



Dear GIWA friends,

Important activities for GIWA are taking place these days. The peer review was completed with a science expert workshop, and the GIWA Steering Group met. Although some issues were found to require further development and refining before being fully used in the assessment, these bodies gave the marching order; the scaling/scoping activities are to be started on the sub-regional level and the first results are to be reported on the first GIWA General Assembly 16-18 June 2001.

Capacity building workshops introducing the GIWA methodology to sub-regional task forces will be held in the near future, in Bangkok, Kharkov, and Moscow. A milestone of great significance has been passed and GIWA is now in the operational/analytical phase of the project. In this issue of the newsletter some of these events are highlighted. You may also read about the status of the GIWA network, and recent events related to GIWA.

I am impressed with the number of highly qualified experts that have joined the GIWA sub-regional task forces. The intellectual capacity certainly is in place to reassure the continued success of GIWA. Finally, I remind you all about the first GIWA General Assembly that takes place in Kalmar 16 – 18 June 2001. Here participants from the sub-regional task forces and invited scientists will meet to discuss the results and the future operations of GIWA. GIWA friends and representatives from other programs related to GIWA will also participate. Improving relations with other programs and institutions are of strategic importance. The formal invitations will be issued in the near future, but set aside the time in your diary today.

I look forward to see you all in Kalmar in June.

Dag Daler, Project Manager

Simplification of the Methodology

The GIWA Methodology has been peer reviewed during a period of several months by a group of selected scientists constituting the Peer Review Board. Simultaneously in the Open Peer Review, other experts and organisations were invited to access the Methodology through the GIWA web site, and to peer review it according to their respective area of expertise. We sincerely



Parts of the Peer Review Board during a coffee break: Bo Bergbäck, Kalmar University, Joan-Albert Sanchez Cabeza, GESAMP and Janos Bogardi, UNESCO

thank all of those who contributed with their valuable knowledge and time in this process. The Peer Review Board convened on 2 March, and dedicated a long day to a comprehensive, deep and cordial discussion about the Methodology and how it could be improved to fulfil the needs of the GIWA project. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Bo Wiman, Kalmar University. The discussion was facilitated by a presentation held by the leader of the Methodology Development Team, Prof. Laurence Mee, Plymouth University. The GIWA Core Team presented the contributions from the Open Peer Review to the Board. Furthermore, GIWA Steering Group members participated as observers, and also gave their constructive input to the discussion. The Board agreed on a number of recommendations to the development of the Methodology, i.e. that

- the Methodology in general needs to be simplified and shortened
- the final stages of the Methodology, scenario building and options analysis, should be developed to ensure that the preceding stages are providing appropriate inputs

The Methodology

The Methodology, also called the Assessment Protocol, is central to the GIWA project.

Assessments will be made according to this protocol in all sub-regions worldwide, and hence comparable information will be produced regarding the status of and causes of environmental problems of transboundary waters in the regions. This information will be used by GEF and others as a basis for prioritisation of issues and areas where action needs to be taken.

The developed Methodology has been tested in two regions, the Baltic and the Gulf of Thailand. Additionally, a number of GEF funded projects use the GIWA Methodology in their assessment work.



The GIWA co-ordination office in the harbour of Kalmar

Steering Group Supports GIWA's Present Direction

The GIWA Steering Group members met in Kalmar on the 3rd of March. This late winter day, the harbour by the GIWA office was coated with ice, and a layer of snow covered the houses and streets. The meeting was attended by the Steering Group members, observers from the Peer Review Board and GIWA Core Team. The Steering Group discussed, among other things, budgetary matters, the development of the Methodology, and the development of the GIWA network.

Status of the GIWA Network

Agreements have now been reached with focal points in about one third of all sub-regions. The network has entered a phase of rapid development, there are tentative agreements with additional one third of the sub-regions, and the Core Team is working hard to establish agreements with experts in the remaining sub-regions.

Assessment Methods Workshops

To help start up the assessment work in the sub-regions, several workshops will be held during March and April.

- To begin with, an assessment methodology workshop will be held in Bangkok, 22-23 March. It will be attended by sub-regional experts from South-east Asia, the North and South Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Subsequently, a workshop will be held in Kharkov, 28-29 March, for experts from the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Aral Sea sub-regions.
- The third planned workshop will take place in Moscow 9-10 April, and will gather Russian experts who will work with the assessments in the sub-regions covering parts of northern Russia.

These meetings, together with individual experts' dedicated work, will get the assessment work off the ground.

GIWA Web Site

As reported in the last newsletter, the Methodology has been implemented and tested in the Baltic region and in the Gulf of Thailand. This process resulted in several reports that are now available on the open GIWA web site, www.giwa.net. At the web site, you can also find this and previous issues of our newsletter.

Messages from the Sea

Students and others came to listen to the open lecture "Messages from the Sea" at Kalmar University 1 March, given by Prof. Mee, leader of the GIWA Methodology Development Team. He discussed the complexity of environmental problems in international waters, and this was illustrated with three cases: the destruction of mangrove ecosystems, the eutrophication of the Black Sea, and the destruction of coral reefs. He also encouraged scientists to reach out to the public with their knowledge in order to bring environmental degradation of aquatic ecosystems higher on the political agenda.

GIWA Events and Milestones

- The GIWA network: agreements have been reached with focal points in a third of the sub-regions, tentative agreements have been reached with another third
- The GIWA Methodology Peer Review was finalised with the Peer Review Board meeting in Kalmar, 2 March, and resulted in recommendations to the development of the Methodology
- Annual GIWA Steering Group meeting, Kalmar, 3 March
- Participation of GIWA in the sixth meeting of the SBSTTA of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, 12-14 March
- The annual World Water Day is 22 March. The theme 2001 is Water for Health, and the lead organisation is the World Health Organisation. Read more at www.worldwaterday.org
- Workshops on GIWA assessment methods will be held
 - in Bangkok, 22-23 March
 - in Kharkov, 28-29 March
 - in Moscow, 9-10 April
- The first GIWA General Assembly will be held in Kalmar 16-18 June 2001