

- **SAVE THE DATE** -
EXPERT WORKSHOP ON VALUING WATER
Thursday February 2nd, 2017, The Hague

Introduction

In support of the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) action Valuing Water, The Netherlands and the World Bank are organizing a one-day expert workshop on valuing water. It will be held in The Hague on Thursday February 2nd, 2017. The workshop will kick off a one year global process.

Background and rationale

Water is a complex and multi-faceted natural resource that is essential for life, pivotal to economic growth and well-being, and has long played an integral role in the cultural and spiritual dimensions of societies all around the globe. Its value to all living beings is therefore hard to overestimate. It is for this reason that the HLPW has proposed a special and holistic initiative to promote the valuation of water across all its dimensions – economic, ecological and cultural.

The importance of this issue is self evident. While water stress is growing, farmers, businesses and households often face few incentives to consume less, maintain water quality, or allocate it to its optimal uses. These economic imperatives need to be combined with the social and environmental dimensions of water to provide explicit incentives to manage it more efficiently, and to help make more transparent and better-informed decisions and trade-offs about water – thereby allowing equity and sustainability to be addressed.

The HLPW will promote efforts to reach clarity and common principles among all stakeholders to address the related and often controversial issues of allocating, valuing and trading water. The initiative aims to energize political leaders, businesses and civil society to take action.

Water is a common-pool resource, making it vulnerable to the related risks of overuse and pollution.

Water has distinct social, economic and environmental values. Water is central to human life and dignity; required for food, energy, manufacturing, and other economic activities; and required by the environment.

Making value more transparent. Every time someone uses water or chooses not to, he or she implicitly values water for this use. Making the values of water explicit helps make decisions and trade-offs about more transparent and better-informed. Incorporating the different needs of men, women and marginalized groups in the community will add to transparency.

Conceptual clarity and common principles. There is a need for conceptual clarity and common principles to address the related and often controversial issues of allocating, valuing, pricing and trading water. In addition, the messages need be understandable for different sectors, countries, and users.

- Allocating water requires managing trade-offs between uses, users and sources of water, particularly when it is scarce. To allocate water effectively, efficiently and equitably while sustainably managing the water resources, its varying values must be understood.
- Valuing water should be based on the social, environmental and economic benefits derived from water use. Water is far more economically valuable when used in food processing than for washing cars, for example, and far more valuable when used for drinking and personal hygiene than for watering city lawns. The value of water should inform the pricing of water.
- Pricing water helps to create incentives to use water wisely or efficiently, to recover costs for operating and maintaining services, and to establish the costs and benefits of further

investment in water infrastructure or services. Pricing pollution creates incentives to reduce or eliminate releasing pollutants into water.

Objectives of the HLPW initiative on Valuing Water (agreed actions from the HLPW action plan)

1. Convene a **multi-stakeholder process**, informed by research and evidence, that distills a set of core principles and a new methodology for valuing water, building on the human right to water and sanitation;
2. Develop **core principles and articulate a narrative** on valuing water, placing valuing water within the broader context of improved water governance and the SDGs.
3. Encourage development partners to establish a **lighthouse initiative** that will support countries willing to implement improved and inclusive policies, institutions and approaches for valuing water.
4. The Panel encourages all stakeholders to support improved approaches to valuing water with case studies, gender analysis, capacity building, and advocacy, including a clear focus on ensuring the human right to water and sanitation.
5. The Panel will encourage a multi-stakeholder Valuing Water Leaders Coalition or similar initiative to continue improving global practices on valuing water after the HLPW has completed its mandate.

Workshop objectives

The goal of the workshop is to further sharpen the preferable outcomes of the initiative, identify necessary building blocks, and to decide on the process and division of tasks. By combining experiences, different perspectives, and scientific knowledge on implementing actions/projects/policies on Valuing Water, the workshop aims to build a foundation to support the multi-stakeholder process of the coming year in various countries worldwide.

Desired outcome of the workshop:

- Identify the current and future challenges with regard to Valuing Water. What are successes and barriers that exists?
- Provide common principles and an (analytical) framework that covers the discussed perspectives (Business, Government, Civil Society, ...)
- Generate ideas on how to address the political/governance aspects
- Provide ideas and design of the multi-stakeholder process and communication
- Decide on a division of tasks; who can do what?
- *Nominate a writers group (reporting group)*
- *Create a multi-stakeholder (event group) for the regional meeting(s)*

Details

Date: February 2nd, 2017

Venue: The Hague, The Netherlands

Location: detailed information on location in The Hague will follow

Note: When participants are not able to travel to The Hague at such a short notice, they are invited to join the discussion by video connection or express their interest to contribute by email.

The meeting will be live-streamed on internet (tbc)

Preliminary Agenda

Thursday, February 2nd

09:30 – 10:00 Welcome coffee

10:00 – 14:00 Morning session

Introduction of objective and process of the Valuing Water Initiative
Setting the Scene: current and future challenges
Framing Valuing Water
Preferred output and outcome of the Valuing Water Initiative
Discussion on content of framing note/background report (outline) as basis for the output of the Valuing Water Initiative

14:00 – 15:00 Lunch (with parallel an impression of the morning session for participants calling in for the afternoon session).

15:00 – 19:00 Afternoon session

Lessons learned
Success stories on Valuing Water
Barriers for implementation of Valuing Water
Political process/governance aspects
The multi-stakeholder process: do's and don'ts

Agreeing on follow-up:

-Nominate a group that writes the framing note/background report. Lead author(s) and contributors

-Nominate the *multi-stakeholder group for preparing the regional meeting(s)*