Long Session Report

Session Title: How OECD's Principles on Water Governance Promote Accountability, Sustainable Development and Social Justice Together

Date & Time: October 23, 8:30am - 10:00am
Report prepared by: Umrbek Allakulov, Research and Analytics Officer, Water Integrity Network

Moderated by: Christiaan Poortman, Senior Advisor/Chair, Transparency International/Construction Sector Transparency Initiative
Session coordinated by: Donal O'Leary, Senior Advisor, Transparency International

Experts:

Dr. Aziza Akhmouch, Acting Head of the Cities, Urban Policies, and Sustainable Development Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Joannie Leclerc, Dialogue and Societal Impact Director, SUEZ

Gari Villa-Landa, Head of International Affairs, Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation (AEAS)

Samuel Kimeu, Executive Director/Member of the International Board, Transparency International Kenya/Transparency International
What were the aims of the session and corruption risks?

The water sector is vulnerable to various risks including corruption because of its fragmented governance and high investment requirements. Also, the construction sector is heavily involved in implementing hydraulic infrastructure investments, which further exposes the water sector to corruption risks.

The session mainly focused on the implementation of the OECD Principles on Water Governance, which can serve as a tool to guide design and implementation of policies in the water sector. The application of the Principles can help effectively address the abovementioned risks and challenges. Special attention was given to Principle 9 and its application, which focuses on mainstreaming integrity and transparency practices in the water sector.

Summary of panellists’ contributions & discussion points (please be as detailed as possible)

At the onset of the workshop, Dr. Aziza Akhmouch of the OECD presented the OECD Principles on Water Governance. The OECD Principles on Water Governance provide a framework to understand whether water governance systems are performing optimally and help to adjust them where necessary. The Water Governance Indicator Framework is composed of a traffic light system of indicators, a Checklist containing questions on water governance, and also an Action Plan for discussion on future improvements of the water governance system in the short, medium and long run.

Next, three experiences in applying the OECD Principles on Water Governance were showcased. The first case, presented by Joannie Leclerc of SUEZ, focused on the lessons learned from the OECD Water Governance Initiative (WGI) working group on evolving practices in water governance. Majority of data and information on evolving practices were collected from OECD countries, while 25% of the practices were collected from non-OECD countries. It was also noted that civil society is underrepresented in the collected practices. The highest share of practices referenced Principle 3 on Policy Coherence and Principle 1 on Clear Roles and Responsibilities. Principle 11 on
Trade-offs Across Users, Rural and Urban Areas, and Generation as well as Principle 7 on Regulatory Frameworks were underrepresented. Determining factors for transformative governance requires identification of challenges through stakeholder engagement; existence of institutional frameworks, finance and skills, data, and equally importantly, leadership and political will.

The second case was presented by Gari Villa-Landa, who elaborated on the experience of the Spanish Association of Water Supply and Sanitation (AEAS) in pilot testing the WGI indicators framework. Several lessons learned from the process were highlighted, including the need to evolve from water management to governance, and to think globally while acting locally. This requires a change in the mindset of the stakeholders. Also, an open dialogue on critical matters such as transparency, integrity, and accountability among multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholders is needed for better water governance.

Finally, Samuel Kimeu of Transparency International Kenya shared experiences from applying the Principles in Kenya. Principle 9 aims to mainstream integrity and transparency across water policies and institutions. As the water sector is especially prone to corruption, the implementation and monitoring of Principle 9 through the proposed monitoring system is especially of interest in Kenya and other African countries. The implementation and monitoring of Principle 9 are complementary to TI-Kenya’s ongoing work that focuses on improving Transparency, Accountability, and Participation (TAP) in the sector. Lastly, TI-Kenya has a strong interest to contribute to the programme on “The Governance and Economics of Water Security for Sustainable Development in Africa” with a focus on ethical procurement and use of anti-corruption tools.
Main outcomes of session (include the highlights and interesting questions from the floor)

The implementation of the Principles in different countries and contexts demonstrate that the move from water management to water governance requires a change of mindset. Especially, stakeholder engagement is pivotal to effective water governance, and this has emerged as a common thread across the three cases presented during the workshop.

Questions from the floor focused on a number of interesting aspects of the Principles. Highlights of the discussions included the following:

- The Indicator Framework can be applied across different governance scales and water functions.
- Gender and inclusiveness are given due consideration and included as dimensions of the Principle on Stakeholder engagement.
- The Principles and the Indicators Framework have been developed mainly from input from OECD countries. However, several pilot tests were conducted outside of the OECD countries and the lessons learned were incorporated in the design of the Indicators Framework.

Key recommendations and concrete follow-up actions

The OECD has been awarded the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize for its work in the water sector, including the OECD Water Governance Initiative; It is currently developing a programme on “The Governance and Economics of Water Security for Sustainable Development in Africa.” The OECD invites strategic partnerships with stakeholders at international, national, regional, and local levels focusing on inter alia governance, integrity, and procurement themes.
We value your assessment following the outputs of the session, if you need to, please get feedback from the session coordinator or the moderator for this component.

What can be done to create opportunities for scaling up the solutions discussed in the session? And by whom?

The solutions discussed in the session can be further scaled up by widely disseminating the main messages and outcomes of the session. The session Coordinator, Moderator, Speakers, and Rapporteur will undertake efforts to this end. Also, we would suggest that the long session report be shared with OECD WGI members. In addition, the 'Long' report will be the basis of a report on the IACC Session to the attendees at the 11th WGI Meeting to be held in Zaragoza, Spain, November 12-13, 2018.
Key Insights for the future of the anti-corruption agenda (including Game Changing ideas/ suggestions/ actions from the session)

The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water and sanitation is a prerequisite to achieve many of the other Goals. However, the challenge of water security is growing, which undermines the efforts toward achieving the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Water crises are primarily governance crises. The OECD Principles on Water Governance is a tool that can guide national and subnational governments in designing and implementing better water policies and strategies.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted
Umrbek Allakulov, 7 November

This Long Report needs to be submitted by 7 November