



Data-driven water diplomacy: UNESCO-IHP Water Information Network System (IHP-WINS)

Chloé Meyer, Tales Carvalho-Resende, Youssef Filali-Meknassi, and Alice Aureli
UNESCO International Hydrological Programme – UNESCO-IHP

Transparency, openness, and interest in the inputs of a diversity of actors are key factors for successful water diplomacy. In 2013, the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for a 'Data Revolution' for Sustainable Development to improve the quantity and quality of available information. The revolution strives for a new approach to open and free data exchange and collection, as well as the development of innovative methodologies and presentation of disaggregated data and geospatial information, to address cross-cutting issues. As the only intergovernmental programme of the UN system devoted to scientific, educational and capacity development in hydrology, the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) is contributing to this data revolution through its Water Information Network System (WINS), the first web-based platform providing information on the water cycle in its entirety.

IHP-WINS was established in January 2017 as a tool for the implementation and monitoring of IHP-VIII programme; and to address the request of the IHP's 22nd Intergovernmental Council to "provide support to Member States to build their institutional capacities, human resources and a sound basis in science capacity for the monitoring and implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) targets, and those of other water-related goals" (Resolution XXII-7; June 2016). IHP-WINS draws on global information sources such as the FAO AQUASTAT database, the WHO/UNICEF joint monitoring programme, the United Nations Statistics Division, and the UNESCO's "Water Family" including water UNESCO's "Water Family" including water programmes and initiatives comprising over 3,000 water professionals worldwide.

IHP-WINS is a user-friendly "one-stop shop", offering a wide-ranging set of data services:

- Access to large datasets on the water cycle at global, regional, national and local level, both spatial and non-spatial, and supported by standardized metadata (i.e. "data about data").
- Data available for download by water-related stakeholders, country officials, civil society, international, regional and national institutions, public and private sectors, and academia.
- A dedicated networking platform also enables the exchange of knowledge and expertise among stakeholders.

As a cooperative platform for water stakeholders, IHP-WINS helps to improve institutional and human capacities to ensure high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data. This enhances the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems, especially in developing countries, and provides a solid basis for scientific decision-making. Its interactive approach enables Member States to update and upload national and regional water-related data, which will be essential for monitoring the SDG 6 indicators on water and sanitation.

Water professionals are invited to use and promote IHP-WINS as a networking platform to share experiences and lessons learnt, mentor early career water professionals and strengthen partnerships within the water sector.