



ECA/RCID/61/99

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION DIVISION

**MISSION REPORT OF THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING
AN INFORMATION NETWORK ON WATER RESOURCES FOR THE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION ORGANISED BY THE GLOBAL WATER
PARTNERSHIP.**

JULY 13 - 15, 1999

HARARE, ZIMBABWE

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
30TH AUGUST . 1999**

1. GENERAL

1.1 Introduction

The Global Water Partnership Southern Africa Technical Advisory Committee (GWP SATAC) in conjunction with the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) plans to develop and set up an information network for southern Africa to promote and support integrated water resources management. This is in line with the GWP objective of building and reinforcing mechanisms for sharing information and experiences as a way of promoting the application of the Dublin/Rio principles in southern Africa.

A workshop to scope the way forward for this network was held July 13th- 15th, 1999 at the Harare Holiday Inn in Harare, Zimbabwe. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a detailed plan for the information network that would enhance information exchange between different southern African countries, organisations, and stakeholders involved in water resources management.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To capture IWRM information needs and demand in the region.
- To develop/define selection criteria/characteristics of the contents of the network.
- To establish components for IWRM Information network for southern Africa.
- To define administrative/governance issues of the network.
- To establish lessons learned from other information networks in the region and beyond.

1.2 Background

The Global Water Partnership is a network that was initially established by the World Bank and UNDP, with a Secretariat housed at Sida Headquarters in Stockholm. The regional arm of the GWP Technical Advisory Committee in Southern Africa is the Southern Africa Technical Advisory Committee (SATAC). SATAC's goal is to encourage sustainable water resources management by promoting the application of the Dublin/Rio principles in Southern Africa and encourage dialogue among the various stakeholders by creating interactive fora at national and regional levels. In this respect, SATAC was established to:

- Assist the SADC Water Sector Coordination Unit (WSCU)
- Promote and operationalise IWRM principles
- Facilitate coordination of donor interest in the water sector
- Link for information exchange to other donors, ngos, institutions or universities in the regional water sector.

One of the objectives of GWP is to build and reinforce mechanisms for sharing information and experiences. To this end, the IWRM Information network is a GWP Associated Programme (AP) through which this objective is fulfilled.

A protocol of the Expert Group Meeting in Harare in January 1998 identified three possible pilot regions for an African IWRM network, of which the German Government favoured Southern Africa (SADC countries).

In line with this goal and with the global GWP goals and objectives, SATAC, among its activities, is planning the establishment of an electronic information exchange network with the support of GTZ. The Harare workshop is seen as the first step to defining and then establishing this network.

About 30 people with expertise and experience in information networks both regionally and internationally, and various local, national, and regional stakeholders in the water sector were invited to the workshop to help scope the way forward for the project. The organizations invited included the SADC Water sector, government water departments and ministries, universities and/or research institutions, water providers, river basin organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Community Based Organizations.

1.3 Results expected from the workshop

- To capture IWRM information needs and demand in the region.
For this network to be useful to the targeted users, the region itself should establish its own information needs. Proposals for content would be obtained from potential users on the ground, such as the SADC Water Sector, water departments, service providers, university/training institutions, donors and any other relevant users that are expected to attend the workshop.
- To develop/define selection criteria/characteristics of the contents of the network. It is envisaged that the IWRM information network will contain *transferable information*, specific elements of which shall be defined by the workshop. Defining the criteria would help save the network from becoming a duplicate of what is already available on the Internet.
- To establish components for IWRM Information network for southern Africa. The network should endeavour to present information to the users in a manner or style that will make the network more useful, user friendly and attractive to the users more than any other network. Components are formats such as question-answer service, databases, etc. Experiences from other networks would give an indication of what to select or further develop to really give this network a different touch.
- To define administrative/governance issues of the network
Successful group efforts require that it be clear who is responsible for what aspects of the network. Roles and responsibilities of both the managers and users have to be defined to ensure continuity and up-to-date information flow.

- To establish lessons learned from other information networks in the region and beyond. To have a strong network, it is important to establish the problems and strengths of other networks so as to determine what to avoid and what to adopt and adapt for the IWRM information network southern Africa node. This would save this network from re-inventing the wheel, but instead improve on what is available and decide the direction to take on an informed basis. Presentations made will review experiences from both within and outside the region in the water, environment and other sectors.

2. PROCEEDINGS

2.1 Presentations

Initial Proposals for the Information Network on IWRM for Southern Africa presented by GTZ.

The network idea originated in the '97 TAC meeting in Brasil and was further developed at three meetings in '98 - the Expert Group Meeting in Harare, the Petersberger Talks in Bonn and the International Water Conference in Paris.

It is expected that the aim of the network would be based on the 5 cross-sectoral issues defined at the Brasil TAC meeting, namely:

- Water Policies and Legislation
- Valuation of water in alternative use contexts, including ecosystem services and conflict resolution among users
- Institutional development: Promotion of IWRM concepts among senior decision makers
- Development of synthesised IWRM knowledge, best practices and management instruments

Compared to the WSCU's information network, the envisaged IWRM network is not intended to be a database in the tradition sense, and is expected to focus more on general information on water sector management strategies. It should:

- Not serve as a primary source for data and hydrological parameters
- Not require new water resource surveys of detailed studies
- Not contain sectoral details such as development of hand pumps etc.

The components would include:

- Fully documented processes, not just final results
- Guidelines for administrative practices (e.g Terms of References and approaches to ensure effective participation of stakeholders in water resource management).
- Proven components for legislative, administrative and managerial regulations
- Studies and results of studies evaluated according to certain criteria, "added value" (e.g. Successful models of commercialisation of public services)
- Question and Answer Service. Most enquiries should be satisfied by information on the network that is accessible by the users themselves. For enquiries that are either specific or infrequent that information cannot be kept on the network, or that cover restricted data, tailor-made solutions will be provided.

The Information Network's Services are expected to be:

- Exchange of information and awareness raising - as the communication link between the supply and demand for synthesised IWRM information
- Provision of synthesised information - best practices, lessons learned, cross-sectoral analysis
- Strategic Advice - not in competition to consultants, universities or others

The project goal is to establish a non-heirarchical, intelligent and demand driven Information network on IWRM. The primary target groups for the network will require different solutions for information delivery. These groups are expected to be:

- Government Institutions
- Non-government Organisations
- Local user organisations

The proposed network is expected to begin in the SADC countries and if successful, as a pilot which is expected to be used worldwide after some time.

The sequence of activities to develop the network is expected to be:

- Structure (conceptual framework) of the network is developed
- Relevant data and information are gathered or developed
- The system itself is implemented and available on electronic media
- The network is in operation, maintained and updated

Some of the open questions that face the network are:

- Is there a demand for an IWRM Information Network in the region?
- Who will the actual users be?
- Will added value and synthesised data be attractive for potential users to pay?
- Will information owners supply their data?
- Will the approach be donor driven or demand driven?

It is expected that the definition of the approach will have to be very flexible with close communication and adaptation of the concept to the actual situation. Close contact will be needed from the beginning with potential users, to maintain their interest, and the Associated Programme activities will be developed according to response from the region and from users.

2.2 BfG/GRDC Input to the network development process

The aim of the networks should be to contribute to an optimal management of water resources through improved flow of know-how and information. Free and unrestricted access to more data and more accurate data will improve decision making. 'Free' means not profit oriented, and 'unrestricted' means the provision of access without discrimination.

Some of the key questions to be addressed:

- How can the decision making process be decentralized to lower levels of government, community organisations , the private sector and NGOs?
- How can we integrate aspects of environmental protection in water policy and water legislation?
- How is the demand management and water conservation practiced in terms of price, quantitative restrictions, legal regulation and other devices?
- How can we harmonise participatory approaches in administration and legislation?
- Are there case studies for successful mediation of water use under conflicting interests?

The IWRM information management system and Information flow and feedback to Associated Programmes and Networks will be expected to help answer these questions.

Data and information flow is expected to take place between:

- GTZ and BfG which could maintain the documentation centre
- SATAC, the other TACs and other Aps
- Consultancy of Experts
- Experts on Information Management
- Various data sources and bibliographic data
- Scientific and technical know-how,
- Users

Other points:

- Examination of existing systems will need to take place
- Where the synthesis and validation of information will take place needs to be decided
- Validation of information should take place from within the region as those familiar with the local situation are in a better position to validate.
- The workshop needs to decide who will own the network.

2.3 The SADC Water Sector Co-ordinating Unit (WSCU)

WSCU is based in Lesotho. It is in the process of strengthening its water information systems. An expert has recently been engaged to develop this area of the SCU's activities. One of the priorities of the WSCU is to develop integrated management of shared water course systems (the Zambezi river basin, for example, passes through 8 countries).

In general national water legislation is seen as inadequate and there is a need for harmonisation of policies. Despite past efforts, human resource development is insufficient, but is seen as vital to an integrated approach to water resource management. The SADC protocol on water identifies this need.

Currently the state, municipalities and companies are responsible for the supply of water. This top-down approach does not give choice to stakeholders and water projects are seen to be part of government which leads to unsustainability through:

- Poor cost recovery
- Problems being seen as government problems
- Lack of a sense of ownership and responsibility for the infrastructure
- Limited participation resulting in poor demand estimates
- Lack of involvement of women, who are more closely in contact with the situation and whose quality of life is more severely affected by lack of water and sanitation facilities. Limited participation by women is exacerbated because planning is usually done at the community level where men are the major decision-makers.

It is felt by the WSCU that SADC countries need to improve their information sources for water management. Regional and national capacities need to be upgraded for better data acquisition, analysis and continuous monitoring through access to better technology and strengthened human resources.

Other major information requirements in this area identified by the WSCU are:

- The hydrology of water resources in member states
- The quality, quantity and useability of water resources
- National legal and regulatory frameworks
- National plans
- Stakeholder participation
- Empowerment of women
- Water resource information systems
- Relationships with land use, weather, pollution, sanitation, aquatic resources and agriculture
- Communications and information technology

The generation of data needs to be demand driven and the resulting information marketed as a product. Water quality monitoring is linked with water services - it is

therefore necessary to consider how water quality data is to be collected and used. There needs to be stronger links between information use and decision making.

The UNDP and Worldbank identified a need for a hydrological water network in the region and a project proposal has been prepared which will help national databases to be linked and to allow remote data inputting.

Aside from a database of water professionals in the region, the WSCU's major information networking activities are focussed on statistics - time-series, and other quantitative data.

2.4 The Global Water Partnership (GWP) Forum/ Web Site

The GWP web site is an online forum and information brokering tool which aims to:

- Facilitate daily work
- Provide communications for tools for target groups
- Act as an online venue for anyone in the IWRM sector

The forum, which will operate in pilot phase until the end of '99, is based on an interactive web site with an array of databases and links to other online resources. It can be seen as a series of GWP intranets for specialist groups. All of the information on the site is freely available (nothing is charged for).

The major actors in the development of the web site are the Stockholm Environmental Institute and the GWP Secretariat.

One of the main features is the use of 'Kiosks' which are user-maintained information areas, which can be seen as mini-web sites of their own, except that all the kiosks are catalogued and categorised in a variety of ways. Kiosk maintainers can make use of email and offline access, including the ability to fax information to the administrators.

There are many hundred kiosks, the most operated by the research/university sector (27%) and the private sector (24%), followed by bilateral and multilateral agencies (16%). When grouped according to country of origin, the kiosks it can be seen that the distribution is spread throughout the globe.

Other notable features of the web site include:

- An address book
- File archive
- List of forthcoming events
- A number of web rings
- Organisational profiles (info submitted by the organisations themselves)
- Search facility

The topic areas in the outline section are:

- Infrastructure
- Constraints
- Examples
- Opportunities
- Key Issues

The site is administered by less than one full time person - the basic aim is that it is a user-updated site. This means that there is no real quality control.

2.5 Examples of Information Networks in Africa

- CTA's Project for a Regional Agricultural Information Service for Africa (PRAIS)
University agricultural library responds to information queries - email based Help Desk (Bloemfontein, SA). <http://www.uovs.ac.za/lib/agrica/assa.asp>
- USAID's AfricaLink
Agricultural researchers conduct region-wide experiment results shared by email. Researchers assisted in getting online. Continent-wide.
<http://www.info.usaid.gov/alink>
- ELDIS: Electronic Development and Environment Information System
ELDIS provides access and pointers to a wide range of information on development and environmental issues. Produced by the UK-based Institute of Development Studies, it offers a data and database hosting service.
<http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/agric/agric.htm>
FAO's Food Security Technical Advisory Unit (FSTAU)
Web site and email based information sharing amongst SADC countries.
<http://www.zimbabwe.net/sadc/fanr/intro.htm>
- AgNIC : Agriculture Network Information Center
The AgNIC Alliance is a group of USA land-grant university libraries and other agricultural libraries, extension services and other organizations. It focuses on providing access to agricultural information in electronic format available on the Internet. Member participants take responsibility for certain segments of agricultural information (such as basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities)
<http://www.agnic.org>

- Regional Animal Disease Surveillance and Control Network (RADISCON)
Project to support for information exchange by assisting with Internet connections in 29 countries, including North Africa. Budget: \$1.25M from IFAD.
<http://www.fao.org/ag/aga/agah/id/radiscon>
- Regional Environmental Monitoring Programme (REIMP)
Multimillion dollar World Bank programme to support environmental information management in Central Africa (Cameroon, Gabon, Zaire, Congo, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea).
<http://www-esd.worldbank.org/reimp>
- Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP)
Regional project with the three East African governments of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Project is putting up a regional website, hosted in Uganda and each of the three countries will have their own web pages. It is also trying to bring the use of IT to more users to enable the better dissemination of information within the region and internationally. <http://www.worldbank.org/pics/gef/3a2.txt>
- WISE-DEV Web Integrated System for Environment and Development
An InfoDev project which increases access to environmental indicators, provides a common information exchange platform and enhances transfer of research projects to development. Will be achieved through a Web integrated toolbox for multimedia data acquisition and processing, and knowledge representation and diffusion. The toolbox is aimed to be a generic multimedia information system, available on Internet for each specific environmental development program to create its own Web server. Based on an object oriented database, it integrates relevant algorithms and software in satellite image processing statistics, modeling, knowledge representation, etc.
<http://wbIn0018.worldbank.org/infodev/infodev.nsf/f470dd78a9d8a1e28525660800679cca/46a6cf26af217ee7852565fd00639e7b?OpenDocument>
- Southern African Non-Governmental Organisation Network (SANGONet)
Non profit network service provision for information exchange (hosts the African Water page (<http://www.sn.apc.org/afwater>)).

2.6 Issues for Information Network Development

- Using a mix of information exchange vehicles.
It is usually necessary to use a range of electronic information exchange tools to achieve the desired level of networking:
 1. Email (one to one)
 2. Mailing lists (one to many)
 3. Bulletin board (web based interface to the mailing list and searchable archives)
 4. Real-time Text Chat (used for time sensitive interaction)

5. Web site (basic starting point for access to the resources held on the server - repository for documents, images and sound files, as well as links to other resources held elsewhere on the Internet)
6. Database (for structured records and full text searching)

- Databases

e.g. MS-Access, MySQL, Oracle etc

Keyword search. Databases can be used to index not only data held on the local web site, but also documents held on remote web sites.

Structured records. A structured record database can be used create directories, such as contact information for organisations, events and training courses.

- Linked Media Interfaces

To extend the reach of the network beyond those with computers and Internet access it is necessary to use other media where appropriate such as:

CDs/Diskettes - for those with computers, including those those with high cost

Internet connections, for copies of the web site and other software applications

Print - hardcopy newsletter, articles for inclusion in the press, promotion of network to journalists.

Broadcast media - radio/TV - as for print.

- Private/vs. Public/open Access

There are a variety of ways of shaping access to the network:

- Moderated mailing lists

- Password protected areas on the web

- Additional services for registered users, members of a physical water network, or paying subscribers.

- Information Gathering process

Laissez Faire vs. Active programme - it is usually necessary to kick- start participation of network members in the exchange of information by starting with a process of pro-active information gathering and loading onto the web site, to make the resource a reference point that users will be encouraged to submit documents, participate in online mailing list debates and keep their directory listings up to date.

Links to information on other local/regional/global web sites - actively maintaining links to resources on other sites requires less work than taking static copies of remote resources and hosting them locally - where possible hyperlink to remote resources but automated regular checks are necessary to minimise the number of broken links. Point directly to relevant documents than to the remote web-site as a whole. These remote documents can still be included in the on-site keyword search engine with appropriate Internet-aware database indexing tools.

Registration - encouraging network members/users to register their particular interests and contact details on the web site makes it possible to:

- gather data on their particular information requirements for prioritisation of the active information gathering process.
- target groups of users with information more relevant to their needs through email alerts and allowing them to customise their 'view' of the web site. A good example is the registration facility on SlashDot. <http://www.slashdot.org>

- Use of GIT

Graphical Information Technologies such as GIS and remote sensing, but also simple map creation are ideally suited to the web and are important tools for representing information. Aside from making a web site more attractive to users, these systems make it:

- Easier to interpret complex relationships
- Easier to compare the characteristics of different regions or countries
- Easier for a wider section of the public to understand issues.

- Costs of Communication

For many government departments and NGOs with limited funding, the costs of access to the Internet are often excessive or remain unbudgetted for, resulting in a substantial number of disconnects. Costs are also usually a higher burden in rural areas and in addition they are much higher in some countries compared to others. Furthermore, there is great variability in the level of skill and knowledge to use network tools effectively and in access to support and technical skills. To help develop the full potential of broad participation in the network it can be desirable to provide assistance to key agencies in the form of equipment, communication subsidies or training.

- Validation and information quality/relevance/priorization

There are a variety of means to achieve these goals:

The member registration facility allows users to customise the presentation of the information on the web site according to their particular definition of relevance. Feedback solicitation and rating systems at various points in the web site can provide tools for user validation and information on how to prioritise and select appropriate information for promotion.

Additional software tools such as Third Voice can allow the annotation of web pages by network administrators and users.

- Network management, ownership and topology

The location of the network web server, databases and other services can each reside in different locations if necessary, and do not have to be located in the same place as the network managers, or owners. In many cases, costs can be reduced and the speed of access improved by locating the services in Europe or North America where most countries have direct connections. At the same time copies of the web server can be 'mirrored' to local web servers to speed access.

- Logging and evaluation

Access to web access logs provides essential data to be able to determine how much, which, and when documents are being accessed and other services are being used, and where the users are located. This should form part of an ongoing evaluation of the network to inform strategy for further network improvement.

3. GROUP REPORTS

Day 1

Group 1

Content needs to focus on water policy and legislation with the target being the decision makers. The six major content areas that should be developed are:

- General information on Integrated Water Resource Management
- Policies and strategies - a) the existing policies in southern Africa b) existing and potential strategies for water conservation and demand management. c) how to harmonise policies
- Legislation, regulation and advocacy - everyone must have access to existing legislation. Details will include: a) different tariff structures and ways to compare them. b) identification of how water requirements are defined. c) approaches enforcement (best practices). d) identification of key concepts and arrival at standard definitions. e) the structure of the decision-making process and the agencies involved.
- Catchment management principles. a) basic information on each catchment b) how to organise water management at the catchment level c) how to mitigate upstream/downstream conflicts.
- Groundwater issues with technical information and approaches
- Database of professionals and experts.

The group took the strategy of being comprehensive, and tried to cover all of the specific problem areas.

It was commented that area 4 on catchment management is quite ambitious - it requires a lot of information gathering and here may be overlaps with WSCU activities. The issue of conflict management was seen to be very important, there is expected to be competition for water resources at a national level, between sectors and even between villages.

In considering the target groups for the network, the breakout group identified three major beneficiaries:

- The 20-30 people in each country who are responsible for formulating policy.
- The about 5000 water user boards who have responsibility for implementing policy (this group don't need the level
- The Public, who need different, awareness raising information

Group 2

The group focussed on two areas - Value and Conflict Resolution, looking at the issues and the information requirements, under the framework of water resources planning and development.

1) The major areas of coverage were:

- Adding economic value to water
- Quantity and quality
- Social Value of Water
- Potential Use
- Competing Uses and the conflicts they will bring about, including looking at the ecosystem as a user

2) Information Requirements

The main areas of need identified were:

- Ongoing Projects
- Resource assessment - quality and quantity
- Water use agreements - local, national and regional
- Economic value of water in other countries
- Investment incentives
- Water allocation priorities

3) Selection Criteria

Criteria should be defined by national focal points and the priority areas are information that is:

- of regional impact and supports SADC policy
- relevant to management
- from other nations

4) Validation

Key points:

- Information quality assurance is necessary. One method may be to fix a quality mark on the resources provided.
- The format of the information should be presented in a consistent manner.
- The development of an agreed upon format should take place.

- The network needs to operate efficiently, and provide an effective forum for sharing expertise
- The issue of validation can be problematic, as it may be influenced by who owns the network, such as through government censorship
- SATAC could be the agency to validate, or have the overriding authority to accept a document.
- Metadata could be used as a means for validation, by providing descriptors for the quality or value of individual documents, allowing the user to make the choice.
- Validation requirements also require a focus on the data acquisition process
- Standards setting for information requires a needs analysis, as different needs will require different standards

Group 3

1) At a national level, descriptive information is needed on the institutional frameworks in the water management sector, with descriptive information covering their roles and strategies. This would include:

- Water user institutions
- Legislative frameworks
- Funding mechanisms
- Roles of national and local authorities

2) At a regional level information is also needed on institutional frameworks, including their plans, agreements, protocols etc. This should include information on which bodies should be approached for the different activities in IWRM, and how to approach them. In the area of cross boundary frameworks, it will be necessary to identify the gaps and potential conflicts.

3) At a user needs level, it will be important to identify differing user requirements for information. The main requirements are:

- Sharing of best practices
- Funding models
- Best institutional models
- Technologies used

4) Capacity Building

Information is needed on:

- Training courses available, including cost, length and funding options.
- Tertiary institutions that provide training, e.g CAPNET and WaterNet
- Training course materials that could be provided via the network.
- Forthcoming workshops, conferences and other initiatives.

5) Institutional Strengthening

Information is needed on:

- Decentralisation efforts
- How best to setup an institution (sharing of best practices)
- Information on consultants, including a regional registry
- All institutional development projects

6) Selection and Validation

The main issues arising were:

- The need to identify a single nationally responsible body to put information on the network
- The need to identify the individuals to take responsibility and co-ordination for this process
- The need for standards is to ensure compatibility. This will require that the use of metadata is ensured.
- In the setting of standards it will be necessary to consider how regional standards may differ from national standards.
- It is desirable that SADC countries include gender rations in their organograms.
- Information submitters could be responsible for quality assurance. The need for evaluation can be a very sensitive issue, but it is very important. It is necessary to identify the cost of validation.
- There is a need to develop linkages with networking institutions involved in the water sector, in particular the FAO.
- The institution of the network would likely consist of a blend of virtual and physical focal points.
- It will be necessary to consider the duplication of information vs using URLs to point to information available on other electronic networks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions or outcomes of the Workshop relate to the *Identification of Priority Areas. Major Technical Elements needed, Organisational Structure of the Network, Structure of the Project, Temporal Prioritization, and other Recommendations.*

Identification of Priority Areas

Group 1

1) Water Professionals database.

Expand the existing efforts in this area, providing good access to expertise, allowing professionals to easily contact each other.

2) a) Policies and Strategies, b) laws and regulation, c) pricing policies

3) a) Groundwater management, b) Catchment management, c) public - private sector participation.

Group 2

1) Allocation of water, in particular the question of how to prioritise economic vs social value

2) Water market. a) Investments, how to involve the private sector, such as public/private partnerships. b) demand issues

3) Environmental value of water.

Group 3

1) Regional information. a) SADC institutional frameworks, b) cross boundary agreements. These should later be expanded to cover all areas.

2) National institutional frameworks in each country. a) roles, b) identification of decision makers c) how they interact.

3) Capacity building information. a) training courses, b) statistics on progress toward human resource development goals. c) track progress toward achievement of the vision.

Major technical elements needed

Consideration of the target group is necessary, particularly links to the poor who will not have direct access to the network, and how professionals can be linked to the people on the ground. Use of radio and translation will also be an issue.

The network will need to provide advocacy for informal group networking at the grassroots level which can be fed back up the policy-making chain.

Capacity building can be linked to directories of professionals and training courses and the Q&A service.

Organisational Structure of the Network

Organisations that might be involved in the network are:

GWP-SATAC

GWP Secretariat

SADC-WSCU

SADC water resources technical committee

SADC Secretariat

Universities

NGOs (e.g. SARDC)

GTZ

Government Ministries

Research institutions

Sectoral institutions

Water professionals

Individuals

Co-operating partners

National focal points

Media

ISPs

Other SADC sectors

Sector reform institutions

WaterNet

IWRM Research

Private Sector

Structure of the Project

Owners - Southern Africa

Governance - GWP SATAC Secretariat, GTZ/Bfg/GRDC/SADC-WSCU supported by the ECA Regional advisory service and information advisors with a management board/steering committee.

Technical Hub - not yet identified

- Source of funds - German Ministry of Co-operation
- Executing agency - GTZ (programme responsibility)
- Implementing agency - GWP SATAC with additional resources and specialist expertise (programme activation)
- Supporting Institutions - everyone anywhere, proactive collectors, national focal points, national structure, consultants, distributors.

Technical Working Committee

A technical working committee was appointed to link the priority areas to the services to be provided by the technical part of the network and prioritise the activities to be undertaken in developing the technical hub.

It was felt by the committee that the content area priorities would be addressed by a number of the different information services to be made available. However the content areas to be prioritised for information gathering and presentation on the web site would likely be data on international guidelines and national/regional policy agreements and statements for countries the process of formulating policy.

Because of the need to show immediate results and with the availability of technical resources at GTZ, it was recommended that the site continue to be built at www.gtz.de/gwpgte until a final site for the technical hub is identified in the region.

The ***immediate priorities*** identified were:

To ensure that all of the email addresses of the participants are collected by the end of the workshop, for inclusion in a mailing list to continue the discussion of the development of the network.

A web site address/domain name for the network needs to be chosen

To decide who will carry out the further tasks identified.

Medium term priorities:

Set up the mailing list with the addresses obtained from the workshop and expand it by inviting other participants using the data from the GWP web site and SARDC's IMERCSA database.

Develop the first take on the web site design and structure which should be translated into french and portuguese for the basic informational documents on the network.

Load the web site with available documents, including those from this workshop
Add hyperlinks to other resources, starting with links from the African Water Page and the water Web ring

Promote the site to encourage submission of information by a) setting up a Kiosk on the GWP web site b) registering the site in the search engines c) becoming a member of the Water Web Ring.

Conduct a study of potentially overlapping activities, such as the recently established African Water Network, WaterNet etc.
Provide an alert service (email announcements) to notify network members of upcoming events and training courses.

Longer term priorities:

Set up other public or private mailing lists as required
Build the directory services:
Projects - look at the current proposed GWP mapping project and additional funding requirements.
Institutions - use the SARDC database as a source
Events - use the global events list from GWP as a source
Training programmes - use the WaterNet info as a source
Professionals - use the GWP, SARDC and SADC-WSCU info as sources
Finalise the technical hub location
Finalise the new web site structure with the added elements - registration and user customisation features, logging and page counters, upload facilities, BBS/Chat rooms and feedback system using design features for low-bandwidth connections (net hygiene)
Move the existing data to the new location
Establish the procedures for integrating access to other online databases such as SARDC's full text referral service and the SA Water Resources Commission.
Develop the Q&A service

Long Term priorities:

Develop the abstracts, synthesis and summary sections
Develop the full alert service to notify users of changes and additions to the web site
Develop strategies for in-depth translation of documents based on feedback from users
Develop strategies to engage the disconnected - provision of extension services, newsletter, rural radio, TV, telecentres, CD distribution, fax and outreach to existing human networks.
Develop the ratings/validation information quality procedures

Further Development of Target Groups for the Network

- 1) Decision Makers at the national policy level
Numbers: 100 (estimate by factor of 10, i.e between 10 and 1000)
Information required: Advocacy.
Direct use of the network - minimal
- 2) Policy/law/regulation formulators, including NGOs, Researchers and the private sector.
Numbers: 1000 (100-10000)
Information required: Documents, summary and a debate/discussion forum facility.
Direct use of the network: significant

3) Water managers, including suppliers and implementors

Numbers: 10 000 (1000 - 100 000)

Information required: understanding of policies, awareness of the impact of policies, guidelines and tools

Direct use of the network: potentially significant

4) Specialist water consumers (non-domestic users of water)

Numbers: 1000 000

Information required: Pricing information, how to carry out advocacy, debate, Q&A service

Direct use of the network: potentially significant

5) Public/community

Numbers: 100 000 000

Information required: popular information, extension products

Direct use of the network: small (1 in 1000)

To further develop the needs analysis of the above groups it will be necessary to identify the level of access to the Internet (connectivity) that each of the groups has. This will require devising a questionnaire and using it to survey the participants of the GWP water weeks which start Aug 23rd.

Domain Name choices

The most desired name chosen for the network is SAWINET (Southern African Water Information Network), followed by SAQUANET and then SAWANET. Subsequent investigations have shown that the following domains are not yet registered/occupied:

sawinet.net

sawi.net

sawinet.int

sawinet.org

sawinet.int

saquanet.org

saquanet.int

saquanet.net

sawanet.net

sawanet.org

Further conclusions and recommendations

National strategies, focal points and in-country activities need to be defined, probably through the use of working committees, but SADC structures should not be used for in-country representation in the network.

The results of the workshop should be distributed through official channels to each country.

The web site should include hyperlinks and other information on funders.

The key potential information providers who are currently without Internet access should be identified and plans made to ensure they are able to participate in the network.

The SADC technical working committees can provide input in the formulation of the network.

Initial sensitisation needs to take place in each country and the results of the workshop distributed widely.

Needs assessment needs to be further developed

An assessment of sources for potential support for the network should take place.

The project is broader than just the SADC member states, possibly including Madagascar and the Comores.

The network should operate as an informal programme outside SADC structures but with links to SADC as a co-operating partner.

The initial contact person in each country was identified from the countries represented at the workshop. These were:

Malawi: Osborne Shela

Botswana: M Sekwati

Swaziland: Kenneth Msibi

Zambia: Jonathan Kampata

Zimbabwe: Gilbert Mawere

South Africa: Nick King