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Water and Environment Center

Newsletter #3
 February 28, 2005

Newsletter for Nuffic-NPT project "Strengthening WEC" project NPT/YEM/036 2004-2008

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1. WEC History

The Water and Environment Centre (WEC) was founded between 1997 and 1998. In December 1997 the university council of Sana'a University approved the "Main Principles" document and formed a steering committee for development of the centre. In August 1998 the first by-laws of the WEC are drafted under the Sana'a University Support program (SUS). In December of 1998 the first director of the WEC is appointed by the President of Sana'a University. In May 1999 the by-laws of the WEC are formally approved, and one month later the SUS project supports the development of WEC's first business plan. In November of the same year, the WEC Council meets for the first time. Finally in October of 2000, the WEC is officially opened with a large seminar in Sana'a. The first two PhD's from the SUS project graduate in January 2001, and many more PhD candidates will follow after that. The last SUS project ends in December 2001, and a SAIL bridging project through the embassy of The Netherlands supports the WEC. A first draft of what eventually will become the Nuffic NPT proposal is submitted in August of 2002 to the Royal Netherlands Embassy, and in September of 2003 the Nuffic proposal is finalized. Then, in August of 2004, the consortium of three universities (Wageningen, Delft and Cairo) and two private companies (Arcadis/Euroconsult and MetaMeta) start together with WEC a four year project under Nuffic's NPT programme.

2. Mission Dr. Babaqi (January 2005) to Cairo University

Dr. Babaqi visited Cairo University (one of the project consortium partners) and had several good discussions with Dr. Ghanem. Dr. Babaqi also visited the centre for water studies and projects, which has similar objectives and working methods as the Water and Environment Centre. Dr. Babaqi received several documents on the centres establishment and current activities. The discussions with Dr. Ghanem resulted in ideas and discussion material as an input into the brainstorm meeting. Mission Report 2005-01 is available.

3. Mission Dr. Ghanem (January 2005) to Wageningen University

Dr. Ghanem came to The Netherlands from Cairo for the brainstorm meeting on January 13, 2005 with other lecturers who will support the development of the MSc curriculum in Sana'a. Dr. Ghanem presented two powerpoint presentations during this meeting; one on ideas on how to implement disciplines and themes into the IWRM curriculum, while the other presented some information on the water centre at Cairo University. Mission Report 2005-02 is available.

4. Mission Ger Naber (February 2005) to Sana'a University

Mr. Ger Naber, librarian of the university of Wageningen, visited the WEC for one week. During his visit he worked closely with the librarian of the WEC, Mr. Abdulla Al-Qumairy. They visited several related libraries in Sana'a. A plan was developed for the activities that need to take place to upgrade and support the library, as well as to develop an on-line resource for IWRM. Mr. Naber presented his findings to Prof. Dr. Saleh Basurrah, president of Sana'a University, during his visit to the WEC. Mission Report 2005-04, including recommendations, is available.

5. Mission Wouter Schaap and Chrisje van Schoot, MetaMeta (February 2005) to Sana'a University

Wouter Schaap and Chrisje van Schoot visited the WEC in Sana'a where they interviewed potential candidates for the training program, developed a draft website in close cooperation with WEC Management and support staff, evaluated teaching methods, teaching material and teaching needs, and had several fruitful discussions with the

WEC Staff. Mission Report 2005-05, including recommendations, is available.

6. Current mission

Richard Soppe prepared the workshop in Sana'a on the training needs assessment in close cooperation with WEC staff, supported the visits of MetaMeta and Ger Naber, is preparing the visits of Dr. Babaqi and Dr. Basurrah to The Netherlands, and supports in the development of the MSc curriculum based on inputs from Dutch, Egyptian and Yemeni staff.

7. Brainstorm meeting January 13, 2005

A brainstorm meeting was held in Wageningen in January to get the input of the Dutch and Egyptian lecturers for the IWRM MSc curriculum. All lecturers attended, and good discussions were held. The group recommended that the IWRM curriculum starts with courses based on disciplinary knowledge to develop a firm base for the second part of the curriculum, which should be based on thematic courses. In the thematic courses, the courses from the first part of the curriculum will come together in an integrated manner. In addition, time will be reserved for large case studies, which will also aid in the integration of disciplinary knowledge.

Based upon this brainstorm meeting, as well as input from staff from the Water and Environment Centre, input from the workshop held in Sana'a, combined with existing IWRM information available (e.g. CAP-Net CD, GWP Technical Note #4) work is currently underway to develop the curriculum in more detail. Discussions are held in Yemen, as well as in The Netherlands and through the internet to get to a final MSc-curriculum plan.

8. News Items

DAAD visits WEC

The German Service for academic exchange (DAAD) visited the Water and Environment Centre at the end of December 2004. DAAD provides study grants for MSc students, to study in Jordan, Egypt and other regional universities, with a chance for a follow-up PhD grant in Germany.

WEC receives WorldBank mission

A WorldBank evaluation mission for the Groundwater and Soil Conservation Project used their visit to Sana'a also to meet with the Water and Environment Centre. The Centre will soon start a project on participatory groundwater management funded by the Japanese Social Development Fund. The WorldBank will be the contact organization for WEC. The mission was headed by Dr. Satoru Ueda, and included Dr. Nejdet Al-Salihi, Dr. Mohamed Bazza, Mrs. Josephine Salang and Mr Abdul Salam Al-Zubayri.

Dutch MSc student internship at WEC

Martijn Vink, an MSc student from the department of irrigation and water management, Wageningen University started a 4 month internship within the project. Martijn will spend 3 months in Sana'a and will contribute to the activities leading to the new IWRM MSc curriculum.

WEC teaches within GTZ courses program

In February Dr. Fadhl has been teaching a course on sanitation engineering within the program of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The opening of the course was attended by Dr. Mohamed Al-Eryani, the minister of Water and Environment, as well as the WEC director, Dr. Abdulla Babaqi. Yemeni TV recorded the opening.

Dutch ambassador drops by WEC

Unexpectedly, the Ambassador of The Netherlands dropped by at the Gender Study Centre, which is located in the same building as the WEC. The Ambassador also visited the WEC, and will return during the official opening of all institutes at Sana'a University later this Spring.

Dr. Babaqi interviewed for TV-Channel Al-Arabia

During a workshop on the National Water Sector Strategy Investment Plan (NWSSIP), Dr. Babaqi was interviewed by Dubai based TV Channel Al-Arabia on the water problems in the Arab Region. The interview was broadcast on February 5.

Rector Sana'a University visits WEC

The rector of Sana'a university, Prof. Dr. Saleh Basurrah, visited the WEC. A presentation was given on the Centre's activities for the coming year. Mr. Ger Naber presented his impressions of the library system at Sana'a University. The University has almost completed "The year of the library" which has supported activities to improve the library system in Sana'a.

Workshop on Needs of IWRM Graduates held February 20 in Sana'a

A workshop to inventory the needs and requirements from agencies, ministries, consultants and NGO's working in water related fields was held in Sana'a as part of a training needs assessment for the IWRM courses of the WEC. There were more than 60 participants from different areas in the water sector. H.E. Dr. Al-Eryani (Minister of Water and Environment), Dr. Ali Kasim Ismael (Deputy Minister for Educational Affairs), Dr. Mohamed Al-Hamdi (Deputy Minister for Water), Dr. Ton Negenman (Royal Netherlands Embassy) and Dr. Babaqi (WEC) participated in the opening ceremony. Recommendations of the workshop are currently being worked out and will be made available.

WEC submits workplans to Sana'a university

The rector of Sana'a University, Prof. Dr. Saleh Basurrah, requested from all institutes at the university that they submit a workplan for activities in the coming year. Both WEC and the WEC-Nuffic project have submitted a workplan for 2005. The next request is to develop a 5-year workplan for each university institute.

WEC participates in GTZ Workshop

At the end of February, WEC representatives were asked to attend a GTZ organized workshop on the organization of higher administration and project management in sanitation projects. Dr. Babaqi participated in the opening ceremony, which was broadcast as a news item on Yemeni TV.

Coordinator of WaDImena visits WEC

The coordinator of the project WaDImena, from the International Development Research Centre, visited WEC. Mrs. Lorra Thompson visited Yemen in the framework of the WaDImena project to investigate the possibilities for Water Demand Management activities in Yemen. She was accompanied by Mr. Frédéric Pelat, from the French NGO IDDEALES, and Mr. Abdulkarim Al-Sabri, from the Central Water Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

9. Planned activities

Rector Dr. Basurrah will visit The Netherlands

The rector of Sana'a University, Prof. Dr. Basurrah, is scheduled to visit the Netherlands on occasion of the Advisory Committee meeting of the Nuffic project. During his visit he will also meet with several other university representatives that have projects in Sana'a. This includes Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, TU-Delft, Maastricht School of Management.

Mr. Rafik Al-Sakkaf to defend his dissertation

In April, Mr. Rafik Al-Sakkaf will defend his PhD dissertation in Delft. Prof. Dr. N.C. van de Giesen (TU-Delft) is the promotor. Other promotion committee members are Prof. Dr. Mohamed Al-Eryani (Sana'a University and Minister of Water and Environment in Yemen), Prof. Dr. W. van Vierssen (Wageningen University), Prof. Dr. E. Schultz (UNESCO-IHE and Wageningen University), Prof. Dr. H.H.G. Savenije (TU-Delft) and the chancellor of Technical University Delft. The title of the dissertation is "Hydrological Response and Transmission Losses in Arid and Semi-Arid Catchments".

10. Planned missions

For each mission, Terms of Reference are needed before the start of the mission, and a mission report is required after the end of the mission.

Mission 2005-07

March, 2005

Prof. Dr. Babaqi and Prof. Dr. Basurrah, Visit to The Netherlands for Advisory Committee meeting

Mission 2005-08/2005-14

April, 2005

Visit of Dutch and Egyptian lecturers to Sana'a University for start of cooperation with Yemeni counterparts

Mission 2005-15

April-May

Dr. Richard Soppe, third long-term visit.

Mission 2005-06

April, 2005

Dr. Frank van Steenberg, WEC business plan, consultancy training

11. Newsletter Items

This newsletter is meant to inform the consortium partners and other interested parties on the developments of project NPT/YEM/036. When you have news to be distributed via this newsletter, please contact rsoppe@hetnet.nl (+31-(0)317-427077). Newsletter #4 is scheduled to appear at the end of April 2005.

If you do not wish to receive further newsletters on this project, please send an email to rsoppe@hetnet.nl and I will remove you from the list