

# Thematic Commission

## GUIDELINES FOR THEMATIC SESSIONS

13 November 2017

## GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING THEMATIC SESSIONS

### 1. THE THEMATIC SESSIONS

The 8th World Water Forum Thematic Framework is structured in six main themes and three crosscutting issues, which relate to each other. Both themes and crosscutting issues open into topics – which make a total of 32. Each topic normally unfolds into three sessions, resulting in 95 Thematic Sessions at the 8th World Water Forum.

The Thematic Sessions will host the debates on the relevant theme through keynote speeches, presentations, case studies and interaction with the audience. Such debates shall refer, whenever appropriate, to the crosscutting issues – addressing the key crosscutting questions provided; to the overall theme of the 8th Forum "Sharing Water"; to the sustainability issues and specific questions raised by the Sustainability Focus Group; to the 2030 Development Agenda and other global processes and forums, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals; and to the 7th World Water Forum 'Implementation Roadmaps'.

Each Thematic Session will contribute to the expected Thematic outcomes and to the overall 8<sup>th</sup> Forum outcomes, which comprise the following:

- Focus on accelerating implementation of water-related SDG (and other Agenda-2030) targets through **country level multi-stakeholder action** that is gender/age balanced
- Propose **action goals for themes/topics for 2021-2024**, continuing tracking of actions from previous World Water Forum
- Prioritize actions driving **acceleration and up-scaling of implementation**
- Promote/encourage **formation of 'alliances for action'**, building i.a. on more than 200 Thematic Coordination Organizations at theme-topic-session levels, the 16 Implementation Roadmaps, and new water/non-water actors
- Integrate with messages from **other Forum processes**

The Forum thematic outcomes will be generated in a process from Thematic Sessions (including Special Sessions and High-Level Panels)<sup>1</sup>, through Topics to Themes that will synthesize outcomes in Concluding Thematic Plenaries:

- Session Coordination Groups (SCGs) leaders should provide a first short report to the relevant Topic Coordination Group (ToCG) right after the session, for example in the form of 3 "Key Session Messages"
- The ToCGs will in turn report to the Theme Coordination Groups (TCGs), again for example in the form of 3 "key Topic messages".
- The TCGs will include this in the Concluding Theme Plenaries, along with messages generated by the Inter-regional Thematic Sessions<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. THE SESSION COORDINATION GROUPS

Each SCG, covering one Thematic Session, shall be composed of three to five organizations, decided by the International Steering Committee (ISC) based on recommendation from the Thematic Commission (TC) after assessing ToCGs and TCGs proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> A template for outcomes reporting will be provided later.

<sup>2</sup> The Thematic-Regional coordination on messages/outcomes will be discussed later.

Leaders of SCGs have been nominated by the ToCGs/TCGs. The SCGs may however propose a change of leadership of the Group for the ToCG/TCG to approve.

All communication regarding the SCGs activities shall go through the relevant ToCG.

### 2.1. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Consider TCs general guidelines and deadlines for designing the Thematic Sessions
- Fine tune Thematic Session title and description, based on the already developed drafts
- Propose the session's format (respecting the Forum rules and resource constraints)
- Propose relevant experiences/studies/cases/scientists/decision makers for the sessions, primarily based on the EOIs already collected but also in their network of contacts
- Invite speakers/moderators/panelists/rapporteurs
- Assist the relevant ToCG and TCG in the selection of a short film (max. 5 minutes), which will be presented in the beginning of each Thematic Session<sup>3</sup>
- Mobilize important institutions around the world related to the Thematic Session and promote the sessions widely, to stimulate participation
- Link Thematic Session discussions with the 8th World Water Forum online global consultation, based on the reports of outcomes, where appropriate
- Link the Thematic Session to the 2030 Development Agenda and other global processes and forums, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals, where appropriate
- Facilitate integration with other Thematic Sessions and with other preparatory processes (Political, Regional, Sustainability and Citizen's Forum), where appropriate and realistically possible
- Report regularly to the relevant ToCG on the progress of the SCGs activities
- Report the results from the sessions as outlined in Chapter 1 above, and contribute to the synthesis document post-Forum

### 2.2. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SESSION COORDINATORS

- Topic Coordinators can participate in Session Coordination Groups under their own topic, but not as leaders. There are no restrictions on roles in other Topics.
- Each organisation can participate in maximum one Session Coordination Group in the same Topic.
- There are no restrictions on TCG/ToCG/SCGs participation in sessions. However, if there is over-representation or imbalances, the TC might intervene.

## 3. SUGGESTED SESSION DESIGN

The key requirement for session design is to make sure that as many different types of participants as possible are actively involved in the discussions and generation of conclusions and key messages.

The session designers need to help the Theme Coordinators to address the “key crosscutting questions” formulated by the Sharing, Governance and Capacity themes, as well as the “key sustainability questions” formulated by the Sustainability Focus Group (Annex 4). They will interact with their Theme Coordination Group leader to identify how to best support them in answering these questions.

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<sup>3</sup> The Citizen's Forum Process will perform an open call and provide a group of films related to the themes. All Thematic Sessions will start with a short film, which connects to its subject.

There are several possible formats for the Thematic Sessions, such as keynote speeches, presentations, panels, round table discussions, talk shows, group work and posters. Each Thematic Session will last a maximum of 90 minutes.

The SCGs must submit the proposed Thematic Session design to the respective ToCG (see Annex 1). First ToCGs, and then TCGs and TC will also review the set of proposals and eventually make suggestions to avoid major redundancies and gaps and to check if the guidelines are met.

Other specific points to be observed are:

- Thematic Sessions should aim at gender balance in speakers, panellists, or moderators. Sessions with only one gender represented will not be accepted.
- Thematic Sessions must have time for audience participation. The TC encourages engaging the audience by limiting “speaking to” time – max. 10-15 minutes for any oral presentation - and maximising interaction between panels and audience, roundtable sessions with audience, use of IT/social media technology etc. Please see box “tips for boosting participation”.
- Thematic Sessions should have young professionals – aged under 35 – as panelist, presenter or moderator.
- Thematic Sessions should search for regional balance, as well as for different backgrounds (academia, governments, private sector, civil society/NGOs, etc.), in its groups of key speakers, panelists, presenters and moderators.
- Thematic Sessions should search for innovative formats and ways to interact with audience, including innovative use of IT/social media,
- Thematic Sessions should refer to the 8th World Water Forum online global consultation “Your Voice” where relevant and possible.

#### TIPS FOR BOOSTING PARTICIPATION\*

- Keep your objectives/expected outcomes in mind
- Open sessions with reference to key questions identified for the session and guide the plenary discussion towards identifying conclusions and recommendations on such key questions
- Define your target audience and use multiple engagement tools and techniques
- After half an hour, the audience attention and ability to process information fades. Use simple mingling exercises or games to keep the brain alert and generate energy to keep the audience focused for the rest of the session.
- Promote audience dialogue opportunities (like “mini meetings”). Ask the participants to talk to the person next to them, either about a specific question raised by the moderator or maybe to reflect on the presentation just given by one of your speakers. If you feel there is time you can ask one or two persons from the audience to share something short about what they discussed. This gives the opportunity to all participants to engage in meaningful discussions, not just the ones brave enough to speak up in a big crowd. Having short Q&A after a presentation is usually not enough to engage the whole audience.

For some additional tips, go to:

<http://managementhelp.org/blogs/communications/2011/01/02/20-great-ways-to-engage-and-involve-your-audience/>.

\* The tips provided are based on those used by the Stockholm International Water Week, whose organization has kindly shared with the TC

- Thematic Sessions should search for connections with other processes: the Regional Process, the Sustainability Focus Groups, the Citizen's Forum and the Political Process. Details on how to do so are yet to be worked out, but focal points for the Regional Process have been identified for each of the 6 main themes.

#### **4. COSTS OF PARTICIPATION IN SESSIONS**

- All participating organisations and individuals are expected to pay for their participation, including the Forum registration fees, for the period of their session.
- Separate guidance is available for a very limited amount of sponsorships to ensure balanced representation (geographical, institutional, gender) and to support the presence of different categories of contributors and citizens from developing countries and non-OECD countries.

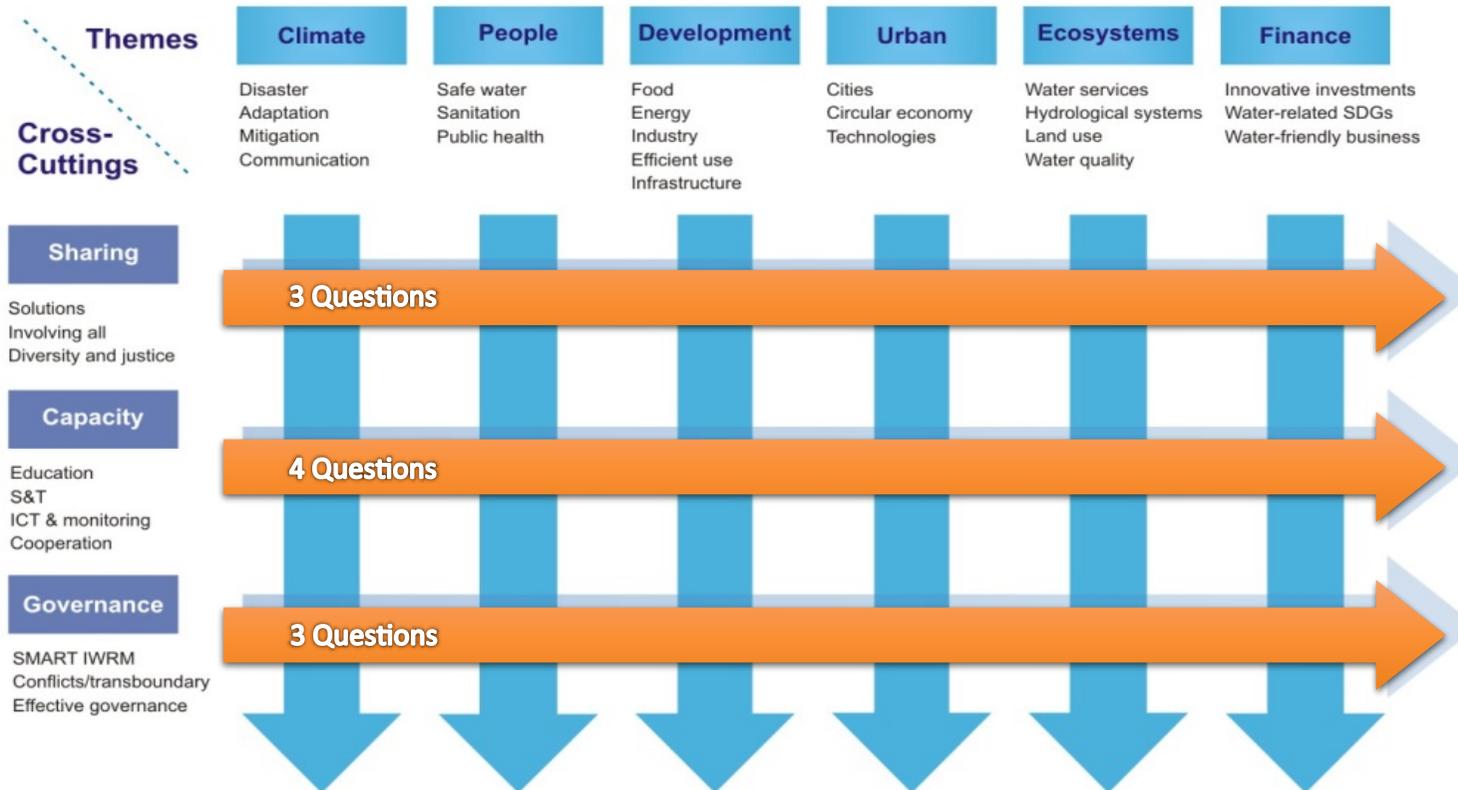
**ANNEX 1 – Session Summary Template**

<b>Media-friendly title</b> (suggested by the co-organizers)	
<b>Working title</b>	
<b>Key question</b>	
<b>Media-friendly session summary</b> (3-5 sentences)	
<b>Session description</b> (150 words)	
<b>Confirmed convening organization(s) and contact information</b>	
<b>Other associated organisations</b>	
<b>Session outline and time allocation</b>	
<b>Contributions received that will be included in the session (with a word or two about how they are included)</b>	
<b>Missing stakeholders</b>	
<b>Expected outcomes, impacts and follow-up linkages with events and initiatives after the Forum</b>	



# ANNEX 2 - THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

## Themes - CCIs Linkages

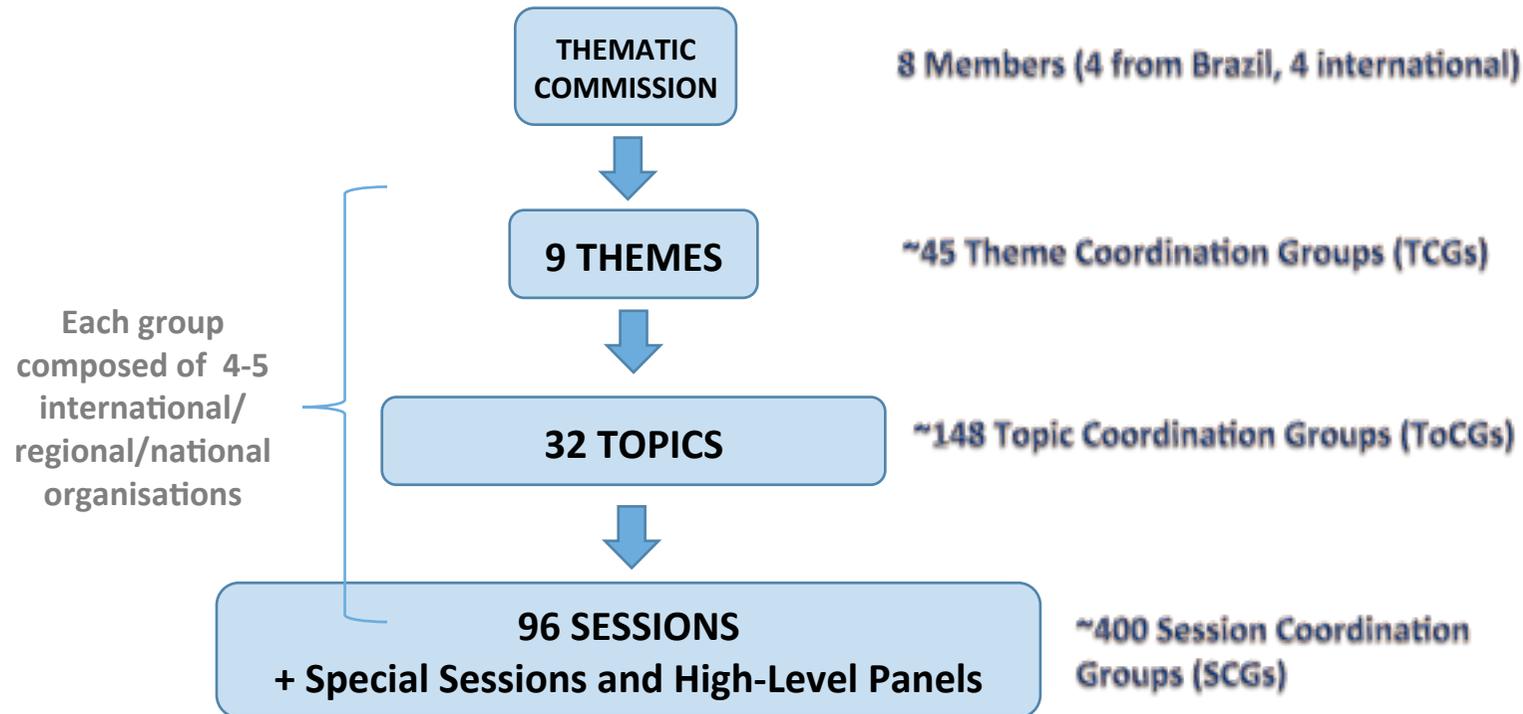


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## ANNEX 3 - THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

### Institutions/People involved



## ANNEX 4 - CROSS-CUTTING QUESTIONS FOR ALL THEMES TO ADDRESS

### THEMATIC QUESTIONS

#### CAPACITY

1. Education and capacity building
  - How can education and capacity building for water be enhanced in your theme/topic?
2. Science policy interface
  - What is being done in your theme/topic to better link water science and technology to decision/policy making?
3. ICT and monitoring for capacity building
  - What opportunities do new technologies offer to improve water monitoring and ICT in relation to your theme/topic?
4. Capacity development to developing countries
  - How do international cooperation initiatives enhance water capacity development for your theme/topic?

#### SHARING

- How to share solutions and good practices for the water-related SDG implementation and with whom?
- How to involve all in water management and governance: public, private, civil society - women and men - young and old - in bottom up and top down approaches?
- How to ensure respect for cultural diversity, justice and equity in the water sector, while sharing science and traditional knowledge?

#### GOVERNANCE

- How do you contribute to designing and implementing IWRM-wise policies/projects in your theme?
- How do you foster transboundary co-operation in your theme?
- How do you ensure multi-level governance, engage stakeholders and assess the results of policies in your theme?

### SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- How can this topic/session mainstream sustainability in decision making by governments and business and advance implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to water (SDG6+)?
- How can this topic/session stimulate funding and/or collaborative/collective actions (by government, business and civil society) for sustainable use of water resources?

## ANNEX 5 - KEY CONTACTS

**Thematic Commission:** [support.thematic@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:support.thematic@worldwaterforum8.org)

**Regional Commission:** [regional@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:regional@worldwaterforum8.org)

**Citizens Process:** [citizens@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:citizens@worldwaterforum8.org)

**Political Process:** [political@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:political@worldwaterforum8.org)

**Sustainability Focus Group:** [sustainability@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:sustainability@worldwaterforum8.org)

**8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum Secretariat:** [secretariat@worldwaterforum8.org](mailto:secretariat@worldwaterforum8.org)