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# **WAWAMAN for better integration into the European Union**

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The WAWAMAN project (Water and Wastewater Management) started in 1998 to help Central and Eastern European countries prepare their executives from public administrations and water utilities for accessing the European Union.

A consortium has been formed gathering organisations which are heavily involved in the training of water specialists, such as the T.G. Masaryk Institute (Czech Republic), the National Committee of Water Producers and Suppliers (Romania), the Engineering Ecology Consultative Technical Centre (Lithuania), the Centre for Distance Learning of the Gdansk Technical University (Poland), the French National Centre for Distance Learning, the International Office for Water, as well as the Gdansk Water Foundation (Poland) which, in addition, is managing the project.

The objectives were to enable distance training in the different countries involved, using the New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT) :

- &bull; The drawing up of a handbook for quality assurance and the associated procedures for the follow-up of the project,
- &bull; An in-depth survey of the future users in the 4 Central and Eastern European countries involved in order to assess the training needs of water specialists as well as the teaching means.
- &bull; The definition of training modules and their technical specifications.
- &bull; The drawing-up and translation (into English, Polish, Czech, Romanian and Lithuanian) of five training modules,
- &bull; The creation of a virtual telematic training centre on water on the Internet.

The programme evaluation, carried out in Autumn 1999 by the University of Sunderland ( England ) on behalf of the *European Training Foundation* confirmed its great success.

It was enough to incite the consortium members to continue on the same path. Several members are already in the national implementation phase of this distance training system, which the University of Sunderland qualified as follows :

- - Professionally presented materials,
- - Excellent quality assurance procedures,
- - Professional Web pages,
- - Topics well suited to the context of accession to the European Union.

The organisations involved are now investing on solid and recognised bases in distance training in the water sector.

The 5 remote training modules are now available on the Internet in 5 languages (English, Polish, Czech, Romanian and Lithuanian), using the usual accessories associated with this kind of system : Forums, hyperlinks, quizz , etc..

In addition to the project, the institutions involved have maintained professional relations which are in line with the enlargement of the European Union.