

The Joint OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire: international harmonisation, alignment with SEEA and SDG reporting

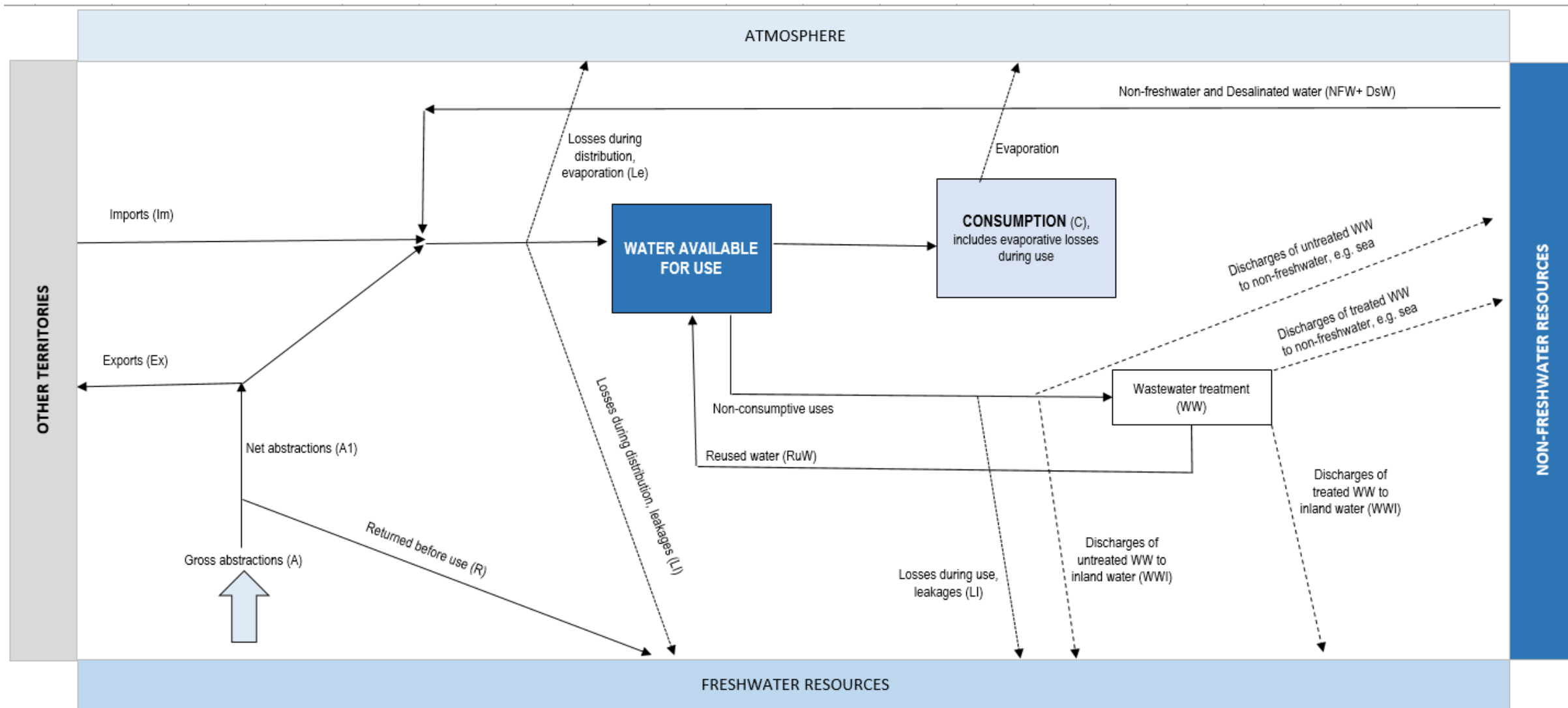
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- The OECD developed the inland waters section of the questionnaire on the state of the environment in the late 1970s-early 1980s. It became a joint OECD/Eurostat questionnaire in 1988. A simplified version has been used by UNSD since 1999, thus ensuring a quasi-global country coverage.
- The data collected provide a basis for calculating several indicators. They contribute to water-related SDG indicators, in particular 6.4.1 (water use efficiency), 6.4.2 (water stress) and 6.3.1 (wastewater safely treated)
- Since June 2018 UNSD, FAO, Eurostat and OECD are having regular teleconferences to discuss options for aligning their questionnaires, and for jointly increasing data availability and quality for water-related SDG and other indicators. In 2020, WHO and UN-Habitat joined the discussion (mainly on wastewater for SDG 6.3.1).

- The discussions have mainly been revolving around differences in:
 1. definitions used in the questionnaires (and therefore in scope and interpretation)
 2. definitions with respect to the global SDG indicators
 3. definitions with respect to the SEEA Central Framework and SEEA Water
 4. data submissions from countries
 5. how to mobilise better data for SDG 6.3.1
 6. practical arrangements for collaboration on data collections
- A consolidated questionnaire (which would eliminate double-reporting) between FAO, on one side, and OECD/Eurostat + UNSD on the other, seems not possible for the moment.
- The focus is therefore on better aligning questionnaires among themselves and with the SEEA framework: the current questionnaires are based on the international water statistics definitions/conceptual schemes. The idea is to progressively move towards water accounts (SEEA)

- The OECD and Eurostat will present to their respective working parties a series of modifications for implementation during the 2023 data collection round (subject to green light). More specifically:
 1. Additions, deletions and clarifications that are independent of SEEA. Among these adding a variable on “environmental flow requirements” (EFR) to reflect the volume of water required to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems. But EFR methodology is not yet agreed and operational. Data is also difficult to mobilise
 2. Modifications to align to SEEA, e.g. treat the artificial recharge into the aquifer as a return flow and some rewording of definitions
 3. A more complex issue are the definitions of water use and consumption. These will be changed in the questionnaire, according to a new flow scheme (next slide)
- Some differences with SEEA will remain, e.g. abstractions for hydroelectricity and cooling water



- We do not expect opposition from countries and we do not expect significant changes to the data provided (e.g. no break in series).
- We hope to come up with fully-aligned questionnaires with UNSD by the next data collection, as well as to fully align definitions with FAO.
- We also hope to be able to provide more and better data for SDG reporting.

THANK YOU