

CONCEPT NOTE: ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL PROCESS

REGIONAL PROCESS, The 10th WORLD WATER FORUM

1. Overview

The Asia and the Pacific region boast a diverse geography and climate. The region is home to 60 percent of the world's total population, with varying levels of access to water resources, sanitation, and services. Asia and the Pacific's bustling urban centers, experiencing one of the fastest populations and economic growth rates, now face increasing demand for water for drinking, sanitation, and industries. making it even more susceptible to frequent natural disasters, environmental challenges, and exacerbating water insecurity. Inequality and inequity in access to natural resources and weak governance are socio-politically challenging in the region. Effectively addressing these multifaceted issues demands sustainable and integrated approaches that take into consideration the region's unique characteristics and the diverse needs of its populations.

However, water services need help to keep up with the pace of urban development, already an imperative challenge. In contrast, rural and marginalized areas face even more fundamental gaps to bridge, including limited access to safely managed water, water scarcity due to increasing demands and possible reallocation to meet higher economic needs, inadequate water infrastructure and services, water pollution, socio-economic and gender inequalities, lack of awareness and capacity, limited enabling environments for collective actions for water security issues holistically, and limited financial resources.

The Asia Pacific Region is also home to a third of the World's Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As a sub-region, our Pacific Island Countries endure some of the world's lowest levels of access to safe water and sanitation and remain disproportionately impacted by the water-related impacts of disasters and climate change. Approximately, 40% of the region's Pacific population live without access to basic drinking water facilities, and approximately two-thirds live without basic sanitation.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive and holistic approaches. Comprehensive solutions encompass various elements, such as leveraging science, knowledge, and innovation, improving access to hydrological data, enhancing resilient water infrastructure, fostering inclusive water governance, promoting collaboration among diverse stakeholders, reducing inequality and poverty, ensuring gender and social inclusion in water governance, enhancing transboundary cooperation, and utilizing innovative financing mechanisms.

The Asia-Pacific region must prioritize the development of quality-oriented societies that promote resilience and sustainability in water management grounded in inclusivity. This can be achieved through concerted efforts at various echelons from interventions at the local level to the sharing of knowledge at regional and global levels. Such actions are imperative towards the realization of regional prosperity as well as the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

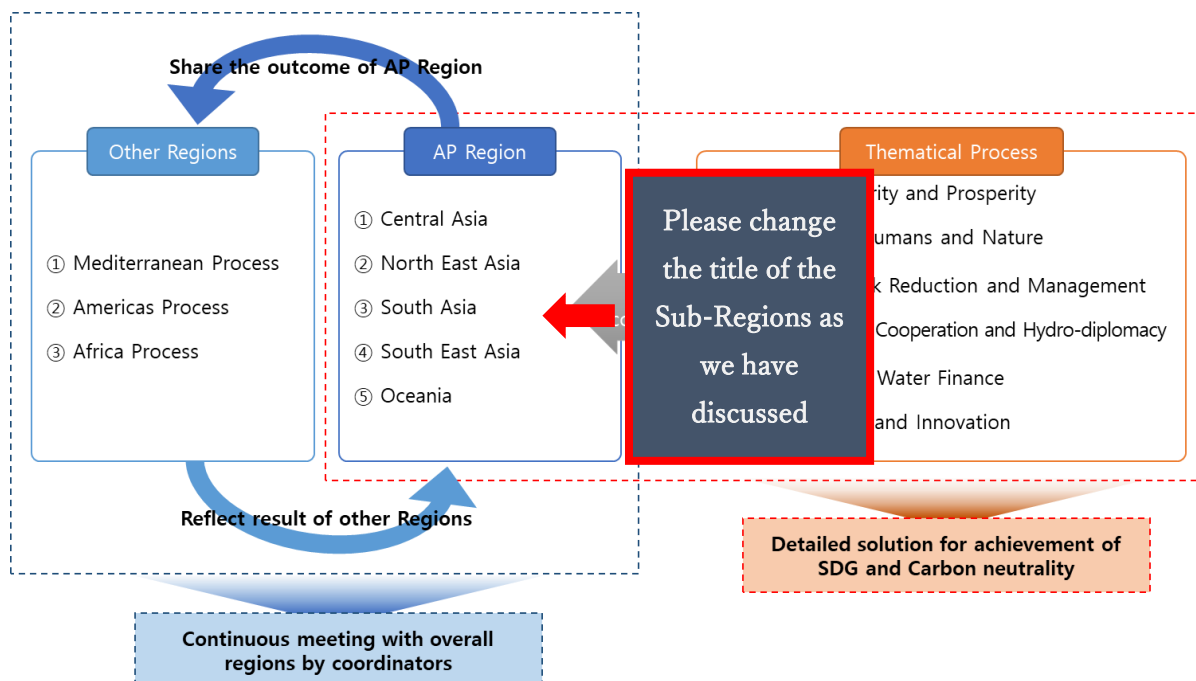
Such endeavors will be envisaged by the comprehensive water management plans rooted in the principles of sustainability, resilience, and inclusiveness through the collaboration of the governments,

research agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders that will participate in the 10th World Water Forum Regional Process. This plan will include locally tailored solutions, shared pathways, enabling conditions, tools and methodologies, and showcases of best practices.

Lastly, we need to understand better the nexus of water-culture-innovation for countries and communities in the region and multi-stakeholders of the other regions in the world, particularly the role of culture in our present and future through showcased practices, debate, and collectively thinking about how to best utilize and integrate the well of wisdom and indigenous knowledge considering gender and social equity perspectives in our region for scaling impacts. Culturally-enabled resilience and shared prosperity will better protect our lives and livelihoods for a better future.

2. Thematic Framework

Six sub-themes are suggested under the overarching theme of the 10th World Water Forum themed as “Water for Shared Prosperity”: (1) Water Security and Prosperity, (2) Water for Humans and nature, and (3) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, (4) Cooperation and Hydro-diplomacy, (5) Water Innovative Finance, and (6) Knowledge and Innovation. In the six themes.



Asia-Pacific Regional Process aims to identify:

(a) the challenges and opportunities in addressing the issues and actions, considering inclusion and equity and indigenous knowledge aspects of water management, including what has been achieved, what more hurdles to remove and what more efforts to make, what the shared pathway looks like, how to elevate political wills and form stronger collaboration and

partnership to deliver the shared goals and prosperity; and how to assure accountability {including what has been done and What still needs to be done - by when and extent of effort needed, along with the corresponding timelines);

(b) breakthroughs, enabling the environment and methodologies to address the challenges and enhancing the actions to deliver effective water management practices; and,

(c) locally and culuturally tailored Solutions, Pathways, best practices/Showcases, and tools and frameworks.

The 10-topic framework is used to guide the organization and conduction of the Asia and the Pacific Regional Process that is focused but rich, diverse, and inclusive and ensures consistency, alignment, and impact. The deep-dive of the 10 topics is expected to present Asia and the Pacific regional narrative and messages to the political leaders built upon the 5 sub-regional processes around (a), (b), and (c), embedded in the 4 syntheses of (1) science and technologies, (2) governance, including gender and social equity perspectives, (3) finance, and (4) culture, indigenous knowledge, and innovation.

Asia and the Pacific regional process can also address the issues on a **sub-regional basis**, such as:

- Northeast Asia
- Southeast Asia
- South Asia
- Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Oceania and Pacific Islands Countries

Sub-regions and countries under the Asia-Pacific Regional Process

Sub-region	Countries
Central Asia and Caucasus Region	Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
Northeast Asia	China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea
Southeast Asia	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor, and Vietnam
South Asia	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka
Oceania & Pacific Island Countries	Australasia Sub-Region: Australia, New Zealand Pacific Island Countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu

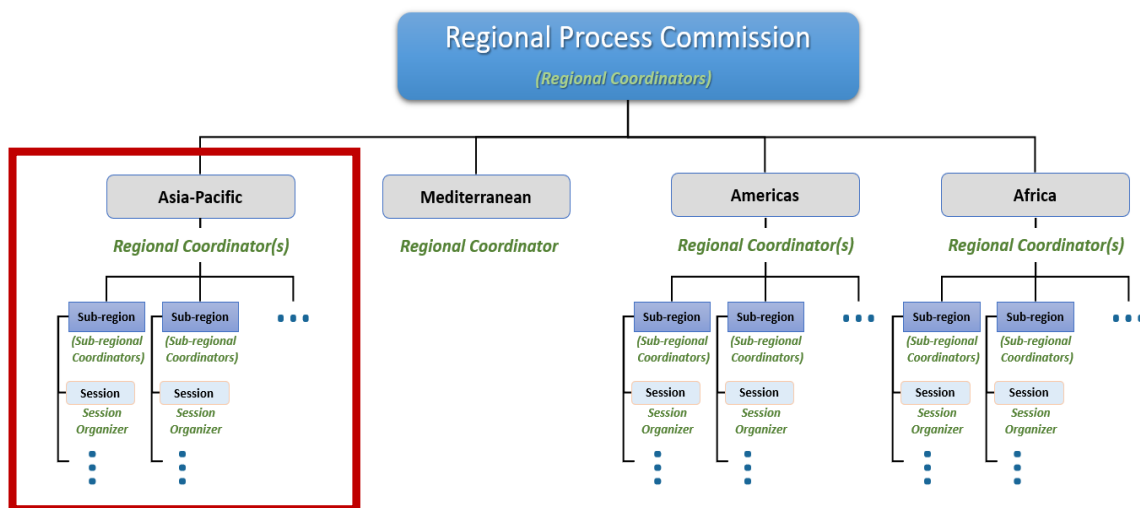
3. Working Group Structure:

The Asia-Pacific regional process will be structured into five sub-regions: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Oceania and the Pacific Islands. A designated coordinator will be selected from both APWF and AWC member organizations for each sub-region to facilitate multi-stakeholder coordination at the sub-regional and country levels.

To ensure cohesive multi-stakeholder discussions, the Asia-Pacific Regional Process has established the 10-topic framework aligned with the six sub-themes and topics of the thematic process for the 10th World Water Forum. Each sub-region will prioritize and discuss specific issues within this framework. Moreover, there will be discussions spanning inter-subregionally across Asia and the Pacific and at the regional level.

The selection of session organizers and topic contributors (working group members) will occur following a consensus-building process for the topic selection.

In addition, the Asia-Pacific Regional Process also establishes the Experts Panel, consisting of several thematic experts on our region, to provide expert knowledge and feedback to Asia-Pacific Regional Process Coordinators (APWF and AWC) and help write the Asia-Pacific Regional Process Report.



[Regional Process Working Group Structure]

Sub-regional coordinators:

- **Northeast Asia: (Lead: JWF, Co-lead: Changjiang Water Resources Commission)**
Korea Water Forum, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia
- **Southeast Asia (Lead: GWP Southeast Asia, Co-lead: National Organization Committee (NOC) and Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MPWH) coordinated with The Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas-)**

KMCRC

- **South Asia (Lead: GWP South Asia, Co-lead: Smart WASH Solutions(Nepal))**
IWMI (supporting agency of GWP SA for the South Asia sub-regional process in whatever ways appropriate)), Gomal Damaan Area Water Partnership(Pakistan)
- **Central Asia and the Caucasus (Lead: EC-IFAS, *Chair of EC-IFAS, Co-lead: GWP Central Asia)**
- **Oceania and Pacific Islands (Lead: Secretariat of Pacific Community, Co-lead: AWP: Pacific Island Countries)**
International Water Centre (Australia & NZ)

4. Deliverables (Expected Outcomes)

- **Asia-Pacific Regional Process Report:** The insights and recommendations from the discussions during the regional process will be compiled into the Asia-Pacific Regional Process Report for the 10th World Water Forum, which will be presented at the forum. This report will highlight each sub-region’s challenges and propose approaches and actions to address them. By bringing together stakeholders from across the region, the report will provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the water-related challenges and opportunities in the region.
- **Flagship report:** For instance, JWF and the Asian Development Bank Institute will jointly produce “Policy Paper - Incorporating Sociocultural Dimensions in Water Resources Management: Policies, Practices, and Challenges”. This flagship report will explore the sociocultural aspects of water management practices that influence people's attitudes towards water and how it is managed. This report will provide valuable insights into how policies and practices can incorporate sociocultural dimensions for effective water resources management.
- **Collection of Showcases in line with each theme:** It covers the showcases introduced in the Regional Process Report, Sessions, and the showcases, which are not included due to the limited spaces of the paper and session time.

5. Preparatory Milestone and Roadmap

Date	Asia Pacific Regional Process	
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Regional Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Date	Asia Pacific Regional Process	
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1st SCM, Kick-off) Introduce the overall process and discuss ways to develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
March~ 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for Interest of Regional Coordinator • Development of the advanced framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of Regional Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
July-August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Note Finalization of proposed regions (Asia Pacific, Mediterranean, Americas, Africa) - Sub-Regional Coordinator selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Priorities of the AP Region selection by co-coordinators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pacific Island Countries: 7th Pacific Water and Wastewater Ministerial Forum (28 Aug-1 Sep-)</i> • Mekong-Korea International Water Forum (7 Sep) • IWRA Congress (11-15 Sep) • Central Asia: IFAS Summit (14-15 Sep)
October 2023	<p>(2nd SCM): Region, Sub-region Topic Description, Session Ideas, Interaction between regions and other processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint meeting with APWF and AWC • Southeast Asia : Southeast Asia Water Security - IWRM Regional Conference (11-12 Oct) • Pacific Island Countries: Pacific Resilient Meeting(11-13 Oct)
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the selected Thematic Priorities, develop Sub-regional water issues with a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Date	Asia Pacific Regional Process	
	brief concept note of each sub-region	
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tentative Topics of the Session, Tentative session organizers list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeast Asia: Korea International Water Week (6-9 Dec) (TBD)
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Session Plan Finalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint meeting among APWF and AWC and their partner organizations (TBD) Central Asia: “Central Asian sub-regional preparatory Workshop to the 10th World Water Forum”, January-February 2024
~May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous development of the sessions and deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Profile of the Co-Coordination Organizations

APWF	AWC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Person: Ms. Changhua Wu (APWF Chair of Governing Council) Supporting lead person: Dr. Eduardo Araral (APWF Vice Governing Council Chair) Dr. Mikio Ishiwatari (Board Director of Japan Water Forum/ APWF Secretariat) Focal Person: Ms. Yumiko Asayama (Chief Manager, APWF Secretariat) Description: The Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF) is an independent non-profit multi-stakeholder network, launched in September 2006, upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Person: Dr. Yong-deok Cho (Secretary General) Focal Persons: Mr. Yonghwan Kim (Executive Director) Mr. Jewon Lee (Planning Director) Ms. Ilhyang Park (Program Officer) Description: The Asia Water Council (AWC) is a leading water platform that aims to provide tangible solutions to resolve water issues in Asia and beyond, and support achieving sustainable development with clean and sufficient water. AWC consists of 164 members from 24

<p>request of the region's ministers at the 4th World Water Forum.</p> <p>The objective of the APWF is to raise the priority of tackling water security issues to the forefront of the development agenda and to seek political commitment for water security at the highest level in the region by promoting the active exchange of information, knowledge, and skills across institutions and people in Asia and the Pacific for water security.</p> <p>To fulfill this mission, the APWF has established a unified platform and voice for countries and organizations in the Asia-Pacific region by organizing the Asia-Pacific Water Summit, etc. This platform accelerates the effective integration of water resources management into socio-economic development by championing best practices and fostering increased investments toward sound water cycle management of the entire basin. The APWF works collaboratively with various regional and global water-related organizations to build capacity, enhance cooperation, and promote regional and global investments in the region.</p>	<p>countries, and actively cooperating with water-related organizations including governments, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as well as international organizations such as World Water Council, International Water Resources Association, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and Asian Development Bank for implementing joint projects.</p>
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