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TWINBASINxn : Promoting twinning between basins to reinforce practices of integrated water resource management 2004 - 2007

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- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Integrated water resources management (IWRM) -

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In order to build the capacity of basin organisations for managing water resources, INBO is promoting bilateral twinning arrangements, as testifies the Associated Programme with the Global Water Partnership (GWP); indeed, direct exchanges seem to be the more reliable way of disseminating the good practices and strengthening the human resources of the Organisations.

The TWINBASINxn project has aimed at facilitating these twinning arrangements, by defining a framework for action, by enabling the move of staffs between twin agencies and by capitalising the knowledge thus acquired.

This initiative of the Basin Organisations has been opened to the other major stakeholders (Administrations, Universities, companies), to work together for facilitating these twinning arrangements.

The tool thus developed focused on the capitalisation of the acquired know-how to share it on the widest scale possible. Special attention has been paid to the relations between Basins and research to increase the dissemination of research results to the users and thus improve management according to demand.

The project outputs had to include:

- guides and agreement models for arranging beneficial twinning arrangements,**
- exchanges on today topics (transboundary waters, public participation, modelling, monitoring, etc.),**
- scholarships to facilitate the mobility of executives between basins (0.5 to 2-month practical courses),**
- tools for managing knowledge and distance training,**
- etc.**

Participation in the TWINBASINxn community was opened: it was "only" necessary to support the project principles, to sign the TWINBASINXN protocol (the MoU – Memorandum of Understanding) to become member, then to commit himself to participate in the exchanges, through Specific Working Groups (Specific Interest Groups – SIGs), specialised on such and such topic of interest.

The project was meant to regroup 150 members before 4 to 5 years to come (Basin Organisations, Administrations, Universities, etc.). To start its activities, it relied on a group of 20 founder members, representatives of the stakeholders concerned, who composed the **project Steering Committee**:

- Co-ordinator : International Office for Water (France)
- International Network of Basin Organisations (France)
- Seine-Normandy Water Agency (France)
- Ea – Water Pole (France)
- Confederación Hidrográfica del Júcar – MENBO (Spain)
- GWP (Sweden)
- Techware (Italy)
- RZGW – Gdansk (Poland)
- National Water Authority - OVF (Hungary)
- Interstate Co-ordination Water Commission – ICWC Aral Sea (Uzbekistan)
- Jara Tirta I Corporation (Indonesia)
- African Network of Basin Organisations (Africa - Niger)
- River Basin Agency Algérois – Hodna – Soumman (Algeria)
- River Basin Agency – Sebou (Morocco)
- Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River – OMVS (Senegal)
- Comisión Nacional del Agua (Mexico)
- Apele Romane (Romania)

A group of partners, including the International Office for Water, GWP and Techware, constituted the operational team of the project (TwinBasin Support Service), in charge of the daily operating of the network (in particular for allocating and managing mobility scholarships) and of its promotion.

The project was selected within the framework of the "Global change and ecosystems" priority of the 6th Framework Programme for European Research during the first invitation to tender. The European financing of the project covered the operating expenses of the network (travels of the Steering Committee members, tool development, mobility scholarships, management of SIGs, dissemination of results, etc.).

The official launch of the project took place on Sunday 25 January 2004, during INBO General Assembly in the Martinique (French Antilles).

2007 was the last year of the TWINBASINxn project.

Since September 2004, the project has obtained very interesting results: 41 completed or ongoing twinning arrangements, more than 100 missions for the exchange of experience, involving 70 Basin Organizations from 42 countries. In particular, the representatives of the two largest basins in the world - those of the Amazon and Congo rivers – met, thanks to the project support, and signed a twinning agreement, thus participating in the TWINBASINXN community.

With TWINBASINxn support, an important seminar, held in Rochehaut (Belgium) in April 2007, gathered representatives of Basin Organizations from 6 countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Malta, Walloon Region and France) and particularly motivated by the economic dimension of IWRM and Management Plans. They worked on the economic component of the European Water Framework Directive and drafted a "guide" available on the project website. This seminar allowed the drafting of a proposal for the implementation of Programmes of Measures in Bulgaria, within an institutional cooperation between the Bulgarian Water Authorities and the French Artois-Picardy Water Agency.

The first lessons learned from the TWINBASINXN project were presented during the World Water Week in Stockholm: twinning agreements are a powerful tool for improving the operation of Basin Organizations and implementing integrated management. The success of a twinning agreement and of its possible follow-up is related to the commitment of the top-executives of the concerned organizations.

The implementation of multiple twinning arrangements such as, for example, between Spain, Romania and France shows the added value of comparisons between several different national situations.

Finally, twinning agreements have proved to be effective tools for the capacity building of stakeholders involved in Basin Organizations, with regard to technical and institutional aspects.

The future summary report will be rich with information on the good use of the "twinning" tool and on the contents of the actions carried out by the twinned Basin Organizations.