



SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report China

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Prepared by:

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GWP China

Stakeholder Consultation Report for SDG 6.5.1

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Executive Summary

After communication with and getting support and guidance from the GWP, the GWP China had discussed with the relevant departments of China's Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) which is responsible for the implementation of SDG 6 in China. The support is given by the MWR to the GWP China to organize the Country Stakeholder Workshop for the SDG 6.5.1. Mr. Mengzhuo Guo, Former Deputy Director, Department of Water Resources Management, MWR, has been appointed as the national IWRM Focal Point. Dr. Yang Zhaohui, Professor of IWHR, has been chosen as the Facilitator for the Workshop, and took the self-paced online course Training of Facilitators Course for SDG 6.5.1.

According to the Guidance Note for the SDG 6.5.1 Workshop, to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, as agreed by the national IWRM Focal Point, the invitations together with the questionnaire were sent to the various groups, sectors and levels for the Workshop participants. There were 20 participants participating in the Workshop from central government (Ministry of Water Resource, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, National Health Commission), river basin authorities (Yellow River and Haihe River commissions), local government (provincial, municipal and county) and other stakeholders including the research institutions, universities, corporations and media, with 7 female (Appendix 1: List of participants). Before the Workshop, the questionnaires completed by the participants were collected. 13 participants choose to fill the questionnaires through the IWRM Survey Tool, and 7 participants choose to fill the questionnaires by email.

The Workshop (In-person) was held on September 26, 2023 in Beijing. Dr. You Jinjun, Program Officer of GWP China, host the Workshop. The background and purpose of the Workshop was interpreted before discussion. The discussions were led by Dr. Yang Zhaohui, the Facilitator. Each participating actor had a fair say in the process, and conducted an in-depth discussion on each section (Appendix 2: Agenda).

China adheres to the philosophy of people-centered development, making every effort to ensure the safety of drinking water. China has actively promoted the development of a water

saving society, comprehensively enhanced the efficiency of water resource utilization, actively advanced the ecological protection and management of major rivers and lakes, comprehensively implemented the “river chief” and “lake chief” system, establishing and refining the organizational structure and working mechanisms for these chiefs. In addition, China has also attached great importance to the protection and restoration of the ecosystem and extensively engaged in international cooperation and exchange in the field of water resources. China ensures water supply for nearly 20% of the global population with only 6% of the world’s freshwater resources, and has made positive progress in implementing water-related SDGs.

Influenced by both global climate change and human activities, there has been an increasing trend in recent years of more frequent, intensive, and widespread extreme weather events, which pose new challenges to the implementation of water-related SDGs. The completed survey can be found in IWRM Survey Questionnaire China. The average score given for the survey is 80%, which is progressed compared with the evaluation results in 2020. The overall opinion of the participants is that China has adequate capacity and strength to implement the IWRM and achieve the water related SDGs. And it is an overall likelihood of reaching the IWRM implementation by 2030.

1.Conclusions from the facilitated discussions on Section 1: “Enabling Environment”

The average score given for the enabling environment is 84P%. China has reached a high level of implementation for each question of section 1. There are differences in scores on the results of different stakeholder groups, including: 1.1.c National integrated water resources management (IWRM) plans, or similar, and 1.2.c Arrangements for transboundary water management. The highest score stakeholders gave was 100%, the lowest score is only 20%.

After discussions over this section, most of the participants had reached common agreement that in general the enabling environment for the IWRM implementation in China is good. Taking arrangements for transboundary water management as an example, China has initiated extensive international cooperation, jointly advancing the realization of water-related SDGs with all parties. China has conducted ongoing water resources cooperation

under the BRI, engaging in collaborations in areas such as water resources utilization and management. Furthermore, initiatives such as the “China South-South Green Envoy Plan”, the “China-ASEAN Green Envoy Plan”, and the “Green Lancang-Mekong Plan” have been implemented to conduct environmental management and technical training. These efforts provide robust support to developing countries along the Belt and Road, helping them address water pollution and water security issues.

China has developed a better framework to implement the IWRM, including the comprehensive policies, legislations, plannings, management and monitoring systems, the established organizations at all levels, the good coordination between the central and local governments, between different sectors and between the river basin organizations and the provinces/autonomous regions in the river basins.

2. Conclusions from the facilitated discussions on Section 2: “Institutions and Participation”

The average score given for the Institutions and Participation questions is 79%. There are still 4 questions in China which are scored medium-high. These four are (1)2.1.c Public participation in water resources, policy, planning and management at national level. (2) 2.1.d Private sector participation in water resources development, management and use. (3)2.2.b Public participation in water resources, policy, planning and management at the local level. (4) 2.2c. Participation of vulnerable groups in water resources planning and management. After discussions over this section, the participants had reached common agreement that in general institutions and participation for the IWRM implementation in China is good.

In China, the institutions for the IWRM implementation are very well set up at different levels, from the central, provincial, cities, counties, townships and down to villages, with quite strong strength and capacities which play the key roles for the water resources management and the implementation of the national IWRM plans. China has established cross-sector and cross-agency coordination mechanisms for the water issues. The river basin organizations in China

have the capacity to effectively lead the IWRM implementation in the basins and the organizational framework for the cross-province water management. The public participation in water resources management, policy and planning at national and local levels is generally good. However, the business participation in water resources development, management and use at national level is relatively limited.

For gender-specific objectives for water resources management at national and local levels, it is quite a bit controversial among the participants. Most participants think that gender is not an issue in China for it is stated in the Constitution that men and women are equal and equal pay for the equal work while a few suggest that it is still an issue that no women-specific policies are formulated. After the discussions, the consensus has been reached that this criterion is relatively inapplicable in China.

3. Conclusions from the facilitated discussions on Section 3: “Management Instruments”

The average score given for the Management Instruments questions is 82%. That means China has reached a high level of implementation. There are still 3 questions in this section that are ranked medium-high. These three are (1) 3.2b. Aquifer management instruments,(2)3.2 c. Data and information sharing within countries at all levels,(3) 3.2d. Transboundary data and information sharing between countries.

After discussions over this section, most of the participants had reached common agreement that in general management instruments for the IWRM implementation in China is good. In China, the management instruments for the IWRM are developed and used and further improved in the recent years. These instruments include the water resources monitoring and metering systems, statistic system of water use, licensing system for water-taking, water-pricing system and groundwater monitoring network, etc.

In recent years, water conservation priority has been further promoted, water resources supervision and water resources protection has been continuously strengthened, the river

and lake chief system will accelerate the transformation from responsible to effective , and rural drinking water security has been significantly improved, with positive progress.

Regulatory structures are required in four main areas: water use and water rights, wastewater control and water quality, service delivery (enterprise regulation), and safety of facilities. At present, regulatory functions are partly exercised by national entities, partly by River Basin Commissions, and partly by provincial and lower level entities. Within provinces: water use and water rights administration are currently responsible by the local Department of Water Resources; water quality regulation is primarily duty of the environmental agencies; regulation of water services is ill-developed, being shared by the price bureaus and other provincial and local entities; and safety of facilities is assigned to different implementing agencies. Furthermore, the full value of water drawing permit and wastewater discharge permit program are not thoroughly realized in part due to the lack of registers for the permits at county, provincial and river basin levels, and in part due to the failure to apply and enforce the "authorized" use and discharge against the actual use and discharge.

To address the challenges and issues: (1) The River Chief System is a major innovation for water resources management in China. However, further implementation of the River Chief System is needed to emphasize more on IWRM to comprehensively solve the problems of flood, dry, pollution, and ecological health, other than water body governance. (2) Further implementation of the priority policy of water conservation is needed to reflect the "most stringent" requirements of IWRM in accordance with the principle of water demand, and comprehensively supervise the conservation, development, utilization, protection, allocation, dispatch and other aspects of water resources. (3) More scientific water allocation in important river basins is needed to make harmony water resources development and socio-economic development. (4) Stronger monitoring system is needed to enhance the ability IWRM. Anyhow, management struments is dynamic, more integrated concepts, mechanism and measures are the direction to improve the management struments along with the scientific and technological development.

4. Conclusions from the facilitated discussions on Section 4: “Financing”

The average score given for the financing questions is 78%, which is high implementation. The central government budget can cover the major tasks and infrastructures. Many financial mechanisms and resources in China are available for water sectors. The national and sub-national budgets for investment are basically sufficient for water resources infrastructures and the IWRM implementation.

Regarding the revenues raised from the dedicated levies, there are water resources fees, water resources fund and regular revenues for the water sector in China. In general, the central government’s investment for water sector is gradually increased.

The water price is relatively low, thus not to be favorable to water saving and financing for the development and utilization of water resources. What’s more, at present, the local government special bonds, financial credit and social capital is still used insufficiently in the construction of water conservancy projects. Therefore, China's departments of water resources at all levels should further strengthen close cooperation with the departments of finance or other, and strive for financial input at all levels.

To address the challenges and issues, more activities are needed: (1) Better implementation of investment plans and improvement of the efficiency of investment from central government and large river basins. (2) better financing policies for local governments with more flexible financial funds, special bonds, social capital input, and reasonable mechanism to ensure its exploitation. (3) More investments on water resources monitoring, scientific research, information construction and operation system, especially on water resources protection. (4) promoting cross-border river cooperation with the neighboring countries with more funds input, such as the Lancang-Mekong Fund.

5.Next Steps

As China's socio-economic development enters a new phase, there are new and higher demands for water resources management and protection of water ecosystems. China will prioritize the following tasks in the upcoming period.

First, further enhance water resources management. China will speed up the establishment of a rigid water resources constraint system and strictly implement the 14th Five-Year Plan's total water usage and intensity control targets. Under the premise of ensuring basic ecological needs for water, China will determine the arrangements, structure, and scale of economic and social development based on available water resources on both national and regional levels. China will improve water use efficiency, expand the area and scale of unconventional water utilization, increase the level of intensive conservation and utilization of water resources, strengthen water resources protection, and advocate for solutions to the issue of excessive water exploitation. China will promote the construction of an ecological civilization and high-quality economic and social development in a coordinated way.

Second, systematic water management. It is to improve management on overexploitation of water resources and groundwater over-extraction, strengthen the rigid constraints of water resources, and focus more on ecological maintenance and restoration. The IWRM should be designed and implemented more based on river basin in accordance with characteristics of water cycle. Holistic ideas are needed in the IWRM with overall consideration of different stakeholders.

Third, independent water regulatory supervision. A separate entity is needed to monitor, assess, and guide the process of IWRM implementation. It should be independent of all agencies responsible for the implementation.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: List of participants

Annex 2: Agenda

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

Annex 4: Photos

Annex 1: List of participants

Workshop participants

Name	Organisation	Position	Email address
Shi Qiuchi	International Economic&Technical Cooperation and Exchange Center, Ministry of Water Resources	Former director	275457560@qq.com
Huang liqun	Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Water Resources	Director	huanglq@mwr.gov.cn
Yan Zhanyou	Department of Water Resources Management, Haihe River Water Conservancy Commission, MWR	Director	yanzhyhw@sina.com
Deng Shuzhen	China Water Resources News	Former secretary	1392318435@qq.com
Zhou Huaidong	Water Environment Monitoring and Assessment Center, MWR	Former director	hdzhou@iwhr.com
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Liu Changshun	Water Resources Department, IWHR	Professor	liucs@iwhr.com
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Jiang Yunzhong	GWP China Water Resources Department, IWHR	SG Director	lark@iwhr.com
Zhang Shuling	Water Resources Management Center ,MWA	Former Deputy Director	zsl@mwr.gov.cn
Xu he	Water Resources Protection Bureau, Haihe River Water Conservancy Commission, MWR	Senior Engineer	215794810@qq.com
Dai Jun	Heihe River Basin Management Bureau Water Resources Department, Yellow River Water Conservancy Commission, MWR	Section Chief	499484313@qq.com
Zhang Chunling	Water Resources Department, IWHR	Professor	zhangcl@iwhr.com
Shao Ziping	South-to-North Water Diversion Group Cultural Tourism Company	Director	403619784@qq.com

Annex 2: Agenda

September 26, 2023

Meeting address: A962 meeting room, A-1, Fuxing Road, Haidian District, 100038 Beijing

Host: You Jinjun (Program Officer of GWP China)

14:30-15:00 Registration, Group photo

15:00-15:15 Conference introduction and welcome address by You Jinjun

- Declare the conference open
- Brief introduction of the conference,
- Introduction of participants and facilitators

15:15-15:45 Brief introduction of SDG assessment tasks and discussion points by Yang Zhaohui

- Brief introduction of work background and objectives
- Mission requirements and early implementation
- Preliminary evaluation results of experts and results analysis
- Introduction to discussion points

15:45-17:30 Expert discussion (Host: Yang Zhaohui)

- Assessment score and basis
- Discussion on main points of disagreement
- Propose common assessment score

17:30-18:00 Concluding Remarks (Host: You Jinjun)

- Summary of the assessment status of the conference
- The follow-up work
- Conference close

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

- 1、 The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda. For the better implementation, the inter-agency coordination mechanism has been set up consisting of 43 government departments at the central level with each being responsible for particular goal(s) as set by the Agenda. The Ministry of Water Resources is the leading agency for the implementation of SDG 6. So far the implementation of SDG 6.5.1 has gone well and much progress has already been made.
- 2、 In 2022, China defined the work objectives for introducing and improving water-saving policies, stipulating that by 2025 the total water consumption for economic and social purposes nationwide shall be controlled within 640 billion cubic meters, with water consumption per RMB10,000 of GDP expected to decrease by approximately 16%.
- 3、 China has comprehensively implemented the “river chief” and “lake chief” system, establishing and refining the organizational structure and working mechanisms for these chiefs. This has strengthened the management and control of waterfront spaces, clarified boundaries for river and lake management, and continuously reinforced the management and protection of rivers and lakes. From 2015 to 2022, the quality of surface water across the country has been consistently improved.
- 4、 The IWRM implementation in China is good with much progress achieved in regard to the 4 aspects as discussed in the Workshop thanks to the joint efforts made by all that are concerned.
- 5、 The Workshop is a successful one and much thanks to all participants. The GWP China will continue to work with the related governmental agencies and the partners to address the challenges and the issues that are mentioned in the Workshop so as to better achieve the water-related SDGs particularly the SDG 6.5.1.

Annex 4: Photos



