



A Roundtable on Water Governance Hub

27th February 2020
Delhi

Organised by-
Center for Water and Sanitation at CRDF, CEPT University
National Institute of Urban Affairs
Stockholm International Water Institute

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Summary Report
February 2020





Background

India is facing a severe water crisis, both in terms of quantity of drinking water available and its quality. Across the country, cities, towns and villages are becoming increasingly susceptible to water related challenges. The significance of water management and governance has never been more pronounced. There is a need for improved and state-of-the-art water governance that not only addresses current issues and challenges but accounts for anticipated drivers of water security as well.

The proposed Water Governance Hub (WGH) intends to leverage on the experience of various partners to support and strengthen water governance in India. Its main purpose is to assist national, state and local governments in water and sanitation reform by providing policy and technical advice, developing water governance knowledge and helping to strengthen institutional capacity. WGH will strengthen monitoring and assessment in governments through tools developed by partners. It will advance water governance in thematic areas such as water supply and sanitation, integrated water resources management, climate change adaptation, integrity, gender and human rights. See annex 1 for the Concept Note of WGH.

On 27 February 2020 (Thursday), the three partners convened a roundtable with participants from over 25 institutions to discuss the notion of this WGH, and deliberate on various water governance challenges, experiences of various stakeholders and innovations. See annex 2 for the agenda of the roundtable and annex 3 for the list of participants.

The workshop had two main objectives:

- (a) To discuss the philosophy and concept of the WGH with the participants with a view to narrow the strategic direction for WGH
- (b) To serve as an avenue for participants to share their experiences and knowledge on the various water-related issues and challenges that will be important for WGH to address

Opening Session

Mr. Hitesh Vaidya, Director, NIUA welcomed all participants and officials from Ministry of Jal Shakti (MJS) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). Dr. Dinesh Mehta, Executive Director, Center for Water and Sanitation, CRDF, CEPT laid down the purpose and agenda of this meeting. He briefly described about need for the [water governance hub in India](#) at the time when national government is also aiming to improve water services through various programs. Moreover, how three partners (NIUA, CEPT and SIWI) will bring together wide ranging of experience related to water governance. The envisaged activities of WGH are also presented for deliberation.



During roundtable meeting, each partner provided a snapshot of their key activities related to governance in various aspects:

- [NIUA's Water Management Portfolio \(Dr. Victor R. Shinde, Sector Coordinator-Water and Environment, NIUA\)](#)
- [SIWI's Water Governance Programme \(Dr. Alejandro Jimenez, Director, Water and Sanitation, SIWI\)](#)
- [CWAS, CRDF, CEPT's Water Governance Activities \(Dr. Meera Mehta, Executive Director, C-WAS, CRDF, CEPT\)](#)

The roundtable also featured addresses by senior officials from Government of India. These include:

- Mr. Parmeshwaran Iyer (Secretary, Department of Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti)
- Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra (Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga)
- Ms. D. Thara (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs)

Mr. Parmeshwaran Iyer



Highlights of the address:

- Integrated governance of water has begun right at the top by merging two ministries into the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The enabling environment for water governance has already been created through various government initiatives such as Jal Shakti Abhiyaan; Jal Jeevan Mission; Swachh Bharat Mission (Phase-2) with significant funding streams.
- The challenge is to translate these initiatives on the ground. WGH could focus on facilitating this translation.
- There is a need to improve on conventional practices (e.g. striving for functioning household tap connection instead of just household connections)

Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra



Highlights of the talk:

- It is imperative to look at water holistically to ensue effective governance. Based on the NMCG experience, it is evident that partnerships among diverse stakeholders are key to good governance.
- There is a need for innovation and blue-sky thinking in water governance. Concepts like wastewater trading rights could be explored.
- A target area of WGH could be *integrated urban water management*
- The citizen angle of water governance cannot be overemphasized. E.g. connecting citizens to rivers is crucial for sustaining river rejuvenation endeavors.

Ms D. Thara



Highlights of the talk:

- There is a need for a paradigm shift in the way we look at wastewater. We can start by calling it new or used water instead of wastewater.
- Water governance cannot be achieved only by horizontal widening (city/ Urban Local Bodies-ULB level attempts) but vertical deepening (the central level missions and initiatives) will be required to achieve the larger targets.
- Source conservation, efficiency in water supply by reducing NRW, rejuvenating water bodies, private partnership for privatizing treated wastewater are critical focus areas to create a sustainable water system in cities.

Summary of discussion

All participants acknowledged the significance and importance of water management in current times. The participants expressed their full support in collaborating with the proposed Water Governance Hub. The discussions revealed critical priority areas for WGH to consider and led to a number of interesting ideas that can be incorporated in the work plan of the Hub. The key takeaways from the discussion were:

Assessment –Strengthen monitoring system:

- WGH can expand on previous work of performance assessment by including indicators/parameters for related domains such as wetland/river health, ecological aspects, and aquatic biodiversity, among others. And it could also provide equal emphasis to the sanitation sector (sewer and onsite sanitation systems, solid waste management) and storm water management sector given the close association between these sectors.
- A systems approach will be required for water governance, in which the interaction of water elements with other aspects such as urban planning, service and infrastructure planning, housing should be examined. This will help in identifying holistic solutions for water governance that will be truly sustainable.
- There is an urgent need in cities for tools that will help ascertain the water balance; establish avenues for wastewater reuse; real time water quality monitoring, rainwater recharging and harvesting, among others. WGH could help develop some of these tools and provide handholding support to city and state governments to strengthen data recording and monitoring system.

Technical support and leveraging data for decision-making process:

- Data is to the digital economy what oil is to the industrial economy. In this digital age, WGH should leverage on the data for designing performance based funding programs, policies and innovation in service delivery. Moreover, provide support to increase accountability, efficiency and equity in service delivery at national, state and city level.
- The Hub could build a case for basin level management that will cut across administrative boundaries (state-national, rural-urban etc.). This will ensure a paradigm shift in the water governance practice in India. While the various national level policies make a mention of basin level management, this is hardly a practiced. WGH has a unique opportunity to change this trend.
- The Hub could support ministry in establishing/ supporting water service/water sector regulators. In India the state of Maharashtra has a water regulator- the Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (MWRRA), but it still does not focus on water service tariff regulation (currently only available for irrigation water). The absence of regulations poses a major challenge to the scalability and sustainability in the sector. For instance, the unregulated use of ground water without adequate recharge mechanism leads to ground water depletion.
- There is a need to explore linkages between urban and rural areas for water and sanitation service provision. For example, the Government of Tamil Nadu has already started initiating the rural and urban collaboration with the aim of establishing around 60 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs). CEPT also done feasibility analysis for treatment of septage emptied from villages in existing or planned Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs) in Maharashtra.

Learning and knowledge sharing to accelerate state / nationwide scaling up

- There are several examples of ongoing initiatives taken by the partners (e.g. CWAS work in six states; NIUA's projects in the Ganga River Basin; SIWI's global network) that have had a fair degree of success, and make a case for scaling up.
- The actual operationalization of water governance happens at the state and ULB level. It is, therefore, imperative that government officials and private service providers are fully abreast of water and sanitation related challenges and have the capacity to address those. A core mandate of WGH should be to help build these capacities and incentive programs to meet service benchmarks.
- The Hub could also provide support to national governments for various aspects such as form national task force for wastewater reuse, hand-holding of startups, showcase of successful technologies, innovations and learnings around policies and other mechanisms implemented at state/ local levels and so on.
- An often-ignored aspect of water governance is community sensitization and engagement. Communities have a vital role to play in the path towards water security. Water governance can no longer afford the traditional top-down approach. WGH must take cognizance of this when designing its strategic approach.



Annexure 1: Concept note - Water Governance Hub

The Need

Cities have become more susceptible to water scarcity than ever before. Climate change and resultant uncertain weather patterns are forcing cities to take extreme steps to combat severe water crisis, especially during summer months. Trains loaded with water have been sent to Chennai and many cities during drought years. It is time to think of a more sustainable solution for water supply services.

A recent Niti Ayog report has said that 'India is suffering from the worst water crisis in its history'¹. The report further states that 21 cities will run out of ground water by 2020 affecting over 100 million people.

The Government of India is conscious of the looming crisis and has restructured and subsumed the ongoing National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) into Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every household or Har Ghar Nal Se Jal (HGNSJ) by 2024.

However, it must be recognised that the water crisis also needs improved management and governance. As OECD points out "Managing and securing access to water for all is not only a question of money, but equally a matter of good governance"². The tendency in the past has however been to focus on building infrastructure, instead of ensuring that the available water is delivered efficiently and equitably.

The Approach

The proposed Water Governance Hub (WGH) intends to use the respective experience of various partners to support and strengthen water governance in India. Its main purpose will be to support state and local governments in their water and sanitation reform by providing policy and technical advice, developing water governance knowledge and helping to strengthen institutional capacity. The Hub will strengthen monitoring and assessment in governments through tools developed by partners. (e.g. PAS, City resilience tool etc.). It will advance water governance in thematic areas such as water supply and sanitation, integrated water resources management, climate change adaptation, integrity, gender and human rights.

The WGH will support local governments in delivery of water in an effective, efficient and equitable manner. It will aim to: a) extend and deepen the performance assessment

¹ Niti Aayog (2018), "[Composite water management index](#)", Niti Aayog.

² See OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/env/watergovernanceprogramme.htm>

system with by adding additional aspects related to water security and governance, b) provide policy and technical support to state and local governments, c) develop capacity of local governments and other stakeholders to deal with impending water crisis, and d) develop a knowledge network and a repository for research and tools related to water governance.

"Water governance is one of the most critical areas through which to improve the sustainable development of water resources and services. How societies choose to govern their water resources and services has profound impacts on people's livelihood and the sustainability of water resources. Access to water is, for many people, a matter of daily survival, or can help to break the vicious circle

of poverty. Improving water governance is therefore essential to alleviating global poverty.” (UNDP-SIWI Water Facility)

OECD’s water governance programme defines water governance as “the set of rules, practices, and processes through which decisions for the management of water resources and services are taken and implemented, and decision-makers are held accountable”. UNDP’s Water Governance Facility says that, “Water governance refers to the political, social, economic and administrative systems in place that influence water’s use and management. Essentially, who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related services, and their benefits. It determines the equity and efficiency in water resource and services allocation and distribution. It also helps balance water use between socio-economic activities and ecosystems.”

Envisaged Activities of the Water Governance Hub

Use PAS system approach for water security and governance: The PAS system currently captures only service delivery related information. This experience will be used to include information on policies and practices related to conservation (both at city level as well as household level), behaviour change (reduced consumption related measures), detailed information on recycling and reuse of water, and regulation and financing of water at the city or district level. This system will be used to explore the development of a Water Governance Index (WGI) for cities and districts in India. This will enable improvements to be tracked regularly.

Provide policy and technical advice and support to state and local governments: Many state and local governments will need to develop policies and programmes for water conservation, water audits, rainwater harvesting, wastewater reuse, citizen feedback, dissemination of water related information etc. The facility will develop templates for such policies and programmes using tools developed by SIWI, CEPT and partners (e.g. water integrity framework, water security toolkits). It will also document ‘good practice’ policies and programmes adopted in cities and rural areas in India and globally.

Develop capacity of local governments to deal with impending water crisis: Small and medium towns in India often lack the necessary financial, technical and managerial capacities to deal with water related issues. The proposed WGH will develop capacity building modules on relevant topics. (E.g. the urban water security toolkit developed by CEPT), and create opportunities for learning and building capacities.

Develop Knowledge network and a repository for water governance: CWAS’s PAS is already the largest depository of urban water and sanitation database. Through the proposed WGF, it will build a platform and a network of institutions working on water and sanitation related aspects. It will also become a repository of tools, technologies, case studies for improved water governance.

Implementation

The GWH will initiate work in states where the partners are already active and where there is an interest in water and sanitation related issues. Based on the initial experience, it will be extended to other states in response to the demand.

There will be some aspects, however, such as capacity building, development of case studies on policy and good practices and knowledge network that are not rooted to a specific state. This can be taken up simultaneously on a pan-India basis.

Partners

C-WAS: Center for Water and Sanitation at CEPT University

CEPT's [Center of Water and Sanitation \(C-WAS\)](#) has been working on urban water and sanitation related action research since 2009. C-WAS carries out various activities – action research, training and advocacy to enable state and local governments to improve delivery of services. C-WAS began its work with Performance Assessment System (PAS) Project funded by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The Performance Assessment System for urban water and sanitation service delivery now covers 6 states and 900+ cities in India, and has become a major repository of urban water and sanitation database in India.

Early efforts in C-WAS have included support to cities for improving their water supply systems through water audits, drawing a roadmap for continuous water supply and focusing on drinking water quality surveillance. C-WAS has also been involved in knowledge management and advocacy for participatory ground water management and urban water security planning. CWAS demonstrated application of a 'low-cost' water audit methodology that enables estimation of water losses in the system. CWAS was one of the partners in developing a training course on pro-poor benchmarking at UNESCO-IHE.

In response to sanitation emerging as a national priority in recent years, C-WAS has focused its work on urban sanitation. In Maharashtra, with funding from BMGF, C-WAS supports the state government and local government to implement Swachh Bharat Mission. The state of Maharashtra has become Open Defecation Free (ODF). C-WAS team is now working on making cities ODF+/++, i.e. manage waste water appropriately, with a focus on safely managed sanitation.

More information about CWAS work on urban water management is available at this [link](#).

SIWI: Stockholm International Water Institute

The [Stockholm International Water Institute \(SIWI\)](#) is a policy institute that generates knowledge, builds capacity and informs decision-making with a view to addressing these challenges. Its vision is a Water Wise World – a world that recognizes the value of water and ensures that it is inclusively shared and used sustainably, equitably and efficiently for all.

SIWI believes that the best way to tackle water crises and help bring about lasting change – with the ultimate goal being the eradication of poverty – is to strengthen water governance among public and private actors alike: the political, social, economic and administrative systems and processes that influence water's use and management. Essentially, who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related services, and their benefits. More information about SIWI work on water improved water governance is available at this [link](#).

Its mission is to “Strengthen water governance for a just, prosperous and sustainable future”. Its focus is on strengthening the governance of freshwater, globally, regionally, nationally, and locally. SIWI hosts the world's premier annual water meeting, World Water Week, and it awards the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize, under the patronage of the H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf, and the Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

SIWI is a Swedish, independent, not-for-profit foundation. Its work is underpinned and guided by its core values: passion, integrity, inclusiveness, and quality. It works in a spirit of independence and non-partisanship.

SIWI is based in Stockholm and has around 90 staff from over 30 countries. More than half the staff members work directly with applied research, advisory services and capacity building. The Institute's main income sources are the Swedish Government, intergovernmental agencies and bilateral donors. SIWI is increasingly collaborating with the private sector and is heading a major initiative on water in the textile industry. SIWI has implemented projects for multilateral organisations such as UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, EU and several governments since 1991.

NIUA: National Institute of Urban Affairs

[National Institute of Urban Affairs \(NIUA\)](http://www.niua.org) is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, India (www.niua.org) whose prime mandate is to promote integrated solutions for urban India. It is widely considered as the think tank of the Ministry. NIUA's engagement with the Ministry and other like-minded organizations over the last 43 years in diverse domains has made NIUA an authority in matters related to the urban sector. It has a pulse on the changing needs of Indian cities with respect to the various current and emerging drivers of urban development. It has been closely associated with several urban missions launched by the Ministry. These include the Smart Cities Mission; Swachh Bharat Mission; Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY); and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT); among others. Water and sanitation related aspects figure prominently in all these missions. In addition to these, NIUA is actively involved in the preparation of the draft National Water Policy; and the draft National Urban Water Supply and Management Policy (2020–2030).

Over the years, NIUA has worked on several projects and initiatives related to some form of water and waste management in cities. Currently it hosts a dedicated “*Sanitation Capacity Building Platform*” supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Platform seeks to build the capacity of town/cities to plan and implement decentralized sanitation solutions. Under this platform 15+ training modules for faecal sludge and septage management have been developed; 35+ capacity-building programmes on urban sanitation have been carried out; and 2000+ government officials have been trained. The platform has also supported the development of city sanitation plans, state FSM policies, draft of National Urban Sanitation Policy 2.0, etc. Similarly, NIUA has recently concluded a USAID funded project “*Innovation Hub for Urban Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Solutions (IHUWASH)*” that helped improve urban WASH sector performance through incubation and acceleration of innovative solutions, technologies, programs and service delivery models within a collaborative framework. From a water management perspective, it is currently doing a project with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (under the Ministry of Jal Shakti) entitled, “*Addressing the urban drivers of river health in the Ganga River Basin*”. The project has developed a framework for developing river-centric urban management plans that cities in the Ganga River Basin will adopt in the next few years. This is first of its kind in India, and possibly the world. Another ongoing high-profile project is the “*Master Plan for Delhi-2041*”, where an integrated approach is being adopted to plan for the management of water resources. The project has established a group of 20+ government water- and environment-related agencies that is collectively working on holistic solutions to effectively manage the water and wastewater sector in Delhi.

Annexure 2: Workshop Agenda

10.00 – 10.30	Registration
10:30 – 10.45	Welcome – NIUA, CEPT and SIWI Introduction of Water Governance Hub (WGH)
10.45 – 10.55	Introductory remarks – Ms. D. Thara, Joint Secretary, MoHUA
10.55 – 11.05	Introductory remarks – Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga
11.05 – 11.20	Keynote address – Mr. Parmeshwar Iyer, Secretary (DWS), Ministry of Jalashakti
11.20 – 11.30	Reflections
11.30 – 11.40	Presentation by CEPT on C-WAS activities
11.40 – 11.50	Presentation by SIWI on its water governance work
11:50 – 12:00	Presentation by NIUA on its role in urban water governance
12:00 – 13.15	Open discussions on Water Governance Hub
13.15 – 13.30	Wrap up and Lunch

Annexure 3: List of participants in the workshop

Sr No	Name	Organisation
1	Abhinav Akhilesh	KPMG
2	Abhishek Chatterjee	WASH Institute
3	Akshat Shukla	Piramal
4	Alejandro Jiménez	SIWI
5	Anantika Singh	Hindustan Unilever Foundation
6	Apoorva Shrivastav	EY
7	B Ashwin Kumar	NIUA
8	Bindeshwar Pathak Founder	Sulabh International
9	D. Thara	MoHUA, AMRUT
10	Dhruv Bhavsar	CWAS, CEPT
11	Dinesh Mehta	CWAS, CEPT
12	Harshvardhan Dhawan	Arghyam
13	Hitesh Vaidya	NIUA
14	Jaladhi Vavaliya	CWAS, CEPT
15	Jyoti Patil	National Institute of Hydrology
16	Jyoti Verma	NMCG
17	Kavita Wankhede	IIHS
18	Kumar Saket	KPMG
19	Lalit Kumar	Sulabh International
20	Lovlesh Sharma	NIUA
21	M Deendayalan	CPHEEO
22	Madhavi Purohit	Arghyam
23	Malavika Thirukode	The Asia Foundation
24	Meera Mehta	CWAS, CEPT
25	Monika Bahl	GIZ

Sr No	Name	Organisation
26	Mr. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra	NMCG
27	N.B.Mazumdar	Sulabh International
28	Nikita Madan	NIUA
29	Panchali Saikia	SIWI
30	Parmeshwar Iyer	MoJ
31	Poonam Sharma	CGWB
32	Prakar Nigam	NIUA
33	Pranab Kumar Mohapatra	IIT, Gandhinagar
34	Pushkar Srivastava	ADB
35	Rahul Sachdeva	NIUA
36	Rahul Sharma	GIZ
37	Ribhya Sarna	ISC - FICCI
38	Ruchi Agarwal	Piramal
39	Ruchika Shiva	IRC
40	Sakshi Gudwani	BMGF
41	Sh. Radheshyam Tyagi	Delhi Jal Board (Former Member)
42	Shalabh Kumar	Delhi Jal Board
43	Shivani Saxena	NMCG
44	Suresh Babu	WWF-India
45	Suresh Kumar Rohilla	CSE
46	Swayamprabha Das	UNDP
47	Tina Mathur	KPMG
48	Uday Shankar Saha	IWMI
49	Upasana Yadav	CWAS, CEPT
50	V.C.Goyal	National Institute of Hydrology
51	Victor Rana Shinde	NIUA
52	Vishakha Jha	NIUA

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National Institute of Urban Affairs

SIWI


