

OECD WGI working group 3: Paris, 25 November 2014

The OECD working group 3 on basin governance met to discuss indicators of basin governance. The meeting started with two short presentations on indicators of basin governance by Daniel Valensuela (INBO) and Tadeshige Kawasaki (NARBO). This was followed by discussion and preparation of a report to the plenary.

The discussion concentrated on four main areas;

- the context and purpose of basin governance indicators;
- the boundaries and scope of basin government indicators including the link between basin governance principles and indicators;
- categories of basin governance indicators;
- implementation of basin governance indicators.

There has been an international move to management at a river basin scale, together with the development of regulatory frameworks and instruments, including water plans, markets and information systems. Indicators provide the means to measure and monitor the progress and performance of river basin management. Discussion in the group focused in a few key areas.

The boundaries and scope of river basin management are not always clear, and this complicates the development of indicators. River basins are often affected by external socio-economic and environmental forces - river basins are not a closed system. There is often a plurality of water resources within given geographical areas, with complex interactions and feedback. Also water use and management effects and is affected by other sectors such as land use and energy. This complexity can be addressed by organising basin management objectives and indicators into themes with multiple indicators per theme. A balance has to be struck between scientific soundness and operational feasibility.

Indicators should also be relevant for policy and management. There is a clear need for overarching basin management goals and indicators, but there is also a need for more localised indicators because much of the implementation of basin management takes place at local scales.

Indicators can help to establish trust and river basin management systems, but at the same time it can be a challenge to establish trust in indicators. Effective stakeholder and community participation is crucial in the development of river basin management goals and indicators. The implementation of basin management indicators will require further financial commitments and capacity building.

A distinction can be made between indicators of the completeness and effectiveness of the legislative framework and indicators of effective and efficient water management including systematic and transparent methods of allocation and sustainable use. Indicators of monitoring and enforcement are a further important category. Indicators of conflict and cooperation are important in basins with contested water supplies.

Finally, it is important to link principles and indicators of basin governments with overarching principles and indicators of water governance. Turkey expressed concern that the scope of work on basin governance principles and related indicators should be consistent with the scope of the OECD water governance project.

The meeting agreed that:

- further comments on the latest draft of the draft principles for basin governance would be submitted by 15 December;
- comments on indicators of basin governments would be submitted by 15 January.