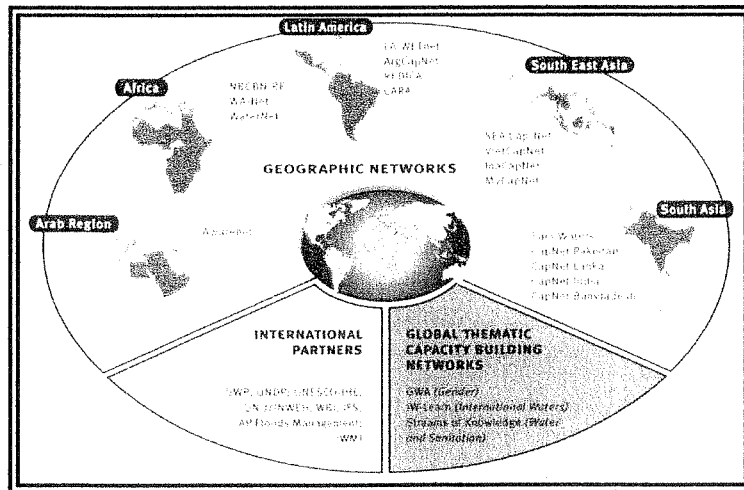


**FINAL REPORT  
PROGRAMME EVALUATION  
CAP-NET**

**Cap-Net INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN  
INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
2001-2004**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. BACKGROUND

The preparatory assistance of Cap-Net, which was done throughout 1999, was carried out by the UNDP Water Programme, supported by a team of the International Institute for Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE), since 2003 UNESCO-IHE. By the end of 2000, the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation decided to support Cap-Net for an amount of USD 4.000.000, the remainder (USD 100.000) being financed by UNDP. It took until April 2002, before the senior staff at the global secretariat was in place and the project effective took off. The Immediate objective of Cap-Net is to foster human resources development for IWRM through the strengthening or establishment of a number of regional IWRM networks able to deliver education and training support for improvement of water resources.

## 2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Objectives:

- Assess the outcomes of the programme in terms of the project objectives.
- Provide an assessment of the programme's value to international partners;
- Provide an assessment of the value of international partners to Cap-Net;
- Provide recommendations to both UNDP and the Government of the Netherlands for improvement.

### 2.2 Methodology:

- Review of the documents: project proposal, reports, publications webpage and its contents;
- Interview with Cap-Net personnel and partner officials;
- Briefing with the Management Board;
- Interview of regional network partners;
- Survey among participants of the ToT courses promoted by Cap-Net;
- Participation in a network managers workshop and in a ToT course in South Africa;
- Debriefing with the Management Board.

## 3. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

### 3.1 Concept, scope and strategies

- During initial project formulation, the process-oriented character of the project has been somewhat underestimated. At a global level the secretariat should emphasize concrete time-bound process-steps and indicators whereas, at a local level, regional and national networks are to demonstrate how, and to what extent, strengthened capacity building contributes to the achievement of the development objective. Cap-Net is systematically emphasizing the importance of work planning and monitoring at regional and local level, without which the effectiveness of the project would be difficult to measure.
- While reading the Project Document, one cannot escape from the impression that, initially, Cap-Net was conceived as an information dissemination network. However, capacity building methods, materials and tools equally need adaptation to and testing in the local context in order to address concrete water management problems. Cap-Net attributes high priority to a flexible adaptation to local conditions and shares local experiences with network partners. The network is presently developing a knowledge management mechanism, in order to scale up best practices in a systematic manner to a policy level.
- The global network has been successfully established and there is a general consensus among international and geographic network partners that from now onwards capacity building in IWRM implementation has to be tackled in IWRM/WVE Plans and in thematically oriented water management projects.
- The facilitating role played by the global secretariat has encouraged the regional and national network managers to actively involve themselves in the establishment of regional/national networks, to organize regional ToT events and national training, as well to undertake inventories of local capacity building

institutions and assessments of opportunities. At the base of its partnership strategy Cap-Net puts to the fore that the local ownership of the capacity building process must be based on responsiveness of local capacity building institutions to the demand in the water sector. In order to effectively support capacity building in the implementation of water management projects, this demand needs now to be systematically assessed and corresponding marketable service products need to be developed.

- Cap-Net's strategy for partnership development has proved to be a cost-effective way to connect international partners to capacity building institutions for water management in the field and to disseminate information with a strong exponential effect.

### **3.2 Project outputs**

#### **3.2.1 Organisational development**

- Cap-Net has made good progress in contributing to the achievement of this output, in a timely and efficient manner. A major bottleneck is that, in spite of a strategy to diversify funding resources, external support agencies prefer to wait until concrete service products will have been developed. With a future shift to capacity building in IWRM implementation ahead, the challenge is to develop services responding to an effective demand.
- The management structure has functioned well. The Management Board has provided strategic orientation and has left operational responsibilities to the project director. It has endorsed strategic adjustments and thereby it has shown to be receptive for innovative strategies, developed by the project team and its partners.
- The global secretariat is doing a highly commendable job. The results obtained in two and a half years, with a very limited number of staff are outstanding! The size of the network and the magnitude of its operations have steadily grown. Given the fact that the recruitment of JPO's has not materialized and in spite of its high degree of working efficiency and availability of temporary attachments, the secretariat is chronically understaffed.
- Cap-Net assumes that regional and networks will be in a position to generate their own financial resources to cover network administration and "product development". It is doubtful whether this assumption was realistic in the stage of network establishment.

#### **3.2.2 Establishment of global network**

- The global network has been successfully established and network managers are being trained in network management, and members in IWRM principles and issues. Presently, all parameters are set for strengthening capacity building in IWRM implementation and the development of the there for needed materials and tools at regional and national levels. Hence it can be concluded that Cap-Net has effectively contributed to the achievement of this expected output.
- A self-assessment exercise, done with the network managers, has enabled to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The lack of funds is generally perceived as a major bottleneck for covering the networks operational charges and to further develop capacity building activities. In function of sector and institutional reforms in the water sector, there is, particularly from a donor's point of view, an increased demand for capacity building in IWRM. Therefore the network has to build its own capacities in order to assess and respond to the effective demand.

#### **3.2.3 Development and strengthening of regional networks**

- Regional and national networks have been established and are actively being strengthened. Exchange has mainly concentrated on sharing material and organising ToT on IWRM principles and issues, within the regions of operations. The spin-off of this is in particular visible in education institutions. Efficient solutions will have to be found for addressing less-active networks and for integrating promising potential networks. Since Cap-Net has succeeded in effectively developing the frame-conditions needed for capacity building in IWRM implementation it can be concluded that it has provided a major contribution to the achievement of the present output.

- At present, 18 networks have been established in five different geographical regions. There are considerable differences in the composition of the networks, varying from fully civil society-led advocacy oriented networks to state-managed institutions with an educational mission and at times without a vision on capacity-building. In a global network with such a diversity of institutions, Cap-Net's approach of levelling the playing field absorbs considerable time and energy. In part of the networks in South-East Asia and in West -Africa partners find it difficult to communicate in English.
- The degree of self-financing is low. In a few cases networks are financed over membership fees. Occasionally networks generate funds over consultancy services. In particular networks financed over seed-funds only, would be at risk, if it were not for Cap-Net's flexible seed-funding policy. Members are reluctant to contribute to core-funding in the form of membership fees, as long as no concrete marketable products are developed with a potential of income generation.

#### **3.2.4 Knowledge development and awareness raising**

- Awareness has been raised on the importance of IWRM at the level of international policy institutions and partners, as well as at the level of local members. Knowledge on several IWRM linked issues has been successfully transferred through TOT's and relevant documentation. At times, the quality of regional facilitation skills appears to be a bottleneck, which needs to be addressed. For the sake of creating larger synergy with other sectors of development and in line with the integrated character of IWRM, there is an opportunity to address a more inclusive approach to training and resource material;
- Cap-Net has been particularly active in advocating IWRM principles in numerous international and regional policy forums and in supporting its network partners in launching, coordination and planning meetings.

#### **3.2.5 Development of innovative materials and tools**

- Cap-Net has effectively contributed to the achievement of this output. It is particularly appreciated that material is made available on CD-ROM's for those who do not have the opportunity to easily access Internet. Cap-Net is actively looking for solutions to address the Anglophone bias in material made available through the website.
- The quality of the material can be rated from satisfactory to excellent. There is still an opportunity to add case studies on IWRM management and implementation. Material available on the creation of an enabling environment for IWRM (legal, institutional, policy) has the potential for incorporation in thematically oriented water management activities on the ground. The section on resource centres mainly refers to training institutes in hydrology/engineering. The section on Courses shows that relevant short-term courses are mainly situated in the North. As observed by network managers, there is a lack of short-term courses addressing the mid-level water managers at an implementation level (sub-watershed, municipality).
- Recently, after an external review, the website has undergone a major overhaul. The result is an excellent, accessible, well-structured and informative website. The tracking programme used by Cap-Net has only limited capacities and does not provide information on frequency of access/download of certain pages/documents. Information on geographical origin is limited. A detailed analysis done by the evaluators of the last 1.000 visitors, in November/December, confirmed earlier findings on modest access by the general public from developing countries. For that reason, very user-friendly CD-ROM's have been compiled with IWRM Tutorial, E-library, IWRM course and Legal reform course.

### **3.3 Project strategies**

Cap-Net's strategy for partnership development has proved to be a cost-effective way to connect international partners to capacity building institutions for water management in the field and to disseminate information with a strong exponential effect. The global secretariat pursues a strategy aiming at maximum local ownership and although this is essential in order to respond to an effective demand, at times Cap-Net could be somewhat more pro-active. This in particular the case while strengthening quality control: (1) support to less performing networks should be made dependent of a mutual respect of commonly agreed expected outputs and (2) networks should equally respond to certain commonly agreed quality

requirements in order to effectively remain responsive to demand for service products. In order to facilitate quality control at all levels Cap-Net is encouraged to continue with its support to its partners in the fields of work planning, impact assessment, monitoring and knowledge development and management.

### **3.4 Assessment of the Programme's Value to International Partners**

As acknowledged by its international partners, Cap-Net has established itself as the unique network to strengthen capacity building in IWRM. The network has been successfully established and network partners in international water policy and management institutions, as well as in regional and national member capacity building institutions have been trained in the principles of IWRM and in frame-conditions for creating an enabling environment. This has substantially contributed to the realisation that sectoral views in water management ought to be challenged in a multidisciplinary way. Now that the organizational and institutional conditions for strengthening capacity building in the implementation of IWRM have been met, expectations are high that network members will be in a position to offer service products responding to an effective demand. Furthermore it is expected that best practices will be fed to a global policy level. The programme's added value is mainly situated in the connectivity between multiple partners at different levels for the sake of sharing knowledge and experiences in a cost-effective manner.

### **3.5 Value of International Partners to Cap-Net**

International partners provide Cap-Net with the opportunity to connect with field projects in water management and to promote IWRM at a global level. A number of specialised international agencies avails the opportunity to bring in their subject matter specialisation into the network, either through documentation or training or by connecting to their own network partners. Also here the key words are connectivity and sharing of knowledge and experiences. The added value from the contribution of international partners is (1) that it gives Cap-Net a credibility towards its geographic network partners; (2) that the network's knowledge base is enriched with knowledge and experiences from multiple multidisciplinary angles; (3) that it creates connectivity between service providers and the field reality.

### **3.6 Follow-up of MTR**

As suggested by the MTR, Cap-Net is creating connectivity between service providers and service demand. This is mainly done by encouraging the use of opportunity assessments. The MTR's suggestion to concentrate on performing networks makes sense. The present evaluation recommends making a regional differentiation in intensity of support, where the respect of commonly agreed outputs will be decisive for a continued cooperation. Both evaluations advise Cap-Net to play a more pro-active role in demand orientation on the ground (what are the concrete needs for capacity building in the water sector?), which should go beyond expressively communicated needs of network members. Cap-Net has picked up on this recommendation by stressing the use of opportunity assessments. Another recommendation which both evaluations have in common is their emphasis on quality control of training and educational material, as well as the measurement of impact on thematic spear points (poverty alleviation, gender-balance, and environment). Other similarities are found in recommendations on the establishment of a knowledge management system and the decentralisation of funds (baby-trust fund/disposition fund). There is a difference in perception between the two evaluations as to how the governance structure of the network and its embedding in UNDP should be materialised, as well as on the localisation of the network secretariat.

## **4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Final year of present phase**

#### **4.1.1 Network management**

- It is recommended that continued support will be given to regional and national networks in the preparation of marketing and funding strategies and yearly work plans;
- A short-term solution has to be found to address the chronic understaffing of the global secretariat;
- A more directive and result based approach is needed in supporting the networks lagging behind;
- A pro-active attitude will be taken to the incorporation of networks interested to join the global network;

- An effort is needed to motivate networks to share background information and capacity building materials with the global network. Particular attention should be paid to the collection of documents in Spanish and French.

#### **4.1.2 Capacity building**

- Both GWP and Cap-Net have their own comparative strengths which should be combined to create greater synergy; International institutions could provide valuable support through a tandem arrangement with regional partners;
- ToT's should not only target an exclusive public. For the sake of increased synergy Cap-Net should pro-actively include participants from other sectors in which multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approaches are being applied; This inclusiveness equally ought to be reflected in documents and resources, made available via the website;
- It is recommended that Cap-Net will support the development of non-directive facilitation and training skills for regional and national trainers. Support by UNESCO/IHE is an option which could be considered;
- Given the limited access from developing countries to the website and consequently in order to more effectively and efficiently disseminate IWRM resource material to a larger target public in that part of the world, it is recommended to increasingly make use of CD-ROM and DVD media carriers;
- The list-serv facility could be increasingly used to set up a follow-up system of ToT's; as desired by a number of course participants. E-groups need an active moderation in order to function effectively.

### **4.2 Next phase**

#### **4.2.1 Conceptual**

- In order to contribute to the achievement of the UN MDG, the negative effects of poverty on a sustained management of water resources have to be mitigated and, at the same time, the management of water resources has to address poverty. Therefore the network is challenged to develop a pragmatic vision of a problem oriented capacity building service delivery system;
- Research in water management should be challenged through interdisciplinary groups of different institutions. It is recommended to identify major regional issues (e.g. urban domestic water supply in Latin America) and research groups, which have the skills to transfer knowledge and to build the capacity for development through partnership.
- It is recommended that Cap-Net will develop an institutional learning culture based on an iterative process of information gathering and dissemination, adaptation, action-research in pilot projects, monitoring/impact assessment, data-collection and analysis, information sharing, knowledge development and management (sharing best practices), feedback to global policies, etc.

#### **4.2.2 Network management**

- The logical framework of the project for the next phase should emphasize process indicators at a global level, whereas regional and national networks should be continued to encourage the use of work plans with concrete measurable outputs enabling monitoring of effectiveness and quality control;
- It will be difficult to find an environment as conducive for the project as UNESCO-IHE. However, for psychological reasons (there is an impression that the network is dominated by Northern institutions) and therefore for the sake of increased local ownership and building greater synergy with local knowledge development it is desirable that the secretariat will shift to the South;
- At the medium term it is desirable to conceive an equitable network management governance structure at a global level, with active participation and decision power of network managers;

- It is recommended to develop a stronger linkage between the regional and country networks and UNDP, in which UNDP expects Cap-Net to play a facilitating role but where the evaluators would also request UNDP itself to play a supportive role;
- For the sake of contributing to the achievement of the MDG's it is deemed important that Cap-Net experiences will be scaled up to the level of global water management policies. For that reason, knowledge management (assembling best practices from the regional/national networks) is to become a major strategy, institutionally anchored in the regions with global coordination by the secretariat;
- It is recommended that for a next phase at least regional and national networks which have shown a satisfactory performance will be invited to prepare a plan, containing strategies for opportunity assessment, product development, funding and marketing, targeted towards capacity building institutions active in water management. Such strategic plans should form the basis for capacity building proposals for IWRM implementation. Such a market-oriented strategy is the logical continuation of the present phase emphasizing network establishment and therefore forms the major justification for recommending a continuation of the project with a next phase.

#### **4.2.3 Capacity building**

- It is recommended that capacity building of IWRM implementation should be diversified. Except for support to IWRM/WE Plans, Cap-Net should in particular address opportunities to address multiple IWRM dimensions in thematically oriented water management activities on the ground;
- Because of the innovative character of IWRM implementation, it is recommended to create adequate space for trial projects, through which capacity building methods, materials and tools can be developed, piloted or adapted, which are context-specific;
- In order to provide networks with the necessary means for the implementation of trial projects, it is recommended to put at the disposal of the concerned networks a disposition fund to be used for piloting the capacity building component of separately financed water management projects on the ground. Decisions on the use of the disposition fund should be within the ambit of regional steering committees and be based on concrete project proposals.

#### **4.2.4 Strategic lines of action**

For the sake of orientation for the next phase, the following strategic lines are highlighted:

- Problem-solving oriented capacity building;
- Support to the integration of water management solutions;
- Addressing IWRM in ongoing/planned water sector and development projects with a water management component.

### **5. LESSONS LEARNED**

- In order to promote financial leverage, it needs to be demonstrated that investments in IWRM yield proper dividends;
- Recurrent costs of networking are high but well justified if value added by increased service delivery can be demonstrated;
- Partnership development through networking is an efficient and effective manner to enlarge the outreach to professional organisations;
- Differences in stages of network development need a regionally differentiated approach;
- Dynamics of networking do not automatically lead to increased financial leverage, unless it is accompanied by a pro-active marketing strategy;
- Be pro-active in targeting an inclusive target public while promoting IWRM;
- The cascade approach proves to be a powerful and cost-effective means to disseminate information with a clearly demonstrated exponential effect;
- Awareness raising and training on IWRM has led to an increased awareness that sectoral views and practices in the management of water resources ought to be challenged from multiple angles.