



LATIN AMERICAN WATER EDUCATION TRAINING NETWORK

CONSTITUTION – APRIL 2003

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LA WETNET - LATIN AMERICAN WATER EDUCATION TRAINING NETWORK

I. Background on the LA WETnet formation

Introduction

The need for a Regional Network in Latin America for water education and training was stated during a regional workshop held in Lima, Peru in July 2002. This need was based on the recognition of the fact that the human resources component forms a critical factor in the development of sustainable water management, in all countries of the region.

Regional stakeholders representing universities, associations, governmental agencies and UN agencies were convinced that they could make an important contribution to sustainable water resources management and water service delivery in Latin America by conforming a regional capacity building network.

A total of 36 participants assisted the workshop, in representation of different regional and global organisations, such as the Global Water Partnership -GWP-, through its Technical advisory Committees (TACs) of Central America (CATAC) and South America (SAMTAC), the Inter American Association of Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences (AIDIS), universities from the region, governmental entities, United Nations organisms (UNESCO-IHE, Cap-Net, PAHO, CEPIS) and sector institutions. Assistants constituted a representative sample of the different stakeholders involved in water resources management and water services, all of them interested in the development of capacities.

As planned during the LA-WETnet's formation, in the Lima Workshop, the Network official presentation took place within a special session during the XXVIII AIDIS Interamericana Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences Congress, held in Cancun, Mexico (October 27-31, 2002).

Global trends in capacity building for Integrated Water Resources Management

The recent formation of LA-WETnet as well as the necessity to achieve IWRM in Latin America are not new issues neither isolated from the global community; these are not outside the margin of international events and treaties signed by the countries in the Region which are linked directly with the principle of the IWRM. The United Nations Environmental and Development Conference (Rio de Janeiro, June 3-14, 1992) and recently the Second World Water Forum (The Hague, The Netherlands, March 17-22, 2000), as well as the active participation of non-governmental organisations and the society in general give proof of this.

The Hemispheric Meeting of Health and Environment Ministers (Ottawa, Canada, March 4-5, 2002), remarked as high-priority within the environmental health in the Region the contamination of water, water and sanitation and hygiene. Countries agreed on the necessity to advance nationally with this strategic alliance -conformed by 32 countries - and the imperative of strengthening national capacities.

The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August 26-September 4, 2002), emphasised that lack in education and training conducts to poverty and reaffirm the UNDP mandate towards capacity building. The political declaration promotes: "...to speedily increase access to basic requirements such as clean water, sanitation, ... at the same time, we will work together to assist one another to have access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity building, use modern technology to bring about developments, and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resources development, education and training to banish forever underdevelopment".

One of the supporting organisations to LA-WETnet is Cap-Net, Capacity Building Network for Integrated Water Resources Management, an UNDP programme and Global Water Partnership (GWP) associated programme. Cap-Net results from the second UNDP/IHE Symposium on "Capacity Building for the Water Sector" which took place in 1996. Among the many challenges in relation to global concerns on water and environment, one was the creation of a network of Capacity Builders which would not only allow the sharing of information and expertise, but also become proactive in synthesising experience and lessons learnt, identifying research areas and encouraging virtual exchanges of views. Cap-Net is supporting regional capacity building world-wide, LA-WETnet is the Latin American focal point for Cap-Net and other regional networks.

Water resources management regional status and capacity building needs

Although Latin America represents a Region that is rich in water resources, most of the resources are experiencing rapid deteriorating water quality conditions. Many freshwater and groundwater systems tend to be heavily polluted, through uncontrolled discharges from human settlements, industries and agricultural fields. Water scarcity for Latin America therefore seems to be related mainly to quality, not so much to quantity of water. Another major problem relates to the poor quality of water services delivery. In Latin America over 80 million people lack reliable water supply, while over 100 million people do not have access to some degree of sanitation services. The objective to achieve full coverage and reliable services by 2025 will form an enormous challenge for most countries in the region.

Water management in Latin America is being described as not sustainable from an economic or environmental point of view (IADB 1998); actions and ordination had tendency to lack future vision and general coverage (IADB 1996); there are reasons to expect a water crisis in the region (SAMTAC-GWP 2000 and ECLAC 2001); low awareness levels among the population result into lack of political commitment among decision makers to initiate actions (IADB 2002).

As a result from a Regional Assessment study, developed in September 2002 by LA-WETnet, in collaboration with SAMTAC-GWP and Cap-Net, high-priority Capacity Building needs in the Region were identified in four levels: Governmental Level (Policies, Planning and Management); Governmental Level (Legislation); Society Level (Users and Organisations); Higher and General Education Level.

The added value of a Latin American network

Capacity building networks are strategic response to the demands for increased capacity building in the water sector. These partnerships of capacity building

organisations present a tremendous opportunity to anchor the capacity development process in local institutions.

Networking is a unique opportunity to share resources, and expand capacities both in capacity building institutions (supply side) and community (demand side); networks are an innovative opportunity to achieve much more with existent resources. Networking, involving all stakeholders is a means for the multi-sectoral and disciplinary capacities and actors needed for IWRM.

A key benefit of LA-WET*net* membership is the opportunity to join into the Thematic Working Units, which provide the opportunity for partnership development, generate homegrown –and owned- processes and the ability to respond to demand. Working areas are a means towards the generation of a critical mass for high quality programmes and effective delivery.

LA-WET*net*, as a Regional network which is part of a global network for capacity building in IWRM (Cap-Net), local knowledge benefits from international expertise and learning resources when these are not locally available. At the same time, LA-WET*net* is a mean for cross-collaboration with other regional and global networks; a regional Network engaged with the global water community is an efficient technology transfer tool in bringing world wide knowledge to the implementation in grassroots level.

There is very little generic development of knowledge, all knowledge has to be gathered and then analysed, modified, disassembled and recombined to fit local needs. The new motto is: “Scan globally, reinvent locally”. This philosophy can turn networks into an empowering tool of capacity development. Networks offer an alternative to the old model of one-way North-South information flows. Now, the flow can be in every direction, within and between countries of both South and North.

II. LA-WETnet Constitution

Definition

LA-WETnet is a regional network for capacity building in integrated water resources management in the Latin American Region. LA-WETnet was established in Lima, Peru in July 2002.

LA-WETnet is non-profit open membership organisation. LA-WETnet activities are developed within the Latin American countries: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. As part of the Latin American region, Guyana, French Guyana and Suriname are also considered as country members.

Mission Statement

To contribute and enable capacity development in Latin American countries, increasing the capacities in the region for integrated water resources management and improve access to water and sanitation for all, bringing equity in health and development opportunities.

Vision

To be recognised and act as a Regional coordination point and reference for Water-Education-Training (WET) and capacity building in integrated water resources management. To promote capacity building service delivery and water education by means of an active engagement with strategic partners and stakeholders in the region, being part of a global effort for a sustainable use of water resources and improved access to water and sanitation.

Justification

The importance of water resources management and effective water services is reflected in the national plans of countries in Latin America, which generally show a serious (financial) commitment to water sector development. The significant investments together with the increased needs for expertise at all levels of water management and services development call for serious efforts in building the needed research, planning and implementation capacity. Inadequate capacities in individuals, institutions and society in Latin American countries are a limitation for the achievement of sustainable water resources management at country and regional level.

LA-WETnet intends to contribute to sustainable water sector development by developing critical mass for HRD in all areas of the water sector. This will be achieved by forming a network of universities, research institutions, sector agencies and professional associations, which in partnership will offer cost effective and high quality training, research, education and information services for the wider region.

Justification analysis

1. The effectiveness of important water sector investments is limited because of insufficient human resource capacity in most specialist areas of the water sector.
2. Most countries in the region have insufficient human resource development capacity to produce the required number of professionals for most areas of the water sector.
3. There is no critical mass for high quality postgraduate training in all water specialist areas within each country independently.
4. Availability of reliable and region specific information on the water sector is limited.
5. Links between university centres and water sector agencies are incidental, not structural and agendas do not seem to match.

Values

The values that motivate LA-WETnet are human dignity, equity of opportunities, freedom, social responsibility and respect for the environment. LA-WETnet activities are to be driven with a future vision and profound knowledge of the local reality involved. LA-WETnet actions should be a means for social change in society through local activities. LA-WETnet actions shall be guided by the principles of local ownership and responsibility and with a partnership approach.

Guiding principles for water sector capacity building: a framework for effective collaboration

To contribute to capacity for development in the region, LA-WETnet activities shall be driven by the following strategic principles for water sector capacity building:

- I. ***Strengthen local ownership:*** Local ownership of the capacity building process must be anchored in the local capacity building institutions. Focus must be given to anchoring capacity building service delivery in local institutions, strengthening over time their responsiveness to local needs and demands, and addressing their own capacity constraints.
- II. ***Partnerships can overcome capacity constraints:*** Partnerships amongst capacity building institutions are emerging as an effective strategy to share experience and skills and reach the critical mass of expertise required to address the demanding requirements of reform towards sustainable management of water resources. At the same time as partnerships are being built horizontally between capacity building institutions, it needs to be ensured that requirements of water management implementers as well as policy makers are being taken into account, also by means of vertical partnerships.
- III. ***Responding to demand:*** capacity building is essentially a service. Capacity building service providers must be encouraged to adopt a more demand driven approach, identifying the immediate needs and demands of society and responding to those. The lack of this identification and response, engagement with the implementing agency, leads to perceived inability to deliver and a

lack of confidence in local capacity building institutions. Responding to demand is the main sustainability means for LA-WETnet.

Network Members

Members of LA-WETnet are capacity building institutions implementing activities at country or regional level and directly related with water education and training in Integrated Water Resources Management. Members may be universities, institutes, associations, country networks, governmental agencies, consulting firms, NGOs, and others, as long as they are interest and involved in WET activities.

When part of large organisations as universities, members should clearly define whether their membership refers to the whole organisation or to a particular department, for example. Different departments from the same university are considered separate members.

Network members are committed to bringing their views and opinions into the network and its members, as these will build the knowledge needed to respond to today's challenges and will make LA-WETnet an organisation open to constant learning. LA-WETnet activities through its members are to facilitate the growth and development of others as well as form and strengthen teamwork, dialogue, participation and alliances. LA-WETnet as a whole and through its members consistently strive to overcome obstacles that may emerge.

LA-WETnet is an open organisation. Institutions are invited to join and leave the network at their will. In case of leaving the network, any initiated activities shall continue until their natural termination.

Governance of LA-WETnet

The governance of LA-WETnet shall be executed by:

- A. The Members General Meeting
- B. The Steering Committee
- C. The International Advisers
- D. The Secretariat

A. The Members General Meeting

The Members General Meeting is composed of all Members and is the overall governing body of LA-WETnet. Each member institution shall nominate and send a representative to the Members General Meeting.

The Members General Meeting shall exercise the powers conferred upon it by this Constitution. The Members General Meeting shall:

- Approve strategic policy of LA-WETnet and its general programme of activities.
- Elect the members of the Steering Committee.
- Decide on the dissolution and liquidation of LA-WETnet.
- Adopt any revisions to the Constitution.
- Deal with all matters placed on its agenda by the Steering Committee.
- Approve or reject the Annual Report submitted to it by the Steering Committee and prepared by the Secretariat.

- Approve or reject the Annual Plan and the Annual Budget submitted to it by the Steering Committee, and prepared by the Secretariat.

The Members General Meeting shall meet once every two years, normally in combination with the AIDIS Interamericana biannual Congress, and may, whenever necessary, hold Extraordinary General Meetings to take decisions on matters within its competence.

B. The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall comprise of the following persons:

- A minimum of five and a maximum of ten people representing Members elected by the Members General Meeting.
- The head of the LA-WETnet Secretariat.

The Steering Committee members shall be elected by the Members General Meeting for a period of four years. Every two years, during the Members Meeting, half of the elected membership positions of the Steering Committee will be open for election or re-election.

The Steering Committee will elect among its members the Chairperson.

The Steering Committee serves as the policy-making body of LA-WETnet. The Steering Committee shall exercise all managerial and administrative powers that are not reserved to the Members General Meeting and may assign such powers to the Secretariat. The Steering Committee will oversee the workings of the Secretariat.

C. The International Advisers

The International Advisers is composed by a maximum of seven persons representing global supporting organisations, donors and recognised experienced persons, linking the regional perspective and ownership of the Steering Committee Members, with a global perspective from capacity building in IWRM relevant institutions.

LA-WETnet is intended to be a regional focal point with strong links and commitments with other regions and the global community. The International Advisers bring global trends, examples of best practices, needs and opportunities into the general management of LA-WETnet.

The International Advisers participate as non-voting observers at the Steering Committee meetings.

D. The LA-WETnet Secretariat

The LA-WETnet Secretariat will be structured according to its work level and faculties assigned to it by the Steering Committee from time to time.

The duties of the Secretariat are:

- To implement decisions by the Steering Committee and the Members Meeting;
- To plan, implement and coordinate the LA-WETnet work plan;
- To administrate LA-WETnet;

- To provide the Steering Committee with annual reports and annual financial accounts, as well as annual work plans and annual budgets;
- To organise meetings of the governing body of LA-WETnet;
- To carry out any other executive and administrative duties on behalf of LA-WETnet as may be assigned by the Steering Committee or the Members Meeting;
- To be accountable to the Steering Committee.

The head of the Secretariat will be appointed by the Steering Committee.

Legal Status

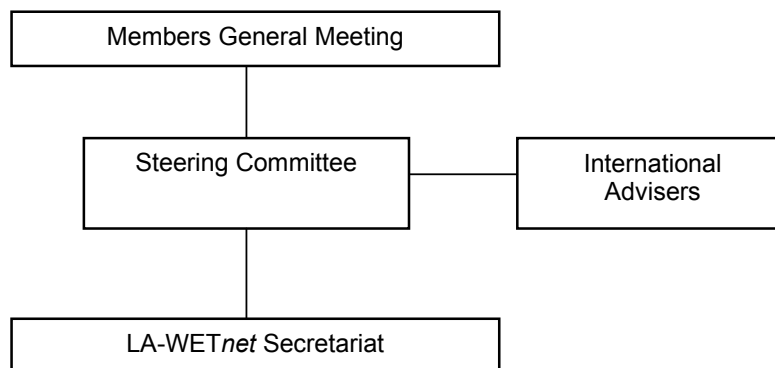
It is needed for LA-WETnet having the proper legal arrangements to being able to operate. Initially, it is suggested that LA-WETnet covers these legal needs by associating with an international body/organisation as such, this will provide benefits in transparency, independence and fund raising.

An agreement with the Buenos Aires ECLAC-UN Country Office was reached in September 2002 regarding the development of the regional assessment study and it is proposed to now formalise an MOU for the relation between LA-WETnet and ECLAC-UN Buenos Aires in this regard. If considered appropriate at a later date fund registration of LA-WETnet will be considered by the Steering Committee.

Management Structure

LA-WETnet management responds to its objectives and strategy, functioning as a small facilitating organisation, supporting and strengthening regional capacity building institutions in their delivery of capacity building services and linking the network with the global community.

The LA-WETnet management structure and the LA-WETnet Secretariat are vehicles to operationalise the network objectives, building capacity at the bottom end by means of a regional partnership and shared activities.



Operational Structure – Working areas of LA-WETnet

- Thematic Programmes: addressing specific technical areas anchored in network members. Institutions and/or country networks conform Thematic Working Units.
- Network development: promoting linkages between capacity building institutions and individuals with common interest in IWRM and capacity building.
- Strengthening capacity building delivery: levelling the capacities and opportunities within and between countries in the Region; building capacity in specific institutions to deliver capacity building services; support the development of country networks to address capacity building needs.

Criteria for initiating a Thematic Working Unit

Delivery at grassroots level in the region is accounted by the network members. Thematic working units are based on initiatives by network members. These operate as decentralised thematic units within the regional network, in permanent communication and coordination with the LA-WETnet Secretariat. The thematic working units are part of the operational structure of LA-WETnet, but are not part of the network management structure, which remains as a small facilitating body.

Members of LA-WETnet will subscribe to the following criteria underlying their cooperation when initiating a Working Unit:

- Commitment to IWRM Principles¹;
- Relevant experience;
- Multi-disciplinary approach;
- Commitment to a participatory and gender-sensitive approach;
- Making available own resources (facilities, staff, budget, training and education materials);
- Mobilisation of additional resources, and open to collaboration with other institutions in the country or region which would stimulate regional cooperation and enable participants from other parts of the country or region to have access to IWRM education and training.

Some thematic working areas were identified during the foundation workshop in Lima, Peru, July 2002. These are presented as examples for Thematic Working Units and many others could be considered:

- Education at university level, to establish the “Latin America Water University”.
- Effective interaction between the Academic and Water Sector institutions.
- Education at school level, continuous learning and informal education.
- Capacity Building actions at the governmental level and decision makers.
- Society level: training, communication and participation.

Other possible thematic working areas are urban water management, water and environment, water and gender, water and poverty reduction, water and sanitation.

¹ **Dublin Principles for IWRM:** 1. Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment; 2. Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels; 3. Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water; 4. Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good.

Members should bare in mind the contribution of each topic towards capacity building for integrated water resources management and water education. Thematic working units should be demand driven, promote partnerships and strengthen local ownership.

Resources and sustainability for LA-WETnet

Responding effective demand will bring sustainability and project opportunities and this will permit the design of work plans. The LA-WETnet Secretariat will perform specific activities in this regard such as identifying regional needs, demands and project opportunities, building alliances with IWRM implementers and water resources managers, among others. It is essential for long-term sustainability of the network that costs are recovered.

The LA-WETnet management will execute its activities with the following resources:

- Donations received by donors, when applicable.
- Cost recovery mechanisms as fees for services delivered to network members such as finding project opportunities, support the development of proposals and putting together working teams, or overhead fee for general managerial support and membership fees.

III. LA WETnet Strategy, From Vision to Action

Problem to be addressed: the present situation

Inadequate capacities in individuals, institutions and society in Latin American countries are a limitation for the achievement of sustainable water resources management at country and regional level.

There is a regional widespread recognition of the need for water sector reform to embrace the principles of integrated water resources management. Over the last years, almost all Latin American countries have formulated reforms in their legislation and organisations involved in water management and optimisation.

It also means recognising that there are many competing interests in how water is used and allocated and these various stakeholders should be active participants in water management. There is an urgent need for additional skills in management, institutional reform, conflict resolution, social and communication skills in the existing and new water managers, both within capacity building institutions, sector organisations, users and decision makers.

These reforms will not translate into sustainable water resources management and better access to water and sanitation without the appropriate capacity building and water education.

Expected results from LA-WETnet

As a result from LA-WETnet, strong structural cooperative links will have produced the required experts to implement integrated water resources management. Regional capacity building institutions will be strengthened and in place to respond to the sectors' needs. High priority projects will have been identified and formulated. These projects will have included stakeholders participation and dialogue. The Latin American countries, their individuals, institutions and societies, will benefit from a network to provide them the appropriate capacities for sustainable use of water.

Direct recipients and target beneficiaries

- Direct recipients: capacity building institutions from the Latin American countries will benefit in a first instance from the outputs of LA-WETnet, they will find their capacities strengthened enabling them to deliver IWRM training and education activities within the region.
- Target beneficiaries: the Latin American countries, their individuals, institutions and societies, will benefit from a network to provide them the appropriate capacities for sustainable use of water and better access of water and sanitation for all.

The LA-WETnet regional strategy

Local ownership of the capacity building process must be anchored in the local capacity building institutions. Without recognition of these as the key players in establishing the core capability for sustained delivery of capacity building services and their role as the information and knowledge centres, then external interventions will have little prospect for achieving long term impact. New focus must be given to anchoring capacity building service delivery in local institutions, strengthening over

time their responsiveness to local needs and demands, and addressing their own capacity constraints.

LA-WETnet shall implement its mandate by means of two main roles and functions designed to helping capacity building institutions in their delivery of services, responding to demand and fostering capacity development:

- Facilitating role: to work close with members and country networks (focal points) -where they exist-, helping them in their delivery of capacity building services, and function as a facilitating and co-ordination body for resource optimisation, needs and demand assessments, project opportunity identification, project proposal design, funding applications, inter-regional and global linkages, stakeholder approach, dialogue, participation and promotion activities.
- Service delivery role: to organise and carry out actions, such as Trainer of Trainers programmes, to strengthen the capacities of capacity building institutions for their service delivery in IWRM and bringing world-wide “state of the art” knowledge into the region and levelling capacities within and between countries.

Development Objective

The common development objective of all network members from the Latin American countries is to enhance human resource development for Integrated Water Resources Management and improve better access of water and sanitation for all.

Immediate Objectives

- i. To strengthen the capacity of regional capacity building institutions enabling them to deliver Integrated Water Resources Management training and education activities within the region.
- ii. To strengthen the overall human and institutional capacity within water sector institutions and water resources management related institutions in the region in order to contribute to an integrated and sustainable use of water resources.

Outputs and activities

These are extensively developed in the LA-WETnet Work Plan.

All outputs and activities are part of the LA-WETnet strategy and intended to help capacity building institutions in their delivery of services. Some activities to be undertaken are:

- Identifying regional needs and project opportunities.
- Identifying donors’ activities in capacity building and water resources management in the region.
- Assisting members in the formation on Thematic Working Units and in the preparation of work plans, funding proposals, and approaching donors.
- Designing and establishing a framework for base information sharing among members.
- Levelling the playing field within the Region, supporting less developed institutions and countries.

- Promoting and improving the LA-WETnet web site with content and a section for members' participation.
- Building alliances with IWRM implementers and water resources managers to include the capacity building component in their activities, both in private and public sectors.
- Training of trainer courses on IWRM, water and gender, climate change in partnership with Cap-Net, GWA and others.
- Define an applied research agenda, addressing regional capacity building issues.
- Promoting the formation of country networks and strengthening existent country networks, enhancing the support to capacity building institutions at the regional, country and local levels.
- Establishing linkages and commitments across regional capacity building networks world-wide, fostering cross-regional cooperation.

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