Evaluation of IHP's Programmes and Major Initiatives

Executive summary of the Evaluation report

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Submitted by:

Engineering that supports development

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Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
FI	Flagship Initiative
FRIEND	Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data
GRAPHIC	Groundwater Resources Assessment under the Pressures of Humanity and CC
HELP	Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy
IDI	International Drought Initiative
IFI	International Flood Initiative
IHP	International Hydrological Programme
IIWQ	International Initiative on Water Quality
ISARM	International Shared Aquifer Resources Management
ISI	International Sediment Initiative
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JIIHP	Joint International Isotope Hydrology Programme
MAR	Managing Aquifer Recharge
PCCP	From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWMP	Urban Water Management Programme
G-WADI	Global Network on Water and Development Information in Arid Lands
WHYMAP	World-wide Hydrogeological Mapping and Assessment Programme

A. Introduction

The International Hydrological Programme (IHP) is an UNESCO intergovernmental programme that focuses on water research, water resources management, education and capacity-building. As a global level science and education programme, IHP covers a wide spectrum of themes, including through the management and implementation of fifteen Flagship initiatives.

At its 53rd session held in April 2016, the IHP Bureau decided to initiate the Flagship initiatives evaluation process.

The fifteen Flagships initiatives have mainly been created by resolutions of the IHP Council following the expression of such a need by member states. They work on long-term cross-cutting themes related to hydrology issues. They are collaborative structures and international partnerships on water-related issues. Their global aim is to enhance the management of water resources through science-based recommendations, education and capacity building.

A.1. Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The aim of this evaluation is to identify which of these Flagship initiatives should be modified, receive additional support from Member States, be terminated or handed over to other entities, considering the current needs from Member States and IHP-VIII. This evaluation is mainly focused on the period covered by last IHP strategic plan (2014-2018). This report gives an in-depth analysis of the Flagships as a type of project for IHP and a benchmarking of the Flagships' performance against a set of agreed criteria and based on the scorecard.

A.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation process has been structured into three phases:

Inception phase → Data collection phase → Reporting phase
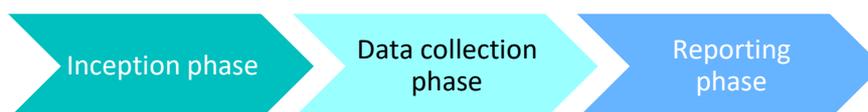
During the inception phase, the evaluation team used the findings from a preliminary document review and key informant interviews to develop the main tools for this evaluation: the evaluation matrix and the scorecard.

The data collection phase was conducted incrementally with a set of documents being analysed one after the other to collate missing data and triangulate information, an online survey was organised and reached 150 stakeholders and the evaluation team contacted the IHP secretariat Flagship initiatives focal points to collect further information.

During the reporting phase, the evaluators used the data collected to calculate the scores in the scorecard and answer the evaluation questions, as well as to develop preliminary recommendations.

B. Description of each Flagship

FI	Definition and objectives of the programme
FRIEND	International collaborative programme intended to develop knowledge and techniques at a regional level and a better understanding of hydrological variability and similarity across time and space through the mutual exchange of data.
GRAPHIC	International research network that promotes studies on the interactions between groundwater and the global hydrological cycle with a particular focus on climate change and the pressure of human activities.
G-WADI	International network focused on the production of interactive tools to optimise international cooperation in arid and semi-arid areas.
HELP	Applied research programme based on a network of catchments that uses a trans-disciplinary and local approach to water management at the river basin level.
IDI	International programme that focuses on developing drought warning tools on a national scale, with the aim to improve understanding, better anticipate and minimise the adverse effects of drought.
IFI	International programme with the aim to build capacity in countries to better respond to floods by promoting an integrated approach to flood management.
IIWQ	International programme promoting scientific research and knowledge-sharing to address water quality issues, and fostering capacity-building and awareness-raising on water quality and wastewater.
ISARM	International research programme that focuses on transboundary aquifers.
ISI	International initiative that seeks to address the environmental, social and economic impacts of erosion, sediment transport and sedimentation processes.
IWRM	International programme focused on promoting the concept of "Integrated Water Resources Management" through case study-based demonstrations, conferences, workshops and other awareness-raising activities for all types of target audience.
JIIHP	Research programme focusing on the integration of isotopes into hydrological practices.
MAR	International programme based on the promotion of the "Aquifer recharge management" concept.
PCCP	International programme that promotes water cooperation over the use of transboundary water resources as a mechanism for peace.
UWMP	International programme that develops, promotes, and disseminates guidelines, knowledge and information on new approaches to help cities to improve urban water management strategies.
WHYMAP	International programme aiming to collect, collate and visualise hydrogeological information at the global scale in order to convey groundwater-related information in a way appropriate for global discussion on water issues.

C. Findings

C.1. Relevance

Definition: the extent to which the FI are aligned with IHP strategy and bring added value.

- The FI help IHP to mobilise international cooperation, Strengthen the science-policy interface, and facilitate education and capacity development: IHP's three global missions
- All the themes are covered by at least two initiatives, meaning that the FI are globally aligned with the six themes of IHP-VIII.
- With the exception of JIIHP, the FI objectives are globally aligned with the SDGs, and would therefore contribute to the SDGs if met.
- In terms of thematic focus, most of the FI complement the work of other United Nations organisations in some way. Due to their very nature, some FI are partnerships with other UN organisations. Quite frequently there are duplications between FI activities and the activities of other UN organisations due to a lack of coordination.
- Most respondents to the online survey considered that the FI meet a current need.
- The added value of each flagship against other IHP activities and the activities of other stakeholders was acknowledged by the online survey respondents. Even if the level is not the same for all FI.

C.2. Design

Definition: the process of creating the initiatives' structure and the framework for their activities

- Few FI have clear objectives and targets
- No FI has logical framework
- No FI has end date
- Even when specific member countries requested the creation of a FI, no financial commitment was required and/or indicated. The financial resources required to properly implement the FI activities also do not seem to have been identified.
- This allows for a great diversity of initiatives, which can (if they have the necessary resources) adapt to needs and opportunities.

C.3. Reporting and monitoring:

Definition: the process to follow up of Flagship activities and results, to report and make improvements

- Most of the FI are not endowed with operational frameworks that set out clear objectives, measurable indicators and planned activities or clear deadlines for their implementation.
- For most of the FI, the only reporting mechanism is the IHP Secretariat activity report submitted to the Intergovernmental Council.
- The FI are not endowed with proper M&E systems.
- None of the FI publishes full financial reports and, in most cases, the focal points are not able to provide financial data on "their" FI.

- The FI report on their achievements at the IHP intergovernmental council meetings, which are held every two years. However, this reporting is not based on clear indicators (because these do not exist) or on expenditure.
- Even when they receive extra-budgetary funds, the FI rarely report on the use of these funds and/or on the activities carried out.

C.4. Institutional setting

Definition: the way stakeholders are organised in order to deliver results as part of the initiatives.
- Seven FI have steering committees (or their equivalent) that meet regularly
- Seven initiatives have no (external) secretariat and no steering committee
- In general, most of the work involved in producing and collecting data, developing a tool, organising workshops and/or training is undertaken by FI partners. Therefore, if the FI do not have the capacity to mobilise proactive partners, this has an adverse effect on their capacity to produce outputs.
- The ad-hoc institutional settings of the FI seem to foster the involvement of the partners and improve their capacity to produce outputs and mobilise resources. However, the absence of a good institutional setting can have a negative effect on partner involvement and on the overall effectiveness of the FI.

C.5. Financial model and efficiency

Definition: how resources are allocated to FI and FI results/inputs relationship
- The limited resources available force the FI to optimise their input/output relationship, especially in their use of partners.
- More funds would very probably enable them to produce more outputs.
- The time-consuming fundraising is sometimes to the detriment of FI focal points work on the content of the initiatives themselves.
- FI should improve their capacity to secure extra-budgetary funds through better reporting.

C.6. Effectiveness

Definition: Level of objectives' achievement
- All FI have issued publications, from scientific articles to implementation reports, through to case studies and training manuals, etc.
- Almost all of the FI have actively participated in conferences, especially in presentations or side event workshops.
- Half of the FI have organised training and eleven of the 15 have organised workshops.
- JIIHP, UWMP, MAR, FRIEND, GRAPHIC, G-WADI, ISI and WHYMAP have reported fewer than 13 activities in a 5-year period.
- One of the key impacts of the FI is that it has prompted experts to work together at a regional and/or global scale, improving international cooperation.
- The FI are also considered to have played a role in awareness-raising on their main focus areas.

C.7. Visibility

Definition: efforts deployed to make the initiatives visible to the sector stakeholders.

- Nine FI have independent websites aimed at ensuring some visibility. The six others have a webpage on the IHP or other partners' websites.
- While IFI and ISI outputs can be easily attributed to them through their logo, this is not always the case for the other FI.
- According to the online survey responses, the most well-known initiatives inside the UNESCO Water Family are FRIEND, HELP (the two oldest FI) and G-WADI
- Half or more of the UNESCO Water Family members remain unaware of many of the FI
- The fact that they lack visibility can alter their role as a "flagship" for UNESCO IHP.

C.8. Score card findings

Criteria	Relevance	Perceived added value	Visibility	Governance and Management	Inputs	Total
FRIEND	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.3	0.8	1.3
GRAPHIC	1.4	1.0	1.5	1.3	0.6	1.2
G-WADI	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.2	1.7
HELP	1.6	0.8	1.5	0.5	0.8	1.1
IDI	1.6	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.8	1.0
IFI	1.3	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.0	1.5
IIWQ	2.0	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.6
ISARM	1.7	1.8	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4
ISI	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.7	1.0	1.3
IWRM	1.4	1.8	1.0	0.3	0.8	1.0
JIIHP	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2
MAR	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8
PCCP	1.3	1.8	1.0	0.2	1.0	1.0
UWMP	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
WHYMAP	1.3	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.4	1.2
Average	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.8	

D. Recommendations

The evaluation lead to some general recommendations:
- The FI should be endowed with measurable objectives, targets and indicators for a two-year or four-year period
- FI should have a secured budget and clear funding commitments
- Each FI should be endowed with M&E systems and should report on a yearly basis against their objectives and their expenses
- A decision should be taken at the beginning of each IHP phase to pursue each FI or end it
- Guidelines should be established on how to set up a flagship initiative
- A new way of (re)naming the IHP initiatives should be developed
- IHP should consider the opportunity for FI to be non-leading parties in another stakeholder's initiative/partnership

In addition to FI specific recommendations:

FI	Increase FI's level of implementation	Change the name of the initiative	Make efforts to improve the FI visibility	Restructure the institutional setting	Ensure added value or Consider closing the initiative
FRIEND					(some groups)
GRAPHIC		X			
G-WADI					
HELP	X			X	X
IDI					X
IFI	X	X	X		
IIWQ			X		
ISARM			X		
ISI	X				X
IWRM	X				X
MAR				X	X
PCCP					
UWMP				X	X
WHYMAP			X		