

World Water Quality Assessment

Tackling the world's water quality challenge

Increasing pollution as a result of rapid economic growth and urbanization in developing countries, and sustained, chronic pollution in developed countries poses a growing risk to public health, food security, biodiversity and other ecosystem services.

The goal of the World Water Quality Assessment is to review the state of freshwater quality and its potential impacts on human health, food security and ecosystem services, in conjunction with its drivers to raise awareness of the importance of water quality degradation on sustainable development and to enable countries to better assess the situation and effectively protect, maintain or restore water quality at sustainable levels.

The UN Environment Assembly ([UNEA-3](#)) Resolution 3/10 on '[Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems](#)' called for an assessment of global water quality. A first global display of the water quality is to be delivered as a pilot at [UNEA-5](#), which will convene in 2021, followed by a full-fledged assessment to provide in depth information to Member States and stakeholders.

Approach

A preliminary [Snapshot of the World's Water Quality: Towards a Global Assessment](#) was published in 2016 revealing the lack of monitoring data particularly in developing countries, rendering the sole reliance on measured data impossible. The full World Water Quality Assessment thus employs a data fusion approach combining in-situ monitoring, modelling and remote sensing. It will illustrate causal chain cases from drivers to impacts.

The major components of the Assessment are: 1) Baseline Assessment of worldwide water quality in surface and groundwater bodies, 2) Scenario Analysis of future pathways of water quality in the freshwater system and its compartments, and 3) Mitigation Options, i.e. information on how to protect or restore water quality.

The ambition of the assessment is to work at different scales; 1) the global scale to provide a consistent context regarding the state of water quality and to identify the water bodies being at risk; 2) the water body to river basin scale with the engagement of stakeholders to use and to tie the information produced in order to achieve their needs and inform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at relevant scales.

Further information:

<http://www.wwqa-documentation-2019.info/analytical-brief.html>

<http://www.wwqa-documentation-2019.info/unep-report.html>

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/snapshot-report-worlds-water-quality>

Contact:

[Hartwig Kremer](#), [Kaisa Uusimaa](#) (UNEP, lead)

[Dietrich Borchardt](#), [Ilona Bärlund](#), [Christian Schmidt](#) (UFZ, scientific coordination)