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Developing Integrated Water Resources Management Practices**

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Memorandum of Understanding

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A Partnership of basins stakeholders for a Common Approach to IWRM principles

1 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.

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.

Following the signature of that MoU by over 40 organisations in early 2003, and the selection of an initial Steering Committee in February 2003, 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 held.

As a result of that experience the original MoU, which is only valid until the end of 2005, will be revised to take account of the accumulated know how.

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.

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.

This TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU will have a period of duration until June 2006 (with a revision expected in 2005), by which time it is hoped that TWINBASIN^{XN} will be ready to convert itself into some form of self-sustainable organisation. 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.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 EMERGING TRENDS

A Basin Organisation is generally regarded as one of the best solutions to adopt for developing an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at a catchment level.

By catchment area, it is understood watershed of rivers and large lakes, including their associated aquifers, gathering the sub-basins of their tributaries.

From an historical point of view, Basin Organisations were implemented in varied legal forms and in various regions of the world, in order to solve at the very beginning local problems, generally sectoral, such as irrigation conflicts, the management of large flood prevention facilities, or the operation of waterways or energy production sites ; more recently water supply for industries and urban areas, and the pollution control of rivers and aquifers.

There have then been many types of Basin Organisations, some of them existing for several decades, and a lot in a development process ; they present a great diversity of legal statutes and economic schemes.

None of these examples can be regarded as a model ; each country must conceive its own system. But years of practice allow to establish some generally admitted principles such as autonomy, transparency, responsibility, equity, stakeholders participation, anticipation and public information.

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.

Many examples show that twinning can be first of all a simple friendly relationship between the policy level - members of the Basin Committees (Stakeholders Committees), and/or the BO executives, which goals and experience in basin management are more or less the same ones. This kind of non formal connections seems to be profitable and prolongs the exchanges which INBO facilitates already.

But two organisations could need to develop a more structured mode of co-operation, better based on a formal agreement organising their permanent relations.

Although twinning between Basin Organisations from European countries and those from Third Countries are to be encouraged, it is also necessary to develop direct relations between Basin Organisations from South Countries to also support specific experience sharing. It is desirable to promote North-South twinning, as well as West-East, North-North and South-South.

2.2 WHAT IS A "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING" AND WHAT DOES ITS SIGNATURE MEAN?

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a formal expression, by all its signatories, of the importance of making progress at European and international levels in the field of IWRM in Europe and Third Countries, mainly through twinning of Basin Organisations for direct cross fertilisation.

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.

This particular MoU implies the following public commitments :

- ◆ Commitment from signatories to help to bridge the gap between research and actual implementation of IWRM principles by :
 1. identifying set of recommendations for policy makers ;
 2. identifying set of recommendations for researchers about real life expectations ;
 3. sharing knowledge and best practices among its members.

- ◆ Commitment from signatories to facilitate and accelerate dissemination of research results in the field by ensuring that the needs of the represented sectors are well defined and conveyed.

- ◆ Commitment from signatories to co-operate in the production of recommendations and guidelines for best practice in developing twinning and related services for learning by :
 1. co-operating in the specification of twinning activities – exchange of information, exchange of personnel ;
 2. co-operating in the specification of common knowledge representation systems and dissemination tools and practices (including Continuous Education and Training) ;
 3. co-operating in the development of standards for curriculum description, learner identification and skills inventory ;
 4. co-operating in the domain of quality standards ;

- ◆ Commitment from signatory individuals to utilise their individual experience and expertise to expedite TWINBASIN^{XN} activities by :
 1. participating in the work of TWINBASIN^{XN} through Special Interest Groups and such other means as may be appropriate;
 2. promoting the results of TWINBASIN^{XN} activities through their personal contacts and networks.

The MoU therefore represents a combination of commitments that together will enable and accelerate coherent developments for the mutual benefit of all those involved.

3 THE TWINBASIN^{XN} ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL ROLE

3.1 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

TWINBASIN^{XN} consists primarily of its members, that is the representatives of those organisations which have signed the MoU and individuals who have signed the MoU in a personal capacity.

Every two years the membership (excluding individual members) elects a Steering Committee from amongst the representatives of all the members, which has the overall responsibility for the day-today supervision of TWINBASIN^{XN} and the determination of its future policy.

The Steering Committee consists of 40 elected members with observer members from the European Commission and member states. The Steering Committee devises its own rules of procedure and elects its own Chairman and such other officers as it decides are appropriate.

The Steering Committee is also responsible for the production and revision of two key documents : a “Vision” of the long-term aims and objectives of TWINBASIN^{XN} and a “Road Map” detailing specific actions and objectives for the next twelve months in order to move closer to the long-term aims set out in the “Vision”. Both of these documents will be revised at least annually by the Steering Committee and the latest approved version will be placed on the TWINBASIN^{XN} web site and will be deemed to be part of this Memorandum of Understanding.

The Steering Committee is also responsible for approving the creation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Members of TWINBASIN^{XN} may belong to any number of SIGs, or to none. Each SIG is responsible for determining its own rules of procedure and for electing its own Chairman and such other officers as it decides are appropriate, subject only to any Rules that the Steering Committee may approve to govern the operation of SIGs. All SIG members must either be representatives of organisational signatories of the MoU or must be individual signatories of the MoU.

The Steering Committee and the SIGs are supported by the TWINBASIN^{XN} Support Service (TSS), which operates under a contract with the European Commission to provide a range of services, including the development and maintenance of the TWINBASIN^{XN} web site and email services, the provision of document editing services, conference and meeting support, learning and knowledge support tools, etc.

The TWINBASIN^{XN} Support Service contract is supervised by the Bureau of the Steering Committee (BSC) which has six members, including the Chair, nominated by the INBO and six members nominated by the TWINBASIN^{XN} Steering Committee.

During the period covered by this MoU it is expected that TWINBASIN^{XN} will transform itself into some form of legal entity, and will take the first steps towards becoming self-sustaining. Proposals for these changes will be drawn up by the Steering Committee and submitted for approval to all the signatories of the MoU.

3.2 TWINBASIN^{XN} PUBLICATIONS

All documents created by the Steering Committee or by Special Interest Groups, including minutes of meetings, reports, etc., shall be non-confidential and available to any interested party on the TWINBASIN^{XN} website. In addition, any document which may be of general public interest, shall be actively disseminated.

The copyright of draft documents shall remain with the author/s, but once any document is formally approved and/or accepted by the Steering Committee, a SIG, the SSSC, or any other formal TWINBASIN^{XN} body then the copyright shall be transferred to TWINBASIN^{XN}.

During the period until TWINBASIN^{XN} becomes a legal entity, however, the copyright of such formally approved documents shall remain with the authors. Once TWINBASIN^{XN} has become a legal entity then the copyright of such documents shall be immediately transferred from the author/s to TWINBASIN^{XN}. The transfer of these rights shall be immediate, with a written agreement and without any request of payment.

During this temporary period, although the Author/s of any such formally approved document shall retain the copyright of the document, they shall agree not to exploit it commercially. Moreover, during this temporary period, the Author/s shall give the right of presentation of any such formally approved document produced under this TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU to all the TWINBASIN^{XN} Signatories to allow them to publicly communicate the content.

3.3 THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Special Interest Groups are formally established by the Steering Committee in order to provide forums for discussion and co-operation in areas of relevance for TWINBASIN^{XN}. It is expected that they will work mainly through electronic means, but there will normally be opportunities for SIG meetings at TWINBASIN^{XN} conferences and other public events.

All SIGs will have their own pages within the TWINBASIN^{XN} web site as well as their own email lists and discussion forums.

It is expected that the output from these Special Interest Groups might consist of:

- ◆ Guidelines for basins twinning
- ◆ Best Practice Handbooks
- ◆ Recommendations to National and International Policy Makers
- ◆ Recommendations for CET and knowledge dissemination
- ◆ Management of funds to support the mobility of professionals
- ◆ or such other deliverable products as the SIGs and the Steering Committee deem to be appropriate.

3.4 TWINBASIN^{XN} EVENTS

From time to time, and at least once each year, TWINBASIN^{XN} will organise an event for its members. This may take the form of a major conference with invited speakers, or it may be a smaller event concentrating on activities within the SIGs.

Other events may be organised by individual SIGs or by signatories of the MoU. Any such events which are to carry the TWINBASIN^{xN} identity must be approved by the Steering Committee.

4 THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

TWINBASIN^{XN} - Promoting Twinning of River Basins for Developing Integrated Water Resources Management Practices

A Partnership of Basin Stakeholders for a Common Approach to IWRM principles

The river basin organisations and other international, national or local authorities, the education and training agencies and establishments, the associations and companies of water stakeholders, end users, consumers, operators, and others signing this MoU are herein referred to as the 'Signatories'.

The Signatories,

Committing to improving the effectiveness of the co-operation between river basin organisations, research teams and other water stakeholders within the European Community, including the Commission of the European Communities (the Commission), and Third Countries,

Committing to fostering research, development and demonstrations to improve the availability and quality of methodologies and, when appropriate, technologies to implement Integrated Water Resources Management principles, with regards to the European Water Framework Directive and the European Water Initiative,

Committing to fostering the development of common European and international guidelines for IWRM services,

Committing to giving a global dimension to their co-operation, and to having open and effective dialogues on issues relating to water management policy with policy makers in all regions of the world,

Considering that the way to achieve these goals is by following certain common rules organising their future co-operation through twinning agreements,

Considering that these rules should be based upon an analysis of the needs expressed by stakeholders in the water sector,

have agreed as follows :

ARTICLE I – SCOPE OF CO-OPERATION

The scope of co-operation under this TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU covers all aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management in Europe and Third Countries – creating a partnership for a common approach of loose exchanges through twinning of river basins. This may comprise all aspects of research, technological development, demonstration and procurement, as well as Community

policies – in particular those related to the European Water Framework Directive and the European Water Initiative.

ARTICLE II – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Signatories agree on the following general principles :

- (i) The Signatories will make their best efforts to improve mutual communication. In particular, they will define appropriate guidelines for efforts-effective twinning protocols between river basins, and identify tools for supporting the know-how development of their professionals.
- (ii) Co-operation initiated by a Signatory is open to other Signatories if they wish to participate and if they actively contribute to the purpose of the initiative. Such an initiative can be anything from a round table meeting to a common project or a permanent activity. For efficiency reasons, the initiator will seek the best match between participants, purpose and resources. Participants may include persons, organisations, and associations other than the Signatories.
- (iii) The value of the contributions from the Signatories results from the active participation of their members.
- (iv) Co-operation organised by Signatories will be supportive of the Community policy of water
- (v) All chapters (from the first to the fifth) of this document form an integral part of the TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU and are equally valid in defining goals and procedures.
- (vi) In cases of differences between the original and translated versions of this document, the English-language original version is the official one.

ARTICLE III – ORGANISING CO-OPERATION

1. A Signatory wishing to take an initiative involving other Signatories may invite them to a round table meeting by giving timely notice on the TWINBASIN^{XN} website. Such a meeting may either be held as a physical meeting or, where possible, as a virtual meeting.
2. The Signatory that has taken the initiative to call such a round table meeting shall organise and chair the meeting and shall be responsible for preparing the agenda and minutes of the meeting, unless otherwise agreed.
3. If the conclusions of such a round table meeting, or a series of such meetings, require further action from the participants, they may decide either to request the TWINBASIN^{XN} Steering Committee to establish a new Special Interest Group (SIG) for this purpose, or to take some other appropriate action.
4. The conclusions of all such meetings shall be included in the minutes, a copy of which shall be forwarded to the TWINBASIN^{XN} Steering Committee for action or information, as appropriate.

5. A Signatory may take part in a round table meeting as either a participant or an observer. It will inform the other participants before the meeting starts whether it is taking part as an observer or as a participant. A participant is entitled to take a position on any common positions adopted, including the conclusions of the meeting. An observer does not participate in the decision making in the meeting(s).
6. If several Signatories decide to launch the same or similar initiative(s), they will use their best efforts to examine together whether it would not be more useful to combine such initiatives. If so, they will use their best efforts to make the necessary arrangements for the management of such meetings, including agreement on who shall chair the meetings.
7. The Signatory that has taken the initiative shall inform all other Signatories of their initiative on the TWINBASIN^{XN} website, including subject, objective, participants and calendar of planned meetings.

ARTICLE IV – INFORMATION

1. The Signatories will seek to obtain regular updated information from the European Commission and other policy makers in the field of IWRM.
2. When the Signatories consider it necessary in pursuing the goals of the MoU, they will allow for linking from the TWINBASIN^{XN} website or send regular updates to other Signatories and the Commission on the following information :
 - (i) The constitution, objectives, composition, members (numbers, profiles, etc.), contact persons and geographical coverage of the Signatory;
 - (ii) Main field of activities and the services rendered to members;
 - (iii) Published declaration in issues of interest to other Signatories;
 - (iv) Plans for co-operation with other Signatories.
3. The Signatories with a relevant network of members will select and transmit all relevant information they receive from other Signatories and the Commission to their members.

ARTICLE V – INPUT IN POLICY MAKING

1. In order to ensure appropriate input for the European Communities' water policy and other international forums, the Signatories will welcome their invitations to meetings to discuss important changes in water policy relevant to IWRM.
2. A Signatory will make its best efforts to reach a common position with other Signatories having similar interests before submitting contributions to the Commission or other policy makers. The TWINBASIN^{XN} Steering Committee or a TWINBASIN^{XN} Special Interest Group can invite Commission and international bodies representatives to meet with them before they prepare such contributions.

3. When submitting contributions to policy makers on matters concerning water policy, the Signatories will provide evidence of the size and profile of their consultation base. The TWINBASIN^{XN} Steering Committee can co-ordinate such contributions to policy makers.

ARTICLE VI – FUNDING FOR COMMON ACTIONS

1. The Signatories will, where appropriate, prepare proposals for common actions which :
 - (i) Result in a valuable and tangible contribution to the TWINBASIN^{XN} objectives.
 - (ii) Will involve their members in the work accomplished.
 - (iii) Will fully exploit the co-operation with other Signatories, if necessary with the co-ordinating help of consultants or experts.
2. The Signatories will explore ways to achieve appropriate funding.

ARTICLE VII – CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

1. This TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU remains open for signature for any organisation, company or individual person wishing to follow the guidelines laid down herein.
2. A Signatory may at any time withdraw from TWINBASIN^{XN}. To do so, the Signatory will have to submit its resignation in writing to the TWINBASIN^{XN} Support Service.

5 Procedures for signing the TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU and for participation

This TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU is signed for an initial period ending 31 December 2005 following which time its terms and objectives will be reviewed by all Signatories.

The signatories are to follow the steps below.

1. The TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU should be signed on behalf of an organisation or company by an authorised representative empowered to sign such documents and morally bind the signatory organisation, or on behalf of an individual person by that person.
2. This signature must be carried out on the appropriate signature page provided, or an exact replica.
3. The information on the signature page must be complete to become a Signatory. In particular, to exercise electronic voting rights an email address must be provided, which the Signatory authorises to be used on its behalf for voting. This authorised email address and other contact information of the Signatory, must be provided on the TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU registration form, which is supplied with this document. Note that individual Signatories do not have the right to vote in the election of the Steering Committee, although an individual Signatory may stand for election to the Steering Committee.
4. The signature page and the registration form should be returned to :

**TWINBASIN^{XN} SUPPORT SERVICE s/c OIEau
21, rue de Madrid
75008 Paris - France**

Tel : +33 1 44 90 88 60

Fax : +33 1 40 08 01 45

5. Further information and copies of relevant documents, including this TWINBASIN^{XN} MoU and the registration form, can be obtained from the TWINBASIN^{XN} web site :

<http://www.iowater.org/inbo/twinbasin>

Organisational Signatory Page

I, _____ (name)

in quality of _____ (title)

declare that _____ (name and address of Signatory)

_____ (e-mail)

Hereby subscribes to the Memorandum of Understanding “TWINBASIN^{XN} - Promoting Twinning of River Basins for Developing Integrated Water Resources Management Practices - A Partnership of Basins Stakeholders for a Common Approach to IWRM principles”

Signed in _____, (location)

this _____ day of _____ (date).

_____ (signature)

Please tick the appropriate type of organisation :

- Basin organisation
- Sub basin body
- Other authorities (national, regional, local)
- Research team or network
- Stakeholders and their representative organisations
- Universities and schools
- Professional training organisations
- Consultant
- Other SMEs
- Large water company
- Information owners and brokers
- International organisations

Individual Signatory Page

I, _____ (name)

of _____ (address of Signatory)

_____ (e-mail)

Hereby subscribes to the Memorandum of Understanding “TWINBASIN^{XN} - Promoting Twinning of River Basins for Developing Integrated Water Resources Management Practices - A Partnership of Basins Stakeholders for a Common Approach to IWRM principles”

Signed in _____, (location)

this _____ day of _____ (date).

_____ (signature)

Please tick the appropriate type of organisation :

- Basin organisation
- Sub basin body
- Other authorities (national, regional, local)
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- Stakeholders and their representative organisations
- Universities and schools
- Professional training organisations
- Consultant
- Other SME
- Large water company
- Information owners and brokers
- International organisations