**UN-Water Expert Group for Water Quality and Wastewater: Updated Terms of Reference**

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| **1. Input prepared by:**  |
| Expert group co-leads United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) |
| **2. Background** |
| The UN-Water Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater was originally established at the 27th UN-Water Meeting in August 2017 with UNEP as coordinating agency to fill a coordination gap in the UN system on ambient water quality and wastewater issues. This Expert Group carried out a number of tasks for UN-Water, primarily in the form of policy briefs, a compendium and leadership on the 2018 World Water Day topic of wastewater. Since the establishment of this Expert Group, a number of water quality and wastewater initiatives have been established in relevant UN agencies. It is clear that there is still a gap where expert knowledge on ambient water quality and wastewater treatment remains, and that there is a continued requirement for such an Expert Group to fill coordination role in these areas. At the 37th UN-Water Meeting in December 2022, the SPMs requested UNEP to present at the 38th UN-Water Meeting a proposal for transferring the coordination function of the Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater to the World Water Quality Alliance. Subsequently, at the 38th UN-Water Meeting in August 2023, the SPMs thanked UNEP for reviewing the functions of the Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater and for providing updated TORs to revitalize the Expert Group. The SPMs welcome the offer of UNEP, WHO and FAO to co-coordinate the Expert Group, acknowledging good ambient water quality and wastewater management is central to achieving a number of SDGs and linked to ecosystems, human health and agricultural systems, and to revise the TORs of the Expert Group to reflect its tripartite co-coordination. The SPMs invite the Expert Group to convene all relevant members and propose a set of activities by the 39th UN-Water Meeting. UNEP, FAO and WHO have updated these Terms of Reference (TOR) to ensure the EG can be serviced by all coalitions and initiatives convened by the WWQA and GWWI, the global coalitions that UNEP convenes, drawing upon its diverse expertise and convening power in the areas of water quality and wastewater.The paragraphs below have a short summary of some of the relevant water quality and wastewater initiatives in the co-coordinating partners that will be relevant for this work.**UNEP** serves as the global custodian for SDG indicator 6.3.2 on ambient water quality and draws upon its diverse expertise and convening power in the areas of water quality and wastewater as exemplified by the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA), created in 2018 and the Global Wastewater Initiative (GWWI) created in 2013 that have matured into global collaborative partnerships for exchange of information, knowledge and experience and servicing the EG. The WWQA is an active, established network brings knowledge and expertise through workstreams that convene subject matter experts on issues pertaining to ambient water quality. The Global Wastewater Initiative (GWWI) is a multi-stakeholder platform of UN experts and actors from all regions working to implement and scale-up efforts to tackle wastewater pollution worldwide. Similarly, **FAO** leads initiatives to manage water scarcity in agriculture, promoting the use of non-traditional water resources and climate-smart practices. It drives the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Regional initiative, fostering policy and field adaptation to water scarcity with over 30 partners. The FAO-hosted Inter-regional technical platform on water scarcity (iRTP-WS) serves as a partnership and knowledge hub for water scarcity solutions, sharing best practices and tools online. Committed to sustainable water management, FAO advances the use of treated wastewater in agriculture, supporting soil health and water efficiency. FAO is also the custodian agency for SDG Indicator 6.4.1, monitoring changes in water-use efficiency over time.Finally, **WHO** will also draw upon its strengths, mandate and networks for this Expert Group. As the UN specialized agency for health with 120+ country offices it contributes with the following thematic: ; evidence-based health guidance, tools and capacity (e.g., guidelines on safe use of wastewater, recreational water quality, sanitation and health), monitoring of SDGs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.1,6a and 6b including financial flows to the sector, convening of regulators via WHO RegNet, integration of sanitation, wastewater and water pollution across WHO disease and risk programmes (e.g. AMR, Cholera, NTDs, food safety and nutrition, health facilities) and global coordination of wastewater and environmental surveillance for pandemic preparedness and response. |

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| **2. Objective** |
| The objectives of the Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater is to:* Work toward greater technical coherence and alignment of UN-systemwide technical advice on aspects of water quality and wastewater management,
* Provide a platform to exchange information, knowledge, experience and expertise on water quality and wastewater issues, and
* Respond to other needs and requests of UN-Water members and partners in this area of work as possible.
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| **3. If membership is already established, please list the Expert Group member organizations. Please also attach the Expert Group’s mailing list.** |
| UNEP, FAO and WHO will draw upon all UN-Water members and partners interested in joining the expert group with full details of contact list and focal points attached to be made available on the UN-water website. They are (TBC after email seeking expression of interest to join): * UN-Habitat
* UNICEF
* UNIDO
* IAEA
* World Bank
* UNDP
* WaterAid
* SWA

In addition, the diverse expertise and convening power in the areas of water quality and wastewater of the three coordinating agencies will be mobilized utilizing hosted platforms and networks such as WWQA, GWWI, RegNet and global experts and end user groups that each convenes. UNEP, FAO, and WHO will solicit inputs and mobilize experts as needed to respond to requests to UN-Water and complete mandatory periodic reporting to UN-Water SPMs.  |

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| **4. Please describe the Expert Group’s proposed specific terms of reference.** |
| The EG aims are three-fold:1. Work toward greater technical coherence and alignment of UN-systemwide technical advice on aspects of water quality and wastewater management,
2. Provide a platform to exchange data, information, knowledge, experience and expertise on water quality and wastewater issues, and
3. Respond to other needs and requests of UN-Water in this area of work as possible.

On objective 1 the lead agencies will aim to:* conduct a mapping of specific areas of lead agency and EG member expertise related to water quality and wastewater management aligned with organizational mandates;
* work toward common principles and definitions that support a One-health and Water Energy Food Environment + Health (WEFE+H) perspective on water quality and wastewater management to guide alignment of EG members technical advice;
* Identify priority joint outputs at the intersection of One-health for joint development/publication by EG leads/members

On objective 2 the EG will:* Provide a platform to share water quality monitoring, encourage data uptake and quality and new data sources as well as wastewater science, innovation, and accelerating scaling-up solutions in the water sector within the SDGs.
* Set up an open Community of Practice at disposal to UN-Water and members (this could be linked to the coalitions convened by UNEP, FAO, WHO) to provide ad hoc expert advice, respond to UN-Water common queries and requests, within available resources, on topics such as (not exhaustive list):
	+ Coordination and partnerships with UN, private sector, academia, member states, for water quality and wastewater solutions;
	+ Public awareness of water quality and wastewater issues, especially emerging pollutants;
	+ Technical capacity development and knowledge sharing on water quality and wastewater, in close collaboration with the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative;
	+ Addressing the impacts of climate change on water quality and wastewater management, including adaptation strategies;
	+ Exploring the interconnectedness of water quality with overall ecosystem health and biodiversity preservation and utilizing nature based solutions for water quality;
	+ Data to action, linking on UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI).

In objective 3, for requests that fall outside of its agreed workplan, the EG on WQ and WW will respond to requests from UN-Water through its SPM Meetings, as funds and resources are available. The EG WQ&WW:* promotes collaborative action between UN-Water Members and Partners,
* can be convened on demand with variable participation subject to the key topic under consideration,
* establishes a flexible Community of Practice on water quality and wastewater
* produces joint deliverable at the intersection of One-health, WEFE+H nexus and lead agency mandates
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