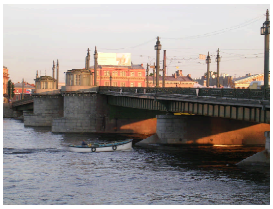
GEF IW LEARN BRIDGES



APRIL 2008

In This Issue

Focusing on Coastal and Marine Systems at the Hanoi Conference

Al Duda, Senior Advisor, GEF Secretariat

The Fourth Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands is being held in Hanoi, Vietnam, April 7-11, 2008, and GEF International Waters (IW) projects are well represented at the meeting. The Fourth Global Conference brings together ocean leaders from governments, NGOs, international and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and the science community to examine progress on ocean and coastal-related aspects of the Johannesburg goals established in 2002 by world leaders.

GEF agency and project staff have participated in working groups to examine progress. Right before the conference, your GEF IW:LEARN staff are collaborating with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Environmental Law Institute to host pre-conference workshops on Payment for Ecosystem Services and Public Participation in International Waters programs.

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Fisheries *Refugia* Benefit South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand

Christopher Paterson & John Pernetta, UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project

An important outcome of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project has been the development of an innovative approach to integrate fisheries and habitat management for the benefit of regional fish stocks and biodiversity. The approach based on the fisheries refugia concept as developed by the project's Regional Working Group on Fisheries (RWG-F) aims to reduce the loss of habitats and biodiversity as a result of fishing. The initiative is focused on improving the level of understanding amongst stakeholders of the intrinsic links between fish production and the quality and extent of coastal habitats.

The intensity of fishing in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand is such that it has been identified by the fisheries and habitat working groups of the South China Sea Project as a factor in the continued degradation and loss of marine habitats and biodiversity in the region. The use of inappropriate and destructive fishing gear and practices, such as the use of demersal trawls and push nets in seagrass areas, and the use of poisons and explosives to catch fish in coral reef areas, is of continued concern with respect to habitat loss and future fish production.

The dilemma for the fisheries and environment sectors as identified by the RWG-F is that conservation of habitat does not necessarily result in increased fish stocks and lowering of fishing effort does not necessarily result in improved habitat condition. In response to this the fisheries *refugia* concept developed by the RWG-F focuses on

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IW:LEARN aims to strengthen International Waters Management (IWM) by facilitating structured learning and information sharing among stakeholders.
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In the Shadow of the Dam: Learning Promotes Environmental Flows in LAC

Mark Smith, IUCN Water and Nature Initiative

Glauco de Freitas is passionate about rivers. As Coordinator of the Great Rivers Partnership for The Nature Conservancy in Brazil, he understands that rivers are vital for development, for building nations' economic strength and for meeting people's aspirations for prosperity. But he also knows their beauty - and he wants to make sure there is development that does not destroy rivers.

Glauco came to the IW:LEARN Regional Workshop on Application of Environmental Flows in River Basin Management, in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, from February 11-15, 2008, to share his vision of how management of rivers can be successfully integrated into development. He told a story from TNC's work in Honduras to explain how 'environmental flows' can be used to do this. Environmental flows is the name given to the practice in rivers regulated by dams or abstraction of ensuring that the amount of water in the river – and the timing of flows – meets the needs of downstream ecosystems. As downstream people and development depend on the services from those ecosystems, environmental flows integrates the needs of people and nature in sustainable water resources development. For this reason, environmental flows is sometimes called 'flows for people and nature' or 'integrated flow management'.

Participants survey future Metolong Dam site --Photo courtesy Dann Sklarew

Glauco used the example of the Patuca River to explain further: The Patuca is Honduras' longest river. It drains a 2.4 million hectare basin into the Caribbean, with cattle ranching in the upper part of the basin, but numerous Tawahka and Miskito indigenous communities and important national forest reserves lower down. Fisheries are an important source of livelihoods. Sediment deposition by annual flood cycles sustains agriculture on the floodplains. There are currently no dams on the river, but a new dam is on the drawing board. Glauco

Environmental Flows continued on page 10

Crossing the Chasm with Public Participation in Africa

From all over Africa, they gathered in under the tallest tree in the center of Ha Seeiso village to learn how this community was actively participating in preparations for a big new dam just a few hundred meters away. Through their translator, the visitors learned of the challenges and benefits expected by both men and women villagers, including those whose property would be affected by the dam. Then, they followed a well worn path, past stone huts and ladies sheering sheep, to the edge of the village. There, a deep chasm will soon be bridged, with with water piped to the capital, fish farmed and neighbors easily traversing the ancient gap for the first time in history.

This field trip to the Lesotho Lowlands Water Project area served as both case study and climax for the third GEF-sponsored multi-day workshop on Public Participation in International Waters Management, held in Maseru from 13-16 November 2007. As one participant later noted, "The visit to [the] Metolong dam community helped to demonstrate some of the problems encountered in stakeholder participation."

The Lesotho Government welcomed to the workshop 37 participants from 9 GEF IW projects, 15 nations, and 8 NGOs throughout Africa. Their valued take-home lessons included:

- The "strategic role of public involvement in the GEF cycle"
- "Public participation is important; public participation improves project outcome"
- "The objectives and needs for stakeholder participation"
- "Continuous interaction with participants"
- "Tools and techniques of stakeholder [identification and] analysis"
- "Involvement of locals in project planning"
- "Gender mainstreaming"
- "Effective engagement of the public in project implementation"
- "Legal and institutional frameworks" for public participation

Upon return to office, participants indicated they

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Sessions on GEF Large Marine Ecosystem projects promise to bring country experiences to the attention of participants as they demonstrate progress toward the goals. Staff from many GEF projects are scheduled to make presentations in the thematic sessions, ranging from the UNEP/GEF South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand Project and its experience with fish refugia and the UNDP/UNEP/GEF Caribbean Integrating Water and Coastal Area Management project to the global GEF/UNDP/IMO initiative for reducing alien species in ship ballast water.

Slovenia Roundtable participants near a karst spring --Photo courtesy Mish Hamid

The GEF CEO, Monique Barbut, is on the agenda to provide a welcoming statement in addition to a keynote presentation on Large Marine Ecosystems in relation to their biodiversity and changing climate. She is also hosting a Roundtable Discussion among Ministers as a pre-conference event.

The big GEF story at the Hanoi Conference is the focus on the large number of coastal and marine GEF IW projects that have been recently approved by the GEF CEO to present to the GEF Council at its April 2008 meeting. A record $70 million in new GEF IW projects has been sent to Council and can be viewed on the GEF website (www.theGEF.org). Among these projects is another $18 million installment on the GEF/World Bank Africa Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Investment Fund as are the GEF/UNDP Caspian Sea fisheries project and the GEF/UNDP Plata Maritime Front SAP Implementation project.

Also included is a series of 7 IW projects embedded in two large GEF multiple focal area programmatic approaches related to coasts, oceans, and islands. The first, known as the Coral Triangle Initiative, contains $63 million in GEF grants and almost one

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Leveraging Political Commitment in SE Europe

Southeastern European Environment Ministers representing the largest tributary of the Danube River just signed a declaration pledging to deepen cooperation over their shared groundwaters. The countries in question — Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia — are all inter-connected via the Sava River basin. Having already established the region's first post-conflict multilateral organization, the International Sava River Basin Commission, they signaled an intent to expand its mandates to cover the groundwater system that underlies the basin, characterized in large parts by karstic aquifers.

This expansionary outcome stems from, beside country commitment and closer cooperation among the countries, efforts under the Athens-Petersberg Process to foster cooperation over transboundary waters in the region. It highlights a key lesson-learned, that a series of international roundtables, targeted workshops and case studies can facilitate actions that may eventually result in the enhancement of cooperation to jointly managing a key resource. Of course, beyond the trust-building meetings and information sharing alone, the experience also highlights the importance of quiet but diligent efforts among the international partners constituting the process to facilitate such developments. Finally, the process also benefited directly from highly charismatic and persistent leadership from high-level, sub-ministerial champions.

The International Roundtable on "Integrated Management of Shared Groundwater in Southeastern Europe" (SEE) took place in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia last November. The Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) jointly organized the meeting, with support from GEF IW:LEARN. It was the fourth roundtable in the series of Athens-Petersberg meetings, informal policy dialogues on transboundary water cooperation that convene governmental officials, stakeholders, experts and decision-makers from the southeastern European water sector. The events provide a forum for exchanging experience and stimulating

Groundwater SE Europe continued on page 12

Google Earth Showcases South China Sea Project

Chris Paterson, South China Sea Project

The implementation of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project has enabled the achievement of a number of innovations that have been recognised as being worthy of replication elsewhere and in other projects. Amongst these innovations is the use of a new technology to enhance global awareness of the projects' interventions.

Based on Google's online Geographical Information System (GIS) known as Google Earth, the Project Co-ordinating Unit recently created a South China Sea Project layer for inclusion in the Google Earth system. This work of the project was featured in the official Google News and showcased by Google in its Google Earth Outreach Showcase.

Use of Google Earth to represent project activities. --Photo courtesy Google Earth

Google Earth quickly gained worldwide popularity following its launch in 2005 by enabling Internet users to fly into their homes from space and explore a virtual 3-dimensional earth based on the superimposition of high quality satellite images and aerial photographs. The system has since been installed by more than 350,000,000 users, is available in 14 languages, and has emerged as an extremely powerful outreach tool for environment and natural resource projects and programmes.

The layer developed by the project provides Google Earth users with an interactive overview of the regional network of government ministries and departments, research institutes, and universities involved in the implementation of project activities; the project's suite of habitat demonstration sites and pilot activities bordering the South China Sea basin; and information and data for 135 mangrove, coral reef, seagrass, and wetlands sites of the South China Sea studied during the project.

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New Project: The GEF Returns to Lake Tanganyika

The Lake Tanganyika Management Program recently became the newest GEF-approved project, offering the promise of transferable experience on a variety of topics ranging from legal harmonization for regional coordination, pollution control for the improved lake environment, and poverty alleviation via better fisheries management. The regional Lake Tanganyika Program features a partnership of the four riparian governments (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and Zambia) and donors. Pledged donor contributions include: a $13.5 million grant from the GEF (implemented by UNDP), $28 million in loans and grants from the African Development Bank, $8 million from the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), $1 million from IUCN and $0.3 million from the FAO. The project as conceived addresses the following objectives:

- sustainable environ-mental management of the lake basin
- poverty alleviation in the lake basin communities through fishery development and management.

The first Lake Tanganyika GEF ecosystem program developed a detailed Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and prepared the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) based on the TDA. The SAP determined major priority areas for intervention in this large regional lake. The priority areas and partners (by participating nations) are as follows:

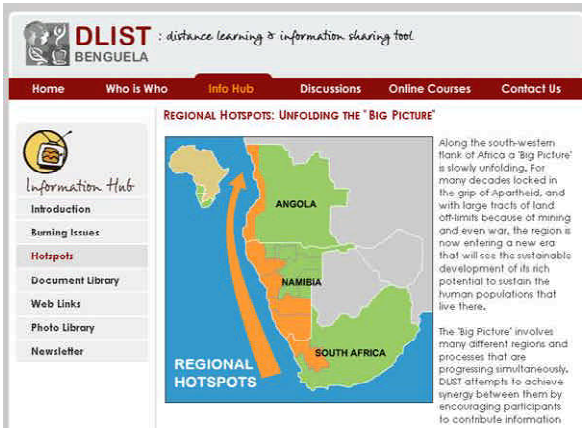
- Over fishing – Fisheries Management, supported by AFDB & FAO (all countries)
- Pollution and Pollution Control, supported by UNDP-GEF and NDF (Tanzania and Burundi)
- Sedimentation and catchment Management, supported by UNDP- GEF (Tanzania, DR Congo and Zambia)
- Greater Regional Cooperation, supported by UNDP/GEF, AfDB and IUCN
- Biodiversity Reserves in the lake (not prioritized by Governments in this phase)

During the gap between the GEF two projects, the riparian governments completed negotiations on the

Lake Tanganyika continued on page 11

Black Sea Project Bids Farewell

The GEF-supported Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP) conducted its ceremonial closing with a final seminar in February 2008. The workshop-style event had three major outcomes: First, it communicated a greater awareness and better understanding of BSERP results and achievements. Second, it suggested ways the Black Sea Commission (BS C) and countries could use the BSERP's results to further advance their shared goals. Lastly, it provided an opportunity for both the project and Commission to obtain insightful feedback from countries and individuals on the presented lessons-learned.



The platform. --Photo courtesy DList-Benguela

The project offers a multitude of lessons-learned across its component activities, much of which have been captured and summarized through readily available online poster presentations. The project coordinating unit itself chose to highlight its achievements in four critical areas: first its capacity building, research and technical activities, second, its policy component, economic analysis and investment programs, third its stakeholder involvement and participation, and finally an overiew of other ongoing and future activities in the Black Sea region coherent with those of BSERP and BSC.

In the first thematic session, one example includes the revised transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) and a technical draft of the updated Black Sea Strategic Action Programme (BS SAP 2008), considered a key achievement of the BSERP's second phase. Some advice included: present a regional perspective, rather than a series of national views. Whenever possible, analyse data from different countries in the same manner. And, where supporting information/data are absent or weak, ensure that expert opinion is regionally accepted, or that differences in opinion are expressed.

Several accomplishments related to policy

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Experience Note: Fostering a Community of Interest

How can a GEF International Waters project foster a community of interest among multiple stakeholders in markedly different socioeconomic, sectoral and geographical conditions? The latest GEF IW Experience Note presents how this issue was addressed by the GEF-supported Distance Learning and Information Sharing Tool (DLIST-Benguela).

The DLIST-Benguela project consists of an Internet-based information sharing platform, distance learning courses and a social networking program to promote sustainable coastal development along the coastline of Angola, Namibia and South Africa, the countries bordering the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem . With a debilitating poverty and fragile ecological resources, this region is in a state of transition.

Changing economies and environmental pressures have contributed to striking disparities and differences in local socio-economic conditions. The overall aim of DLIST-Benguela was to increase local communities' access to vital information for environmental management and sustainable livelihood creation.

One of the main challenges faced by DLIST-Benguela was to reach and engage a representative group of stakeholders. As Rean van der Merwe, DLIST-Benguela's project director, writes, "The first lesson we learned was that stakeholder engagement benefits from an integrated approach." The DLIST-Benguela mix evolved to include a web site, online discussions and newsletters, a distributed film festival, printed materials, radio communications and face-to-face workshops. Even the distance learning course played an important role in focusing engagement of specific sectors of the Bengula target audience.

DLIST-Benguela's interactive online communication approach required active facilitation. From the outside, the project worked with "champions," key information sharing partners in each region, to nurture relationships and dialogue. These champions actively moderated online discussions, periodically inviting key coastal players to directly contribute to relevant discussions. The project also made use of

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Fostering an Online Multilingual Information Community: From Monolingual to Multilingual Websites

Richard Cooper, GEF IW:LEARN Regional Coordinator

How can we better share and access information distributed throughout the multilingual GEF International Waters community? A more effective global sharing of information is now possible given the language tools under development by a host of companies and organisations including Google, AltaVista, WorldLingo, and Plone. As a service to International Waters Projects, IW:LEARN is making these tools available to facilitate improved access to online multilingual information across the GEF IW portfolio.

IW:LEARN has adopted a two-pronged approach in offering its multilingual service to projects. First of all, IW:LEARN has developed a Machine Translation Tool (Fig. 1) that can be readily integrated into a project's website (e.g., www.iwlearn.net), offering visitors the option to translate the page from English to a host of other languages; currently including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. This tool integrates existing machine translation functionality offered by Google into a simple drop down menu that is simple to use and easily transferable to project websites. It should be mentioned that while machine translation cannot match the accuracy of human translation, it can give a general understanding or 'gist' of the original text. Further customisation of the tool for other languages is also possible.

Fig. 1

The second prong of the approach involves making full use of the in-built functionality of IW:LEARN's Website Toolkit. This differs from the Machine Translation Tool mentioned above, in that is does not provide an actual translation of content but rather facilitates management and display of content that is already translated (Fig. 2). For example, if the language of your site is by default English and you want to offer some content in Spanish, the Toolkit enables you to create a Spanish version of that content which can be viewed by clicking on a Spanish flag to toggle between the two translations. Alternatively, you may have a site that is Spanish by default and wish to make English translations available to readers. By making full use of this functionality, projects have considerable scope for building multi-language content sites.

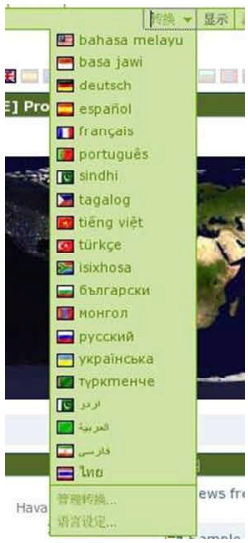

Fig. 2

The importance of offering translated content was reflected at the recent IW:LEARN IT Workshop in Beijing where each of the participating projects decided to adopt the Website Toolkit and develop bilingual sites (Fig. 3). The meeting also identified the need for IW:LEARN to create multi-language Toolkits to facilitate development of sites where the default language is not English; IW:LEARN now plans to develop Chinese and Spanish versions of its Toolkit.

Fig. 3

It is hoped that projects consider multi-language support of their sites. It is recommended that as a minimum a machine translation capability, such as that offered by IW:LEARN's Translation Tool, is integrated into every project website. Such functionality should prove valuable not only to stakeholders directly associated with a given project, but also improve accessibility for the wider GEF community. If accurate human translation is possible, then the Toolkit's in-built multilingual support can be used for displaying translated content. Ideally, a combination of both machine translator and human translated content would best facilitate sharing of multi-language information among projects and partners.

For more information on IW:LEARN's Information services, please contact UNEP IW:LEARN in Nairobi, Kenya at iwlearn@unep.org or the regional office at SEA START in Bangkok, Thailand at richard@iwlearn.org. The toolkit can be accessed at www.iwlearn.net/websitetoolkit. The Beijing workshop materials at: www.iwlearn.net/old_events/unep-iw-learn-regional-it-workshop-agenda/view

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components, economic analysis and investment programs were also highlighted particularly the institutional review of the Black Sea Commission's governing framework. While not unprecedented, the review was wide-ranging with an eye to enhancing BSC sustainability and improving its effectiveness in meeting goals of the Black Sea Convention and Strategic Action Plan (BS SAP 1996, revised 2000). The Review discovered the Convention was outdated in critical areas vis-à-vis trends in international environmental law. Several recommendations emerged to update BSC financial and procedural rules, staff regulations, and host country arrangements.

Among GEF projects, BSERP has been a leader in advancing stakeholder involvement and participation. One session highlighted the ever-expanding Black Sea Day campaign. The event is a basin-wide public awareness and NGO/stakeholder engagement process. Some of the key impacts of last year's Black Sea Day included: strengthened relations with NGOs, media coverage about the Black Sea Day, the Commission, BSERP and the UNDP/The Coca-Cola Company "Every Drop Matters" public-private partnership. Events that day reached an estimated audience of at least 10 million people, with direct participation of more than 40,000 people in 156 different activities across six countries, and with key decision-makers from national and local government agencies engaged in every country.

Within the last session of the meeting, Look into the Future, the key UN Agencies and EC outlined the further support to the Black Sea countries. All of them re-confirmed the commitment to continued cooperation with both the Black Sea countries and BSC.

The seminar concluded fifteen successful years of fostering cooperation and capacities of riparian countries in order to reduce nutrients and other pollutants entering the Black Sea. The project has been a pilot and model in partnership-building and applying concerted regional action to an urgent human development problem.

For more information on the Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project please visit www.bserp.org or contact its director, Yegor Volovik (yevolovik@bserp.org). Both the project and IW:LEARN will upload all materials from the final seminar. In addition, Experience Notes on the TDA Revision and Black Sea Day will be forthcoming, posted to www.iwlearn.net/experience.

DLIST Experience continued from page 5

"push media" in the form of an electronic newsletter. The newsletter followed up on topics of interest from the discussions and significantly consisted of partner-generated content. In this way, DLIST-Benguela's reach was extended well beyond registered discussion participants.

During the project design phase, access to the Internet was considered a potential obstacle – specifically for an approach that relied substantially on email and web based interaction. In practice, DLIST-Benguela surmounted this challenged by encouraging online users to become "information intermediaries" to extend the conversation beyond the core Internet-based platform . To do this, the project packaged information in a format that was as easy as possible to share offline, in both radio and printed formats.

To further improve access to web content, DLIST-Benguela also piloted the concept of regional "nodes" – offices where users could come and access the web based platform for free, download learning materials and receive the support of a trained "node moderator." The project learned to integrate a local presence within an existing information hub – a library, resource center or museum. In this way the project supported local initiative, built valuable partnerships and greatly simplified the management of the nodes.

The most notable lesson from the project relates to fostering "social capital," networks of relationships: Social capital grows when a group of people have multiple points of contact over a significant period of time, and where participants gain something they perceive as valuable from their ongoing interaction. Fostering this approach requires an openness to the perspectives of stakeholders – to engage people on their terms, based on their needs. Rather than simply disseminating information to its target audience, DLIST worked to build an enduring community of interest, a group of people who share a degree of mutual trust in pursuit of common coastal development goals. Thus, participants effectively became project partners. Thus, building social capital allowed the project team to significantly extend its reach in support of sustainable coastal development.

To view the Experience Note this article summarizes, please visit www.iwlearn.net/experience. For more information on DLIST-Benguela itself, please contact Rean van der Merwe (rean@ecoafrica.co.za) or visit www.dlist-benguela.org.

Fisheries Refugia continued from page 1

establishing areas in which specific management measures are applied to sustain important species during critical stages of their life-cycle.

The experience of the South China Sea Project is that the *refugia* concept appears to be a successful approach to addressing barriers to the effective management of links between fish stocks and their habitats. Such barriers include the adverse reaction to the Marine Protected Area concept that is elicited from fishing communities and fisheries officers at the local and provincial levels in Southeast Asia. This has enabled the identification of 52 spawning and nursery areas, of which 23 have been selected by stakeholders as important fisheries *refugia* for inclusion in a regional system of managed areas. Another important outcome has been the inclusion of UNEP/GEF regional guidelines on fisheries *refugia* in the intergovernmentally agreed "ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia."

It is anticipated that the experiences gained in the South China Sea Project will be suitable for application in other large marine ecosystems such as the Yellow Sea where over-fishing and the use of inappropriate fishing gear are significant impediments to more sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources. The concept is also under consideration by members of the Scientific Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for use in the management of tuna stocks in the Western Pacific.

National fisheries departments staff participating in at-sea training on fish egg and larvae surveys in the upper Gulf of Thailand -- Photo courtesy SEAFDEC Training Department.

A full account of the procedure of the work of the RWG-F is included in the South China Sea Knowledge Document series (see www.unepscs.org/refugia.html), and has been summarised in an IWLEARN Experience Note. The RWG-F has also developed an online Fisheries *Refugia* Information Portal which can be accessed at http://refugia.unepscs.org/.

Public Participation Africa continued from page 2

would recommend that their colleagues and teams "focus more on social aspects associated with the project implementation." In particular, they advised projects to -

1. "Initiate public participation in the project"
2. "Have a good strategic plan"
3. "Consider stakeholder analysis and stakeholder capacitation as a (whole) activity, and as so planned, monitored, and evaluated"
4. "Involve all stakeholders at every level of implementation"
5. "Review methodologies"
6. "Diversify communication channels"
7. "Do actual PP and not just information dissemination"
8. "Move from stakeholder consultation to full stakeholder involvement/participation"
9. "Revisit the approaches of project activities ... to incorporate issues of gender, benefit sharing, participatory tools"
10. Pursue "stakeholder mapping, especially to bring in issues of gender mainstreaming and legal analysis"

Comparing participants' self-assessments before and after the workshop revealed a double percentage (to 62%) who were at least "quite familiar" with different approaches and techniques and considerations for public participation. Prior to the workshop, most participants knew five or less people who could assist them in enhancing public participation. Afterward, over one third knew 11 or more such people. These impacts support participants' high rating of the workshop's relevance (94%) and usefulness (90%), using the World Bank Institute's standard training assessment methods. Participants also gave the workshop an overall quality rating of 95%.

This Public Participation workshop was co-organized and co-sponsored by GEF IW:LEARN, the Environmental Law Institute, Africa Center for Water Research, InWeNT, the Lesotho government, GEF agencies and partners. The Coca-Cola Company also provided much appreciated sponsorship.

To access workshop materials – including ACWR case studies, ELI's Public Participation Handbook, workshop presentations, photos, and lessons learned – please visit www.iwlearn.net/abt_iwlearn/events/p2/africa or email (troell@eli.org) or call Ms. Jessica Troell (+1 202 939-3843) at ELI.

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half billion in co-financing. Several Large Marine Ecosystems in East Asia are at the center of global marine and coral biodiversity with critical transboundary concerns related to tuna fisheries and spawning/nursery areas and can be considered along with the South China Sea as being the Amazon of the oceans. Three GEF focal areas are involved and the projects include linkages and active learning among partnership projects.

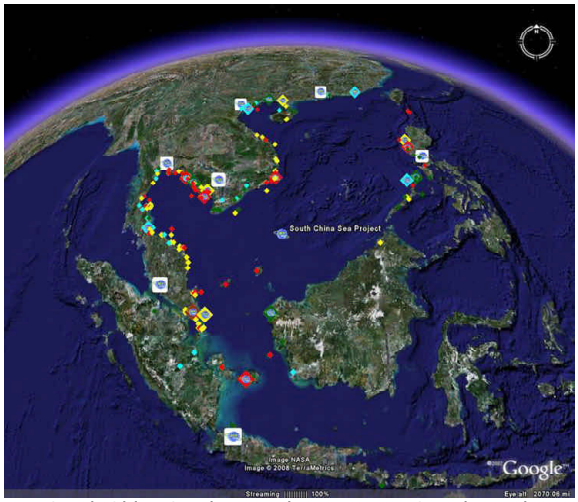
The second program is the $100 million GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability, which involves all Small Island Developing States in the Pacific. This developing program represents an example of GEF's move away from isolated projects to a more strategic and integrated programmatic approach across focal areas. The program supports coordinated GEF operations across all 5 focal areas with 6 GEF agencies collaborating on country-driven priorities. It contains projects on climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation such as the Micronesia Challenge, and several IW projects. The IW projects include the GEF/UNDP/UNEP IWRM project focusing on protection of individual island surface and groundwater supplies and practical approaches to IWRM as well as the first Asian Development Bank (ADB) IW project. The ADB project is also multi-focal with biodiversity and adaptation components along with "Ridge-to-Reef" IW elements aimed at reducing land-based pollution of reefs and lagoons.

GEF is moving to more strategic, programmatic approach in order to better focus its resources to achieve on-the-ground results. These programs need the political driving force of high visibility, high level partnerships among Ministers in countries, GEF agencies, the GEF Secretariat, and other development partners if typical bureaucratic delays and bottlenecks are to be overcome. These programs must be ecosystem-based and cross-sectoral in nature while local communities must be at the center of action in parallel with needed national reforms in appropriate sectors.

Recent GEF work programs have focused on coastal and marine projects as a result of more country-driven interest in these issues. It is time to renew interest in transboundary freshwater basins and involvement of all major riparian countries in those projects. Several new concepts have been suggested by agencies on behalf of requesting countries, and we at the GEF Secretariat look forward to their further development.

Google Earth continued from page 4

This is being used by the project to highlight achievements and successes of the project and to bring the world's attention to global environmental problems in a specific region. It uses Google Earth as the geographical search engine to provide an in-depth analysis of the South China Sea Project and its' many interventions. A key benefit of the Google Earth platform is that it enables users to get a perspective on the location of project sites, nearby cities, local terrain, and proximity to other projects. The work was highlighted by Google in its official news as "a great example of how to connect with a wide audience".



South China Sea layer as it appears on Google Earth -- Photo courtesy Google Earth

The project utilised Google Earth code known as Keyhole Markup Language (KML) to create the layer. This is a task that may at first appear complicated, but the support provided by Google Earth's Outreach Programme is resulting in the technology becoming increasingly more accessible and user friendly to non-IT specialists.

The Google Earth Outreach webpage contains a wealth of online guides, video tutorials, and templates that guide first time users through the development and integration of placemarks, textual descriptions, images, video, and 3D models into the global GIS. The Google Earth Community, an online forum with more than 1,000,000 registered users, is another excellent source of information and guidance for projects wishing to develop their own Google Earth layers.

SCS Project Google Earth Layer - services.google.com/earth/kmz/south_china_sea_n.kmz
Google Earth - earth.google.com/
Google Earth News - google-latlong.blogspot.com/2008/02/south-china-sea-project.html
Google Earth Outreach - earth.google.com/outreach/
Google Earth Showcase - earth.google.com/outreach/showcase.html
Google Earth Community - bbs.keyhole.com/

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asked participants, “If a dam is built, how should flows in the river be managed? What flow regime would be needed to keep downstream ecosystems healthy, and to sustain the ecosystem services from the river that people depend on?”

The workshop aimed to help participants understand how to answer these questions and what is needed to design then actually implement environmental flows. There were 25 participants from a dozen countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region, including Caribbean islands, Central America, Andean countries and the Plata and Amazon basins in the heart of South America. They came to an inspiring location to consider what it takes to manage flows sustainably: the Itaipú dam on the Paraná River between Brazil and Paraguay. Itaipú is the second largest dam and the largest hydropower plant in the world, meeting some 25% of electricity demand in Brazil and 90% in Paraguay.

The event was organised by IUCN, in partnership with GEF IW:LEARN, TNC and the workshop hosts, Itaipú Binacional, the dam operating company, and the Itaipú Technology Park (PTI).

Participants at the environmental flows worksop. -- Photo courtesy Mark Smith.

The programme covered the major issues that have to be addressed to use environmental flows. “Setting an environmental flow in a river is not a problem that you can just leave for hydrologists or ecologists to solve,” explained Mark Smith, IUCN Water Management Advisor. “It’s true that you have to have some understanding of how ecosystems respond to changes in river flows. For example, you have to be able to decide what sort of flow regime is needed to make sure that fish catch in a wetland downstream of a dam is maintained. This shows, though how important environmental flows are for both people and nature – so setting an environmental flow also involves economics, law, the participation of communities and the politics of water.”

The week began with workshop sessions that introduced the participants to the principles of environmental flows and to the methodologies used for environmental flow assessments. These provide the data needed to determine how changes in flow regimes affect ecosystems, their services and the costs and benefits of water infrastructure development. To help understand how they are applied, participants looked at case studies from Latin America, as well as further afield, including the Pangani basin in Tanzania, where IUCN and GEF are supporting application of environmental flows. With expert input from engineering staff from Itaipú, participants considered what actually has to be done to change the way dams are operated and therefore downstream flow regimes, what constraints have to be faced and what options need to be considered when engineering new dams.

After a field trip to a nearby biological reserve and to see the dam first hand – both outside and inside, up close to the turbines - participants then spent the final two days of the workshop looking at the enabling environment needed to implement environmental flows in practice. With support from Alejandro Iza and Roció Cordoba, IUCN specialists in environmental law and water governance, participants undertook a two-day role play exercise designed to explore use of economic incentives, policy and legal reform and multi-stakeholder negotiations in enabling implementation of environmental flows.

Participants worked intensively on the exercise, which was based on a fictional river basin – “The Takong” - shared by two countries and several federated states. Working groups were tasked with representing different governments and different interest groups in negotiations over allocation of water in the basin and development of water infrastructure. Each group had to present its case to a basin Commission, but not before negotiating deals and trade-offs among the governments, economic sectors and political interests involved. This led to hard bargaining – in the corridors, on the bus to the hotel, in the hotel lobby, even around the table at the workshop dinner. And deals were reached, in which for example investment in irrigation efficiency and a new dam was agreed provided that flows were sufficient to sustain downstream fisheries and river navigation. When put to the Basin Commission to recommend processes

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Upcoming Events

25 May 2008 - 28 May 2008
3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MANAGING SHARED AQUIFER RESOURCES
Tripoli, Libya
www.unesco.org/water/ihp/isarm_tripoli_2008.pdf

23 Jun. 2008 - 27 Jun. 2008
4th CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM
Grande Anse, Grenada
www.cehi.org.lc

24 Jun. 2008 - 28 Jun. 2008
GROUNDWATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Kampala, Uganda
www.gwclim.org/

07 Jul. 2008 - 11 Jul. 2008
11th INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF SYMPOSIUM
Ft. Lauderdale, FL, USA
www.icriforum.org/event_detail.cfm?CID=226

01 Sep. 2008 - 04 Sep. 2008
13th WORLD WATER CONGRESS
Montpellier, France
www.worldwatercongress2008.org

15 Oct. 2008 - 18 Oct. 2008
IV INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS MANAGEMENT
Thessaloniki, Greece
www.igrac.nl/publications/288

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Lake Tanganyika instrument and busily established their joint regional institutions: The Lake Tanganyika Authority was formally established at the First Conference of Ministers in April 2007 and all countries then ratified the Lake Tanganyika Convention in August 2007. The Second Conference of Ministers is scheduled to be held in Burundi on 24 April 2008, when all governments and partners will renew their commitment to the improved regional management of the Lake Tanganyika and its resources. The new UNDP-GEF project is designed to designed to implement the joint strategic action programme and build the capacity of the regional Authority to function under the Convention.

.For more information on the UNDP-implemented Lake Tanganyika project, please contact Akiko Yamamoto (akiko.yamamoto@undp.org).

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for resolving remaining disputes, the Commission suggested several ways to increase benefits of basin cooperation using a flow regime, encouraging the parties to consider further how they could, for example, broaden the scope of energy options under negotiation, and address climate change adaptation in managing flows.

It was clear from the enthusiastic commitment of participants to this and other activities over the week that all share Glauco's passion for rivers. Each left Foz do Iguaçu with an action plan for applying what they'd learned to the goal of sustainable development of river basins, in both large and small ways, according to the roles each plays in their projects and institutions. André Pol, of the Brazilian Ministry of Environment, for example, was adamant that "the time is now right for an environmental flows pilot in Brazil. We are going to talk with ANA, TNC and IUCN and others about an environmental flows partnership in the country, to support dialogue, capacity building and then a flows demonstration." Itaipu's Director for Cooperation, Nelton Friedrich, also expressed interest in working with GEF IW:LEARN to pursue learning exchanges with African basins where Portuguese is spoken.

Time spent getting to know one another also led to numerous proposals for exchanges and collaboration. Itaipú, IW:LEARN, IUCN and Fundacion Natura of Panama discovered a common interest in microwatershed planning and discussed how to promote wider application in Panama, the Plata basin and elsewhere. Zuleika Pinyon, Executive Director of Fundacion Natura, commented that "As a result of this workshop we will be able to bring lessons on community participation around Itaipú to the Panama Canal Zone. This will help us a lot."

More information on environmental flows, as well as discussion forums and case studies, is available from the Environmental Flows Network (www.eflownet.org). This has been set up recently by IUCN, TNC and a group of partners to promote experience sharing and peer-to-peer learning on environmental flows. The IUCN toolkit used at the workshop, titled FLOW – The Essentials of Environmental Flows, can be downloaded from www.iucn.org/themes/wani/publications/publications.htm.

Further information on the workshop and future events being planned by IUCN for river basin learning in IW:LEARN are available from Mark Smith at IUCN (mark.smith@iucn.org).

2008 IW:LEARN ACTIVITIES PLANNED

IW EVENTS/TRAININGS

- LAC Regional Workshop on Environmental Flows (in Foz de Iguacu; with IUCN and Itaipu Binacional)
- 3rd Regional Public Participation Workshop (in Hanoi; with ELI)
- Payment for Ecosystems Services Workshop (in Hanoi; with IUCN)
- Targeted Workshop on Public Participation in SE Europe (in SE Europe; with GWP-Med and EU)
- Athens Declaration-Petersberg Process II - South-eastern European Public Participation Roundtable (in Sofia, with GWP-Med, World Bank, the governments of Germany and Greece)
- Coral Reef Symposium (in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; with ReefBase and the World Bank)
- 4-7 Stakeholder Learning Exchanges, all regions

IW OUTREACH

- Publish at least twelve IW Experience Notes
- Publish E-Bulletin and Bridges newsletters

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS 2007

√ IW:LEARN/UNDP/DLIST Inter-project stakeholder exchange on internet-based Community of Practice Platforms (in Bratislava; with UNDP)
√ Athens Declaration-Petersberg Process II - South-eastern European Groundwater Roundtable (in Slovenia, with GWP-Med, World Bank, the German and Greek governments)
√ Information Management Workshop (in Beijing)
√ 6th Petersberg Roundtable on TWM in Africa (in Bonn, Germany; with GEF, UNDP, InWEnt)
√ 2nd Pan-Africa TWRM Workshop on Public Participation Workshop (in Maseru, Lesotho; with ELI, InWEnt and ACWR)
√ Regional Conference on Nutrient Reduction (in Ankara, Turkey; with World Bank and UNDP)
√ 10 IW:LEARN experience notes published to http://www.iwlearn.net/experience
√ Constructed Wetlands Community of Practice Launched http://www.iwlearn.net/constructedwetlands

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cooperation.

People rely heavily on groundwater in SEE, where some studies count more than sixty transboundary aquifers. Karstic aquifers are notably vulnerable to both climate variability and pollution. Among the limestone karsts of Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro, some municipalities rely 100% on groundwater. Participants at the meeting highlighted the importance of endorsing a proposed GEF-UNDP-UNESCO project on the Dinaric Karst.

Going forward, meeting participants called for

- Incorporation of surface-groundwater interactions into plans for scientific assessment and cooperative water management;
- Adaptation of groundwater assessment and management practices from other regions to support actions in SEE;
- Consideration by countries of a series of pilot projects in identified transboundary aquifers, to facilitate regional collaboration and trust-building;
- Support for peer networks that are critical for long-term cooperation, through workshops and joint site visits;
- Potential use of risk assessment as an element of groundwater planning and management.

Other emerging issues include the need to share benefits, more effectively use economic instruments, manage inter-linked groundwater and coastal-marine systems, adapt to climate change and harmonize legal frameworks, especially in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive.

For more information on the outcomes of this roundtable, participant lists and supporting documents, as well as the overall Athens-Petersberg Process, please contact Mish Hamid (mish@iwlearn.org), Dimitris Faloutsos (dimitris@gwpmed.org) or visit www.watersee.net.

IW:LEARN aims to strengthen International Waters Management (IWM) by facilitating structured learning and information sharing among stakeholders.
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