IW:LEARN Steering Committee Meeting

Draft Minutes

Location	World Bank Building Room: MC-7-715, Washington DC	
Date	19th April 2007	
Attendees	Al Duda (GEF Secretariat)	Sean Khan (UNEP/DEWA)
	Christian Severin (GEFSec)	Dann Skralew (UNOPS)
	Andrew Hudson (UNDP)	Janot Medler (UNOPS)
	Tessa Goverse (UNEP)	
	Kristin McLaughlin (UNEP)	*via SKYPE:*
	Isabelle Vanderbeck (UNEP)	Mish Hamed (UNOPS)
	Tracy Hart (World Bank)	

The IW-Learn Steering Committee (SC) meeting began shortly after 9:00 AM (EST), April 19th 2007.

It was agreed that this meeting would be chaired by Dann Sklarew. For future meetings, the chair of the IW:LEARN Steering Committee meetings would be nominated at the start of each meeting and revolve among Steering Committee members.

I. Meeting objectives and background documentation related to MTE response

Background documentation: IW:LEARN Mid-Term Evaluation; UNEP Response for Steering Committee Consideration, Annex III – UNEP IW:LEARN MTE Response (table format)

The GEF representative noted that the IW:LEARN project was being implemented slowly and collaborative implementation between partners was unsatisfactory; not just for the UNEP component but for the project as a whole. It was clarified that the use of the "probation term" was inappropriate and that this term had only been used to get the attention of everyone to address the need for improved collaboration and project implementation. It was furthermore clarified that there is only one IW:LEARN Steering Committee as it concerns one joint project. More agency interaction and collegiality is required as well as an increased interest in the IW:LEARN website content from the side of Agencies.

UNEP introduced the UNEP team and the newly appointed Task Manager for the IW:LEARN project, Tessa Goverse, and clarified the meeting's objective to obtain Steering Committee direction and guidance on the steps UNEP is proposing in response to the MTE. UNEP explained that the proposed agenda was designed to respond to the UNEP specific MTE recommendations; Extensive documentation was made available by UNEP reflecting a comprehensive risk mitigation plan in response to the recommendations of the MTE, and concerns expressed by Steering Committee representatives.

It was agreed that issues raised by the Steering Committee members prior to the start of the meeting would also be incorporated into the agenda in the course of the meeting's proceedings. These included the need for improved checking of the accuracy and quality of the content on the website by all participating agencies; the need for cross checking of web links; clarification regarding the Caribbean activity; and additional emphasis on preparation of the forthcoming biennial International Waters Conference.

II. Project governance, management and coordination issues

Background documentation: Annex VI – IW:LEARN Proposed Project Management Structure

The composition and roles of the Steering Committee were clarified. UNDP and UNEP are joint implementing agencies. GEF Secretariat does not have an operational role on the project, and views its role as monitoring progress and providing advice at Steering Committee level. The World Bank representative noted their role as a sub-contractor to UNOPS, the UNDP executing agency.

UNEP presented an organigram with the proposed IW:LEARN Project Management Structure which clarified the difference between Agency representatives providing oversight(Tessa Goverse for UNEP and Andrew Hudson for UNDP) and project team representatives executing the IW:LEARN project components (Sean Khan for UNEP, Dann Sklarew for UNOPS) – thus addressing the issue of reporting lines and having a designated Task Manager in each Agency.

UNEP noted that significant changes had been made since the MTE to improve the internal management of the UNEP

component of the IW:LEARN project. A supporting internal UNEP organigram with contact details was presented for information and to clarify who the points of contact were within UNEP. UNEP confirmed that the project manager for the UNEP component, Sean Khan, would henceforth work full time on IW:LEARN. This was welcomed by all participants and UNOPS proposed to continue having weekly meetings between UNDP and UNEP IW:LEARN teams. It was further agreed to have a follow up meeting after the Steering Committee meeting to discuss project team coordination and communications.

A short discussion regarding the MTE with respect to the recommendation to add "2" additional project representative to serve on the Steering Committee followed. As the purpose of the additional representatives was to broaden stakeholder involvement in the project, it was agreed to expand the Steering Committee by including project representatives from GEF International Waters projects implemented by UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. Prior to nominating a project representative, UNEP wanted to know who would cover the costs of the project representative participation. It was clarified that project representatives would be invited to participate through skype or teleconferencing to minimize costs and that it was decided that funding for participation had to come from the projects themselves.

> **Decision: ANNEX-VI: Project Management Structure accepted with minor amendment to reflect an additional project representative on the Steering Committee.**
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> *Action: UNEP to update the organigram and email to UNOPS/PCU for inclusion in project documentation.*
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> *Action: UNEP to organize a follow-up meeting (next day) with UNOPS to discuss project team coordination and communications*
>
> *Action: UNEP to nominate a representative from a UNEP implemented GEF International Waters project.*

III. Strengthening the Transboundary Water Management knowledge contents of the IW:LEARN website, in particular the inputs from components B, C and D

UNEP urged Steering Committee members to provide guidance and inputs to the knowledge contents of the IW Learn web site. UNEP noted the need for IW:LEARN to have real knowledge reflected in the website, beyond project documentation and asked for suggestions.

The following suggestions were made:

1. adding a three tiered search engine within web site to prioritize the search to the IW:LEARN project, other IW projects or IWLEARN.Net;
2. reviewing planned IW:LEARN activities to see where there are possible outputs generated that could be inputs for the web site,
3. discussing the topic of knowledge content regularly in the weekly project team member meetings;
4. improving the navigation on the website to easily refer to "structured learning activities";
5. linking to project web sites and to Agency web sites; and
6. highlighting knowledge gems stemming from IW:LEARN projects or experience notes on the IW:LEARN home page.

UNOPS suggested that the IW newsletter could be a roll up of such knowledge gems.

The World Bank representative warned against loading up every single document on IW:LEARN site. She also announced that the biennial International Waters Conference would be highlighted on the World Bank's web page.

The issue of Implementing Agency (IA) quality control of web site contents was revisited, with suggestion that IAs do a quarterly check of all Agency-related contents on the web site. Participants agreed that all points to improve the knowledge content of the IW:LEARN web site were worth exploring.

> *Action: The two executing teams are to Cross walk work plans to identify areas where content for the website could be generated.*

> *Action: As a standard practice, during the weekly execution team teleconference, executing teams should flag items in respective activities that can contribute to content.*

*Action: On a quarterly basis, UNEP executing team to
request Implementing Agencies to do a check of Agency
content on the website*

**IV. 2007 Work plan, key targets and timeline and progress
report for the First Quarter of 2007 / Beyond 2007:
activities, budget and co-financing**

Background documents: Annex I – Report for the First
Quarter of 2007; Annex II – Detailed Work Plan and
Benchmarks; Annex IV – Clarified Logical Framework, Annex V
– Proposed Revised Budget

Revised Logframe - UNEP presented a revised logical
framework and reported on the deliverables for 2007 and
progress made over the first quarter of the current year.
UNEP noted that the revised logical framework had only been
amended at the output levels in respect of UNEP components,
and did not affect the overarching outcome and objectives
of the IW:LEARN project. UNEP also explained that it had
improved the indicators to reflect measurable targets for
the end of the year 2007 and the project end (2009). UNEP
argued that there was some unclarity in what was originally
reflected in the project document and has therefore refined
activity details in the revised logical framework to
improve the understanding of its component and associated
deliverables.

In addition, UNEP demonstrated a number of tools put in
place during the first quarter of 2007, such as the "issue
tracker" to follow-up on ICT requests and a tool to test
"dead links" to ensure with 98% certainty that there are no
broken links on the web site. UNEP informed the Steering
Committee of the development of a demonstration web page to
improve monitoring of the UNEP-led component A of IW:LEARN.
These tools and initiatives have been developed over the
first quarter of 2007 in response to the MTE to strengthen
the delivery of the project.

Work Plan and Caribbean Activity – UNOPS together with GEF
Secretariat raised the need to build up modules by topic,
region and ecosystem in each of the International Waters
communities to support the structured learning activities
(e.g. Caribbean activity, Africa workshops), to capture

tools, data and knowledge available - unless these are now captured as part of the suite of tools and web site. The UNEP team noted the dependence of the future learning on these modules being successfully established by other components in the IW:LEARN project. UNEP proposed to focus the Caribbean activity on data collection, data management and data sharing in the region. In addressing concerns expressed by SC members regarding possible overlap with another UNEP/GEF project in the region, UNEP noted that the activity proposed would not focus on information and communication technology aspects, but on substantive data issues.

It was noted that the Caribbean activity budget was reduced from its original agreed allocation. UNEP stated that bringing the level of the Caribbean budget back to the originally foreseen amount by increasing it with US$25,000 was not an issue as these funds were currently allocated to provide more toolkit support and improve the network function of component A2 in anticipation of additional interaction with projects. Depending on what the final proposal for the activity will be, the allocation as presented to the SC may or may not be enough. The SC called for more discussion on original intent and delivery of the Caribbean activity.

Project Budget - UNEP presented the proposed revised budget mirrored against the original budget in the project document, including actual and planned expenditures and co-financing. UNEP noted that disbursement scheduling delays were caused by a slow project start up and that project extension to October 2009 would be required to fully deliver. The UNEP project manager further rationalized the need to extend the project by arguing that follow up to project supported workshops required a minimum of 6 months.

GEF Secretariat suggested that the Steering Committee endorse the revisions proposed by UNEP for the logframe, work plan and budget, with the exception of the cut in budget for the Caribbean. There were no objections against this suggestion.

> **Decision: The proposed logframe, work plan and budget were approved pending reallocation in the budget of funds towards the Caribbean activity up to US$100,000.**

Action: UNEP to organize a teleconference before May 5th 2007 to agree on the scope and contents of the Caribbean activity in a sub-committee including Al Duda, Sean Khan, Janot Medler and Isabelle Vanderbeck.

Action: UNEP Project Manager to send link and password for the issue tracker to Steering Committee members

V. Project Extension and Sustainability

A project extension for the UNEP component was proposed so as to fully deliver the activities and allow the project to properly adjust to and integrate learning from the technology support workshops. UNEP confirmed that the proposed project extension to October 2009 did not require any additional funds from the project. UNDP noted that the UNOPS executed component of the project will end as currently indicated in October 2008. World Bank noted that the SC had no authority to authorize an extension and that this is a decision an IA need to take in order to fulfill its responsibility. It was noted though that it was in the interest of transparency and openness that UNEP was bringing forward proposed changes to the Steering Committee.

UNEP raised the issue that it is now hosting many project web sites and questioned the sustainability of maintaining web sites permanently. The Steering Committee recommended to host free for 1 year and then charge a fee for the service.

The World Bank noted that it is important for both UNEP and UNDP to work on the sustainability aspects of the project. To ensure a clear linkage between sustainability plans, it was agreed that a draft joint sustainability plan would be prepared for the next Steering Committee meeting in June 2007.

> **Decision: Teams to work on the sustainability plan prior to the next Steering Committee meeting scheduled for June and submission of a proposal as part of the Steering Committee meeting documentation.**

VI. Project Evaluation.

Concern was expressed over how a terminal evaluation would work if there were different closure schedules for the components handled by the two Agencies. The UNOPS executed component will end a full year before the UNEP component. It was agreed that the issue presented by two different closure dates should be discussed by the IAs with the respective Agency Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Units keeping in mind that the project evaluation is currently budgeted for in the UNOPS component.

The WB called for referencing the MTE recommendations for the final evaluation

> **Decision: IAs to look at how other joint projects in their respective portfolios handled different closure dates and agree on a process for the Terminal Evaluation.**

VII. Next Steering Committee Meeting

The World Bank looks forward to the next June 4 Meeting being used for discussing both components of the project. It was suggested that a jointly developed draft agenda will be circulated in advance and that a circulating chair be appointed, from an IA or GEF Secretariat, freeing up the project team representatives to take notes and for dialogue. The next Steering Committee meeting will focus on the preparations for the upcoming International Waters Conference. Additional suggestions included: circulation of the draft project implementation review format, draft sustainability plan for full project, approval of the plans for the Caribbean activity and discussion on the project evaluation (taking into account two different closure dates).

Potential formats for the meeting were discussed, including video conferencing, teleconferencing and skype. It was agreed to combine teleconferencing combined with skype texting and to start at 7am in consideration of Nairobi based participants. A 4-hour agenda is proposed with front loading of UNEP specific issues.

With regard to the next face-to-face Steering Committee meeting at the end of the year 2007, UNEP offered to organize this meeting in Nairobi.

VIII. Other Business.

Expert Roster - UNDP suggests integrating the International Water Conference roster into the IW-Learn web site. As the Regional Learning Center roster is already being integrated as an activity this year, it was agreed to include this request in the 2008 work plan

Course Catalogue - UNEP raised the issue of the impact that additional ad-hoc requests may have on the implementation of the current work plan. The UNEP team has already spend two days of work on the request for a course catalogue and proposed that the Steering Committee rules on the decision to proceed on this and future ad-hoc requests considering potential negative impact on deliverables outlined in the current work plan. UNOPS stressed that the value of this particular request would be high impact/visibility for the IW:LEARN website and that the work described as done by UNEP would possibly already suffice as a minimum for the time being.

Making changes to the web site -   It was agreed that UNOPS team could make changes directly to the "about" section of the web site, but would concurrently notify UNEP team for cross checking.

> *Action: UNEP Project Manager to send the link to course material work implemented to UNOPS and provide access to that section of the website for updates.*

> *Action: UNEP will create an "emergency publishing" account for UNOPS to publish content in those few occasions where the UNEP team would not have 24 hours to respond (e.g. weekends, holidays).*

IX. Biennial GEF International Waters Conference

Over lunch, the Contractors presented their progress on preparing for the Biennial International Water Conference. An annotated agenda will be circulated by the end of the following week. Agencies were requested to: 1) double check invite list; 2) send list of potential speakers from proposed project.

The Steering Committee meeting was closed at 3.30pm.

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