



# Mid Term Review of Cap-Net phase II 2006-2010

Final Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main objective of Cap-Net is “*Sustainable management and development of water resources and improved access to basic services are contributing to improvement of livelihoods, reduction of poverty and environmental sustainability.*” It is too early to tell if this objective has been reached although there are some promising indications that it will be if the present strategy is pursued. Some of the capacity building has already had direct physical benefits such as the reduction of haphazard mining of sand and aggregate in rivers in Sri Lanka which will increase the lifespan of infrastructure such as bridge piers and reduce flooding.

Cap-Net is built around the achievement of 3 main outcomes: i) Capacity building leading to improved management of water resources and delivery of water services; ii) Strengthening networks so that capacity can be scaled up and implementation supported; iii) Improving access to knowledge on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and water services.

**Capacity building:** The project has reached and exceeded, at its mid-point, the target number of stakeholders trained in IWRM and water services. Over 1800 people have been trained in IWRM against a target of 1200 and just over 900 people have been trained in water services against a target of 900. The materials developed by Cap-Net are considered excellent and have been widely replicated e.g. they have been adopted by several universities as part of their Master courses.

Some courses have been highly specific and problem orientated (e.g. assessment of water resources in ungauged basins in Tanzania – a course developed by WaterNet) - others less so. Courses are well targeted and adapted to the local situation although in some cases improvements can be made in tailoring the courses to the different audiences and in making more use of local material.

There is no shortage of demand for courses but the real demand is untested as co-financing is arranged via other donors. There is an increasing demand for implementation skills in applying IWRM whereas the courses mainly deal with education and knowledge of IWRM.

**Strengthening Networks:** The project has trained, at its mid-point, the expected number of capacity builders (over 200). The expected number of networks are functioning (over 20). Although the networks vary considerably, strong points of the networks include: the broad composition of the members; the decentralized decision making; the presence of multi-disciplinary skills in the networks and an increasing capacity to make good proposals that match the demands. Weak points of some of the networks include: low financial sustainability; very variable membership commitment (some networks are dependent on a handful of interested members); variable attention to management of quality; insufficient adaptation of material to suit local circumstances; lack of active knowledge management strategies and, in some cases an inability to respond to demand.

Network strengthening is a difficult task that needs to be tailored to each situation. The Cap-Net secretariat has provided support that is both consistent and well

conceived. The networks have been receptive to this assistance and have retained ownership of their achievements and most demonstrate a capacity to take initiative.

**Knowledge management:** The development of the knowledge management cycle and training material has followed expectations as has the development of new partnerships (e.g. with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)). The monitoring system, although well conceived, is not yet fully rolled out. Communication across networks and the sharing of new knowledge has progressed but is open to further improvement. Material has been translated to Spanish and Bahasa which has increased access. The cost-free access to material is appreciated by all concerned.

The benefits of knowledge management are well understood and appreciated by the networks and a strong systematic knowledge management cycle has been developed. Nevertheless there are significant areas of improvement. Web based tools could be made greater use of. Even if some of the networks find it difficult to access the internet the world wide trend is towards improving communications so the investment is worthwhile.

**Global secretariat:** Global partners are highly appreciative of Cap-Net and actively make use of its network of in-country institutions. This has led to improved focusing in research (e.g. for International Foundation of Science (IFS)) as well as ensuring a relevant outlet for specialized training (e.g. Flood Management by World Meteorological Organization (WMO)). Cap-Net has also benefited from its international partnerships by broadening its access to specialist material and resources and by increasing its global visibility and credibility.

The secretariat is lean and efficient and provides a valuable service at relatively low cost. It has struck the right balance in developing international partnerships whilst prioritizing the development of country and regional networks.

More use could be made of overlapping networks e.g. . the IHE-UNESCO alumni network. The project related activities of international partners (such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) should be exploited systematically to provide links to implementation projects.

**Relevance:** Good IWRM practice leading to sustainable management of water resources and provision of water services is still far from universal. Capacity building is repeatedly stated as one of the key constraints to putting effective IWRM into practice. By stimulating and bringing together networks for capacity building within IWRM and water services, Cap-Net provides a unique service that is not available elsewhere. This service is increasing in relevance with climate change, population increase and economic and social development.

Cap-Net can increase its relevance further by finding practical ways of getting closer to the implementation level and developing skills in application of IWRM in practice. Some impressive examples of how this is possible have already been done by Cap-Net Lanka and (REDICA) in Central America.

**Effectiveness:** As mentioned earlier the outcomes expected at this stage of the project have been reached as measured by the indicators provided. The quality of the training courses is considered excellent and there is plenty of evidence of training material being integrated into ongoing courses and curriculum e.g. at the University of Malaysia. Courses are thoroughly researched before being developed and only launched where there is strong demand e.g. the course on Economic Instruments.

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be improved so that more is documented on the end effects of the capacity building provided and knowledge management systems set up. This will allow Cap-Net to better adjust its approach.

**Efficiency:** Cap-Net is efficiently run. Cost norms are well established and appropriate. Finance is leveraged from a number of sources so that the end impact of Cap-Net activities is at least double the resources put in. Many networks, host organizations and individuals make valuable inputs at little or no cost. The UNDP based administrative systems are working well.

Cap-Net is funded by DGIS, Sida and the Water Facility of European Commission. The approach and strategy and what the funds are used is identical for all sources of funds which is very positive. The findings of this report thus pertain equally to all sources of funding.

However, it was found that funding (such as that provided the water facility of the European Commission) which require special administrative and accountancy procedures tend to reduce the efficiency of the operation as they require special reports and accountancy procedures which drain what is already a very lean organization both at the secretariat and network level.

**Sustainability:** Cap-Net is not self sustaining and the networks and concept could well collapse if donor funds were withdrawn. Much of the capacity that has been built up would remain especially for those courses that have been integrated into wider processes e.g. into Master courses. Individuals who have been trained would also continue to benefit although their knowledge and skills may not be renewed as effectively as if Cap-Net were to continue. The networks and aspects of the knowledge management cycle would continue in some of the countries but in others they would probably collapse in the absence of external support.

The main threat to sustainability is the lack of adequate financial resources and the poor prospect of cost recovery and payment for services. For some networks an adequate level of self-correcting governance has not yet been established which means that they might collapse without the catalytic support of the secretariat.

## **Recommendations:**

### Recommendation #1

The overall recommendation is to pursue the current strategies – because although there is room for improvement the capacity to recognize and act upon these opportunities within Cap-Net is present and can be relied upon.

### Recommendation #2

Accelerate the building of IWRM and water services implementation skills by insertion of IWRM approach into the human resource function and institutional tools of key institutions (public, private and civil society) e.g. within continuing professional development courses and within mandate statements, strategies and performance contracts.

### Recommendation #3

Develop a systematic ladder of key institutional achievements and steps that the networks can self-graduate along.

The steps will help to increase accountability to members and funders as well as help in communicating common values. Aspects such as adequacy of host services, record keeping, work planning, application of monitoring and, success in cost recovery could feature in the institutional steps.

### Recommendation #4

Formalize key elements of the knowledge management cycle by

- Improving on the web based knowledge management
  - Update the web sites of networks
  - Portuguese translation
  - Classify the specialist areas of the networks
  - Use the knowledge mapping approach of Nile Basin Capacity Building Network (NBCBN)
- Improving on monitoring and evaluation practice

### Recommendation #5

Support a phase 3 with a similar activity set and governance set up as phase 2 but with the gradual goal over a 10 year period of Cap-Net becoming an autonomous network managed organization.

Already some steps have been taken in this direction by inviting network representatives onto the management board. This could be extended in line with improving governance at network level so that the network managers' annual meeting became an Annual General Meeting where a Board was elected. For an autonomous organization to have meaning the degree of cost recovery would need to increase and membership fees, even if small, would have to be applied.

