



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

WAVES

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SPECIAL WORLD WATER FORUM ISSUE

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GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS SESSIONS AT THE WORLD WATER FORUM

The 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, Japan this March 16-23, highlights actions being taken to implement solutions to key global water problems. Some 10,000 government officials, representatives of international organizations such as the World Bank, and UN organizations such as UNESCO and UNEP, along with water experts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and more than 1,300 journalists are slated to attend. In a break with traditional approaches to such meetings, the organizers are asking participants to come not to debate issues, but to describe actions they have taken and make concrete commitments to future actions. In addition to the GEF's involvement in ministerial-level meetings, GEF IW projects are participating in a variety of knowledge sharing events at the Forum.

The GEF IW:LEARN project is leading the capacity-building session, "Knowledge Sharing and Learning Exchanges among IW Projects," (8:45-11:30am on 21 March at the Kyoto International Conference Hall, Room J). At this session, mature projects in the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) International Waters portfolio are sharing their experiences and lessons learned related to common issues such as: project development, public participation, transboundary assessment, financing and long-term sustainability. Specific regional insights from East Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe projects are being presented, as well as IW:LEARN's knowledge sharing experiences. Attendees are also participating in a demonstration and discussion of the web-accessible UNEP-IW:LEARN Eco-Insight Web tool for capturing and sharing practical experiences and lessons learned. Scheduled speakers are: Pablo Gonzalez, Rio San Juan Project Coordinator,

Organization of American States; Huming Yu, Senior Programme Officer, Partnerships for Environmental Management of the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA); Sean Khan, Programme Officer/Knowledge Management, UNEP/Dept. of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA); Margit Sare, UNDP/GEF Project Assistant, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation; Dann Sklarew, Director, IW:LEARN; with Andrew Hudson, Principal Technical Advisor, International Waters, UNDP/GEF, moderating the session.

GEF IW:LEARN is also featured at the WWF3 Water Information Day (19 March at 08:45-15:15, organized by American Water Resources Association, Water Web Consortium, and UNESCO at the Grand Cube Osaka, Event Hall E). A diverse cross-section of water and information technology professionals are discussing needs for water information in developing and developed countries, information technologies, and the Internet; information for water and governance; and information challenges for water management. IW:LEARN is one of several projects to be highlighted during the "Building Networks for Knowledge Sharing" session. Organizations such as Water Web Consortium, World Meteorological Organization, and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) will also present their use of information technology to address resource management concerns.

PORTAL DEVELOPERS COLLABORATE AT WIS5 WORKSHOP

In October, the GEF IW:LEARN project conducted a Water Portal Developers Workshop with UNESCO and the Water Web Consortium in conjunction with the 5th Water Information Summit (WIS5) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Eighteen participants from fifteen countries were trained in defining,

designing and developing a water portal for sharing information resources pertinent to water management. The primary objective of the workshop was to have each participant construct their own water portal using open source software, templates, and common standards to ensure that the portals constructed are compatible with each other and others around the world. A secondary objective of the workshop was to catalyze the development of a group of inter-compatible portals that could be linked under the auspices of the Latin America and Caribbean regional Water Portal for the Americas, launched by the WaterWeb Consortium and UNESCO, as the first stage in the realization of an integrated World Water Portal.

IW:LEARN prepared a comprehensive guide to designing a dynamic web server system, which was given to workshop participants for testing and comment. In addition, two English/Spanish "Toolkit" CDs were created for participants, containing web development software and web server software and tools. These materials and further information are available from IW:LEARN on request.

The hands-on workshop in Florida was followed by a 100-day period of virtual support in which attendees proceeded to develop their own sites in concert with the development of the Water Portal for the Americas, being presented during "Water Information Day" at the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan this month.

PROJECT NEEDS IDENTIFIED

The results are in! Thanks go out to over 50 GEF IW project managers and national partners who submitted the Project Needs Assessment Surveys at the International Waters Conference in Dalian, China (September 2002). The GEF IW:LEARN project conducted this survey to prioritize IW projects' needs for a variety of transboundary water management tools and with respect to specific IW-related environmental concerns.

Respondents prioritized sixty management tools (derived from the Global Water Partnership toolbox taxonomy and some additional GEF-specific project management components) and twenty issues (adapted from the GEF-supported Global International Waters Assessment's key issues).

An overwhelming majority viewed tools for Public Participation as their top capacity-building need. Nearly two-thirds identified Public Participation as a high priority, while 90% rated it as either a medium or high priority. Participants also expressed a strong need for tools related to: Knowledge Management and Knowledge Sharing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Water Management Indicators and Databases.

Loss of Ecosystems and Ecotones was the IW issue of greatest importance to respondents. Overexploitation, Biodiver-

sity Impacts and Habitat Destruction were also among issues for which projects most commonly require more knowledge and information. The table below ranks issues rated highly needed by over one third of respondents and medium or highly rated by two thirds of respondents.

The results from this survey largely reaffirm the outcomes from a similar assessment conducted at the first International Waters Conference. These findings will be used to guide future knowledge sharing activities across the GEF IW portfolio, with support and facilitation of the GEF's IW:LEARN Project. The Dalian Conference summary report, which includes the full survey results, is available via <http://www.iwlearn.org/iwc2002>.

BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENTAL DATABASE FOR THE DNIPRO RIVER BASIN

The UNDP-GEF Dnipro River Basin Project conducted a workshop in February to further efforts on framing, developing and defining the use of an environmental database for the basin. Participants representing the Information Management thematic center and its country level components, met to coordinate their approaches to integrating information on a variety of data, ranging from legislative acts to pollution hot spots. Planners envision an Integrated Environmental Database tool that will eventually be publicly accessible and enable coordinated policymaking between the three riparian countries: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

In a brief presentation, aimed at providing technical support to the participants, IW:LEARN Project Assistant Mish Hamid outlined key data standards, data security procedures and online working directory options. At the moment, a wide variety of data exists throughout the Dnipro basin, both at the national level and as a result of different projects undertaken to collect information throughout the area. The proposed database tool will bring together water quantity and quality, water use, and pollution discharge data. IW:LEARN provided information on metadata, data standards and establishment of conventions, which are key elements of the requisite data exchange and integration that will occur.

The dissemination of metadata and data standards is an example of the type of service IW:LEARN provides to its core constituency, the GEF International Waters projects. Metadata, or data about data, is structured documentation about information or knowledge resources. There are multiple standards for various purposes and communities; when institutions agree on common standards, they can export their information to an integrated database.

The Dnipro environmental database represents an important milestone in basin monitoring. An expressed desire to make the database interactive through the Web, as well as GIS-

enabled, puts the project at the leading edge of applying information technology to environmental issues. IW:LEARN will continue providing suggestions on standards, software and information resources. Ultimately, IW:LEARN will in turn ensure that the lessons learned by Dnipro in the course of this activity will be disseminated to the wider IW community. Please contact Mish Hamid (mish@iwlearn.org) for further information.

SOCIAL MARKETING IN THE PACIFIC

Awareness-raising and environmental education are all well-and-good, but how do you translate that into real social change? The GEF-sponsored International Waters Programme (IWP) of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is developing a “Social Marketing” model that they are confident will have enduring results. A workshop was held in Samoa in November 2003 to discuss the elements required to formulate a Social Marketing strategy in the Pacific, based on the “e” model developed by GreenCOM, a leading authority in environmental Social Marketing in developing countries. The workshop brought together experts in social research, public awareness, community relations, and communications to develop a Social Marketing plan as part of their public outreach efforts.

Social Marketing draws from commercial marketing and behavioral psychology to encourage more socially responsible behaviors in a target community, such as through anti-littering campaigns. Based on case studies, Social Marketing is an appropriate communication tool to support IWP implementation, though the techniques have only recently been introduced to the Southern Pacific. Whereas traditional “environmental education and awareness campaigns” in the region do not lead to sustainable behavioral change, the application of environmental Social Marketing campaigns in Africa, Asia and South America appear to have had more enduring results. “What we’re doing is using commercial marketing principles and techniques, but applying it to social environmental issues. Instead of selling soap, we’re selling messages about the type of future Pacific people want,” says IWP Community Communications Specialist Samson Samsoni.

The model being developed uses a five-step process: assessment, design and planning, pre-test and revision, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. IWP will be adapting this to cultural and country-specific practices of Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). For more information, contact Samson Samsoni at samsons@sprep.org.ws.

IW COMMUNITY NEWS

As the Dalian Needs Survey indicated, GEF IW projects view insights regarding public participation tools and techniques as a top priority. A recent sampling of IW project experiences related to Public Participation includes:

BERMEJO PRESENTS STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The GEF Bermejo Project recently presented its report summarizing public participation mechanisms utilized in the (1997-2000) formulation of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) for the bi-national Bermejo River basin. This document outlines major activities conducted to ensure the active participation of basin communities, local, regional and national authorities, academia, and NGOs in the preparation of the SAP, and provides examples of methods for public participation, which could assist other GEF International Waters projects. The full report is on-line at <http://www.cbbermejo.org.ar/novedades.html>.

PEMSEA TO SHARE LESSONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ICM PRACTITIONERS

Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) is applying its field experiences to develop an information series showcasing best practices in integrated coastal management (ICM) arising from its experiences in the field. Presented in a reader-friendly format, PEMSEA’s Notes for ICM Practitioners shares results of its ICM-related activities. Practical solutions and lessons learned by PEMSEA during its program implementation are highlighted in the more than 20 success stories to be featured both online and in print, the first of which is scheduled for publishing in February 2003.

The story of Yuan Dang Lake in Xiamen, China, is exemplary of how stakeholder collaboration can enhance and sustain both environmental and socio-economic values to restore and manage a lake.

In the heart of Xiamen City, Yuan Dang Lake was diagnosed in 1989 as biologically dead, and posing health and environmental hazards to city residents. Mounting pressures from Xiamen’s residents and the business sector pressed the City Government of Xiamen to improve the lake. Once institutional arrangements were established, local government pooled and mobilized its resources to methodically undertake the clean up of Yuan Dang Lake, which was completely rehabilitated by 1996.

The lake’s rehabilitation has brought countless benefits for the people of Xiamen. With a cleaner environment and effective

pollution control measures in place, more foreign and domestic investors opted to move to the lake vicinity, which then emerged as a commercial and investment center in Xiamen City. At the same time, the living standards in the community were uplifted and the social value of the lake restored. For more information, contact info@pemsea.org.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY IN THE SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN

The San Juan River Basin, shared by Costa Rica and Nicaragua, is the chief freshwater reserve in Central America, boasting rich and diverse ecosystems. Most of its one million inhabitants are vulnerable to recurring natural hazards that range from hurricanes and flooding to heat waves and severe droughts.

Such climate extremes can exacerbate underdevelopment, unemployment, forced migration, an uncertain food supply and related problems. With technical support from the OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment (USDE), the governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua are working to identify practices to cope with climate variability in this region. The project is supported by the International Secretariat of the Dialogue on Water and Climate (DWC), based in The Netherlands, and funded by the Dutch government and the Global Environment Facility.

As part of the project, the OAS has been coordinating a dialogue among area stakeholders such as local governments, municipalities, farmers, universities and non-governmental organizations. Workshops were held in September of 2002 to gather perceptions and share approaches used to prepare for and avoid disasters, reduce the vulnerability of settlements, and mitigate the social and economic impact of natural hazards. The goal is to compile strategies and recommend policies to better cope with climate variability, building on community-based approaches that will help maintain and develop the local infrastructure. Over 250 stakeholder groups participate in the project, as tracked by its Institutional Mapping Tool (co-developed with IW:LEARN).

The OAS/USDE is presenting this tool and the lessons learned during its public participation process at international DWC meetings and the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto. For more information, contact Pablo Gonzalez at pgonzalez@oas.org.



TIDES

RECENT IW:LEARN ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Conducted Water Portal Developers workshop in conjunction w/WIS5
- ✓ PERSGA Fellowship Program administrative manual & database management system delivered to and installed by PERSGA
- ✓ Conducted UNEP/IW:LEARN BPDb Interactive Session at Monterrey Transboundary Water conference
- ✓ Authored a comprehensive guide to designing a dynamic web server system which was initially distributed to 25 members of the LAC IW community for testing and comment
- ✓ Assist the GEF Dnieper project in developing common database standards across their basin, as well as in the development of several databases
- ✓ Developed two new bilingual knowledge products: iToolkit - web development software; Server Toolkit - web server software and tools.
- ✓ Signed agreement with OAS to help develop Institutional Mapping Tool
- ✓ Agreement signed with UNESCO re: WPA/IHP-WWAP

NEXT QUARTER IW:LEARN GOALS

- ◆ Planning for KM workshop in conjunction w/WIS6 (Sept. '03)
- ◆ Name PERSGA Fellowship financial aid recipients
- ◆ Deployment of Red Sea ICZM course
- ◆ Launch on-line Projects and Contacts, Needs and Resources databases
- ◆ Continue to identify partners and sign Memoranda of Understanding for joint activities
- ◆ Submit Phase II project concept paper to GEF



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