



United Nations
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Expression of Interest

Mid-term evaluation of phase IX of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP)

July 2025

Reference: IOS / EVS / IHP-IX / 2025

Date: 16 July 2025

Request:

The Evaluation Office of UNESCO's Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) is currently seeking proposals from a qualified individual to provide technical expertise and input on water sciences to the **Mid-term evaluation of phase IX of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP)** as described in the Terms of Reference below. The evaluation is expected to take place between July 2025 and March 2026, with the technical expert expected to start in early September 2025. The estimated effort for this exercise is 30-35 working days.

How to apply:

To enable you to prepare a proposal for this assignment, please find attached the Terms of Reference.

Interested individuals should submit their application by **Tuesday 29 July 2025 at 23:59 CET** to Ms. Taipei Dlamini (t.dlamini@unesco.org) with copy to Mr. Alfonso Gonzalez-Montesinos (a.gonzalez-montesino@unesco.org). Please specify 'Expression of interest – Mid-term evaluation of UNESCO IHP-IX' in the email subject line.

Your written proposal should comprise:

(a) A Technical Proposal consisting of:

- The updated and abridged curriculum vitae of the individual planning to bid for this evaluation.
- A description of how the technical expert covers all the qualifications as defined in the Terms of Reference (1-2 pages)
- A statement indicating what experience, practices, areas of expertise and/or specialization distinguish you and make you a good fit for this assignment (maximum 2 pages)

- 2-3 samples or links to reports you completed within the last 3 years. If you have participated in evaluations before, we specifically ask that at least one of the samples provided be an evaluation report.

(b) A Financial proposal¹ consisting of :

- The overall cost of the assignment quoted in US dollars or in euros only. Please include the daily rates of the consultant as well as other overheads or incidentals.
- There may be one or two missions as part of this assignment. If confirmed, the costs of these missions will be calculated at a later stage and UNESCO will amend the contract of the selected consultant to cover those costs. Please do not include any mission costs in your financial proposal.

UNESCO places great emphasis on ensuring that the objectives of the work assignment, as described in the Terms of Reference, are met. Accordingly, in evaluating the proposals for the assignment, attention will focus first and foremost on the technical elements. From those proposals deemed suitable in terms of the criteria in the Terms of Reference, UNESCO shall select the proposal that offers the Organisation best value for money.

Thank you for your interest in this UNESCO assignment; and we look forward to receiving your proposal.

Claudia Ibarguen
Head of Evaluation
Division of Internal Oversight Services
UNESCO

¹ The Financial proposal is to be presented as a stand-alone document separated from the Technical proposal.

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Mid-term evaluation of phase IX of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

I. Background

1. The UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) is the only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research, water resources management, education and capacity building. Since its inception in 1975, the IHP has evolved from an internationally coordinated hydrological research programme into an encompassing and holistic programme to facilitate education and capacity-building and enhance water resources management and governance.

2. The main objective of the ninth phase of IHP is to facilitate a transdisciplinary and integrated methodological approach aimed to generate solutions for a water secure world in a complex context with the view of contributing towards the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on water² along with and other relevant internationally agreed agendas such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the New Urban Agenda³.

3. Since its inception, IHP has been implemented in phases, meant to reflect medium term strategies for the programme. Since 2016, IHP phases are implemented over an eight-year cycle aligned with the UNESCO Medium Term Strategies. The current ninth phase of IHP is thus aligned with UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-29 (the 42 C/4).

4. Phase IX is focused on developing knowledge in the field of water sciences to support Member States in becoming water secure in light of the changing environment (e.g. addressing water scarcity, floods, climate change adaptation efforts, urban water management, etc). This phase was specifically built around a detailed theory of change outlined in the [Strategic Plan for IHP-IX](#) (see the Figure below). It is organised around five priority areas:

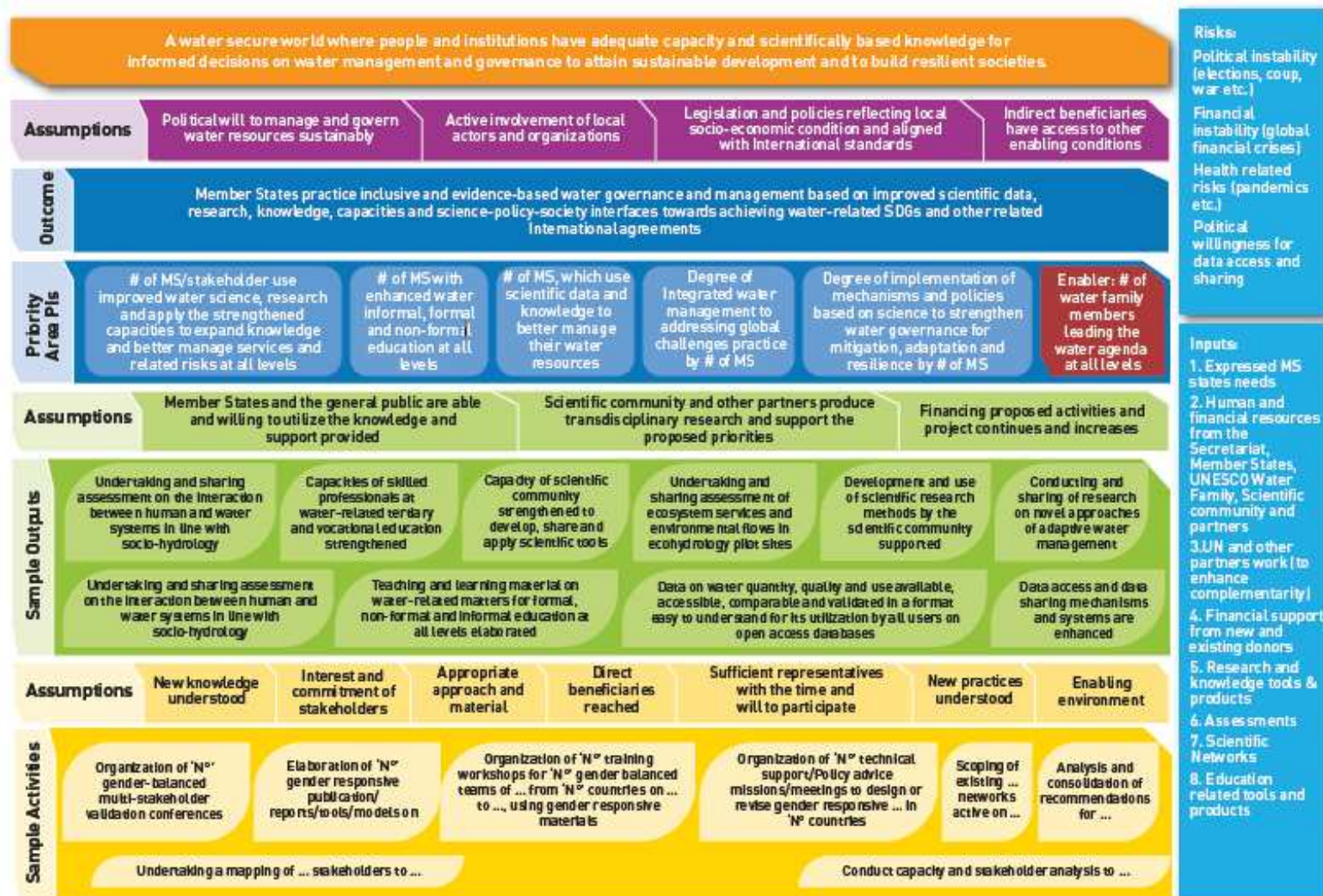
- 1) Scientific Research and innovation
- 2) Water education in the Fourth Industrial Revolution including Sustainability
- 3) Bridging the data-knowledge gap
- 4) Integrated water management under conditions of global change
- 5) Water governance based on science for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience

5. These 5 priority areas are each associated with specific outputs. The [IHP-IX Operational Implementation plan](#) outlines a total of 34 outputs and 151 key activities.

² The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework and its 2030 Agenda including, specifically, SDG 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and its connecting role to all the other SDGs, the associated High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and updated monitoring of progress towards SDG targets, the SDG 6 Global Accelerator Framework,

³ Other relevant international frameworks include: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Development; the Human Rights Framework with reference to the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation (UNGA Resolution A/RES/64/292 and A/RES/70/169); the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition; the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki 1992); the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (New York, 1997); the Resolution A/RES/68/118 on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers. Other important frameworks include the UNGA declaration on the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and the Decade of Action to Deliver SDGs by 2030, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the Global Commission on Adaptation's Year of Action, and the outcome document of the Small Island Developing States' Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Figure 1 Theory of Change of phase IX of the IHP



Source: IHP-IX Strategic Plan, Annex 1.

6. There are also three cross-sectoral axes to supplement the foundational five priority areas and ensure synergy. They are in line with the scope of work of the three sections of the UNESCO Division for Water Sciences:

- 1) Hydrological Systems, Rivers, Climate Risk and Water-Food-Energy Nexus
- 2) Groundwater and Human Settlements
- 3) Ecohydrology and Water Quality

7. External evaluations of the previous phases of IHP, Phase VII (2008-2013) and phase VIII (2016-2021), were managed by IOS in 2014 and 2019. The evaluations identified key areas of recommendations including, inter alia, to strengthen the UNESCO Water Family as a global network of expertise on water, to clearly connect IHP and the UNESCO Water Family to other relevant actors in the global landscape of water institutions and to strengthen the financial sustainability of the IHP. The 2019 mid-term evaluation further advocated for a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework for IHP, which led to the creation of the first detailed theory of change for IHP in the IHP-IX Strategic Plan. This evaluation's recommendation to assign clear responsibilities for each IHP priority to the UNESCO Water Family members was also implemented in IHP-IX's design. The full evaluation reports are included in the references.

Situating IHP in UNESCO's Programme and Budget

8. As outlined in the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2024-2025 (42C/5), the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme contributes to the achievement of the following outcome and outputs of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-29 (41C/4):

Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction.

Output 3.SC2 Water science, innovation, education, management, cooperation and governance bolstered for a water-secure world in a changing environment

Intersectoral Output 3.IP2 Environmental education strengthened to equip learners to address global environmental challenges

9. Its specific contribution is then outlined in the Strategic Plan for IHP-IX as described in paragraphs 4-6 above.

Governance

10. The IHP Intergovernmental Council (IGC) is composed of 36 Member States and is elected by the General Conference of UNESCO. The main role of the IGC, which meets every two years, is to ensure sound planning, definition of priorities and supervision of the execution of the IHP.

11. The IGC elects a six-member Bureau, which meets once a year to supervise the implementation of Council resolutions to report on the status of programme implementation and to prepare the sessions of the Council in consultation with the Secretariat.

12. The IGC also has three specialized committees: the Financial Committee, the Communications and Outreach Committee and the Draft Resolutions Committee. Each committee is composed of six representatives from different Member States.

13. The IGC has established 8 Open Ended Working Groups in line with the five priority areas and 3 cross-sectoral axes to ensure effective mobilization and involvement of Member States and

UNESCO water family in the implementation of IHP-IX (see the ‘working method’ chapter below for more details).

Human Resources – the UNESCO Water Family

14. Several key players, forming the UNESCO Water Family, work to support the implementation of IHP-IX and the strategic goals of UNESCO. This network comprises the IHP Secretariat, the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), hydrology focal points in UNESCO field offices, IHP National Committees, water-related Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO, water-related UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Networks, and IHP Flagship Initiatives.

15. **The IHP Secretariat** sits at the Division of Water Sciences within the Natural Sciences Sector in the UNESCO Headquarters. The IHP Secretary is the Director of the Division of Water Sciences. The secretariat is composed of the following three sections within the Division of Water Sciences:

- i. the Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation (HCA) Section,
- ii. the Groundwater Sustainability and Water Cooperation (GSW) Section, and
- iii. the Capacity Development and Water Family Coordination (CDW) Section

16. In total, the IHP programme is thus supported by 23 staff members⁴ and 11 affiliate personnel⁵ at Headquarters.

17. UNESCO further has **hydrology focal points** in its field offices. There are five Regional Hydrologists based in each UNESCO region⁶. They are responsible for coordinating IHP activities within their respective regions and providing guidance and support to Natural Sciences Programme Specialists⁷ in the field offices in their dedicated region.

18. The **WWAP** also contributes to IHP. It is an entirely extrabudgetary UNESCO programme, funded by the Government of Italy with the objective of providing key water information to decision makers including in particular, the production of the United Nations World Water Development Report (UN WWDR): a UN system-wide annual global overview of freshwater resources. Through the UN WWDRs and complementary activities including a comprehensive component on water and gender equality, WWAP’s mandate is to equip water managers and policy and decision-makers with knowledge, tools, and skills necessary to formulate and implement sustainable water policies⁸. It is currently composed of eleven staff and affiliated personnel.

19. The other four entities that form the UNESCO Water Family are all external stakeholders representing the government, - **170 IHP National Committees**⁹ – or research institutes, universities and

⁴ This includes 15 fixed term staff as reflected in the SC organigramme in UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2024-25 (42C/5), page 93. There are also 6 project appointments, 1 secondment and 1 JPO as reflected in UNESCO’s internal directory, UNESDIR.

⁵ These numbers are based on UNESCO’s internal directory, UNESDIR. As of June 2024, the affiliated personnel in the UNESCO Water Division include 2 loaned experts, 4 consultants, 3 interns and 2 trainees.

⁶ The five regional hydrologists are based in Cairo (Arab States), Jakarta (Asia-Pacific), Montevideo (Latin America and the Caribbean), Nairobi (Africa) and Venice (Europe and North America).

⁷ Not all SC Programme Specialists in the field are hydrology focal points. Only some are, such as those based in Dakar, New Delhi, Beijing, Kingston. See the current list at: <https://www.unesco.org/fr/ihp/secretariat>

⁸ <https://www.unesco.org/en/wwap/about>

⁹ IHP National Committees are the official entities representing each UNESCO Member State. They are composed of technical water experts selected from relevant line ministries or scientific research institutes at the national level. The full list is available at: [Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme National Committees | UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/en/ihp/national-committees)

international organisations – **29 Category 2 centres**¹⁰ specialized on water, **93 UNESCO Water Chairs**¹¹ and **17 flagship initiatives**. The later were created by the IGC to bring together experts around a specific thematic area in the field of water sciences¹².

Working methods

20. Phase IX of the IHP has been designed in such a way as to prompt active involvement of the UNESCO Water Family and to instil a shared responsibility between the IHP Secretariat, UNESCO Member States and the UNESCO Water Family in operationalizing the work related to improving water security globally. With this in mind, the IHP programme has devised a thematic working group system reflecting the Priorities of the strategic plan to advance the implementation of the 34 outputs and 151 key activities of phase IX: 5 Open-Ended Thematic Working Group (OETWG) based on priorities and 3 Cross-sectoral Thematic Working Groups (CTWG). Participation in these working groups is on a voluntary basis and based on UNESCO Members' interest.

21. The implementation of each output is to be led by a dedicated Member State – called 'the lead' who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of specific activities contributing to that output (e.g. expert meetings, technical workshops) as well as monitoring and reporting all activities and progress achieved against that given IHP output. All members of the UNESCO Water Family and partners¹³ who are interested to contribute to the achievement of specific outputs of IHP-IX may join the working groups as 'a contributor'. Each output lead reports their work to the relevant overarching thematic working group.

22. The 8 thematic working groups of the IHP-IX are led by three Member States – the chairperson and two vice-chairpersons – and coordinated by a representative of the IHP Secretariat¹⁴ who acts as a team leader and ensures alignment of the group's activities with the relevant IHP priority area and UNESCO's programming overall. The members of these working groups consist of the leaders and contributors of each relevant output as described in the paragraph above¹⁵. Figure 2 below provides a schematic overview of this structure.

¹⁰ As defined on the [UNESCO website](#), a Category 2 centre is 'an institution of excellence that works in UNESCO's area of competence and is expected to contribute to the achievement of UNESCO's programme through international and regional cooperation, research, knowledge production, policy advice, and capacity enhancement'. The full list of water-related centres is available at [Water-related centres under the auspices of UNESCO | UNESCO](#)

¹¹ As defined on the [UNESCO website](#), 'a UNESCO Chair is a team led by a higher education or research institution that partners with UNESCO on a project to advance knowledge and practice in an area of common priority'. The full list of UNESCO Chairs contributing to the IHP and water science is available at [Water-related UNESCO Chairs | UNESCO](#)

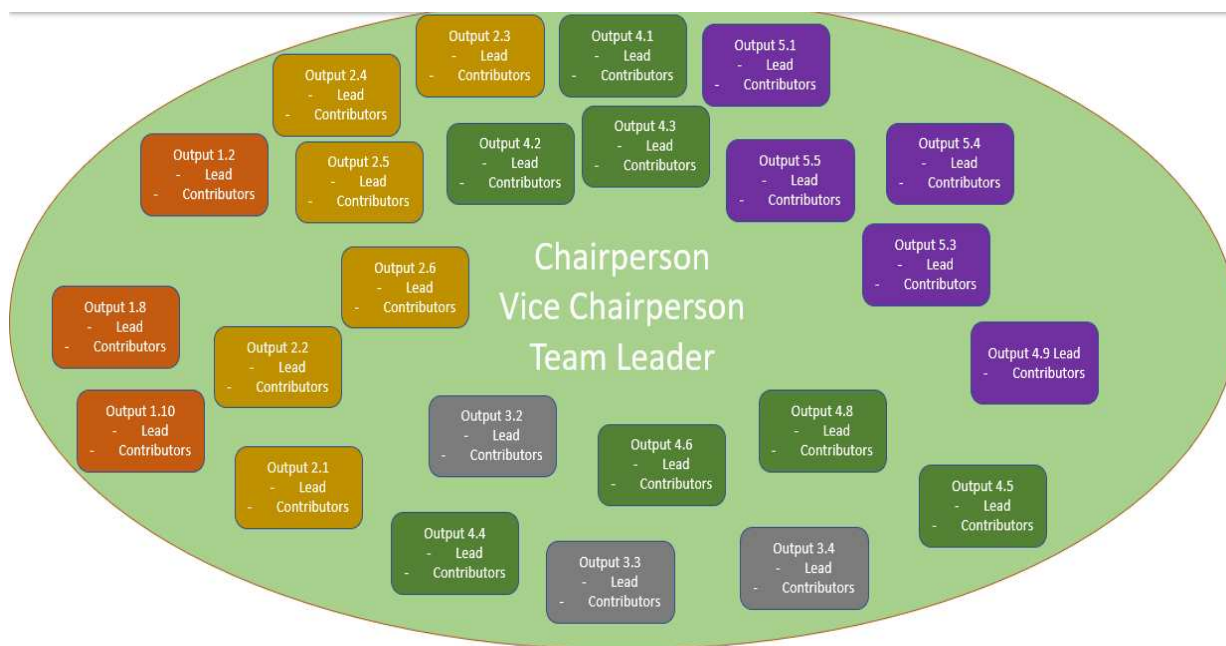
¹² The full list of flagship initiatives is available here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389952>. The flagship initiatives are co-hosted by a member of the UNESCO Water Family – i.e. a Chair or category 2 centre – or a UNESCO partner organization – i.e. [GWADI](#), [WAMUNET](#) and the [IAHR](#).

¹³ Partners may include other UN agencies, professional organizations, centres of excellence and scientific institutions.

¹⁴ The HCA section leads OETWG 1 (scientific research and innovation) and CTWG1 (hydrological systems and climate risk); the CDW section leads OETWGs 2 (water education), 3 (bridging the data and knowledge gap) and CTGW 3 (ecohydrology and water quality) and the GSW section leads OETWGs 4 (integrated water risk management under global change), 5 (water governance) and CTGW 2 (groundwater and human settlements).

¹⁵ Please view this IHP Bureau document for the full list of output leaders: unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000393285/PDF/393285eng.pdf.multi

Figure 2: Example of the composition of a cross-sectoral thematic working group



Source: IHP Secretariat

23. These 8 thematic working groups meet at least once a year, and they report to the IHP Council and Bureau.

Financial Resources

24. The regular programme budget available to the IHP is included within the UNESCO approved programme and budget. Over the four-year period under study (i.e. 2022-2025 of the 41 C/5 and 42 C/5), the total foreseen budget for the Division for Water Sciences to deliver UNESCO's single water related output – i.e. output 3SC.2 was approximately USD 28 million. The total amount of of in-hand voluntary contributions was approximately USD 43 million¹⁶. The latter also includes about 1 million USD dedicated to WWAP, which is an exclusively extrabudgetary programme. Additional funding is sought throughout the budget cycle through different resource mobilization initiatives to fill the funding gap and secure additional funds to implement IHP-IX.

II. Purpose and Use

25. As 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the IHP programme and the halfway mark of phase IX of the programme (2022-29), this seems an opportune time to take stock of the IHP's contribution to strengthening Member States' capacity in water management. in line with the global water landscape and the outcomes of the UN 2023 water conference. At the request of the IHP Intergovernmental Council¹⁷, the IOS Evaluation Office will therefore conduct a mid-term evaluation of phase IX of the IHP

¹⁶ Regular programme budget: 13.2 million USD for the 41C/5 and 15.7 million USD for the 42C/5

Voluntary contributions: 16.3 million USD for the 41C/5 and 27.2 million USD for the 42C/5

Source: [41 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2022-2025: first biennium 2022-2023 - UNESCO Digital Library](#), page 114 and [42 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2024-2025: second biennium of the 2022-2025 quadrennium - UNESCO Digital Library](#) ; page 84.

¹⁷ Final report, 26th session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council, June 2024,([IHP/IC-XXVI/Final Report](#)), para 24.

programme as part of IOS's corporate biannual evaluation plan. As phase IX introduced many novelties compared to the previous phases, this mid-term evaluation will especially focus on the pertinence and effectiveness of these new tools and approaches.

26. More specifically, the evaluation will assess:

- The relevance of the IHP-IX priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan vis a vis the needs of Member States, global water landscape and the outcomes of the UN 2023 water conference;
- the coherence and complementarity of the IHP programme with the broader UN mandate on water, SDG 6 on water and sanitation and any other relevant SDGs;
- the effectiveness of the new results-based management framework, and of its M&E structure, as embedded in IHP-IX, as well as the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- the effectiveness of the operational and coordination mechanisms for the implementation of IHP-IX, namely the shared working environment, thematic working groups, output leadership mechanisms and the flagship initiatives
- the use of the IHP budget to leverage extra-budgetary contributions to the programme
- the efficiency of the financial management of IHP¹⁸
- the adequacy of the current IHP secretariat structure for effective and efficient delivery of IHP-IX.

27. The mid-term evaluation should also help clarify UNESCO's positioning in the field as the topic remains of high relevance for most Member States. In this regard, 2026 will be a pivotal year in this field as we prepare for the 2026 UN Water Conference in Dubai.. The African Union has also named water and sanitation as the AU theme of the year for 2026¹⁹.

28. Given the short period of implementation of IHP-IX, questions pertaining to the impact of the programme will not be addressed in this exercise and should rather be covered in the final evaluation of IHP-IX.

29. The mid-term evaluation will adopt both a retrospective and a forward-looking perspective with action-oriented recommendations formulated based on evidence and substantive findings. While one dimension of the evaluation will be summative, i.e., to provide evidence about key achievements of the programme since the adoption of the strategic plan for phase IX in 2022; its design will focus on assessing and exploring relevant formative elements to assist the IHP Secretariat and the IHP Intergovernmental Council in strengthening the implementation of the IHP-IX in the remaining years of this ninth cycle and start informing the design of the tenth phase of IHP.

30. In pursuit of the main evaluation purposes, indicated above, the IOS evaluation team will collect data, draw conclusions, formulate lessons learnt and articulate recommendations based on its assessment and analysis.

31. The Organization's work is also guided by two Global Priorities endorsed by the UNESCO Member States: Priority Africa and Priority Gender Equality. The flagship programmes for Priority Africa are outlined in the UNESCO [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa](#) (2022-2029) as contained in Annex VII of the 41C/5. The ambitions for Priority Gender Equality are embedded in UNESCO's regular programming in the C/5 but also, more specifically for water, in WWAP's toolkit for collecting sex-disaggregated data on water management²⁰, which was recognized by the IHP Council: The evaluation

¹⁸ This element was specifically requested by the IHP Bureau as reflected in *IHP Finance Committee Report for the 64th Bureau session*, April 2025 ([IHP/Bur-LXIV/Ref. 3.A](#))

¹⁹ <https://amcow-online.org/a-water-theme-for-the-africa-union-in-2026/>

²⁰ For more information on WWAP's work on the nexus between water and gender, please see: [Addressing gender inequality in the water sector | UNESCO](#)

shall assess the contributions made by the IHP to UNESCO's global priorities by collecting data on the gender dimensions and gendered impact of UNESCO's actions around hydrology, as well as focusing, as appropriate, on the specific needs and challenges of the African continent.

32. As requested by the IHP Council, the findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation report will be presented at the 27th session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council in June 2026²¹. The main audiences for this evaluation are thus the IHP Intergovernmental Council, the Assistant Director-General of the Natural Sciences Sector and the IHP Secretariat. The secondary users are the UNESCO Water Family, other UNESCO Member States, associated networks and partners, and the general public.

III. Evaluation questions and Scope

The evaluation scope

33. The current evaluation will focus on UNESCO's activities since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for phase IX of IHP in 2022 and cover the full spectrum of activities implemented by different strands of the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector to contribute to the IHP across the globe.

The evaluation questions

34. The mid-term evaluation will develop evidence-based and future-oriented recommendations concerning UNESCO's work on hydrology. The evaluation will be guided by the revised OECD/DAC Evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability²². An evaluation criterion is a standard used in evaluation as a basis for evaluative judgement. Evaluation criteria provide different lenses through which an evaluation can assess an intervention, programme or entity. The criteria provide complementary perspectives, giving a holistic picture of the intervention. Interventions should be relevant to the context, coherent with other interventions, achieve results in an efficient way and have positive, lasting impacts for sustainable development.²³

35. The evaluation will answer the following indicative list of questions:

Relevance

- To what extent do the IHP priorities address Member States' needs, interests and current challenges in line with global water landscape and outcomes of the UN 2023 water conferences?

²¹ Final report, 26th session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council, June 2024, ([IHP/IC-XXVI/Final Report](#)), para 24.

²² The [OECD-DAC defines the evaluation criteria](#) as follows:

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things? Relevance is the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

Coherence: How well does the intervention fit? Coherence measures the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

Efficiency: How well are resources used? Efficiency measures the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

Impact: What difference is the intervention making? Impact measures the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Sustainability: Will the benefits last? Sustainability measures the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

²³ OECD (2021), Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>.

- How aligned is UNESCO's programming with key international frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda?
- To what extent is UNESCO's positioning in the field of water clearly established and recognized amongst UNESCO staff, Member States and partners?

Coherence

- How does UNESCO add value and ensure complementarity with other UN agencies and international mechanisms related to water (e.g. UN Water, the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation, priorities of the 2023 UN Water Conference)?
- To what extent is IHP-IX aligned with UNESCO's global priorities Africa and Gender Equality as well as other priorities like Youth and SIDS?

Effectiveness

- How advanced is the implementation of the IHP-IX outputs? What factors are enabling or hindering the successful implementation of these outputs?
- How likely is IHP to achieve the different objectives set out in the IHP-IX Strategic Plan?
- To what extent have all members of the UNESCO Water Family been mobilized in implementing the IHP-IX and reporting on it? How can their overall participation be improved?
- How effective are the operational mechanisms set up – thematic working groups, output leadership, flagship initiatives, IHP-WINS platform, shared workspace (Teams/Sharepoint) – in advancing the IHP priority areas?
- How useful is the data collected through these different mechanisms in informing decision-making and programming for IHP-IX?
- To what degree, is this current architecture facilitating or complicating coordination and implementation?
- Are flagship initiatives functioning as pilots, knowledge hubs or models for scaling up?
- How effective are the monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the IHP, namely the shared workspace (Teams/Sharepoint) platform?
- How effective is the current structure of the IHP secretariat for effective and efficient delivery of IHP-IX?

Efficiency

- To what extent is there collaboration and information-sharing for decision-making purposes between the IHP Council, IHP Bureau and the IHP Council's committees?
- To what extent are there sufficient resources for the IHP Secretariat and various thematic working groups to deliver on the IHP-IX Strategic Plan? How does current resourcing affect implementation?
- To what extent is the IHP Secretariat equipped to undertake appropriate monitoring and evaluation for the IHP programme?
- How can financial reporting mechanisms be improved to facilitate decision-making at the level of the IHP Council?
- How well does UNESCO leverage, attract and retain external funding to support the implementation of IHP-IX – both within UNESCO and more widely within the UNESCO Water Family?

Sustainability

- To what extent has the intergovernmental nature of the programme and the significant involvement of an extensive UNESCO Water Family enabled ownership and sustainable take up of water policies at the national level?

- To what extent is IHP-IX supporting an intergenerational transfer of knowledge in sustainable water management?
- To what extent is UNESCO IHP connecting water policy dialogue and capacity building efforts connected to finance and investment initiatives to support sustainable water management? To what extent does IHP enable the translation of scientific efforts into country-level investment?

36. These questions will be agreed upon and further refined, prioritized and validated during the inception phase.

IV. Evaluation methodology

37. The IOS Evaluation team will design a detailed methodological approach to answer the above-mentioned questions. The overall design will include several of the methods of data collection below:

- A document review** of relevant documents pertaining to the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme. These shall include UNESCO strategic documents and data bases such as the UNESCO Programme and Budget (C/5), the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (C/4), IHP documents – including those prepared to the IHP Council and Bureau – , the IHP reporting platform, project progress and monitoring reports, previous evaluations, studies and audits by UNESCO, and other relevant UN agencies active in the field.
- Semi-structured interviews** with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. These may include UNESCO staff at Headquarters and in the Field Offices; members of the UNESCO Water family, relevant government officials, other relevant international organizations (both within and outside the UN System), other research institutions and networks; NGOs, youth networks, and other relevant stakeholders. They will be identified by applying a sampling strategy that ensures adequate geographical representation and participation of women and men.
- Online survey(s)** directed to groups of relevant stakeholders including members of the UNESCO Water Family. For maximum outreach, all surveys will be disseminated in English, French and Spanish at least.
- Observation field mission(s)** to one or two countries to observe conferences and or meetings of high relevance in the UNESCO IHP agenda, to conduct data collection, and interact with UNESCO staff and partners to gain an understanding of their work and assess the effectiveness of research management and collaboration processes. *(to be confirmed during the inception phase as this is subject to budget availability)*

38. The specific methods will be further refined during the inception phase, in consultation with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and the selected technical expert. The latter is expected to support the evaluation team in designing the appropriate data collection tools for this assignment and suggesting relevant stakeholders to consult for the exercise.

39. The evaluation team will use a mixed method approach involving quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. Data analysis will be based on gathered evidence, which will inform preliminary findings as well as evaluation recommendations. Any findings require triangulation with more than one data source. The evaluation approach and data collection methods should also seek to be human rights-based, gender-responsive and take into consideration the diverse cultural and social contexts in which the activities are being implemented. Whenever relevant and possible, data should be disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, and disability.

40. The evaluation team will submit an inception report at the end of the initial stage of the evaluation to agree upon the detailed methodological approach, evaluation matrix and workplan. This will be presented and discussed at an inception meeting with the evaluation reference group. Prior to the finalization of the evaluation report, a participatory stakeholder workshop will be held remotely to validate the evaluation findings and discuss the preliminary recommendations and lessons learnt as presented in the draft evaluation report.

41. In line with [UNESCO's Evaluation Policy](#), the evaluation will have to comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), UNEG [Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#) and UNEG [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#). The evaluation team will also ensure that ethical, human rights and gender equality principles are duly integrated at all stages of the evaluation process.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation manager

42. The evaluation will be conducted and managed by UNESCO's Division for Internal Oversight Services (IOS). The Head of Evaluation will be responsible for the quality assurance of the evaluation process and all deliverables. The final evaluation report will also be peer reviewed by another evaluation expert within IOS and will be assessed against the UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist as contained in Guidance 13 of the [UNESCO Evaluation Manual](#). The IOS evaluation team will be expected to develop a detailed evaluation methodology including an evaluation matrix and data collection tools, to enable data collection and analysis and to prepare the draft and final reports in English.

Evaluation Reference Group

43. An evaluation reference group shall accompany the evaluation process and provide feedback on the inception report and draft evaluation report. The reference group will include representatives from different entities, namely the IHP Intergovernmental Council, the Division of Water Sciences of the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector, the World Water Assessment Programme, two UNESCO Field Offices, an IHP National Committee, a UNESCO Chair and a UNESCO Category 2 centre from the UNESCO Water Family. A representative of the UNESCO Groundwater youth network will also be represented. The reference group shall exchange/meet periodically and be consulted in the different stages of the evaluation, as appropriate.

Logistics

44. The technical expert will contribute to the evaluation process and support the IOS evaluation team, as relevant. The technical expert will commonly be responsible for their own logistics: office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing, travel, etc. Suitable office space will be provided when the consultant is working in UNESCO premises (if applicable). The IHP Secretariat will provide them with access to relevant documentation and contact details of relevant stakeholders and distribution lists. IOS will also facilitate access to UNESCO staff at both Headquarters and the field and provide contacts of representatives of external stakeholders and partners.

VI. Work assignment for the technical expert

45. An independent technical expert in the field of water sciences and hydrology with experience in the development world, will be hired to support the IOS evaluation team in conducting

this exercise. They will be expected to provide technical insights and share their knowledge and experience in to strengthen the quality of the evaluation and help issue more relevant and feasible recommendations. More specifically, the technical expert will:

- Review relevant documentation as part of the desk review;
- Co-develop the data collection tools with UNESCO IOS;
- Participate in key informant interviews, especially those that would require more technical knowledge (e.g. those with the members of the UNESCO Water Family or other technical experts) and that are considered highly strategic (e.g. with SC senior management).
- Conduct one or two field missions to attend conferences and/or meetings of relevance to the UNESCO IHP agenda and mandate;
- Participate in the inception and validation workshop; and
- Draft relevant segments of the inception report; draft evaluation report and final evaluation report.

VII. Required qualifications for the technical expert

46. The evaluation foresees a level of effort of around 30-35 professional working days for the technical expert in hydrology / subject matter expert. The expert shall conduct the assignment remotely, with possibly one or two field missions. Confirmation of these missions and the specific destinations will be determined during the inception phase.

Mandatory qualifications

The applicant should possess the following mandatory qualifications and experience. Not meeting these mandatory criteria will disqualify a proposal.

- No previous involvement in the implementation of the activities under review²⁴
- An advanced University degree at master's level or equivalent in hydrology or any other relevant field in natural sciences
- At least 7 years of professional experience in water policy design and/or capacity development efforts in the field of water management.
- At least 3 years of professional experience in conducting assignments for the UN
- Knowledge and good understanding of UNESCO's and other UN agencies' mandate in the field of water.
- Excellent oral communication in English
- Analytical and demonstrated excellent drafting skills in English (demonstrated in a sample of work)

Desirable qualifications

The following qualifications will be considered an advantage:

- Previous experience engaging in intergovernmental processes related to water policies.

²⁴ This precludes any involvement in the design or implementation of phase IX of the programme. UNESCO partners that were involved in prior phases of IHP may apply, so long as they did not actively participate in any of the stages of the design or the ongoing implementation of phase IX. This also excludes current members of the UNESCO Water Family.

- Previous experience in contributing to independent evaluation processes²⁵
- Examples of work demonstrating understanding an application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality and/or of gender-responsive and culturally sensitive approaches in evaluation
- Working knowledge of other UN languages (French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese)

47. The consultant is required to provide evidence that demonstrates that the mandatory and relevant desirable criteria are met. According to the evaluation grid, proposals with additional references/proof of evidence to meet the minimum requirements shall receive higher scores.

48. Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae and may include a reference check. Names, titles and contact details of three references should be provided as well as a web link or an electronic copy of one recently completed report with relevance to the assignment. Candidates are also encouraged to submit additional references such as evaluation reports, research papers or articles of relevance they drafted.

VIII. Deliverables and schedule

Deliverables

49. The assignment will consist of the following main deliverables:

1. The **inception report** will be presented at an inception meeting. This report will outline the detailed methodological approach to take on the assignment and outline when and how the activities for this will be undertaken (work-plan) (*max. 15 pp. excluding annexes*).
2. The **draft evaluation report** will be presented at a stakeholder workshop. This report will include (a) the evaluation background, including a description of the evaluand and the evaluation methodology; (b) the evaluation findings; (c) conclusions and lessons learnt and (d) recommendations. In addition, it will include an executive summary of 2-4 pages. (*max. 30 pp. excluding annexes*).
3. **The final evaluation report.** The report will be developed according to the UNESCO IOS Evaluation Office template and quality guidelines. It will then be formatted by UNESCO to match the IOS Evaluation Office layout and branding for UNESCO corporate evaluation reports before it is published on the [IOS evaluation website](#).

50. The technical expert shall provide input to all three evaluation deliverables described above. They will further address the comments and questions from the ERG that are addressed to them and/or on segments of the report drafted by them.

Schedule

51. The evaluation is expected to start in July 2025 and to be concluded by March 2026. The technical expert will be onboarded as of early September 2025. The overall indicative timetable of key

²⁵ For this criterion, the applicant does not need to have been the team leader for the evaluation. Participation as an active member of the evaluation that contributed to the design of evaluation products, took part in the data collection process and/or drafted segments of the evaluation report is enough. On the contrary, being invited as an interviewee or answering a survey for an evaluation would not be considered as sufficient knowledge of the evaluation process.

activities and deliverables is shown below. The lines in bold in the table below are the deliverables associated with payments for the technical expert.

Activity / Deliverable	Indicative date
Desk review and preparation	July-September 2025
Draft inception report	Mid-September 2025
Inception workshop	Late September 2025
Final inception report	Mid-October 2025
Data collection	October - December 2025
Data analysis & write-up of draft evaluation report	January-February 2026
Draft evaluation report	Early February 2026
Stakeholder workshop (review of draft report)	Mid-February 2026
Final evaluation report	Mid-March 2026

IX. References

Relevant Evaluation Resources

UNEG (2020). *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 14 June 2021 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

UNEG (2010). *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://uneval.org/document/detail/607>

UNEG (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2107>

UNEG (2017). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/27>

UNESCO (2023). *UNESCO Evaluation Manual*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 12 June 2023 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383948>

UNESCO (2022). *UNESCO Evaluation Policy*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 12 June 2023 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664.locale=en>

Relevant Resources on the IHP

UNESCO

UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme website: <https://www.unesco.org/en/ihp>

UNESCO (2014). *IOS Mid-term Evaluation of phase VII of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (2008-2013)*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 22 May 2025 from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000228062>

UNESCO (2019). *IOS Mid-term Evaluation of phase VIII of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (2014-2021)*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 22 May 2025 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370407.locale=en>

UNESCO (2022). *UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 20 August 2024 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378083.locale=en>

UNESCO (2024). *UNESCO Approved programme and budget 2024-2025: second biennium of the 2022-2025 quadriennium*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 22 May 2025 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389188>

UNESCO (2024). *Impact report of the achievements of IHP-VIII 'Water security: responses to local, regional and global challenges.'* (2014-2021). Paris: UNESCO Intergovernmental Council, 26th sessions. Retrieved 16 June 2025: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389765>

UNESCO (2024). *Overview report of the achievements of IHP-VIII 'Water security: responses to local, regional and global challenges.'* (2014-2021). Paris: UNESCO Intergovernmental Council, 26th session. Retrieved 16 June 2025: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000389764>