



International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN)

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WHAT IS IW:LEARN?



The Global Environment Facility's *Global Action on Water* (December 2001) identifies "collaboration among countries" and "South to South exchanges of experience" as essential to transboundary water project success. The GEF facilitates these efforts through its sponsorship of the International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN).

The GEF's IW:LEARN project institutes a variety of programs to foster effective communication across countries contributing to a specific international waters (IW) project as well as among IW projects world-wide. Through coordinated use of international events and information and communications technology (ICT), IW:LEARN is providing ongoing opportunities to forge a global knowledge community to address transboundary waters issues. The articles here demonstrate how the GEF and IW:LEARN help IW projects to exchange experiences and collaborate, both face-to-face and across the vast distances.

IW MANAGERS ON-GOING DISCOURSE

Industrious GEF project managers are realizing prolonged in-depth discussion through the power of the Internet. In the wake of the GEF's first International Waters Conference in Budapest, several peer-to-peer electronic forums ("e-forums") were established by the GEF and its

IW:LEARN project. Using both email and the World Wide Web, participants can access these e-forums both in their offices and while on mission.



Since March of 2001, the "GEF IW Managers" e-forum has attracted over 60 participants from GEF projects and agencies globally. IW managers used the forum to provide direct input in setting the agenda for the GEF's next International Waters Conference in Dalian, China (September 2002), and to discuss recommendations of the GEF's 2001 International Waters Program Study. During the discussions, Juha Uitto and Al Duda of the GEF Sec-

retariat posed several poignant questions regarding assessment of transboundary waters, releasing numerous replies. Andrew Wright (South Pacific/Somalia) commented that a transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) was unaffordable - but would have

been beneficial - at the outset of his project; Dr. Yow Opuku-Ankomah (Volta River/Ghana) sought guidance from other experienced projects near the outset of his project's TDA; Gabrielle Gaite and Jorge O'Connor (Rio Bermejo/Bolivia) and Juan Castro-Chamberlain (Rio San Juan/Costa Rica) and colleagues stress that fostering broad public participation is critical to projects' successful TDA initiatives and Dr. Chua Thia-Eng (East Asian Seas/Philippines) describes how a consensus vision was critical at the regional-policy level before proceeding with local environmental assessments.

Meanwhile, project representatives from Lake Malawi to the Black Sea to the South China Sea presented their perspectives on the TDA process and its role in water resource management. They also clarified the sort of guidance and resources projects need to more effectively implement TDA in the future. Summary reports of these dialogues will be accessible via IW:LEARN's International Waters Resource Center at the conclusion of the current discussion in May 2002.

South-to-South exchanges of experiences on a regional scale have been implemented using a hybrid of face-to-face and distance discussion formats. IW:LEARN moderated such an exchange amongst GEF partners in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. The GEF's Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia project (PEMSEA) then replicated this effort through its IW-East Asia electronic forum and an associated face-to-face meeting in Busan, South Korea in early 2002.

If you would like more information on the "GEF IW Managers" e-forum, or to set up an e-forum for your own regional or local IW community, please contact info@iwlearn.org.



NEW INTERNATIONAL WATERS WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A cornerstone of IW:LEARN's mission is facilitating the sharing of information resources and knowledge products. As of 22 March 2002-- World Water Day -- current IW project profiles, news and events are available via the International Waters Resource Centre (IWRC). Hosted by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and administered by its IW:LEARN project, this site also provides Web-based access to electronic forums and distance learning opportunities pertinent to the entire IW community. cont. on pg. 4

Some examples of posted items include:

- The project profile and latest news for the GlobalBallast Water Management Program (GloBallast), Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)
- Documentation and Web-based registration for electronic lists and forums, e.g. LakeNet, the River Basin Initiative and IW:LEARN's own International Waters Forum (IW-FORUM).
- Access to GEF guidelines, forms and sample project-related documents (e.g., project concept papers, project briefs, etc.)
- Several environmental MBA distance learning degree programs, and tools to construct a financing package to cover tuition
- Proceedings and papers of past IW conferences and symposia
- Upcoming IW conferences and events

For more information, please visit the IWRC at <http://www.iwlearn.net>.

To update a project profile, contribute additional information, or questions/suggestions to improve this site -- please contact info@iwlearn.org.

FINANCING: THE KEY TO IW DISTANCE EDUCATION

Substantial unmet demand for IW training in developing and transitional countries necessitates innovative delivery and financing mechanisms. IW:LEARN's distance masters MSc pilot program (1998-2000) with Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) revealed the immense current need for IW post graduate distance education. In 2001, RHUL received sufficient qualified applicants for the MSc programme to become permanent. However, one hurdle still remains: financing. No matter how cost effective, the RHUL and other distance learning environmental education programs like it cannot meet demand without adequate student financing. IW:LEARN is helping qualified students obtain the financial support to meet their capacity-building educational

IN MEMORIUM Paul Broome 1961 - 2002

A member of the IW:LEARN team for five years, Paul exemplified dedication to a vision of a better world, where ideas and information are freely exchanged, a world free of oppression, of extremes of wealth and poverty, and in which every human being is able to realize their full potential and enjoy the fruits of their own striving.

Paul's life was a testimony to this underlying cause, and his accomplishments stand as a hard-won tribute to the emergence into reality of the world he wanted to live in and help create. Paul was recognized and respected for his considerable talents in all matters technical, and as an innovative thinker and doer whose vision was world-embracing.

He was a pioneer in the field of distance learning. Paul was solely responsible for the design, set-up, and running of the delivery system for the pilot distance Masters program IW:LEARN co-developed with CEDAR Royal Holloway University of London. Everyone admired Paul's integrity and convictions, born of hard work and life experience. He was involved in dialogues and discussions with an ever-expanding network of colleagues and friends around the world, who will miss his lively and thoughtful participation.

IW COMMUNITY NEWS

NILE BASIN MINISTERS ENDORSE PLANS FOR SHARED VISION

CAIRO, Egypt, 14 Feb. 2002. The Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States (Nile-COM) endorsed implementation plans for the Shared Vision Program (SVP). The Ministers also resolved that necessary steps be taken to grant the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), which is situated at Entebbe, Uganda, legal capacity to enable it to mandate

The endorsement by Nile-COM, which is the highest decision making organ of NBI, marked the official launching of the SVP implementation. "With the launching of implementation of SVP by the Nile-COM, all is set for action on the ground, which is geared towards improving the quality of lives of the peoples of the Nile Basin", Said Mr. Meraji Msuya, NBI's Executive Director. Launching meant that planned activities would immediately start following decisions taken and endorsed by Nile-COM.

Under the implementation arrangements, pre-inception missions, composed of experts in various fields, NBI staff, cooperating partners, would initially go out to stakeholders in the various Nile Basin countries to consult on way forward for implementation of the projects. The Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat (Nile-SEC) would be strengthened with more human and financial resources to enable it handle the program, which has seven approved projects. Nile Basin focal points would also be opened in each country to facilitate in-country co-ordination of NBI activities. Funding and financial management mechanisms, procurement procedures, human resources development would also be streamlined and put to international standards.

The Nile-COM meeting was attended by Ministers of the ten Nile Basin countries, diplomats, experts, development partners, Nile-TAC members, Nile-SEC staff and collaborating NGOs. [www.nilebasin.org]

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN ECUADOR

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador --- In the spirit of south-south cooperation, East Asian Seas experiences were shared with maritime administration authorities of 19 Latin American countries during the Seminar on International Conven-

tions and Cooperation for Marine Environment Protection 22-26 October 2001. The seminar aimed to promote the need for marine environmental protection through the adoption/implementation of International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions and integrated coastal management (ICM); update the regional strategies on marine environmental protection (including the ICM concept); and promote coordination between governments and between institutions providing regional cooperation. The event was hosted by the Directorate-General of Merchant Marine and Coasts of Ecuador and organized by the IMO in partnership with the Operative Network of Regional Co-Operation Amongst Maritime Authorities of South America, Mexico, Panama and Cuba (ROCRAM).

Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, outlined the concept and operational modality of ICM as well as the content and processes in the formulation of a regional framework for environmental management for addressing transboundary marine environment issues. The PEMSEA presentations were specifically arranged by the organizers to provide participants with a different perspective on environmental management using the East Asian experience. [http://www.pemsea.org]

PARTICIPATION DE PROCUENCA-SANJUAN EN FOROS INTERNACIONALES DE AGUA

Los Directores Nacionales del Proyecto, Ing. Jorge Bonilla C. y el Dr. Juan José Romero M. por Costa Rica y Nicaragua respectivamente, participaron en el "IV Dialogo Interamericano sobre Administración del Agua" realizado en Foz de Iguazú, Brasil, los días 3 al 6 de Septiembre del año en curso. Ambos Directores aprovecharon este foro para hacer una presentación sobre los avances del Proyecto como una experiencia de gestión de recursos hídricos.

Igualmente los Coordinadores Técnicos por Costa Rica Sr. Juan J. Castro Ch. y por Nicaragua, el Ing. Javier López Medina representaron al Proyecto en la "Reunión de Gerentes de Proyectos GEF en Aguas Internacionales en Latinoamérica y el Caribe" también celebrada, y coordinado por IW:LEARN, en Foz de Iguazú, Brasil, los días 1 y 2 de Septiembre.

En esta Reunión de Gerentes se identificó la importancia de la participación de los diferentes actores en todas las fases de los proyectos GEF; también se indicó que debe procurarse una inserción de los proyectos GEF en las políticas de desarrollo nacional y local para tener mayor fortaleza en la gestión de fondos para la etapa de ejecución del PEA.

PROCUENCA-SANJUAN participó en la IV Cumbre de

Información del Agua (WIS4) celebrada en Panamá los días 25 al 27 de Octubre, así como en el Taller Internacional de Infraestructura Web en Aguas Internacionales, celebrado en la misma ciudad durante los días 28 al 31 de Octubre. Como resultado de este Taller se elaborará en los próximos 60 días una página web que interactúe con las Unidades Técnicas del proyecto y los Estudios Básicos o Proyectos Demostrativos que se estén ejecutando en ambos países, asesorados por iniciativas del FMAM a través del PNUMA y el PNUD. Representaron al proyecto los Técnicos en Sistemas de Información Geográfica Ivannia Mejia y Elías Sequeira, de la Unidades Técnicas de Costa Rica y Nicaragua respectivamente.

For more information, visit <http://www.oas.org/usde/SanJuan/sanjuan.htm>

BLACK SEA CONFERENCE CONVENED

The GloBallast Programme is based on the use of initial demonstration sites located in pilot countries, followed by replication of activities in each region as the programme develops. Being common for all regions, this objective has a higher priority for those that, due to economic, geographic, oceanographic and/or ecological conditions, are more vulnerable to the introduction and spread of harmful species.

In view of this plus the fact that regional networks cooperation are already in place for the Black Sea (Odessa, Ukraine) and the ROPME Sea Area (Khark Island, Iran), GloBallast regional initiatives are being launched in these two enclosed seas first. Accordingly, the 1st Black Sea Conference on Ballast Water Management and Control was held in Odessa, Ukraine from 10 to 12 October 2001.

For more information, visit:
<http://globallast.imo.org/BallastWaterNews7.pdf>

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needs while remaining at work in their home countries.

The first challenge students face is not whether they will be accepted into an educational institution, but whether they can afford it. IW:LEARN, has developed a financial tool to assist students in developing countries. The spreadsheet helps individuals identify and calculate their assets and liabilities, and create a budget for their scholarship needs via a simple, 9-step process. The second, and greater, challenge is locating financial support. An individual who desires additional education can use the tool to determine their financing strategy, then go to the International Waters Resource Center (IWRC) for links to potential scholarship and fellowship opportunities (<http://www.iwlearn.net/course/index.htm>).

Scholarship awards and student loan availability are limited in developing countries due to a lack of money, government support, or sometimes, cultural barriers. IWL is developing programs to address the gaps. These include government-sponsored environmental scholarships in Cameroon and a financial aid/scholarship fund operated on Islamic principles in the Red Sea region. Where scholarships are not available, IW:LEARN and its partners work to develop new options and address the capacity-building needs of the IW community, providing personnel with affordable access to distance learning opportunities.

TOOLBOX: INTERNET CONFERENCING SAVES MONEY

Internet-based tele-conferencing (I-telecon) tools provide a cost-effective means for IW partners to communicate and collaborate in real-time. Used appropriately, I-telecon can supplement or even replace costly international phone calls or teleconferences. I-telecon uses text, audio or video modes to connect two or more people in real time via the Internet.

The GEF's Guinea Current project prepared its annual Tripartite Review materials through extensive use of one-on-one text-based instant messaging. The River Basin Initiative participated in a trans-Atlantic discussion of transboundary issues via an Internet chat room, which involves many people at once. Other GEF IW projects from Uganda to China have taken advantage of this technology. Text-based I-telecon is appropriate for brief exchanges or where per minute Internet connection charges are minimal.

IW:LEARN, Lake Tanganyika, and MBRS information officers have made productive use of audio teleconferencing, which is viable even at the limited speed of older (28.8 kbps) modems. In addition to saving on long distance fees, audio I-telecon participants can benefit from simultaneously viewing a chat room to document proposed action items, using an electronic blackboard for collaborative diagrams, or sharing files to discuss and edit together in real time.

While video I-telecon exists for those with faster Internet connections, its current utility in IW projects is limited.

Most I-telecon tools have the ability to record discussion for later review. Other features vary between software and cost options. A review of specific software along this cost gradient, along with links to install each tool, can be found on IW:LEARN's website, <http://iwlearn.org/tech/tech1.htm>. If you would like assistance or training to use any of these tools please contact info@iwlearn.org.

WEB DEVELOPERS ADDRESS WATER MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Through IW:LEARN's most recent 15 week IW Web Developers Workshop (Fall 2001), participants applied various Web development tools to address their countries' water resource management needs. The 3 phase bilingual workshop involved 22 participants from Latin America in interactive, face-to-face and distance learning modes. During the 4 week assessment phase prior to the workshop, these Web developers gathered via an e-forum to introduce themselves and their technical needs, then propose training topics and discuss personal objectives and priorities. In October, they met for a face-to-face phase in Panama City in conjunction with the 4th International Water Information Summit (WIS4).



IW:LEARN staff led three days of customized training with participants as co-instructors. Evaluations of this phase rated the Panama training 83% useful and effective in achieving the trainees' objectives.

The face-to-face workshop also had attendees develop individual work plans for specific products they aimed to realize within 60 days of returning home. These work plans provided the basis for the virtual implementation phase - extended to 100 days - during which participants worked with one another and IW:LEARN to accomplish their stated goals. Samples of their successes:

- Juan Carlos Andino, from the Commission for Integrated Water Management in Bolivia (CGIAB) created a dynamic on-line inventory of Bolivia's irrigation systems. Juan said sharing experiences, visions and difficulties "greatly enriched" his personal vision for this system. [<http://www.aguabolivia.org>]
- Mary Vasquez, of the GEF's Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) office in Belize, developed a fully bilingual MBRS Web site and document library as a result of her IW:LEARN training. She "didn't fully believe the 'virtual' component would work but it did" by providing targeted skills, information and follow-up technical support via the Internet. [<http://www.mbrs.org.bz>]
- Francisco Hernandez-Montoya sought to use his IW:LEARN training to develop a service to address the lack of hydrological, flood mitigation and outreach information in Columbia. Within 100 days he created a Web site for flood mitigation and aims to share the

results of the workshop with his compatriots. [<http://www.floodmitigation.galeon.com>]

All participants felt the workshop was worthwhile, emphasizing the value of meeting and interacting with their counterparts from other projects and countries and discussing alternative approaches. More importantly, by extending the workshop via the personal work plans, the students were able to immediately apply what they had learned not only for the benefit of their Web sites, but their projects overall. Commented one of the graduates: "I am applying the knowledge gained in Panama for the actual planning of future activities. I believe that gives me a good background to promote these activities to decision makers and politicians to convince them of the importance of using Internet Technologies as a cheap communication tool for training".

For more information on participating in IW:LEARN's upcoming workshops, please visit the IW:LEARN Web site [<http://www.iwlearn.org>] or email info@iwlearn.org.



BENGUELA DLIST GOES ON-LINE

DLIST, the Distance Learning and Information Sharing Tool, is a new information sharing process and communication tool by and for the Namibian and Northern Cape (South Africa) coast. DLIST seeks to promote the sustainable use, protection and development of these coastal areas by providing access to locally relevant and current information via shared experiences on processes, distance learning modules, and peer-to-peer networking. Trained by IW:LEARN and the World Bank, EcoAfrica partners locally installed a Web server -- provided by IW:LEARN -- and conducted a series of area workshops to gather priorities and content for the DLIST site with local, provincial, national, and regional stakeholders, as well as citizens, the private sector, experts and specialists.

Features of the DLIST Web site (<http://www.dlist.org>) include:

- A pilot Integrated Coastal Management distance learning course targeting managers and planners active in the Benguela Current coastal zone
- Kiosks -- self-administered web spaces -- where local DLIST partners post information about their projects and organizations and provide links to other websites
- A resource library, offering open-access information, pooled from various coastal stakeholders such as discus-

sion documents, journal articles, consultant reports, lessons learned and high quality graphics and photographs.

- An open discussion forum, where participants post questions and share experiences or lessons learned.
- A message board, to share community information on upcoming events, announcements, calls for proposal, newsletters etc.
- A list of links providing users with access to a variety of useful websites related to coastal management.

To inquire about setting up a system like DLIST in another IW project area, please contact IW:LEARN at info@iwlearn.org.

NEW SUPPORT FACILITY TO SERVE THE LAC REGION



IW:LEARN and the Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC) have agreed to establish a new IW Regional Support Facility for the Latin American and Caribbean Sea (LAC region). CATHALAC serves as an administrative focal point for training, research and technology transfer in the field of water resources and the environment, with special emphasis on problems and issues related to the humid tropics.

In keeping with the IW:LEARN's knowledge transfer activities, the Center will provide a mechanism through which information can be shared and expertise developed via project training, research, distance learning and workshops. CATHALAC and IW:LEARN plan to jointly create and evaluate technology delivery systems, and aid in the development and use of collaborative knowledge products and services to serve the LAC IW community.

"This cooperative agreement is an example of how IW:LEARN partners can stimulate peer-to-peer education" said Dann Sklarew, CTA of IW:LEARN, "We intend to replicate this model in other regions and to connect International Waters personnel world-wide." Interested projects or partners should contact info@iwlearn.org



RECENT IW:LEARN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Install host server and software for DLIST
- Support distance forum follow-up to GEF IW program study
- Provide GEFSEC with Web site usability analysis
- Assist in realization of workshop and I-team project activities
- Launched first iteration of project information database
- Formally launch the on-line "IW Resource Center"
- Distribute first iteration of a PRC (iToolkit) to LAC and Southern Africa projects

IW:LEARN'S NEXT QUARTER GOALS

- Synchronize IWL workshops with global and regional IW conferences
- Identify partners to study or pursue consortium-based approach to IW distance learning (e.g. UNESCO, IHE Institute for Water Education)
- Establish Islamic financial aid program in Red Sea Region
- Establish 2 additional Support Facilities developed in conjunction with regional projects (Middle East/N. Africa, Southern Africa)
- Begin development of Community Resource thematic products and products with and for individual GEF IW projects



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