



# OECD/EUROSTAT WATER QUESTIONNAIRE AND RELATED INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

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# OECD WATER DATA COLLECTION

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- Annual Quality Assurance (AQA) covering LTAA resources, freshwater abstractions and wastewater treatment connection rates. Recently we added water use
- Biennial complete data collection, 7 tables: (1) Renewable freshwater resources; (2) Annual freshwater abstraction by source and by sector; (3) Water made available for use; (4a) Water use by supply category; (4b) Water use in the manufacturing industry - by activity and supply category; (5) Population connected to wastewater treatment plants; (6) Generation and discharge of wastewater (volume, BOD, COD; other pollutants have been dropped recently). Sewage sludge and river/lake water quality are no longer collected



## OECD WATER DATA COLLECTION (cont.)

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- Being a joint questionnaire, Eurostat collects from EU member countries plus a few others; OECD collects non-EU OECD members
- **Data coverage** is much better for EU than for non-EU countries. More data is available for the AQA (core) variables, i.e. resources, abstractions and wastewater connection rates. Much less data is available for water use, and very little for discharges. Overall, not enough data is available to fully compute SDGs indicators.
- **Quality and timeliness** are also persistent concerns. Data is not collected regularly in countries and definitions may vary



## *International collaboration*

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- In 2018 FAO launched a data collection to populate AQUASTAT.
- This raised the question of international coordination to reduce response burden → regular teleconferences since 2018 between UNSD, FAO, Eurostat and OECD
- Main objectives: harmonise concepts and definitions; better align with SEEA (move towards water accounts?); feed into SDG monitoring; work towards harmonised data collection (consolidated questionnaires?)



## *Main achievements so far*

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1. Clarifications on a number of terminology and conceptual issues between FAO (and SDGs), on one side, and other IOs on the other side. Ironed out definitional inconsistencies
2. Consensus on a number of modifications to be implemented to better align (partly) to SEEA water accounts. Yet to be approved by member countries
3. Draft new water scheme (to be finalised) to better capture “water use” and “water consumption” concepts and better align them with SEEA framework



## *Alignment with SEEA*

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1. Some differences with SEEA will remain, and will be highlighted: (i) abstraction for hydroelectricity; (ii) exclusion of soil water and other types of water; (iii) cooling water not considered wastewater; (iv) glaciers, snow and ice not included in surface water
2. Modifications to align with SEEA: (i) treat artificial recharge into the aquifer as a return flow; (ii) other small definitional issues (e.g. “run-off”, surface water)



## *Alignment with SEEA (continued)*

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- More substantively, there remains to fine-tune the definitions of “water use” and “water consumption” (new water scheme)
- These often create confusion among users (but also statisticians), and there are differences in definitions and concepts between water statistics and water accounts
- In SEEA use=supply, encompassing all water flows (no consumption defined). In water statistics we look at water available for use and at consumption/consumptive.



## *Move to SEEA?*

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- Will we move to water accounts (e.g. Eurostat)?
- If yes, what would happen to water statistics?
- Current water statistics can help populate simple use/supply water account tables
- But data quality and scarcity remain an issue, especially for non-EU countries. Data more available for connection rates, abstractions and resources. Less for use. Much less so for discharges and water quality





## *Next steps*

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- OECD to present to its WPEI in February 2021. Eurostat to do the same.
- If countries approve, changes to be implemented during 2021 data collection
- Eurostat's proposal to move to water accounts remains uncertain and will take a few years
- Proposed changes would not affect significantly current data collection. But will ensure more clarity in definitions and better alignment with SEEA



THANK YOU