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[www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org)

# INTERNATIONAL WATER QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR ECOSYSTEMS (IWQGES)

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# Objectives, purpose, scope

The guidelines will

- Suggest a framework and provide a set of scientifically sound parameters and threshold values
- Provide guidance for implementation:
  - in the focus of IWQGES: how to set up (national) standards
  - additionally addressed: secure enforcement and feasibility of future standards
- Not be a substitute for standards to be established and enforced by sovereign state authorities or by intergovernmental bodies

# Objectives, purpose, scope

The guidelines will

- Be necessarily broad, have a coarse resolution, be precautionary in nature → need further development, refinement and validation at national/ subnational scales considering local ecotypes & stakeholder contexts
- Be a useful starting point to bring forward more strategically targeted in-depth research over time

# Objectives, purpose, scope

The guidelines will

- Have awareness and capacity building (institutional, professional) processes to be built in from an early stage
- Address topics like: transboundary waters, intergovernmental bodies, legal requirements, international treaties
- Although non-binding, the IWQGES aim to trigger clear management action towards the protection and quality improvement of ecosystem health

# Objectives, purpose, scope

The guidelines will

- Contain checklists and sections in a “cookbook” style
- Have a strong focus on developing countries
- Present case studies and examples for regional approaches (according to needs of countries).  
“Regional specificity guarantees regional use”



# Process

a

- Mobilization/ inception phase

b

- Development of Draft Guidelines (by mid-2014)

c

d

e

# Process

May & October 2013:  
2-day  
Drafting Team meetings

a

- Mobilization/ inception phase

b

- Development of Draft Guidelines (by mid-2014)

c

- International & regional consultations of the Draft Guidelines (from mid-2014 to 2015)

d

- GC/EA: Endorsement of Draft Guidelines (Feb 2016)

e

- Dissemination, outreach, implementation, regular updates, finer-scale developments (post 2016)



# Process

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013:  
Launch of IWQGES at  
Budapest Water  
Summit, Hungary

a

- Mobilization/ inception phase

b

- Development of Draft Guidelines (by mid-2014)

c

- International & regional consultations of the Draft Guidelines (from mid-2014 to 2015)

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- Dissemination, outreach, implementation, regular updates, finer-scale developments (post 2016)

# Organization

Invitation to scientific communities and institutions to contribute, to give input on the framework and content & example material

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# IWQGES principles: Water Quality

WQ related problems threaten health and functionality of aquatic ecosystems

- IWQGES will consider physico-chemical, biological and biodiversity related parameters
- Additionally considered: water quantity, adequate spatial availability, temporal distribution, morphology of water bodies, maintenance of environmental flows
- → These factors co-determine ecosystem health & their potential to provide & support ecosystem processes and services

# Principle „Ecosystem Health“ focus

- Ecosystems are living entities
- Specific water demands both in quality and quantity
- Ecosystem water requirements are met → aquatic ecosystems function and provide services to other systems
- Securing water quality/ quantity for ecosystems ensures water quality for other uses → human needs aspect will be considered



## Principle 2: Precaution & restoration

- Precautionary principle:  
“No (further) deterioration” over “restoration”  
  
→ IWQGES team will elaborate on this topic, since  
“without ecosystem health, no sustainable development”.  
→ Precaution should however not counteract economic  
development; precaution is on the long run cheaper than  
“cleaning up” afterwards
- Monitoring and restoration programs with clearly  
identified objectives. → IWQGES will raise ecological  
awareness

# More IWQGES principles

1. „Ecosystem Health“ focus
2. Precautionary principle & restoration
3. Detailed global coverage of various aquatic habitats & typology
4. Best attainable condition (BAC) & categories of water quality
5. Cautious use of (numerical) thresholds





## Drafting Team

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