

World Water Quality Alliance - 2nd Annual Global Meeting (Virtual)

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27 - 28 January 2021, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (CET)

Dear Members of the World Water Quality Alliance,

First and foremost, we hope that you are all in good health during these difficult times. Over the past year, the WWQA working groups and their respective workstreams have made significant progress despite the disruption caused by the current global health crisis and for that we would like to commend all our principal investigators and partners for their continued efforts.

The WWQA is a unique Community of Practice, representing an enormous range of outstanding expertise regarding water quality. It looks into interlinkages and feedback between water and health, environment and societies to name a few, whilst also representing a bridge between data, knowledge and action, by aiming to inform science, policy, business, society interfaces. As an Alliance we therefore continue to work collectively to explore the related knowledge and innovation workstreams underway that can assist global communities to find solutions to challenges in the short, medium, and long-term.

Cognisant of the fact that COVID-19 slowed us down in 2020 and which resulted in not having an annual global meeting of the Alliance in 2020, the WWQA Coordination Unit and the Co-chairs of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committees would like to invite all members of the WWQA to the 2nd Annual Global Meeting on the 27th and 28th January 2021 (to take place over 2 half days). We are grateful to also confirm that irrespective of all global disruptions the African Ministers Council for Water, AMCOW, remains on board as our co-convenor. This is very important since in the absence of an African Water Week at the end of 2020 and the same applying to a postponed World Water Forum to 2022, we are convinced that one geographical and thematic focus on Africa shall remain our top header. Due to current restrictions on international travel the meeting will be taking place virtually.

Objectives:

1. To invite and present updates and outlooks to our distinguished Community on the current state of the various WWQA workstreams as well as discussions on new emerging topics; this will include several focal areas summarized here and to be fleshed out in a detailed programme to follow:
 - the World Water Quality Assessment with its contributing working groups on satellite observations, modelling and in-situ data;
 - the workstreams addressing water quality in groundwater (*Friends of Groundwater*)
 - several perspectives to be provided on water quality and health, but also water reuse, including antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and an update on the exploration of a Sentinel System for SARS-CoV-2 and beyond stemming from the Umbrella Study conducted by the European Union (EU)
 - ecosystem dimensions of water quality and how to intercompare the quality of different ecological systems
 - we will focus on and establish a consortium around the urgently needed upscaling of water quality and monitoring related capacity development, - here GEMS/Water Capacity Development Centre (CDC) will be in a lead together with UNEP
 - we will take a look into the topic of data, namely in-situ data, and where to go with monitoring in future – here GEMS/Water will be in a leading role
 - further, we will focus on the social engagement workstream; here focus in the first place is on the municipal scale to foster societal transformation advocating an “all of society” approach
 - we also expect new initiatives to come our way with regards to involving the private sector and the youth
2. Dedicated focus on Africa

Water has for decades been a central focus on the African continent, water as amenity, as part of the life support system with both quantity and quality being key to human wellbeing, and environmental health. Environmental water quality, however, has always been an afterthought of drinking water and sanitation. A possible key to unlocking this situation is to highlight the interlinkages of these dimensions where one cannot go without the other. Africa is a prime example for the relevance of a multidimensional nexus focus. We aim to address:

- The special initiative on Monitoring and Evaluation (Water and Sanitation Management Organisation - WASMO),
- The evolving programme on water quality (AMCOW) where we aim to explore mutual working links to the WWQA
- Specific cases by African Colleagues will be possible on all aspects mentioned under a)
- The WWQA UseCases on the Volta, Victoria and Cape Town Aquifer Systems – experiences, opportunities, challenges and potential upscaling

We invite UN-Water to provide us with insight and a statement on the relevance and mutual agendas between the Alliance and the recently launched UN-Water Framework for SDG 6 Acceleration in which heads of all UN agencies were involved^[1].

We will arrange for subsequent Expert Group virtual meetings on specific cases where there is need for follow up in smaller groups on certain topics. It is further suggested that two special sessions can be arranged prior to and after the conference for the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to consider proposals received for new workstreams and/or seed funding applications.

While our immediate concern lies with the health and well-being of the members of the Alliance, we also recognise that the issues that drive WWQA's work through its various workstreams will continue to be our priority focus, more central in the post-COVID 19 reconstruction efforts. We hope this virtual Annual Global Meeting will support the continued establishment of a community of like-minded innovators and raise entrepreneurship in a scientific and solution-oriented sense to address what we observe and may anticipate for the future.

We look forward to your participation!

With kind regards,

The WWQA Coordination Unit

[1] <https://www.unwater.org/un-water-launch-the-sdg-6-global-acceleration-framework/>

Meeting Agenda:



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