

High Level Panel on Water

Roadmap of the Valuing Water Initiative

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1. HLPW and the Valuing Water Initiative

The High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) is co-convened by United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and World Bank President Jim Kim, and charged with mobilizing action to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, many of which depend on managing water more effectively. The HLPW recognizes that action is critical, and aims to build momentum towards a common vision for better stewardship of our water around the world.

Valuing water in a right way is an important part of that vision. Therefore, the Panel launched an initiative aimed at building “a global consensus and common language to guide better approaches to valuing water across three critical dimensions – social and cultural, environmental and economic”.

A key deliverable is a set of general shared principles to motivate and encourage governments, business and civil society to consider water’s multiple values and to guide the transparent incorporation of these values into their decision-making. Shared principles means shared in the sense of the process (shared with all the partners and within all the regions and distributed in wide variety of ways) and shared in the sense of agreement within the HLPW and the broadest possible coalition (a shared understanding of valuing water in a right way).

2. Why Value Water?

Most people agree that water is an extremely valuable resource: for farmers who depend on it to grow crops, for businesses that need it to cool machines, spin turbines and produce goods, for the ecology and its sustainable quality under all threats of development and of course for human life. But unlike most other valuable resources, it's proven hard to put a price on water. The very fact that water is so important to people, economies, and the environment has become reason for it being almost impossible to even agree on a common way of valuing it.

Societies around the globe are increasingly facing the task of difficult tradeoffs between different uses of water. While in most countries the majority of human water use goes to growing crops, cities and ecosystems are getting thirstier as a result of growing populations, economic development. Climate change is making things even worse, enlarging water related stresses on our societies and the environment. Water quality, too, is deteriorating in many areas because of pollution, and far too many people still lack access to safe and dependable sources of clean water. In addition to tradeoffs between uses of water as a scarce resource, societies face difficult tradeoffs in protecting lives, livelihoods, settlements and assets against the destructive forces of water during floods. These need to be factored into the valuing process as well.

Agreement on principles for valuing the contribution that water makes to both people (and their economies) and the planet, and applying these in decision making, can contribute to better tradeoffs that optimize the combined social and cultural, environmental and economic values of water to societies. Previous attempts to do so have encountered numerous challenges. The commitment of 11 world leaders in the HLPW to make a difference in this domain, presents a unique opportunity to overcome these.

3. Valuing Water Initiative objective

The valuing water initiative will build on the efforts of many groups around the world that have tried to tackle this issue in the past. It will develop an inclusive, consultation-driven process to articulate a set of principles to capture the many different values of water, including for economies, ecosystems, communities, individuals, political environments (politicians/lawmakers), cultures, and religions.

Through this inclusive process the HLPW will solicit views from all segments of the water stakeholder community and beyond, including agriculture, energy and other sectors, on how water could be valued. The HLPW will curate these and explore commonalities as well as divergence. It will identify ways to expand common ground and better understand and accept divergence. It will encourage dialogue on principles and their practical application, on obstacles that need to be overcome, on areas that require further dialog and will solicit guidance on political action by the HLPW.

Inspirational principles on Valuing Water have a focal role in this process of the Valuing Water Initiative. For successful implementation and real integration in water management and water use valuing water principles need to be supported by good examples and tools. This part is a critical step in the inclusive process: it is not only about discussing research and trying to agree upon the best set of words to describe valuing water principles. Showing the dynamics in this field around the world with good examples and tools can help raise the ambition and inspire people around the world. The best examples for inspiration and aspiration are needed to foster good leadership. Examples, experiences and existing tools are also needed to determine next steps for implementing valuing water right, across the world.

It is therefore proposed, that the High Level Panel adopts the following overall objective for the Valuing Water Initiative:

To strengthen sustainable water management and water use by providing a set of shared principles (supported by good examples and tools) to motivate and encourage governments, business and civil society to consider water's multiple values and to guide the transparent incorporation of these values into their decision-making.

4. Deliverables of Valuing Water Initiative

The Valuing Water Initiative envisages the following deliverables:

- a. Principles on valuing water (2 pages + 2 pages on action and video report)
- b. Concise report "Principles and implementation of valuing water"
- c. Good examples and existing tools on valuing water
- d. Layout of process and organization for follow up and implementation (Coalition on Valuing Water?)
- e. Communication activities to increase awareness of the importance of valuing water and the ongoing process for developing principles.

a. Principles on valuing water

The principles on valuing water will be the key deliverable of the Valuing Water Initiative. It will be presented as 1 page text of preamble and 1 page of the principles. In addition, it is envisaged to include 1 or 2 pages text on possible actions for different actors for operationalizing the principles on valuing water. A video report will be produced to present the principles in an inspiring way in easy to understand language and illustrate it with good examples.

The expert meeting on February 2nd 2017 in The Hague drafted the following specifications for the principles on valuing water:

- Principles should be inspirational and also applicable in terms of stimulating actions on the ground.
- Principles should be universal, but contextual (regional, national, local, group/stakeholder focuses) implementation of principles and valuing water should be part of it.
- Objective of principles should be: How can better valuing water help achieve the SDG's faster and better?
- Principles should aim at behavioral and institutional changes
- Principles should make use of what already exists and incorporate links to other processes, but should not shy away from advocating for reform in existing (malfunctioning) practices.

b. Report "Principles and implementation of valuing water

A concise report will be developed to give background and explain the principles on valuing water in terms of how to use the principles and how to integrate them into water management /stewardship and water use. It will mention what different actors could do to operationalize the principles on valuing water. It will also make reference to the good examples and (existing) tools. In addition, the report will provide the written documentation of the video report of the principles.

c. Existing good examples and tools

Good examples will inspire, support and explain how the principles on valuing water can be applied to optimize the various values of water. The examples will illustrate how in different contexts, the same principles may lead to different tradeoffs. This may inspire implementation. Once governments, companies, institutions have decided to improve the use of valuing water in their planning, decision making and operation they will need tools to make this happen. The HLPW will primarily curate, evaluate and assess existing information about good examples and tools in the form of reports, web pages, video reports, models or other.

d. Process for follow up and fostering implementation

When the principles, with possible actions and supporting good examples and tools, are ready a follow up process is critical to foster implementation of the principles and have real impact in achieving the water related SDG's. The Valuing Water Initiative will develop a proposal for this follow-up process for instance in the form of a multi-stakeholder Valuing Water Leaders Coalition or similar form of coalition and governance to continue improving global practices on valuing water after the HLPW has completed its mandate.

e. Communication activities to increase awareness

The HLPW's initiative on Valuing Water itself and the global and regional multi stakeholder consultation create as such ample opportunity to already start broader communication to increase awareness of the importance of valuing water and the ongoing process for developing principles. This broader communication during the

implementation of the Valuing Water Initiative in the period until the formal launch by the HLPW (early 2018) is also considered as a deliverable of the Valuing Water Initiative. This objective of outreach, sharing, and inspiration will be incorporated into the regional process to be able to deliver on this ambition. This outreach across the world is also critically important to track the world for best valuing water examples and existing tools to support implementation of the principles on valuing water. Key partners to help on communications, campaign and stakeholder-management and outreach will be asked to help inform (and manage) this process.

5. Outline of process

The outline of the process of the Valuing Water in the coming year is as follows:

1. Start of initiative, Expert Meeting and Roadmap

The initiative started with defining the scope, objectives and organization. This resulted in a 3 page concept-note on Valuing Water. The content of it was discussed in Budapest on November 30th, 2016. On February 2nd, 2017 an international Expert Meeting on Valuing Water took place in The Hague¹. Participants discussed the concept, possible principles on valuing water and the approach and process of the Valuing Water Initiative. Based on the outcome of the Expert Meeting a roadmap was drafted to be discussed for comments and approval in the Sherpa Meeting of March 7th and 8th in Mexico.

2. Collecting input from existing reports, studies and Vatican Watershed Event

Much important work on valuing water has already been done even including drafting of principles on how to work with valuing water for specific sectors or for more general use. This information is compiled through literature review and inputs from experts participating in the Valuing Water Initiative and will subsequently be curated. Special attention is paid to the socio-cultural and environmental/ecological values of water by commissioning several expert background papers on these subjects.

Another source is the Vatican Watershed Event "Value and Values of Water" on March 21st – 23rd, 2017 at the Vatican². This Event presented and discussed value and values of water from multiple perspectives. Presented material and especially results of discussions and the workshop on March 23rd provided valuable input for drafting the principles on valuing water.

3. Developing first draft discussion document on key principles

Based on the outcome of the February 2nd Expert Meeting and on existing material a zero draft version of the principles with preamble was written in several iterations between participants in that Expert Meeting.

4. Drafting workshop

In early May 2017 a drafting workshop was hosted by The Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy. This workshop started with the 0.1 version of the principles and sought to refine the document based on the early feedback received. Relevant questions that were considered include: What is needed to really underpin planning, decision making and implementation of water management and water use with the principles on valuing water? What were the challenges in previous attempts to do so and what could be done to overcome these? And what does this imply for principles on valuing water? The workshop produced a new version of the draft principles on valuing water to be fed into

¹ Results are presented in "presentation wrap up Expert Meeting Valuing Water February 2 2017" and "Notes on Expert Meeting Expert Meeting Valuing Water February 2 2017"

² Jennifer Sarah gave a presentation on March 22nd about the theme value and values of water and the work of the High Level Panel on Water

the global and regional consultation processes as well as the work being done on good examples and tools.

5. Regional live consultations and discussion with stakeholders

The outcome of the workshop in Bellagio will feed back into regional multi-stakeholder consultation meetings. The aim is to have an open debate on the values of water and the way to value water and to test the draft principles with a broad range of stakeholders; solicit their comments informed by the contextual realities of the region and their proposals to make the principles work in such context, and; collect examples, stories and proposed actions to bring the principles to life. The following regional meetings are envisaged: in South Africa (May 30th), Tajikistan (July 6th), Mexico, Senegal, Bangladesh, (July 31th, back-to-back with regional ministerial meeting, meeting of the Delta Coalition and Sherpa meeting) and possibly Peru and Jordan. In addition, already planned international meetings on water for NGO's, business and others can be used to obtain input and discuss drafts of the principles for instance by organizing back to back meetings (e.g. meeting on May 15th linked with EU Waterpact meeting).

6. Global virtual consultation and discussion

The outcome of the workshop in Bellagio will be brought into a global virtual consultation and discussion using the HPLW site for input on valuing water, good examples and reflections on the Bellagio narrative on valuing water. Other platforms (e.g. World Bank, Global Water Partnership) will be used as well to communicate about the process and link to the platform used for consultation. A first step in this process was already made by a blog on the HLPW site³ (also put online as a World Bank blog).

7. Further developing principles and description of good examples and tools

The outcome of regional meetings as well as the global virtual consultation will be used to further develop and improve the principles on valuing water, possible actions for different actors and material about good examples and tools. A drafting session will be organized prior to the Stockholm International Water Week to develop a new (final) version of the principles on valuing water.

8. Global live consultation and discussions (sessions at Stockholm IWW, parallel to UNGA, AIWW)

Next step is a global live consultation of the (final) draft of the principles on valuing water using existing global events like the Stockholm International Water Week, the UNGA (parallel to program). Apart from the principles, proposed actions and description of good examples attention will be paid to layout of the process for follow up. The planned HLPW meeting parallel to the UNGA can be used to discuss the principles among HLPW members as a preparation for endorsement. It also provides an opportunity for high level communication about valuing water together with the other HLPW actions.

9. Producing draft final products and discussion and approval by Sherpa's

The global live consultations and the HLPW meeting will provide the last input for preparing the draft final documents and video report. They will be discussed in a meeting at the Amsterdam International Water Week. They will be further improved and sent to the Sherpa's for final comments and –after integrating the comments - approval of the Sherpa's

10. Endorsement of final products by panel and launching

Documents and video-report will be finalized and sent to the HLPW member for endorsement. Based on the progress of this endorsement by HLPW members and the opportunities provided the principles on valuing water and the other products of the Valuing Water Initiative are planned to be launched at the World Water Forum 2018 in Brazil or other similar event.

³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater#blog>

6. Planning

The outline of the Valuing Water Initiative is visualized in the following figure

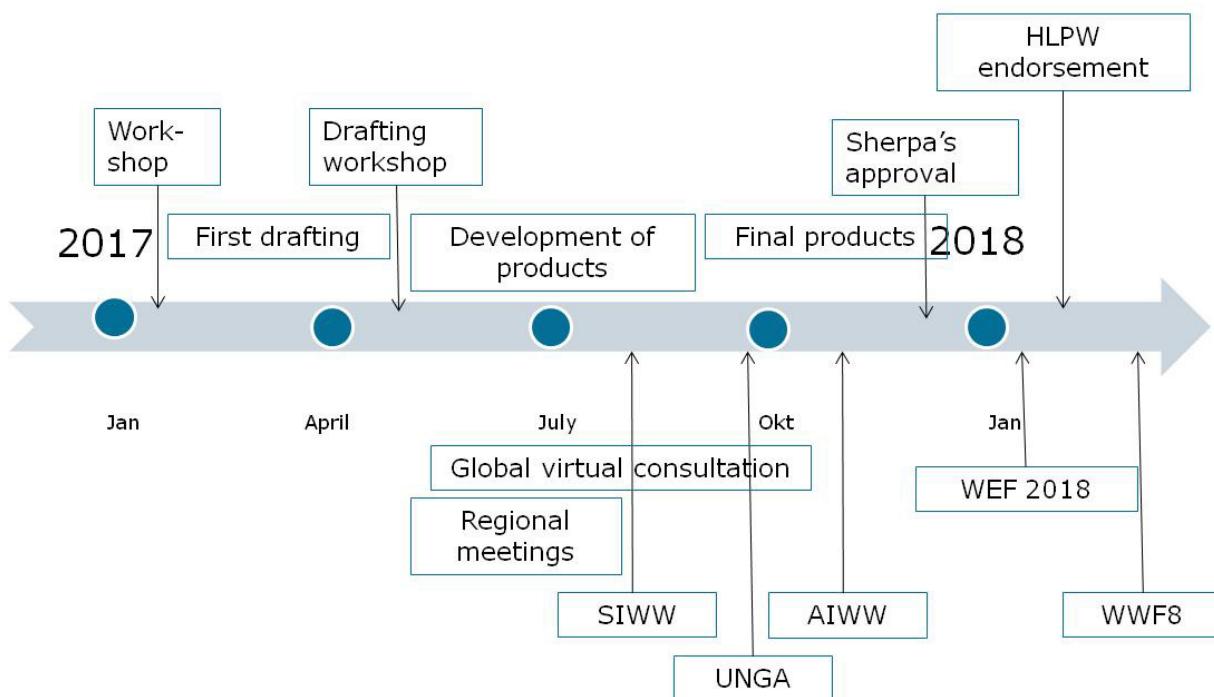


Figure 1: Planning of Valuing Water Initiative

7. Organization

Within the HLPW The Netherlands has adopted to be the so called champion of the Valuing Water Initiative. Supporting HLPW countries are Australia, Bangladesh and Tajikistan. Other HLPW member countries have shown interest to participate in the Valuing Water Initiative as well (e.g. South-Africa, Hungary and dr Han). For the implementation of the initiative The Netherlands works in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the HLPW and with growing participation of other HLPW countries.

Being one of the cross linking actions presented in the HLPW Action Plan, the linkages between the Valuing Water Initiative and other actions of the HLPW require special attention for the organization. There is for instance an important relation with the action Water Use Efficiency for Resilient Economies and Societies, because the values of water is (or should be) an important factor for allocation and efficient use of water. Linkages also exist with Water Governance (role of valuing water in decision making), Water Data (values of water related to data requirements), Resilient Economies, Societies and Disaster Risk Reduction (e.g. risk mitigating measures in relation to values of water). Universal Access to Safe Water Supply and Sanitation (the role of values of water in issues like water allocation, cost of water, price of water and tariff setting), Water and the Environment (environmental value of water). Though maybe less direct, there are

also linkages with the other actions of the HLWP. It is important for the Valuing Water Initiative to connect to the other actions to see how synergy can be created. When some first material (among others draft principles) is available the Valuing Water Initiative will reach out to other actions to see how valuing water can provide input for other actions and how other actions can help the Valuing Water Initiative.

The Valuing Water Initiative triggers interest in a wide range of organizations, governments, NGO's, companies and academic institutions. Their support and input in virtual and live discussion platforms, conference calls, document reviews and/or participation in workshops is of critical importance for the initiative and is highly appreciated. This support and input will be integrated as best as possible into the process of the Valuing Water Initiative.