



WATER4ALL TAP ACTION ON WATER AND BIODIVERSITY

Terms of Reference

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List of acronyms

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
ERA	European Research Area
FPO	Funding Partner Organisation
HE	Horizon Europe
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
JTC	Joint Transnational Call
PCDE	Plan for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation
RDI	Research, Development and/or Innovation
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
TAP	Thematic Annual Programming
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
Water4All	European Partnership on Water Security for the Planet

WATER4ALL TAP ACTION ON WATER AND BIODIVERSITY – TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

1.1 Introduction to Water4All

The Water4All Partnership - Water Security for the Planet - is a funding programme for scientific research in freshwater. It aims to tackle water challenges to face climate change, strengthen the European Research Area (ERA) in the field of clean and healthy ecosystems, help to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and boost the EU's competitiveness and growth. It is co-funded by the European Union within the frame of the Horizon Europe (HE) programme.

The topic of Water4All is intrinsically an environmental concern, so that improving the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity is one of the expected impacts of the Partnership. Good health of ecosystems and their capacity to host biodiversity and properly deliver their services is identified as Theme II in Water4All Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda¹ (SRIA). These targets react to pressing climate change that has already started exacerbating the water crisis, while water quality is globally declining as well as biodiversity in freshwater. Huge risks derive from these challenges. In order to face them in a comprehensive way and to provide multidisciplinary solutions for a safe and healthy aquatic environment, Water4All aims to further alignment of national Research, Development and/or Innovation (RDI) programmes and projects related to water challenges.

1.2 The Concept of Alignment

"Alignment is the strategic approach taken by Member States to modify their national research programmes, priorities or activities as a consequence of the adoption of joint research priorities in the context of Joint Programming, with a view to improving the efficiency of investment in research at the level of Member States and the ERA."² In general, both the Member States and the Associated Countries may coordinate to reach further alignment via (joint) actions. The goal is a greater coordination and complementarity among national research priorities, programmes and activities around jointly identified strategic priorities (e.g. SRIA). The desired outcome is increased efficiency of public funding and research by avoiding duplication across Europe and beyond. In order to reach this objective, Water4All supports the development of the Water4All Thematic Annual Programming (TAP) Action.

1.3 TAP Action: a Tool for Alignment

A TAP Action is a "light alignment" tool aimed to foster the alignment of national research programmes, promoting the international cooperation and coordination of national research projects. It has a finite time frame. It relies on the establishment of a network or cluster of excellence of national projects focussed on specific RDI needs from new or already started national calls in order to partner them, creating a critical mass of research and technological excellence, and ensuring the integration and sharing of knowledge. Specific

¹ Water4All Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, September 2022
https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/sites/www.water4all-partnership.eu/files/2023-02/Water4All_SRIA-2022-2025_A4_2311_bd.pdf

² Source: ERA-Learn 2020 Policy Brief on impact assessment of networks, 2015.

outputs and added value of the cluster are listed in Section 2.4. In a nutshell, activities include biannual working meetings of the cluster which allow exchange on approaches, methods, and data.

This document sets out the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the first Water4All TAP Action starting in 2024 and the procedure for setting up the TAP Action. The Water4All TAP Action will draw from the experience and lessons learned from the AquaticPollutants TAP Action implemented under the ERA-NET Cofund AquaticPollutants in 2022 and other relevant initiatives such as the Water Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) TAP action AQUATAP-ES on Ecosystem Services implemented under the ERA-NET Cofund WaterWorks2015.

2. Water4All TAP Action

The Water4All aims at pooling resources from participating research programme owners / managers from European, associated and third countries to implement six Joint Transnational Calls (JTC) for proposals with European Commission co-funding. The TAP Action is an additional initiative complementary to the six JTCs foreseen during the lifetime of the Water4All Partnership. It is a network of national projects focussed on specific RDI needs that addresses topics close to the Water4All JTC contents. In this way, it will complement the JTC theme while aligning national programmes relevant for this theme. Moreover, it will employ a multi-disciplinary approach including economic, ecological, societal and technological disciplines and perspectives.

Interested Funding Partner Organisations (FPOs) will either include in their national calls the same call text on a specific RDI need, or select projects in this area from new calls or possibly already started calls and request the selected projects to join an international cluster organised by the participating FPOs.

Thereby, the TAP Action will create an opportunity for broader cross-border cooperation, greater collaboration and a more unified focus on water RDI across Europe and beyond. It will allow coordination between the individual projects, lead to a greater impact at the European and global level, and address research gaps and avoid duplication.

2.1 Theme: Water and Biodiversity

The general theme selected for the first Water4All TAP Action is **Water and Biodiversity**, based on the Water4All SRIA Theme II - Water for ecosystems and biodiversity, and encompasses *environmental engineering and ecohydrology for ecosystems restoration, multiple pressure–impact–response relationships, monitoring tools at different scales, harmonization of methodologies for evaluation of surface water hydromorphology, Impacts of hydrological extremes, rehabilitation of water bodies*. The Water4All TAP Action theme is aligned with the 2023 Water4All JTC theme on “**Aquatic Ecosystem Services**”³. The TAP Action and JTC themes are complementary and the TAP focuses on those aspects not centrally addressed in the 2023 JTC.

While lakes, reservoirs and rivers cover only 2.3% of the Earth’s surface, water pollution and the degradation of freshwater ecosystems account for about one-third of the global biodiversity loss⁴. The biodiversity decline rate in freshwater ecosystems doubles that of oceans and forests (of around 83% between 1970 and 2014). This is confirmed by the Global Assessment recently released by the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services⁵: i) Inland waters and freshwater ecosystems show among the highest rates of habitat decline; ii) only 13% of the wetland present in 1700 remained by 2000; iii) recent losses have been even more rapid (0.8% per year from 1970 to 2008). The World Wildlife Fund’s 2020 Living Planet Report

³ Water4All 2023 JTC on “Aquatic Ecosystem Services”, pre-announcement - <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/joint-activities/water4all-2023-joint-transnational-call-pre-announcement>

⁴ WWF, 2018

⁵ IPBES, 2019

states that “almost one in three freshwater species are threatened with extinction, with all taxonomic groups showing a higher risk of extinction in the freshwater, compared to the terrestrial system⁶.

Biodiversity in freshwater ecosystems is also affected by structural changes linked to the loss of hydrological connectivity (e.g. dams, flood protection barriers, water storage). Only in Europe, aquatic biodiversity is at risk in about 34% of surface water bodies due to structural changes. Technological breakthroughs offer opportunities for advanced water treatment and recycling, and the depletion of numerous dangerous substances for both human health and the environment. Wastewater treatment in all parts of Europe has improved during the last 15-20 years but the values of population connected to wastewater treatment in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are still relatively low compared to Central and Northern Europe (at about 70% against 80% and 97% in Northern and Central countries, respectively)⁷.

Moreover, some EU countries are lagging behind in the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. Small agglomerations or non-connected dwellings (not covered by the Directive) place significant pressures on 11% of the EU’s surface water bodies. Finally, emerging pressures such as climate change adaptation, the implementation of enhanced resource efficiency programmes and newly identified pollutants, e.g. pharmaceutical residues and micro & macro-plastics call for additional substantial investments for the construction of new infrastructures or the maintenance of existing ones. Innovative water treatment will contribute to the Circular Economy and the Zero pollution targets.

Another key pressure in EU and international waters is climate change. Climate change induces short- to long-term variations in the availability of freshwater, impacting social communities, the hydrological cycle and freshwater ecosystems. The review of recent studies and international reports on the effects of climate change on ecosystems and society at large shows a striking conclusion that Biodiversity loss, water quality decline and climate change are all interdependent and they exacerbate one another⁸. EU’s Member States and countries around the world strive to adapt to climate change conditions, making their communities and infrastructures more resilient to water-related hazards, restoring ecosystems and developing policy frameworks that enable protection for all. Solutions to water stress cannot only emanate from technological development; tackling water stress is mainly a governance problem that deals with the design, implementation and evaluation of measures for securing water for all.

Therefore, the theme of this first TAP Action follows Water4All holistic and multi-disciplinary approach of the entire research-water innovation pipeline and the whole water cycle, including the interaction between coastal and inland waters, the ecosystem and biodiversity aspects, climate change and biodiversity. The theme also supports the EU Taxonomy regulation calls to consider harmful any economic activity that would adversely impact: climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, i.e. the good status or the good ecological potential of surface water and groundwater, or marine waters; the circular economy, notably the efficiency of the use of water; pollution prevention and control, notably into water; or, the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. All these aspects are covered in the Water4All SRIA. Research and innovation on water and practical implementation of solutions produced in Water4All will actually positively impact the six environmental objectives set in the Taxonomy regulation. The activities run in Water4All themselves will not make a significant harm to any of these objectives.

Ultimately, through this theme, the TAP Action on Water and Biodiversity - alongside the Water4All Joint Transnational Calls - aims to contribute the following expected impacts:

- Europe builds competitive sustainability and tackles climate change and natural disasters through the deployment of nature-based solutions
- The interrelations between biodiversity, health, food, soil, water, air and climate are better known.

⁶ WWF, 2020

⁷ EEA, 2021

⁸ EC, 2020

2.2 Participating Countries

The FPOs and the national projects from six countries taking part in the Water4All TAP Action on Water and Biodiversity are⁹:

- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Finland
- Ireland
- Spain

Participation of other countries will remain open until six months after the TAP Action kick-off meeting in January 2024. However, it is strongly recommended to join before the kick-off meeting.

2.3 Selection of National Projects

TAP Actions are clusters of national projects, considering either new projects being funded as part of new national calls with the topic of the TAP Action included in the National Call documentation; or new national projects of relevance to the topic of the TAP Action (i.e. funded as part of new national calls without specification of the topic of the TAP Action included in the National Call documentation); or already running national projects that were funded within previously announced national calls and their contract was modified and budget increased. Projects need shall last during the total duration of the TAP Action (i.e. until December 2025).

Depending on the funding mechanisms at national level, three scenarios were identified for the process of nominating national projects to participate in the TAP Action.

Scenario A:

- funding organisations include the short topic description as part of their individual 2023 national calls (or prepare a new call, especially to nominate new projects for TAP);
- funding organisations award projects at national level submitted in response to the TAP Action topic.

Scenario B (Countries without national RDI programmes and/or bottom-up funding organisations):

- funding organisations identify (running) national projects awarded before January 2024 relevant to the theme of the TAP Action;
- funding organisations invite the coordinators to join the TAP Action with additional new national funding to cover the TAP Action-related activities;

Scenario C (Countries without national RDI programmes and/or bottom-up funding organisations):

- funding organisations identify (running) national projects awarded before January 2024 relevant to the theme of the TAP Action;
- funding organisations invite the coordinators to join the TAP Action using their existing budget (i.e. no new funding) to cover TAP-related activities;

In all scenarios, selected projects shall last until the end of 2025.

⁹ The list may be updated over the course of the TAP Action

When nominating national projects to participate in the TAP Action, research funding organisations should bear in mind, among other issues, the time availability of the nominees. Following the lessons learned from the previous JPIs' alignment activities, it is highly recommended not to include only high-profile senior scientists whose work schedule tends to be quite tight, but also early-career scientists and professionals who may dedicate more time to the TAP Action's activities. Apart from that, research funding organisations should apply due diligence regarding the disciplinary and gender diversity of the cluster.

2.4 Expected Outputs and Added-Value

It is envisaged that the TAP Action will carry out its networking and knowledge sharing activities:

- via two on site meetings per year;
- via online forum; and
- remotely (time input required) in between the on-site meetings.

Expected Outputs

The expected outputs of the Water4All TAP Action may include (but are not limited to):

- creation of a leveraging network, which would not necessarily exist without this action – increasing transnational synergies of projects funded in national schemes;
- fostering research coordination and promoting sharing of results, data and other resources;
- fostering mobility and sharing of infrastructure;
- preparing policy briefs, stakeholder briefs, joint scientific publications, etc. that will be translated into the official languages of countries participating in the TAP Action;
- facilitating mutual learning;
- preparation of joint RDI proposals to secure sustainability of the cooperation,
- developing common and cohesive practices/methodologies; and
- delivering knowledge for policy making, anticipate scientific and technological needs and provide efficient scientific support for strategic and political decision making in the specific field.

Added-Value for Funders

It is expected that the Water4All TAP Action will:

- contribute to knowledge transfer to similar scientific platforms, decision makers and private sector;
- bring together researchers in a more collaborative manner;
- avoid duplication;
- provide access to other RDI infrastructures;
- contribute to alignment at project-, programme-, researcher-, and institution level; and
- strengthen collaboration in line with the Water4All Joint Transnational Calls.

Added-Value for Researchers

It is expected that the Water4All TAP Action will:

- bring together researchers in a more collaborative manner;
- provide access to other RDI infrastructures;
- provide researchers with opportunities for networking;
- facilitate cooperation;
- improve the researchers' awareness of research priorities in other countries and how their needs overlap;

- build the researchers' capacity through integrated, transnational and multi-disciplinary approaches and exchanges of good practices;
- foster knowledge exchange and transfer.

3. Water4All TAP Action Governance

3.1 TAP Steering Committee

Composition

FPOs participating in the Water4All TAP Action will compose the TAP Steering Committee. The TAP Steering Committee will oversee and support the activities of the TAP Action and ensure their full integration in and complementarity with the overall Water4All activities. Costs associated with the TAP Steering Committee activities (i.e. attendance at meetings, time, etc) will be covered by each funding organisation (i.e. in-kind contribution).

The TAP Steering Committee is composed of FPOs that have projects taking part in this activity: ¹⁰

- FNRS for Belgium
- TA CR for the Czech Republic
- ETAg for Estonia
- AKA for Finland
- EPA for Ireland
- AEI-FECYT for Spain

Role

The role of the TAP Steering Committee is to:

1. Identify relevant national projects to take part in the Water4All TAP Action;
2. Oversee and support the activities of the TAP Action;
3. Take all decisions on management of the TAP Action;
4. Contribute to their full integration in complementarity with the joint strategy of the European Partnership and national programmes;
5. Supervise the outcomes of the TAP Action cluster by means of midterm monitoring, final follow up and final seminar with the possibility to provide feedback when required by the cluster (for instance when the cluster perceives a critical issue and/or requires support);
6. Facilitate the kick-off meeting and a final meeting.

Contributions

The TAP Steering Committee will contribute and support the TAP activities by:

- covering the travel and accommodation costs of the designated representatives from the nominated national projects or by approving an inclusion of these costs as part of the project budget at national level;
- if needed, covering the costs of having documents addressed to local policy-makers translated to the official language of the given country;
- providing meeting facilities or a digital platform for online meetings, when required.

Costs associated with the TAP Steering Committee activities (i.e. attendance at meetings, time, etc) will be covered by each funding organisation (i.e. in-kind contribution or from the Water4All management costs - i.e.

¹⁰ This list will be updated on the Water4All website at the starting date of the TAP Action in January 2024.

additional cost for Water4All partners participating in the task, basic travel budget for funding organisations' involvement and engagement).

Steering Committee Chair

The TAP Steering Committee is chaired by TA CR (the Czech Republic) who has the overall responsibility for carrying out and coordinating the setting up, implementation and evaluation of the Water4All TAP Action.

TA CR as lead for this Water4All TAP Action will act as TAP Action administrator, during the first two years of its existence. Costs will be covered by Water4All management costs assigned to TA CR in advance.

The Steering Committee Chair, TA CR, will help with:

- supporting the TAP Scientific Coordinator;
- organising at least two on-site meetings (agenda, logistics, documentation);
- facilitating communication within the TAP Action members and with the TAP Steering Committee and Water4All consortium;
- supporting the cluster in the preparation of the Implementation Plan of the TAP Action and its implementation;
- external communication- disseminating and creating dissemination leaflets/contents for Water4All website and social media;
- ensuring regular updates and communication between the TAP Steering Committee, Water4All consortium;
- circulating exploratory survey about expectations of the TAP Action members.

3.2 TAP Action members

Composition

The Water4All TAP Action members (cluster) will be composed of researchers from the national funded research projects that have the formal support of their respective research funding organisation. In order to ensure geographical diversity of the cluster, no more than three projects from one country may participate

Role

The role of the TAP Action members is to:

1. Select the TAP Scientific Coordinator.
2. Actively participate in the TAP activities including attendance at meetings.
3. Agree on and implement the TAP Implementation Plan to the highest possible extent.
4. Actively disseminate the activities of the TAP Action.

The TAP Action activities will be facilitated via:

- two face-to-face meetings or equivalent per year;
- online restricted forum (e.g. this could be done via a LinkedIn group for example);
- online restricted platform for sharing documents (e.g. could be done via Google docs, SharePoint, Water4All intranet, etc);
- public dissemination of its activities and outputs through the partnership communication tools;
- remote interaction in between meetings (e.g. video conferencing, WebEx).

The TAP Action members should comply with the Water4All Open Access / Open Data principles¹¹, Water4All Privacy Policy¹², as well as the Water4All Plan for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation¹³ (PCDE) according to the Grant Agreement number 101060874 and relevant national, regional and EU regulations.

Contributions

As stated before, the TAP Action members' costs for attending meetings (travel and accommodation costs) will be covered at the discretion of the funding organisations. The arrangement should be discussed between each national project and relevant contact in the TAP Steering Committee according to their selected funding and project nomination scenario. Specifically, national funds allocated/re-allocated to the TAP Action will cover the participation of researcher(s) from the national projects selected for the TAP Action to attend at least four meetings over two years, i.e. two meetings per year. Depending on the agreement between the FPO and the respective project, they may but do not have to also cover personnel costs, direct costs, indirect costs and more.

3.3 TAP Scientific Coordinator

Composition

The TAP Action will be chaired by a Scientific Coordinator. The Scientific Coordinator will be selected among the researchers involved in the TAP Action during the kick-off meeting (in January 2024) by the TAP Action members themselves. Afterwards, the TAP Scientific coordinator has to be confirmed by the TAP Steering Committee. Candidacy for this role will be on a voluntary basis.

Role

The role of the TAP Action Scientific Coordinator is to:

1. Ensure the scientific coordination of the TAP Action activities.
2. Lead the work in developing the TAP Implementation Plan.
3. Lead the work in developing the proposed TAP Action outputs.
4. Represent the cluster at the midterm guided dialogue with the TAP Steering Committee.
5. Lead the work in developing the final follow up of the TAP Implementation Plan.

If requested, support additional foresight exercises carried out by the partnership in the selected scientific area of the TAP Action.

Contributions

Same as for the cluster members, the Coordinator's costs for attending meetings (travel and accommodation costs) will be covered by the budget of his/her respective national project/or funding organisation. An additional honorary fee of c. €10,000 will be provided to the Scientific Coordinator to cover part of his/her time committed during the two years of the TAP Action. This cost will be covered by the budget allocated to the Water4All TAP Action task and will be paid out in two instalments based on invoices provided by the Scientific Coordinator: the first instalment will be paid within 3 months after the election. The second instalment will be paid no later than 3 months after the midterm review.

¹¹ Water4All Data Management Plan, December 2022 - https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/sites/www.water4all-partnership.eu/files/2023-06/Water4All_D3.1_DMP_20221220.pdf

¹² Water4All Privacy Policy - <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/privacy-policy>

¹³ Water4All Plan for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation, November 2022 - https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/sites/www.water4all-partnership.eu/files/2023-06/Water4All_D1.2_PCDE_20221130.pdf

4. Tentative Activities and Timeline for 2024 and 2025

The Water4All TAP Action related national calls or selection of new national projects will take place in the first half of 2023, with a launch date for the TAP Action in January 2024. The TAP Action will run for a period of 24 months. The expected deliverables must be completed before August 2026. Selected national projects must be operational during the period January 2024 - December 2025.

4.1 TAP Action Timeline

Summer 2023: Information regarding the TAP Action included on the Water4All website.

- A dedicated area on the Water4All website will be used to disseminate information about the TAP Action. The website will be updated during the TAP Action lifetime with the information regarding the funded projects participating in the TAP Action and the TAP Action outputs to ensure coherence.

May 2023: Recommended deadline for FPO confirmation of participation in the TAP Action

June - September 2023: National calls following national procedures

October 2023: Nomination of national projects and contact details sent to TA CR

- Invitation issued to the national projects by the funding organisations to participate in the Water4All TAP Action - Researchers from the selected national projects will be requested to send their CVs.
- TAP Steering Committee members will review the CVs of the researchers invited and identify a potential candidate for coordinating the TAP Action. The information will also be reflected in the “TAP Who is Who” package.
- Informal contact can be made to gauge the interest of these researchers in presenting their candidacy to become the Coordinator.

November 2023: Exploratory survey examining needs and expectations of the TAP members

- Considering their no previous experience with the TAP Action, all the members will be provided with a brief description of the TAP Action and Who is Who document.
- Outcomes of the survey will be analysed by TA CR and, if beneficial, presented at the kick-off meeting to clarify the expectation of the TAP members from the very beginning and to simplify the initial discussion.

January 2024: Launch of the TAP Action at kick-off meeting. All national projects to be involved in the TAP Action have officially started.

December 2025: TAP Action ends

January - June 2026: assessment of the TAP Action and related outputs

July 2026: Delivery of the final report

Figure 1: Water4All TAP Action on Water and Biodiversity, Timeline



4.2 TAP Action Kick-off

Once formed, all members of the TAP Action will meet face-to-face in January 2024 (kick-off meeting facilitated by TA CR probably in the Czech Republic, ideally back to back with Water4All consortium meeting). Expected attendees include researchers from the national projects (cluster members) invited to participate in the TAP Action and the TAP Steering Committee members.

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- provide clarification on the processes involved, etc;
- provide an introduction platform;
- select a TAP Scientific Coordinator based on the Who is Who package prepared using CVs provided by the nominated experts and exploratory survey about expectations of the TAP Action members;
- select the TAP Action acronym and name;
- exchange and networking of the national projects involved in the TAP Action – Discussion on the Implementation Plan;
- clarify the Implementation Plan expectations;
- overview the previously mapped Action members' expectations and needs in order to start the process of Implementation Plan preparation.

Costs:

- Travel costs of the researchers will be covered under the related national project budgets.
- Travel costs of the Steering Committee members will be covered by the funding organisations (i.e. as in-kind contribution or from the Water4All management costs dedicated to the funding organisations).
- Meeting costs will be covered under the other direct costs dedicated to TA CR for implementing the task.

4.3 Implementation Phase

The TAP Scientific Coordinator linking with the TAP Action members will prepare a proposed Implementation Plan to meet expected outputs of TAP Action within four months from the kick-off meeting. The Implementation Plan will be sent to TA CR that will distribute it to other Water4All partners or information. The plan must include:

- main objectives;
- key outputs and indicators of progress;
- target audience/stakeholders (policy makers, private sector representatives, municipalities, etc): The TAP Action Steering Committee will later help the cluster to reach these stakeholders and invite them to the final seminar where conclusions of the TAP Action will be presented to them;
- measures on how success of the TAP Action will be evaluated.

The Implementation Phase will compose of:

- a virtual meeting platform/information sharing will be set up to facilitate the work of the TAP cluster;
- biannual working meetings;
- a midterm monitoring that will have a form of a guided dialogue between the TAP Steering Committee and the Scientific Coordinator mapping the up to date degree of accomplishment of the indicators of progress defined in the Implementation Plan;
- a final seminar including a presentation to the funding organisations and public and private stakeholders in order to achieve a better knowledge transfer;

- Water4All TAP dedicated web pages will be created to provide all relevant information on this TAP Action.

Costs:

- Travel costs of the researchers will be covered under the related national projects budgets/and or their national funding organisations where possible. Where not possible, the costs will be carried by the researchers within their current nationally funded project budget.
- Scientific Coordinator's time will be covered by the Water4All task 2.4 in the form of a lump-sum honorary fee.
- Travel costs of the TAP Steering Committee members will be covered by the funding organisations (as in-kind contribution or as part of the Water4All management costs dedicated to the funding organisations).
- Meeting costs (two meetings in total including the kick-off meeting) will be covered by the Management costs - other direct costs dedicated to TA CR for task 2.4. If additional meetings will be needed, the costs will be covered by the members of the TAP Steering Committee.
- The Water4All website will be used to spread the information about TAP Action. All communications tools (website, newsletter, social media) may be used for communicating and disseminating the results and outcomes of the TAP Action.

4.4 Joining the TAP Action later in 2024

This will be possible under the following conditions:

- new RDI projects tackling the selected TAP topic during the TAP Action duration; and
- integration in the TAP Action within six months after its kick-off meeting.

The conditions mentioned above, however, are valid only for the RDI projects nominated by the respective funding organisation standing outside of the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members have to follow the given timeline and, therefore, are not given the possibility to nominate their national projects later.

5. Water4All TAP Action Assessment

Monitoring of the progress indicators will be put in place to ensure that the TAP Action achieves its objectives. This evaluation will be linked to the Water4All Impact Assessment activities including a timeframe for achieving the expected outputs of the TAP Action. Possible Indicators of progress will be defined in the Implementation Plan by the TAP Action members and they may include:

- number of joint publications which acknowledge the TAP Action;
- number of publications produced with transnational authors/different clusters in a short timeframe;
- policy briefs and other reports for policy makers;
- stakeholder briefs and other reports for stakeholders;
- interoperable databases developed;
- standard methods/standards developed;
- comparative studies developed;
- mobility of researchers between countries evident;
- exchange of students (e.g. joint supervision of Ph.D. student);
- good attendance at online/in person meetings;
- attendance at informative meetings/workshops addressing to stakeholders;
- organisation of meetings/workshops;
- other.

Regardless of the types of the Indicators, at the end of the TAP Action the Scientific Coordinator will present to TA CR at least a short follow up of the Implementation Plan where actions, outcomes and achievements will be summarized. The material will be used by TA CR to compose the final report on the implementation of the Water4All TAP Action on Water and Biodiversity. The report will list the final set of outputs defined by the cluster, the cluster's intentions for further exploitation of the outputs and the sustainability possibilities. The cluster is obligated to provide the TA CR with material to compose the report, which will be later presented to the Water4All consortium. In addition, it is recommended that the cluster represented by the Scientific Coordinator presented its achievements during the final seminar attended by the TAP Steering Committee and target stakeholders.

In view of the fact that the duration of the Water4All TAP Action will be very limited in time, precisely two years, the midterm monitoring will not be done in a written format. Instead, TA CR will conduct a guided dialogue with the Scientific Coordinator with the main aim to map the ongoing progress and to detect potential bottlenecks.

Depending on the character of the cluster and the content of the TAP Implementation Plan, a sustainability plan may be drafted by the TAP Steering Committee in order to allow for the TAP Action activities to continue and possibly expand the network into the future. The sustainability plan would offer further opportunities for research collaboration and possible implementation tools in the framework of the Water4All Partnership, other co-funded Partnerships, the EU Missions or other initiatives. However, sustainability of the TAP Action will not be further monitored.



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