP Chair said that he is in discussions with various organisations and will update the Sponsoring Partners when there are any news to this end. Going forward, GWP needs to head in the direction of collaboration.
- ✓ Strengthening of the Sponsoring Partners base. Efforts have been made to get Japan onboard as a new GWP Sponsoring Partner, but limited progress has been made so far due to difficulties for Japan to go through governmental requirements. Japan is a very strong player in water, and we do not have a Sponsoring Partner from South or South East Asia. If GWP's Sponsoring Partners can welcome the interest of Japan to become a Sponsoring Partner, that would be favourable for Japan's continued efforts in this matter. Korea has also been approached but they are not in a position to move forward with the process of becoming a Sponsoring Partner at present.

The Chair of the GWP Sponsoring Partners Meeting thanked Amb. Bamsey for his kind words and collaboration during the past 1,5 years, and the GWP Secretariat for their hard work. The Chair of the GWP Sponsoring Partners Meeting further said that GWP can count on continued strong support from the Swedish Government in the coming years. She also emphasized that it would be very appreciated if the Sponsoring Partners can connect with Japan and express their view of welcoming Japan as a new Sponsoring Partner.

One of the representatives from Argentina said that they are in general positive to invite Japan to become a Sponsoring Partner but of course needs to process this request through their authorities, and for that sufficient time needs to be given.



Action: The GWP Secretariat will prepare a draft text for the Sponsoring Partners, expressing their positive view of welcoming Japan as a new GWP Sponsoring Partner. The Secretariat will then collect the individual letters sent back from the Sponsoring Partners and forward to Japan authorities.

5. GWP Strategy 2020 - 2025: Looking forward with the present worldwide COVID19 situation in mind

The Interim Executive Secretary started off this agenda item by saying that even though COVID19 hit us, we need to move ahead with our business and our main focus will continue to be to deliver on our strategy. We need to focus on our commitments. Q1 went pretty much according to plan but Q2 has of course seen implications caused by COVID19. Significantly less money has been spent on travel as an example. A focused effort on stepping up the work on virtual environments and moving meetings into a virtual set up has been made. The GWP Regional Days 2020 were conducted as a fully virtual 4 days event, with over 130 participants in the plenary sessions, including a fully virtual signatory event where GWP and GCF signed a USD 2,1 million Grant Agreement for Zambia's National Adaptation Planning process.

GWPO is increasing the support to regions for the purpose of mitigating the impacts of the global health crisis as part of the StRONG programme (Strengthening Regional Operations and Network Growth). Up to 20k additional core funding per region, for 5-8 regions, will therefore be made available in 2020 for network strengthening purposes. Regions that do not receive additional funds this year will be able to access the same amount in 2021 for similar purposes.

An initial analysis of the planned activities and budget allocations from across GWP's workplan has been made to assess how to adopt GWP's approach to deliver – to the extent possible - on the 2020 workplan under the current circumstances with the following objectives:

- i) To identify the activities and outputs likely to be affected by the ongoing crisis
- ii) To determine which of these activities can be completed through virtual means or should be postponed or removed altogether, and (here we want to be careful not to casually move it all to Q3, Q4) also observant that reality/conditions in the field is many times something else than theories
- iii) To carry out a high-level assessment of potential budget savings

Some overall results from this analysis:

- i) Key to remaining focused to deliver on our workplan (realizing not all can be done). Good to see that for example the WACDEP-G programme is kicking off
- ii) Stepping up work on virtual environments in our core themes and programmes, moving several programme components from workshops to virtual gatherings. A positive message,

for example, Trinidad and Tobago doing a full virtual workshop as part of the SDG 6 IWRM Support programme

- iii) Working closely to support our regions in their deliveries – this is key to stepping up the support service function of the Secretariat to our regions. We see regions with different experiences and degree of measures, some more active than others, moving (part of) the work plan activities to virtual environments, trying to build new opportunities

Some of the comments/input received during the following discussion:

- ✓ Good to see that GWP's focus and dedication is on 2020 workplan delivery. Also important to consider the long-term response to the COVID19 crisis as well .
- ✓ Will GWP now link its work more towards WASH?
- ✓ Will be very important to deliver on SDG6
- ✓ An opportunity for collaboration would be the Water and Climate Coalition (part of UN Water Acceleration Framework for SDG6), where the WMO representative would see GWP as a great asset, to strengthen impact. Discussions had been started with the previous ES but would be good to continue discussions with the GWP Chair and Interim ES.
- ✓ In the coming 6-9 months it will be important to emphasize the link between the COVID19 debate with a debate on systems change
- ✓ A good longer-term position to tackle the COVID19 situation is of course essential but we need to be cons when we talk about IWRM since there are also many other issues that we need to include in our discussions. For example, plastic in various forms is a huge threat to water. With more and more floods and droughts, Climate Change Adaptation is also a very important topic to focus on.
- ✓ Going forward a cross sectoral approach will be very important
- ✓ Would advise GWP to focus work on River Basin Commissions, there are several established around the world. Transboundary issues are important. Would be good for GWP to collaborate with UNECE Nature Convention.
- ✓ Biodiversity is also as important as water, need to make sure to also include this in the work under the present 5-year strategy
- ✓ With the Economical, Environmental and Social aspects of the SDG Agenda for 2030 and not to leave anyone behind, it will be important not only to focus on gender perspectives but also include other perspectives
- ✓ GWP could be much bolder and show more leadership in a number of areas, in terms of national, regional and global advocacy (*in written from the World Bank*)
- ✓ Can GWP not use its network to collect and give voice to the water related COVID challenges that communities and stakeholders are facing, to ensure that they are heard? (*in written from the World Bank*)
- ✓ GWP could advocate for application of WRM principles in all investments, not only those related to water systems. (*in written from the Word Bank*)
- ✓ GWP could be playing more of an advocacy role to help ensure that water is included in green stimulus investments (*in written from the World Bank*)

The GWP Chair thanked the participants for their very good comments and said that most of them are, or will be, covered in some form by the Secretariat moving forward. The Interim Executive Secretary mentioned that several of the issues raised have been incorporated in the updated 2020-2022 GWP Business plan which will be communicated to the Steering Committee in September. We have to look for new opportunities which we have not gone in to before and change the way in which we work. GWP needs to be part of a global response and as earlier mentioned, we are in the process of finding new opportunities and partners/organisations to collaborate with.

### **6. Any other business, date for SP meeting 2021 and Summary of discussions and decisions**

#### **AoB:**

##### **Date for SP Meeting 2021:**

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners said that this virtual set-up of the meeting gathered more participants than normal and suggested that for next meeting, the option to participate virtually could be given as well. The Secretariat will come back to the Sponsoring Partners with a date for the June 2021 meeting well in time.

##### **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 18th Annual SP Meeting had already been approved as of August 15th, 2019.
3. Two 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 2019 and the GWP Annual Financial Report 2019 of the Steering Committee to the Sponsoring Partners were received and approved.
5. The GWP Audit Report and Management Letter 2019 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 2019 was approved.
7. Action: The GWP Secretariat will prepare a draft text for the Sponsoring Partners, expressing their positive view of welcoming Japan as a new GWP Sponsoring Partner. The Secretariat will then collect the individual letters sent back from the Sponsoring Partners and forward to Japan authorities.



Meeting closure:

The Chair of the Sponsoring Partners thanked everyone for a very constructive and good meeting and thereafter closed the meeting.



Inger Buxton

Chair of the Meeting of the Sponsoring Partners

