



SWP General Assembly 2020

Date: 17 September 2020, 08:30 – 18:30 | Statutory Part started at 14:15

Venue: Old town of Berne and Kursaal, Berne

Participants: In total 31 participants, representing 21 member organizations and 2 representatives of the SWP Youth Committee (see list of participants in Annex).

Detailed Agenda and Minutes

This document presents the detailed agenda and minutes of the General Assembly of the Swiss Water Partnership (SWP). Points marked with a star (*) are statutory issues, the outcomes of which are detailed in the following pages of this document. Points marked with two stars (**) are statutory issues for which documents have been sent to the members by email. These points are also detailed in the following pages.

AGENDA

A) Guided Visit Old Town Bern and Presentation SDC* (08:30-12:00)

B) Presentation of SWP Youth and activities*

C) Feedback SWP members survey and Check Mandate SWP*

D) General Assembly – Statutory Part (14:15-15:30)

D.1 Opening

- D.1.1 Opening of the General Assembly by Olga Darazs, Chair of the Swiss Water Partnership
- D.1.2 Confirmation of the number of voters and majority for votes
- D.1.3 Approval of the Agenda
- D.1.4 Approval of the minutes of the General Assembly 2019**

D.2 Year of 2019: Key achievements

- D.2.1 Presentation and approval of the Annual Report 2019**
- D.2.2 Presentation and approval of the Financial report 2019**
- D.2.3 Appointment of the bookkeeper and independent auditor for 2020*

D.3 SWP: the way forward: Presentation of Activities 2020-2021

- D.3.1 Presentation and approval of the Action Plan 2020-21**
- D.3.2 Presentation and approval of the Budget 2021**

D.4 Membership & Governance

- D.4.1 Notification on members which left the SWP*
- D.4.2 Approval of the membership fees for 2020*



D.4.3 Presentation of SB (re-)election results*

E) Breakout sessions: Flagship Initiatives and UN Water Theme 2021 (15:45-17:15)

E.1 Introduction to the breakout sessions (15:45-16:00)

E.1.1 Flagship Initiative "Position Paper"

E.1.2 Flagship Initiative "Rotational Internship"

E.1.3 UN-Water Theme 2021 "Valuing Water"

E.2 Breakout sessions (16:00-17:00)

E.3 Feedback from breakout sessions (17:00-17:15)

F) AOB and closing of the General Assembly (17:15-17:30)

F.1 AOB*

F.2 Closing of the General Assembly by Olga Darazs

Aperitif (17:30-18:30)

MEETING MINUTES

A) Guided Visit Old Town Bern and Presentation SDC

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) hosted the morning program. The group started with a Fountain Tour in the Old Town of Bern. In two groups, the SWP members discovered the decorative character, the history and the decisive importance of the fountains, cisterns, the subterranean stream and the Aare river for the city of Bern.

In the second part of the morning program, SDC presented the [Strategic Framework 2021-2024 for the Global Program Water \(GPW\)](#) and the perspective of future collaborations. The new Head of the GPW, Mr. Simon Zbinden, highlighted the importance of the Swiss knowledge in the water sector. The Swiss Water Partnership is highly valued as the platform that gathers the swiss expertise and knowledge base on water and as a space where water sector players are keen to exchange. The SWP is seen as the "ambassador for water", both in Switzerland as well as internationally. The collaboration between SDC and SWP is therefore foreseen to continue under one of the four pillars, called "Water Voices", in the new Strategic Framework 2021-2024.

B) Presentation of SWP Youth and activities

Members of the newly founded **SWP Youth Management Committee** presented themselves and gave an [overview](#) of the current and upcoming activities. SWP youth currently has around 75 members. A call for proposals was launched with 10 incoming project proposals, of which 4 were awarded with seed funding. The SWP members can support SWP Youth projects as advisors/mentors or through project funding. Interested members can address the SWP Youth Management Committee.



Anna Sidonia Marugg [presented her Matura work](#) on the presence of micro plastics in the Upper Engadin rivers and lakes, a very interesting and well done research. She won the **Swiss Junior Water Prize 2020** for her work!

C) Feedback SWP member survey and Check Mandate SWP

In July/ August 2020, a **member survey** was held to check the satisfaction with SWP activities and the benefits of membership. In total, 27 member organizations (40% of the SWP members) responded the questionnaire. A [summary of the results](#) was presented by the SWP Coordinator.

The four most relevant topics for the SWP members are Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services and Supply Systems (WASH), Water and Climate Change, Financial sustainability of water and sanitation services and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). The overall satisfaction with the current activities is good. A few new potential activities or events have been suggested, for example more learning events in Switzerland or events with potential to show products and solutions of the members. The main benefits of being a member are networking with water stakeholders and creating new partnerships, a space to learn, exchange and explore new trends as well as international representation of the Swiss water sector and promotion of Swiss expertise. Generally, the members have rated that SWP is on a good way for all three pillars after 8 years and the overall satisfaction is at 3,7 (of 5).

The benefits SWP members marked as being gained with membership, were compared with the objectives of SWP in the Statutes. Many of the highest ranked benefits match the objectives but there is still potential for improvement, for example in strengthening the knowledge hub function and in working more inclusive. The survey will be discussed in detail with the Steering Board and the answers will be used as a guideline for the elaboration of proposal for new SWP phase from 2022.

D) General Assembly – Statutory Part

Please find the link to all presentations and background documents [HERE](#).

D.1. Opening of the General Assembly

Olga Darazs, the Chair of the Swiss Water Partnership (SWP), welcomed the audience and opened the General Assembly (GA) 2020. In total 17 voters were confirmed¹. The minutes of the General Assembly 2019 had been sent to the members beforehand.

Decisions:

- The GA approved the agenda of the meeting.

¹ The four present new members were not eligible to vote.



- The GA approved the minutes of the GA 2019.

D.2 Key achievements 2019 and lessons learnt

D.2.1 Presentation and approval of the annual report 2019**

The SWP Annual Report 2019 highlights the main achievements of the Partnership in executing the action plan approved at the General Assembly 2019. The SWP annual report was discussed, amended and approved by the SWP Steering Board. The Steering Board recommended adopting the SWP Annual Report 2019.

Marisa Ruoss, SWP Coordinator, highlighted the following key achievements of 2019:

- Dynamic Learning:
 - Launching of SWP Youth with Kick-off Event
 - Dialogue session about Water and Peace at the Geneva Peace week
 - Swiss Junior Water Prize 2019 Winner Zamir Borojevic
 - Working group on the topic of Water and Climate change (UN Water Topic 2020)
- Strong Swiss Voice:
 - World Water Week > SWP was present with 20 members
 - Study Tour on Integrated Water Resource Management for policy makers from Pakistan
- Water Dialogue:
 - Position paper on the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2021 – 2024: endorsed by 56 organizations, of which 24 are SWP member organizations, and by 201 individuals from the water and sanitation sector

Questions/ Comments:

The present SWP members commented that the SWP Annual report was nicely done. Yet members suggested that next to a more factual presentation of activities, to include also the main observations and lessons drawn from the events, as well as an outlook after an event. Additionally, more strategic embedding and political positioning of the activities is requested, clarifying why the SWP is organizing certain activities or its presence at events.

D.2.2 Presentation and approval of the financial report 2019**

The Financial Report 2019 was reviewed and approved by the independent auditor Jean Frei Revisions- und Treuhand AG. The detailed financial report was sent to the members. The Steering Board recommended adopting the SWP Financial Report 2019.

Following aspects were explained concerning the financial report:



- The total operating income in 2019 was CHF 354'305.10, the total operating expenditures consisted of CHF 389'355.74.
- Over 2019, SWP had a negative result, despite having reduced expenses. Taking into account the reserves, per 31.12.2019, the membership is obliged CHF 5'498.71 to the legal entity SWP.
- The negative result is mainly due to the "Extraordinary expenses" from phase 2 that came into account in 2019 and the fact that less income was generated from Flagship Initiatives and Members' contributions for events.
- Additional income was generated through a study tour.
- The SDC contribution is in line with 60% of total audited expenses.

D.2.3 Appointment of the independent auditor for 2020

The Statutes require the GA to appoint an independent auditor to review the annual financial report of the SWP. The financial reports were audited by 'Jean Frei Revisions- und Treuhand AG'. For 2019, the requirements for the audit have changed according to the contract with SDC for the phase 3. The bookkeeping and audit have to be separated because no double mandate is possible according to International Standards on Auditing (ISA 805). Therefore, the elected auditor TBO suggested to hand over the auditing task to Jean Frei AG for 2019.

For 2020, 3 offers from auditing companies were analyzed. The Chairperson suggests continuing the collaboration with Jean Frei after good experiences in 2019. The General Assembly has to approve the procedure to assign Jean Frei AG for the audit 2019 and the new independent auditor for 2020.

Decisions:

- The GA approved the 2019 annual report.
- The GA approved the 2019 financial report.
- The GA approved the assignment of 'Jean Frei Revisions- und Treuhand AG' for the audit 2019.
- The GA approved the appointment of the independent auditor 'Jean Frei Revisions- und Treuhand AG' for the audit 2020.

D.3 SWP: the way forward

D.3.1 Presentation and approval of the action plan 2020-21**

The Action Plan 2020-21 was discussed, amended and approved by the SB of the SWP. The action plan also strives to put the short-term actions into perspective with the long-term vision of the SWP. The Steering Board recommended to adopt the SWP Action Plan 2020-21.

Marisa Ruoss, the Coordinator of the Swiss Water Partnership, presented the main elements of the 2020-2021 Action Plan, which can be summarized as follows:

Dynamic Learning:



- Learning and knowledge exchange event: one learning event on “the role of the finance actors in the water sector” with presentations of Federal Office of Environment with SDC and Zurich Insurance.
- Youth: Activities were presented by SWP Youth
- Flagship Initiatives: New FIs were elaborated by the Steering Board and discussed with the GA.

Strong Swiss Voice:

- WWWWeek at home: 2 sessions with 19 conveners from Switzerland but also some partners from other countries like Pakistan, India and Tanzania. The 3 sessions had a total number of around 200 participants.
- Preparation of WWW 2021 was started at the GA with the discussion of the UN Water Theme 2021 ‘Valuing Water’.
- 3 Study tours are in preparation for next year.
- Swiss and international networks: AGUASAN, WWW session with Nordic Water Network → collaborations continue.

Water Dialogue:

- Shaping global policy → inputs on GPW Strategic Framework 2021-2024 in participatory process
- Preparations for WWF 2021 for March 2021

Platform Development:

- Engaging new members
- Update website and social media channels

Questions/ Comments:

- Why has the Flagship Initiative not worked out as planned? A pilot project of blended financing in Ethiopia with Nestlé and a financial institution was foreseen. Due to political reasons in Ethiopia the project could not be pursued. If the situation gets more stable, the project should continue. Flagship Initiatives should be collaborative projects of the members with SWP. The Secretariat can be addressed for new ideas, that ideally also generate income for the Partnership.
- A position paper with the strategic focus for the Swiss Water Sector and its responsibility on global level should be elaborated. In general, the SWP could contribute more to identifying, presenting and positioning the thematic strengths of the swiss water sector. An actualization of the material available from 2015 would be welcomed. The members are reminded that ideas need to be driven by the members and cannot be solely driven by the secretariat.
- Another suggestion is to further explore activities around public debates and policy influencing, for example on 10 years of human right to water or the swiss Drinkwater initiative, on for example the occasion of World Water Day.
- The importance of partnerships between the members should be increased on several levels, for example by actively organizing events with partners from different sectors.



D.3.3 Presentation and approval of the budget 2021**

The yearly budget of the SWP for the period 01.2021 – 12.2021 was discussed and approved by the Steering Board. The Budget 2021 was sent to the members beforehand. The Steering Board recommended to adopt the SWP Budget 2021.

- Expenditure and income are similar to the years before.
- The expected income through flagship initiatives was reduced.
- Additional income can be generated through study tours if they can take place in 2021 as planned.
- The Steering Board suggested to allocate an additional CHF 10'000 for youth activities. The budgeted CHF 10'000 was so far mostly used for the Swiss Junior Water Prize. In the Budget 2021 the positions for the Swiss Junior Water Prize and other youth activities should be listed separately.

Decisions:

- The GA approved the SWP Action Plan 2020-2021.
- The GA approved the Budget 2021.

D.4 Membership & Governance

D.4.1 Notification of members, which left the SWP and exclusion of members

The consulting company STRATEGOS has left SWP because their Water mandate has come to an end.

The following new members were approved and welcomed by the General Assembly:

- Institute of Environmental and Process Engineering (UMTEC), HSR University of Applied Sciences Rapperswil
- Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Berne
- Center for Ecological Engineering at Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)
- Evodrop AG
- Zurich Insurance

D.4.2 Approval of the membership fee for 2020

According to §6 of the statutes, the membership fees are as following:

- Companies with more than 500 collaborators and Federal Offices: 3'000 CHF per year
- Companies with 20 to 500 collaborators, Non-Profit-Organizations with annual expenses of more than 40 million CHF and Non-Profit-Umbrella-Organizations: 1'000 CHF per year
- Small companies, consultants, small NPO's and foundations, university institutes, etc.: 500 CHF
- Start Ups joining SWP within the first three years of their existence get one year of SWP membership for free



The General Assembly has the mandate to decide upon the annual membership fee. The Steering Board recommended maintaining the annual membership fee as described in the statutes.

Decisions:

- The GA approved the membership fees for 2020.

D.4.3 Presentation of Steering Board (re-)elections results

Rose Osinde Alabaster, WEHDI and Simon Zbinden, SDC were approved for another 3-year term. Christof Sonderegger, SECO and Abishek Narayan, SWP Youth Committee were elected as new Steering Board members.

E) Breakout session

Riff Fullan (facilitator SWP) introduced the break-out session and explained the process. In a World Café the participants discussed in 3 breakout groups the following topics and outcomes:

E.3.1 Flagship Initiative 'Position Paper'

The Steering Board discussed ideas for Flagship Initiative in the Retreat in early 2020. The idea is to elaborate a position paper on Switzerland's position on the topic of Climate Change and Water. The members were asked for input, scope and potential synergies.

Key questions:

- a. Which SWP members are willing to take this forward?
- b. What concretely needs to be done in the next 1-3 months (and by whom)?
- c. What possibilities should be pursued to find the necessary funding/sponsorship?

Main outcome of the discussion:

- **Title:** "Role which Switzerland can play in reducing its water footprint in the World"
- **Objective/ Impact:** Swiss Contribution to SDG 6.4 / CC Mitigation (awareness creation), change consumer behavior (value chain), create a movement to leverage action, identify & contribute to on-going policy/ strategy processes of Water sectors → added value of Swiss interventions (branding)
- **Target/ Audience:** Members & External actors (e.g. Utilities), Consumers (value chain, technological)
- **Scope:** Concrete actions (best practices / case studies, showcasing Switzerland actions)
- **Process/ Format:** create a movement → discussions/ workshops, establish Blog (short film), story-telling through media (e.g. consumer impact), Presentation political platform, "Watertube"-studies



- **Actors/ partners interested:** WEHDI, GIWEH, Helvetas, SDC, GWH, Swiss Fresh Water, SECO?, STO?, Skat?, EBP?
- **Next steps:** 1) Communicate data from WWF report, 2) mapping of existing actions and gaps within SWP members, 3) Group workshop to define narrative, 4) media release by SWP

E.3.2. Flagship Initiative 'Rotational Internship'

Cross-sectoral, inter-organisational internship as an opportunity for young professionals from development countries, which should be hosted by 3-4 members and 2-6 months each. The members were asked for ideas, input and funding opportunities.

Key questions:

- a. Which SWP members are willing to take this forward?
- b. What concretely needs to be done in the next 1-3 months (and by whom)?
- c. What possibilities should be pursued to find the necessary funding/sponsorship?

Main outcome of the discussion:

- **Target/ Audience:** 2-3 fellows from developing countries, focus on women?, Cross-sectoral (gov./ private/ NGO/...), 1 host + 2 organizations = 1 project
- **Time:** 2-10 months → leaving the job possible?
- **Value for SWP:** SWP-ambassadors for CH water, Member: skillset of fellow?
- **Value for fellows:** certificate?, CV CH-label, YP? or postgraduate in CH (to reduce logistics), work experience
- **Caution:** brain drain
- **Challenges:** language → French easier, German?, training/ skillset?
- **Regions:** start with partners
- **Finance:** +/- CHF 2'000/ month + travel cost + insurance
- **Logistics:** Recruitment, Visa (check requirements), Covid-19?
- **Actors/ partners interested:** Skat, CSD, Caritas, EAWAG, ETH, SDC, Geneva Water Hub, Helvetas, SECO?
- **Next steps:** Who?, research of other programs, define joint topic

The leaders of the Flagship initiatives will update the concept notes and refer to the questions.

E.3.3. UN-Water Theme 2021 – VALUING WATER

The objective of this breakout session was to foster the exchange on this topic and go beyond.

The High-level Panel of Water defined 5 principles to sharpen the topic:



- Recognize and Embrace Water's Multiple Values
- Reconcile Values and Build Trust
- Protect the Sources
- Educate to Empower Principle
- Invest and Innovate

We can use this topic for the Preparation of Events in 2021:

- World Water Day Event in Switzerland?
- World Water Week in Stockholm

As this breakout session on 'Valuing water' marked the launch of the new SWP working group on this topic.

Main outcomes of the discussion → to be continued in the working group:

- 1.) **Governance & sustainable financing** of water through communities → examples from Swiss municipalities and water utilities (prevention water pollution, water supply and sewage system → what can other countries learn of the Swiss model? Which are the limits / barriers?
Further related topics:
 - Local control of water
 - Political interference
 - Affordability of water → what is a fair prize for water? → subsidiesExamples: EBP project Egypt, SECO
- 2.) **Cost of polluting water** → studies UN Water
 - Water purity can't be valued but everyone is enjoying it (e.g. swimming in Swiss rivers and lakes)
 - Sensitivity towards water consumption → health issues
 - Raise awareness in CH for water pollution → some people start mistrusting tap water and buy bottled water in CH → youth activity: go to people and discuss topic & social media
- 3.) **Cost / Benefit Analysis:** payment for ecosystem services, flood protection / DRR → Nature-based solutions
 - Impact on health → how would it be if system doesn't work (e.g. Covid-19)?

Working Group: SECO, EBP, VSA?, SVGW?, Skat, ETH, SDC, Geneva Water Hub, CSD



F) AOB and Closing of the General Assembly

F.1 Any Other Business (AOB)*

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F.2 Closing of the General Assembly

The assembly was closed by Olga Darazs with special thanks to the participants, guests and SDC for hosting the event.



ANNEX

General Assembly Participants List

	Member	Name, Title
1	Caritas	Arabela Philipona, Project Officer Natural Resource Management
2	CSD Engineers	Olga Darazs, President of the advisory board, SWP Chair
3	Eawag	Chris Zurbrügg, Member of Directorate
4	EBP	Risch Tratschin, Water Specialist
5	Ecopsis	Marco Forster, Partner
6	ETH Institute of Environmental Engineering	Darcy Molnar, Coordinator MAS in Sustainable Water Resources
7	Evodrop AG	Dino Novia, Co-Founder
8	Geneva Water Hub	Francois Münger, Director General
9	Helvetas	Ruedi Lüthi, Head Sustainable & Inclusive Economies
10	Sanakvo Foundation	Jan-Marc Lehky, member of the board
11	SDC	Simon Zbinden, Head of Division Global Programme Water
12	SDC	Stéphanie Piers de Raveschoot, Programme Manager
13	SDC	Nadia Bennani, Programme Manager
14	SDC	Arlette Tsopmejo, Assistant GPW
15	SECO	Christof Sonderegger, Program Manager
16	Skat Consulting	Frank Wiederkehr, Member of the Management Board
17	SVGW	Rolf Meier, Vice Director Water
18	Swiss Toilet Organisation	Karla Schlie, Founder
19	Swiss Water Partnership	Marisa Ruoss, Coordinator
20	Swiss Water Partnership	Bernita Doornbos, Secretary General
21	Swiss Water Partnership	Sandra Fürst, Focal Point Swiss Romandie / SWP Youth
22	Swiss Water Partnership	Riff Fullan, Head, Knowledge & Learning Helvetas
23	Swiss Fresh Water	Thomas Gajan, CEO
24	Swiss Junior Water Prize	Anna Sidonia Marugg, Winner
25	SWP Youth	Abishek S Narayan, SWP Youth Management Committee/ eawag
26	SWP Youth	Elodie Feijoo Seara, SWP Youth Management Committee/ Skat
27	UMTEC/ OST	Rias Stalder, Project Engineer
28	WEHDI	Rose Osinde Alabaster, Director
29	World Vision Schweiz	Emile Stricker, Responsible Programme Latin America
30	ZHAW	Devi Bühler, Research Associate
31	Zurich Insurance Group	Michael Szoenyi, Flood Resilience Program Lead