

Memorandum of Understanding - Brief

Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted as a result of wide discussions with a number of important interested parties (INBO members, participants to WSSD, etc.), and is intended to enable key players to identify key issues for further development of **Integrated Water Resources Management** (IWRM) and the provision of education and training to water stakeholders and basin organisations professionals in Europe and Third Countries by the means of **twinning agreements and associated exchanges** ([DRAFT STATEMENTS FOR THE PANEL DISCUSSION IN "TWINNING OF RIVER COMMISSIONS"](#)).

The MoU partnership was intended to bridge the gap between research and actual implementation of IWRM principles, and to reach a wide consensus so as to enable all parties to benefit from it, for example in the form of Guidelines, Recommendations and Best Practice Handbooks, for quick research dissemination and mutualisation of knowledge resources.

The consortium of signatories adopted the name TWINBASIN^{xN} – promoting TWINning of river BASINs eXchange Network.

During the next three years, a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will be established and several conferences and other events hold.

The MoU co-operation framework will be in the field of **integrated water management**, focusing on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the European Water Initiative (EWI) – a key accompanying network supporting exchanges on research, technological development and demonstration activities. The work of TWINBASIN^{xN}, carried out under the framework of this MoU, should feed into the activities of policy makers and standardisation bodies in the IWRM sector.

Why this TWINBASIN^{xN} project?

By facilitating direct exchanges on best practices, and as well on failed experiments, twinning can help Basin Organisations to improve their effectiveness by a greater technical, scientific and institutional expertise. The concept of twinning is based on the following observation : Basin Organisations can profit from peers opinion regarding administrative, technical and/or institutional aspects, coming from a sister organisation managing a basin in another geographical, political or economic context. This is particularly true for the youngest Basin Organisations, but also makes it possible to improve BO having already reached a further stage of development (benchmarking effect and human resources development).

It is forecasted that direct and close connections and exchanges between Basin Organisations could lead to a strengthening of these structures and to a quicker diffusion of the research outputs in the real life ; these could be assumed on the basis of twinning bilateral agreements between BO, but better within the framework of a formal network of these pairs, to be sure not to waste the involved human energy and expertise, by capitalising all the associated knowledge.

What's the main goal of the TWINBASIN^{XN} ?

The main goal of TWINBASIN^{XN} is to **support effective use, take-up, research and development in the field of IWRM by promoting twinning of basins**. This will be achieved by creating a world-wide forum and a global knowledge resource dedicated to identifying, sharing and disseminating knowledge and best practices relating to all significant activities in this field, and to identifying any gaps in knowledge, experience, capability and tools across Europe and the associated Third Countries.

TWINBASIN^{XN} aims to become an authoritative and neutral body, attracting a critical mass of actors, promoting collaboration between different sectors and across national borders, and providing a channel for conveying the needs and opportunities identified globally to TWINBASIN^{XN} members, the European Commission, Member States, Standardisation Bodies, and other relevant organisations.

The MoU takes the form of a co-operation framework signed by different categories of actors, coming from a range of organisations, both public and private, which have an interest in the deployment of IWRM practices :

- ◆ basin organisations, and sub basin bodies ;
- ◆ other public authorities (international, national, regional and local), and advisory/inspection bodies ;
- ◆ research institutions, both public and private ;
- ◆ water stakeholders, and their representative organisations (NGOs, Unions, federations)
- ◆ companies and organisations with learning needs for their employees or members, schools, vocational training and higher education ;
- ◆ individual persons who wish to contribute to TWINBASIN^{XN} activities, but who are unable to do so through their employers.

The MoU is a **voluntary agreement**, entered into by organisations, companies and individuals prepared to be both pioneers and active participants in developing consensus on issues of common interest, and who are willing to commit both human and financial resources for this purpose.

While there is no legal obligation to respect the agreements that emerge, **the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding represents a public commitment to respect certain principles and to work towards specific common goals and consensus in specific areas**.

Who could sign the TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU ?

This TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU is open for signature by all public and private organisations that share its aims and objectives and are willing to contribute to the work in Europe and Third Countries; it is also open for signature by individuals who are willing to contribute to this work. These contributions can be in the form of direct participation in TWINBASIN^{XN} activities or in the form of creating awareness of the issues raised by TWINBASIN^{XN} and disseminating the results arising from TWINBASIN^{XN} activities.

How to sign the TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU ?

The signatory page is available for organisation or individual.