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Developing Integrated Water Resources Management Practices**

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## **Rules and Guidelines for TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIGs**

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# Rules and Guidelines for TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIGs

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## 1. SIG Definition and General Rules

A TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> *Special Interest Group* (TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIG or SIG hereunder) is an open forum where discussion takes place around a specific topic in the domain of the TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> initiative, as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) approved by TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> Signatories.

Any representative of an organisation (not more than one person per organisation) that has signed TwinBasin MoU and who has an Email address can become a member of one or more TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIGs.

The topic of a TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIG is specified in a *scope statement* and is reflected in the SIG's *title*. The main goal of a SIG is to reach and express a consensus view within its scope, or well-identified parts of it, and to generate appropriate reports.

SIGs may adopt any operating procedures they consider appropriate as long as they comply with the TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> *SIG Functioning Rules*.

## 2. SIG Functioning Rules

### 2.1 Interaction of the Steering Committee with SIG

The TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> Steering Committee (the SC) is responsible for approving the creation, correct operation and termination of all SIGs. In particular, the SC must :

- ❑ approve SIG scope statements;
- ❑ ensure that basic rules for democratic behaviour and decision making are respected;
- ❑ approve the dissemination of SIGs' results outside TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup>;
- ❑ consider any SIG actions that may impact upon other SIGs or TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> as a whole;
- ❑ ensure that all SIGs report on their activities in a timely manner.

The Steering Committee may appoint one of its members as its Liaison to a SIG to keep the Steering Committee informed on the operation of the SIG.

The Steering Committee determines the status of a SIG as :

- ❑ a Provisional TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIG, or
- ❑ an Operational TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIG

## **2.2 Technical Support Service (OIEau – GWPO – Techware) and SIG**

As specified in the Description of Work, GWPO, member of Twinbasin Support Service leads the Workpackage 2, which is dedicated to the “Operation of the SIGs”.

More over, both OIEau (as global project co-ordinator) and Techware (leader for Workpackage 5 “support to staff mobility” and 6 “dissemination component”) will also participate in SIG’s exchanges.

## **2.3 SIG Requirements**

### 2.2.1 General

An Operational TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> SIG must have :

- ❑ a Title
- ❑ a Chair
- ❑ a Scope Statement
- ❑ a Membership List
- ❑ at least 5 members from at least three different countries

### 2.2.2 The SIG Chair

The SIG Chair is responsible for the general operation of the SIG. In particular, the Chair must ensure that all members are informed of proposals and are given the opportunity to openly participate in all discussion and decision making in the SIG.

The SIG Chair, working in close co-operation with GWPO (TSS member in charge of SIG operation), is responsible for notifying the Steering Committee of :

- ❑ the minutes of SIG meetings, including attendance lists;
- ❑ any proposed modification to the SIG scope or working structure;
- ❑ SIG progress, including reports and decisions.

### 2.2.3 SIG Reports and SIG Decision Making

A SIG Report is required to have:

- ❑ an Editor
- ❑ a Title and Scope.

A report must be approved by the SIG before it is submitted to the SC for approval and dissemination.

SIG decisions can be made during SIG meetings or through an electronic consultation. For a decision to be accepted at least 5 votes are required and a 80% majority of all votes cast.

If SIG decision making requirements are not met at a SIG meeting, provisional decisions can be taken with a simple majority of votes cast but must be confirmed within one month through an electronic vote open to all SIG members.

Important electronic decision making (such as the Chair's election or renewal) is handled by the SC Secretariat. Routine electronic consultations are organized by the SIG Chair.

In cases of dispute, the Steering Committee acts as a final court of appeal on request of any SIG member.

#### 2.2.4 New SIG Creation

A new SIG can be proposed by anyone via the TWINBASIN<sup>xn</sup> web site or directly to the Steering Committee. A SIG proposal will require :

- ❑ a Proposer (name, organisation, email)
- ❑ a Title
- ❑ a Provisional Chair (name, organisation, email)
- ❑ a Provisional Scope Statement
- ❑ a list of at least 5 interested persons
- ❑ an outline of expected deliverables and time scales
- ❑ proposed Steering Committee Liaison (optional)
- ❑ URL links to supporting evidence of the need for the SIG (optional)

All proposed SIGs will be considered by the Steering Committee who may delegate individuals to research the proposal and make recommendations. The Steering Committee will decide to :

- ❑ Reject the proposal,
- ❑ Accept the proposal, or
- ❑ Suggest modifications.

If accepted by the Steering Committee the proposed new SIG becomes a Provisional SIG for a trial period of up to three months, and starts functioning on the TWINBASIN<sup>xn</sup> web site.

The Steering Committee then determines if a SIG should become an Operational TWINBASIN<sup>xn</sup> SIG or be discontinued. In making such a decision the *Duties of the Steering Committee* and the *SIG Requirements* will be considered.

At the discretion of the Steering Committee, the trial period during which a Provisional TWINBASIN<sup>xn</sup> SIG may operate without fully meeting the SIG Requirements can be extended up to a maximum of one year, at which time a final decision on the SIG's status must be made by the SC.

### 2.2.5 SIG Termination

A SIG can be ended by :

- a decision of the Steering Committee to terminate the SIG (e.g. due to lack of activity, merger of SIGs)
- the SIG members deciding the SIG should end (e.g. as it has reached a conclusion)

The termination of a SIG by the SC can be appealed by a valid vote of the SIG members. In that case, the TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> Support Service will organise a vote on the issue amongst the signatories of the TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> MoU.

## **3. SIG Guidelines**

*The following are non-mandatory guidelines and recommended best practice.*

### ***SIG Working structure***

A SIG, led by its Chair, is largely responsible for its working practices as long as it meets SIG Requirements.

In addition to its Title, Chair, Scope Statement and Membership List, a SIG is expected to have :

- a Vice Chair
- a Web presence and an Email list for all members

Each SIG may appoint one or more Vice-Chairs, and other officers, as its members feel appropriate, to meet the objectives of the SIG. To support continuity, sharing of responsibilities and SIG leadership team building, each SIG will elect a minimum of one Vice-Chair and a maximum of three Vice-Chairs. The SIG Chair should notify the Steering Committee of its agreed structure, including the names of all elected officers and their duties. The Chair is responsible for frequently reporting on the progress of the SIG to the Steering Committee.

In case of prolonged absence of - or lack of initiatives by - the Chair, a Vice-Chair may propose to the SIG a way forward, including a new Chair election.

It is expected that SIG members should represent a wide range of organisations and the Steering Committee has a duty to ensure decisions are not prejudiced.

## ***SIG Discussions and Decisions***

SIG discussions will be open and should be recorded on the web. They will be managed by the Chair with the following guidelines :

- Keep within scope
- Summarise and guide discussions
- Provide frequent progress reports

Only SIG members, duly listed in the membership list used for the email posting, can participate in voting.

The preferred decision making process is by the SIG email posting. A decision may, however, sometimes be made at a meeting, in which case, all SIG members should be informed as soon as possible. If there is any doubt that such a decision represents the consensus view or if there are significant objections from SIG members, then the SIG Chair should organise a vote amongst the whole SIG.

## ***SIG Reports***

A SIG Report should reflect consensus views and the editor should ensure that members of the SIG are given the opportunity to contribute and to comment. *Subject to Steering Committee approval*, the completed SIG Report may be published to a wider audience on the TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup> web site. The Steering Committee may use SIG Reports as the basis of presentations to other organisations or as an official output of TWINBASIN<sup>XN</sup>.

## ***SIG Meetings***

SIG members may physically meet as often as they deem necessary provided they abide by SIG decision-making procedures and inform the complete SIG list of such meetings in advance.

The minutes of any SIG meetings, and approved SIG reports, should be made publicly available on the SIG web site.

## ***Starting a new SIG***

Before anyone suggests a new SIG they should carefully consider existing SIGs to ensure there is no significant overlap.

To become fully operational the SIG will need to meet SIG Requirements. It is also expected that the SIG will attract members and generate sufficient activity. Use should be made of the possibility of refining the scope and goals of the SIG.

Within three months, a Provisional SIG will be expected to meet SIG Requirements and the SC will decide on whether the SIG should become an Operational SIG or be discontinued.