Development of the draft Supplemental Specifications for the Application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources to Groundwater Resources – Inclusion of the Public Consultation Feedback

UNFC for Groundwater resources ??

Peter van der Keur, Chair Groundwater Resources Working Group
1. Malis Absametov (LLP Institute of Hydrogeology and Geoecology, Kazakhstan);
2. Hashim Carey (Geoscience Australia);
3. Daniyar Chensizbaev (LLP Institute of Hydrogeology and Geoecology, Kazakhstan);
4. Henk Coetzee (Council for Geoscience, South Africa);
5. Narmina Garayeva (Eilink R&D, Azerbaijan);
6. Klaus Hinsby (Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS, Denmark);
7. Alan MacDonald (British Geological Survey, United Kingdom);
8. Lucio Martarelli (ISPRA, Italy);
9. Oleksii Netskyi (State Commission of Ukraine on Mineral Resources, Dept. of Groundwater, Ukraine);
10. Dan Palombi (Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Geological Survey, Canada);
11. Kevin Parks (Stantec, Canada);
12. Sergii Paiuk (SCU, Dept. of Groundwater, Ukraine);
13. Marco Petitta (Sapienza University of Rome, Earth Sciences Department, Italy);
14. Manzoor Qadir (UNU-INWEH, Canada/UN);
15. Teodóra Szőcs (Supervisory Authority for Regulatory Affairs, Geological Survey, Department of Hydrogeology, Hungary);
16. Alexey Tudvachev (SPbSU, Centre for Geology, Russian Federation);
17. (Chair) Peter van der Keur (Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS, Denmark);
18. Natalia Vinograd (SPbSU), Dept of Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology, Russian Federation);
19. Magdalena Worsa-Kozak (Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Geoengineering, Mining and Geology, Poland).

Groundwater Resources Working Group

alphabetically
At its ninth session, the Expert Group on Resource Management “noted the continued interest in applying UNFC to coal mine methane (CMM) and groundwater and requested the Bureau to consider placing this on the agenda for discussion at the tenth session.

The Expert Group recommended that, subject to volunteers and extrabudgetary funds being identified, the Bureau explore the applicability of UNFC to other resources such as CMM and groundwater and that any findings be reported to the tenth session.” (ECE/ENERGY/GE.3/2018/2, paras 82 and 83.)
At its tenth session, the Expert Group on Resource Management “noted the establishment of the Groundwater Working Group and requested that it start work on development of specifications for application of UNFC and UNRMS to groundwater and provide an update to the eleventh session.” (ECE/ENERGY/GE.3/2019/2, para 95.)

The UNFC Supplemental Specifications for Groundwater Resources were open for public consultation from November 2023 to January 2024. Comments were received from a broad range of experts and stakeholders for proposed use, including reconsidering the applicability of UNFC for groundwater resources, and if so, a revision and adaptation process of the specifications, in co-producing with stakeholders and the wider hydrological community.
Public consultation reviews (38 !) received from all continents:
ministries, governmental agencies, UN agencies, research
institutes, universities, geological surveys, hydrogeological
communities, private companies, individual persons

Including joint letter with major concerns on how UNFC can be
applied to groundwater resources, signed by 118 persons
originating from primarily the hydrogeological research
community
Public consultation
UNFC Supplemental Specifications for Groundwater Resources

Comments received broadly categorized, **concerns on**:

- **Added value and applicability** of UNFC for groundwater resources
- **Groundwater should not be seen as commodity like oil, gas, minerals and UNFC is a commodity reporting system**
- **Groundwater as a public good, private and economic good, common pool reserve, groundwater as human right**
- **Transboundary aquifer management, relation to IWRM**
- **Groundwater – surface water interaction, groundwater dependent ES, groundwater quality (health aspects)**
- **Groundwater as renewable resource, unlike minerals etc**
- **Groundwater terminology used, definitions**
- **Interrelation with groundwater management systems**
- **[...]**
- **Editorial specific comments**
Scope of this presentation

UNFC Supplemental Specifications for Groundwater Resources

Suggestions on added value and applicability of UNFC for Groundwater Resources.
This is asked for by reviewers during The public consultation and dialogue meeting

Present possible roadmap for Revising and adapting the supplemental Specifications for Groundwater Resources
UNFC is a classification and reporting tool:

The United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) is a resource project-based and principles-based classification system for defining the environmental-socio-economic viability and technical feasibility of projects to develop resources (maturity of projects).

UNFC provides a consistent framework to describe the level of confidence of the future quantities produced by the project.

But can it be used for groundwater resources??
To be considered on background of public consultation.
UNFC for groundwater resources & IWRM?

Integrated Framework

- Integrated Water Resources Management
- Policy frameworks

Classification and reporting Tool

- Informs on UNFC boundary conditions
- Aggregated UNFC information
- Operational tool for classification and reporting (for accounting)
A perceived benefit of the UNFC for Groundwater Resources classification and reporting is the integration of groundwater resources in UNFC along with other subsurface resources to ensure a common implementation and understanding of sustainable and integrated resource management to support sustainable exploitation of resources and (subsurface) spatial planning, especially in areas with competing uses of subsurface resources. This includes consideration of the intricate links within the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus (WEFE Nexus).
Anticipated benefit of including groundwater resources in UNFC

UNFC for Groundwater Resources

Integrated Management of surface and subsurface resources

UNFC

UNRMS

Similar integrated concepts
Exist outside Europe
Anticipated benefit of including groundwater resources in UNFC

UNFC for Groundwater Resources

Should groundwater resources be excluded??

UNRMS
System for the integrated and sustainable management of resources

UNFC
Resource accounting based on maturity of projects
Inclusion of the Public Consultation feedback
UNFC for Groundwater Resources

Revision and adaptation roadmap: co-producing the UNFC specifications for groundwater

- Fall 2023
- Nov ‘23 – Jan ‘24
- March 18 ‘24
- Apri 22-26 ‘24

2019 → 2023

Today

Public consultation
Dialogue meeting
EGRM-15
Co-production with stakeholders

Stakeholders
GRWG
dialogues
Revision & adaptation of supplemental specifications

Suggested workflow

Revision and adaptation

Dialogues and co-producing

Stakeholders

White papers, bridging documents, use cases, guidelines

GRWG
Suggested outreach and collaboration

**IAH Network (GRUCMN)** – established at IAH2023 conference (Cape Town) to support work done by GRWG, including Developing case studies. IAH Network set to be included in **IAH UN-Engagement WG**

**UN University Water Hub at U of Calgary** – introductory meeting in May to introduce UNFC/UNRMS GRWG and expand dialogue, (in conjunction with UNU INWEH – Hamilton, Canada (also represented in GRWG)). The University of Calgary has become the world’s first United Nations University hub focused on water.

**International Water Association (IWA)** – follow-up to **Copenhagen workshop 2022** through groundwater community, adaptive water policy community after EGRM 15 (meeting today).

**Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA)** – initial conversations in 2022 and expressions of interest to communicate about our work in case UNFC-Groundwater sufficiently advanced.
Revision & adaptation of supplemental specifications
Further development of UNFC supplemental specifications for groundwater resources ???

Some of the comments received during the previously mentioned Public Consultation and the stakeholder dialogue meeting on 18 March 2024 question the relevance and need for this work by the Expert Group. The Groundwater Working Group seeks confirmation from the Expert Group at its fifteenth session (April 2024) that this work should continue as proposed [and possibly adapted from input during this session].

Should the Expert Group be of the view that the work should continue, the Expert Group is invited to review and agree to the process proposed in this document, and possibly adapted from input during this session, to revise and adapt the draft UNFC Supplemental Specifications for Groundwater Resources and/or propose any modifications.

ECE/ENERGY/GE.3/2024/7
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE THOSE OF THE GROUNDWATER RESOURCES WORKING GROUP, HERE REPRESENTED BY THE WORKING GROUP CHAIR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Thank you!

Peter van der Keur
Senior scientist, Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland
UNECE
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