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Water and Soil Times

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A newsletter for the "Water Cycle and Soil Related Aspects" activities in the European Commission Directorate General for Research

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Note from the editor:

Recently, the European Commission launched a vast public awareness campaign about European Union's institutions, mechanisms and activities.

In our case, it has become apparent that in order to move beyond conventional science communication practises (publications, books, conferences etc.) embedded in European funded research projects, complementary and more innovative ways have to be explored.

A clearer profiling of the audience seems to be a reasonable starting point. Every two months, this newsletter reaches about 3.000 subscribers, of whom we basically know their e-mail addresses and basic institutional information. Therefore, it is rather difficult on the basis of such level of information to extract and analyse data which could reveal potential issues or focus of interest. We feel, that the transition period between the FP6 and FP7, might be the right time to launch a readers'™ poll for establishing a more in depth view of our readers'™ background and preferences, assessing the degree of satisfaction or more simply for acquiring fresh views and ideas on content and communication approaches.

On our side, we shall try to dynamise our content by including a new section dedicated to examples of (good/bad) practises and experiences in exploitation of RTD results. Various examples are expected in terms of such use and exploitation of research outcomes, but also addressing policy implementation or project communication strategies. It is widely acknowledged that frequently the time scale for real-life application of results exceeds the duration of a typical RTD project; tangible outcomes are often visible only few years after the completion of a single project. We are thus pleased to rely on voluntary contributions from our readers, especially the ones that have previously participated in FP funded projects. Therefore, your contributions are welcome, appreciated and essential for our next newsletter issues

FP6 " Policy-oriented research " Scientific Support to policies: results of the last call for proposals FP6-2005-SSP-5A

In total 103 eligible proposals addressing the areas Policies 1.5, 1.6, 3.4 were evaluated of which 53 passed all thresholds. The total EC budget requested by the applicants of the 103 proposals was 76 M EURO, close to 5 times more than the available budget of 16 M EURO.

Among the 27 proposals selected the following two are addressing water-related aspects:

EFI + "Improvement and spatial extension of the European Fish Index"

- Duration: 24 months
- Instrument: STREP
- EC contribution: 0,9 M EURO
- Objectives: to overcome current limitations of existing fish index by developing a new, more accurate and pan-European fish index as well as a methodological approach to assess the ecological status of rivers in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

SPI-Water "Science-Policy Interfacing in support of the Water Framework Directive implementation"

- Duration: 24 months
- Instrument: STREP
- EC contribution: 1,07 M EURO
- Objectives: the project proposes a number of concrete actions aiming to facilitate the communication between research scientists and regulatory instances by developing and implementing a "science-policy interface", focusing on setting up a mechanism to enhance the use of RTD results in the Water Framework Directive implementation.

The proposal **CHEF** "Cultural Heritage environment and flooding" (STREP, 24 months, 0,77 M EURO EC contrib.) investigates how future variations in extreme rainfall, wind-driven rain, floods and urban runoff may affect cultural heritage, with a particular focus on stone, wood and metal. Within the frame of the project policy recommendations and preventive strategies will be established as well as an on-line tool for CH protection planning.

FP6 - Global Change and Ecosystems: Evaluation of proposals addressing the Targeted Third Countries call FP6-2006-TTC-TU Priority 6.3.

The evaluation of 40 proposals received for this specific call, aiming to reinforce international scientific collaboration, took place in mid-June 2006. Out of them 4 proposals were ineligible, 6 proposals failed the thresholds and 30 proposals passed. The total amount of requested EC financing was 17,7 M EURO.

Coordinators of proposals have been informed of the evaluation results. The EC will start negotiations with selected projects before the summer break, expecting a formal decision before the end of 2006.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Platform - State of play

The Water Supply and Sanitation Platforms identified 6 pilot themes as a way to implement the Strategic Research Agenda and to tackle the 4 major challenges for global sustainable water management for Europe highlighted in the Vision document. The pilot themes are all articulated around the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) framework and have significant potential for applications to the third world contributing therefore to the worldwide Millennium Development Goals.

A pilot is an organisational structure that covers the total of generic RTD, enabling RTD and implementation cases; the structure is set up to carry out precisely targeted and prioritized research that is defined by and tested in a number of real-life "or close to real-life" applications. The ultimate objective of a pilot is to make new and innovative contributions developed within the framework of IWRM aiming to solve major European water problems and to stimulate the formation of multi-faceted, multi-sectoral and highly competitive consortia.

The 6 pilot themes are as follows:

Pilot 1: Mitigation of water stress in coastal zones

Pilot 2: Sustainable water management inside and around large urban areas

Pilot 3: Sustainable water management for agriculture

Pilot 4: Sustainable water management for industry

Pilot 5: Reclamation of degraded water zones (surface and ground)

Pilot 6: Proactive and corrective management of extreme hydro-climatic events

Each pilot theme will be conducted in the deployment phase (SDD) by a "pilot steering group" constituted of the main stakeholders involved. It will have its specific set of required generic research areas as well as its specific set of enabling technologies which will have to be demonstrated through a selected group of implementation cases covering Europe with potential extensions to other countries.

For more information see www.wsstp.org

Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment in the Water Safety Plan

The MICRORISK project (FP5 project) has recently produced its final report. The report is going to be published as a book in the format of a guidance document rather than a scientific report (scientific results from the MICRORISK project are published in peer-reviewed literature). The final report describes how Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment (QMRA) can be used in water safety plan. It highlights what QMRA is and how it can provide important information to guide the HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point)-based risk management process. The report reviews waterborne outbreaks and its causes through drinking water in Europe, the problem of small systems and the limited ability of health surveillance systems to pick up waterborne illness. It introduces QMRA and its place and value for risk management of pathogens in drinking water and gives guidance on how to collect relevant information about pathogens, removal of micro-organisms, contamination during distribution and consumption on tap water. A particular emphasis is put both on normal performance and on hazardous events in source water, treatment and distribution. Finally, it provides information on the theoretical basis for data analysis and illustrates the value of QMRA for the risk manager of a water utility through representative case studies.

For more information about the MICRORISK project see www.microrisk.com

Marine Pollution (MAPO) Project

This FP6 Specific Support Action aims to assist small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) that are specialized in marine pollution issues and wishing to participate in current technological partnerships (IP/NoE) and in the future European research projects.

The objectives of the initiative are as follows:

- Identification of best practices to facilitate the integration of SMEs into the projects
- Updating of current state-of-the-art as well as the establishment of a European cartography of skills in the field of marine pollution allowing a networking of competencies, the identification of technical needs and research priorities for future research projects
- Development of technological partnerships for FP6 projects and first FP7 calls.

For more information please visit: www.marine-pollutions.org

Launch of www.mbr-network.eu , the web platform dedicated to the MBR technology

The European cluster www.mbr-network.eu , group of four projects financed by the European Commission and entirely dedicated to the development of the membrane bioreactor technology, has launched their official website www.mbr-network.eu . The four FP6 projects, namely **AMEDEUS**, **EUROMBRA**, **MBR-TRAIN** and **PURATREAT** are supported by three different financial instruments set up by the European Commission within the sixth

Framework Program, and are implemented in parallel from October 2005 up to December 2009. They will perform research, development, capacity building and technological transfer in regards to this promising wastewater treatment process. Around 50 European and international companies and institutions are actively involved in these four projects and will join their efforts and coordinate their actions within the cluster "MBR-Network". The four projects amount to a total budget of ca. 15 million, for which ca. 9 million will be financed by the European Commission.

The website www.mbr-network.eu is one task initiated by the projects AMEDEUS and EUROMBRA but it will not only provide detailed information on projects of the European cluster. It is in addition thought and designed as a communication and exchange platform dedicated to the worldwide MBR-community, which offers contacts to a large group of international MBR professionals and experts. In particular, the following free services will be offered online:

- Data-base of companies and institutions active in the MBR field
- Data-base of articles, books and conference proceedings related to MBR
- Data-base of other European projects involved with MBR
- List of international conferences, symposiums or seminars addressing the MBR topic
- Virtual discussion forum between members of the MBR-community

Companies, institutions or private persons interested in the field of MBR technology are invited to register online and to provide their data and relevant news or information to the MBR community through this website (<http://www.mbr-network.eu/>).

Contacts: Boris Lesjean, Project Co-ordination AMEDEUS (boris.lesjean@kompetenz-wasser.de) or TorOve Leiknes, Project Co-ordination EUROMBRA (torove.leiknes@ntnu.no)

European Platform on Life Cycle Assessment is providing reference data and recommended LCA methods.

The project is coordinated by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in close cooperation with DG Environment. Its major aim is to support life cycle thinking both in the development of goods and services and addressing a broad range of policies.

One of the main deliverables of this project, that is expected by 2008 is the European Reference Life Cycle Data System (ELCD), including:

- Core Life Cycle Inventory (LCI)
- Life Cycle Impact Assessment (LCIA)

For more information please visit: <http://lca.jrc.it>

Network for the development of Sustainable approaches for Large Scale Implementation of Sanitation in Africa (NETSSAF).

The NETSSAF kick-off meeting took place on 26-27 June 2006 at the Swedish Agricultural University, Uppsala.

The proposed Coordination Action, brings together key stakeholders in the field of sustainable sanitation in Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe to promote international cooperation between research organisations, associations, universities, and social and governmental stakeholders, focussed in particular on West African countries.

The proposed network aims to develop a variety of innovative, adaptable and replicable approaches to sustainable sanitation, integrating appropriate low-cost technologies with community-based management and their relevant governance, institutional frameworks and socio-economic constraints.

This project is expected to contribute to the implementation of the EU Water Initiative.

For more information please contact Mr Mirko Hänel, Verein zur Förderung des Technologietransfers an der Hochschule Bremenhaven e. V.:
e-mail: mhaenel@ttz-bremerhaven.de

Low cost water test for developing countries – a preparatory study (AQUATEST).

The AQUATEST kick-off meeting shall take place on 11-12 July in OXAM, Oxford, UK.

Contaminated drinking water remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in developing countries, with 1.8 million deaths per year being attributed to water-related disease. This project is a preparatory study for the development of a low-cost water quality test and associated management systems for use in developing countries and in disasters/emergencies. In addition, following major disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes, many deaths result not from the disaster itself but from subsequent outbreaks of disease caused by contaminated drinking water. Existing water tests are largely designed for use in developed countries and not in situations where laboratory infra-structure, resources and trained personnel are lacking. There is thus a need for more appropriate water testing technology for use in resource-poor and disaster settings.

This network will meet with stakeholders at the World Water Congress in Beijing to consider how these needs may be addressed. The project will establish how an appropriate water test can be developed from existing technologies within the near term.

This project is expected to contribute to the implementation of the EU Water Initiative.

For more information please contact Mr Stephen Gundry, University of Bristol:
e-mail: stephen.gundry@bristol.ac.uk

PUBLICATIONS and AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

“Water Management In Arid and Semi-Arid Regions” by Phoebe Koundouri, Katia Karousakis, Dionysis Assimacopoulos, Paul Jeffrey, Manfred A. Lange.

The aim of the book is to define appropriate strategies and guidelines for water management necessary for the formulation and implementation of integrated sustainable management of water resources. The book considers results of the EC funded FP5 project **ARID** and presents various case studies concerning the examination of competing water use patterns, comparison of the governance structures and the evolution of response to scarcity as well as structural and non-structural instruments to address water deficiency.

The book is published by: Edward Elgar Publishing, e-mail: info@e-elgar.co.uk

“Sustainable Management of Water Resources. An Integrated Approach” by Carlo Giupponi, Anthony J. Jakeman, Derek Karssenbergh and Matt P. Hare.

The book is resulting from contribution of the FP5 project **MULINO** and provides introduction to water resource management covering the following topics:

- the ecology of surface waters
- international regulations and economics
- stakeholder participation in management

- tools and methods for decision making
- integrated modelling
- decision making and water policies
- stakeholder participation and social issues.

The book is published by: Edward Elgar Publishing, e-mail: info@e-elgar.co.uk

CORDIS focus. RTD Results Supplement.

CORDIS focus is published by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities as part of the FP6 Framework Programme. It presents information on European Union research and innovation and related programmes and policies. The CORDIS focus RTD Results Supplement is based on research results and technology offers published both on the CORDIS Technology Marketplace. CORDIS focus is available at: <http://cordis.europa.eu.int/focus/en>

Water and Soil European Research - Catalogue of FP6 projects

A recent publication provides an overview of the projects addressing issues linked to water and soil research that resulted from activities launched from 2003 to 2006 by the priorities "Global Change and Ecosystems" and "Policy-Oriented Research". The overall European Commission's budget dedicated to the presented 58 research projects is 188 M EURO.

The listed projects are presented and sorted by area according to the following sub-division:

1. Hydrology and Climate processes
 - Flash-flood forecasting
 - Global water cycle, water resources and droughts
2. Ecological impact of global change, soil functioning and water quality
 - Ecological impact of global change on surface water bodies, ecosystem , health indicators and remediation strategies
 - Water-soil systems functioning and management
3. Integrated management strategies and mitigation technologies
 - Integrated water management at catchment scale
 - Integrated urban water management and mitigation technologies
 - Management of water under scarcity and mitigation technologies
 - Sewage sludge treatment and management
 - Sustainable water management solutions for developing countries
4. Scenarios of water demand and availability
 - Water scenarios for Europe and for neighbouring countries

The information provided is based on the data available in June 2006, some projects still being subject to final negotiation.

The publication is available at:

http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/rtd/eesdwatkeact/library?l=/projects_information&vm=detailed&sb=Title

EVENTS

Stockholm Water Week 2006, Joint Workshop on: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF IWRM IN AFRICA
Jointly organised by the EU Water Initiative (Research) " Challenge Programme on Water and Food Workshop
Lilla Teatern Room, 22 August 2006, 13:30 - 17:30

Overall objective:

To address capacity building barriers to adaptive, knowledge-based approaches to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) implementation.

Specific objectives

1. Identify main capacity building barriers to a knowledge based advancement in the practical aspects of IWRM implementation
2. Identify how the Challenge Programme on Water and Food (CPWF) research can contribute to the generation and application of the required knowledge.
3. Identify how European Union's Water Initiative (EUWI) research efforts can generate the capacity building momentum and research-practice interfaces needed for the implementation of adaptive IWRM approaches.
4. Identify specific joint initiatives that EUWI and CPWF could undertake together to better support national goals for IWRM implementation (including also strategic partnerships with other support frameworks)

Expected Result

Initiate the production of guidelines on integrating and adapting IWRM research knowledge into real life planning and implementation

For more information please contact Zissimos Vergos, European Commission, e-mail: Zissimos.Vergos@ec.europa.eu
[1] (by EU Member States and the Community Research Framework Programme)

Drinking water quality in distribution systems, Workshop, Nancy, 7 - 8 September 2006

This workshop is organised as the result of a strong research effort undertaken in the context of the EC FP5 project **SAFER** (<http://www.safer-eu.com/>). It is addressed to collectivities, industrials, researchers and in general, any institution or organisation, whose role is to guarantee the quality of the drinking water during its distribution. Three main topics will be presented and discussed during this Workshop:

- i. biofilm accumulation surveys (to gauge the status of biofilms and their development),
- ii. pathogen detection (bacteria and protozoa in aquatic biofilms),
- iii. efficient disinfection (rapid monitoring of disinfection efficiency).

A round table is also scheduled at the end of the workshop to highlight the after-effects of SAFER, in particular in the field of water quality changes versus the material in contact with water and the important relationship between the water quality and the human health.

For more information on the workshop see
<http://www.nancie.asso.fr/workshopsafer.htm>

Towards use of uncertainty in data and models in water resources management, Workshop, Brussels, September 2006

The **HarmoniRiB** project (Harmonised Techniques and Representative River Basin Data for Assessment and Use of Uncertainty Information in Integrated Water Management) is organising a final one day workshop (date still to be fixed between 11-22 September 2006). The overall objective of the meeting is to disseminate the results of the project to policy makers, researchers and practitioners. Policies and status of key European policy organisations will be also highlighted and the contributions of the EU FP5 project HarmoniRiB towards development of concepts and tools for handling uncertainty in data and models will be presented. More particularly, the workshop will:

- discuss the importance of uncertainty among water resources policy makers, practitioners and researchers with respect to the WFD implementation as well as to related fields such as Earth Observatories, spatial management, etc.

- present and discuss operational tools for handling uncertainty in data and models.
- outline the need for future database functionality and discuss the limitations in the current database designs for adequately supporting water management functions.

The final date of the workshop and further information will be announced in the project's website: www.harmonirib.com

IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition, Beijing, China, 10-14 September 2006.

The European Commission " Research Directorate General will be present at **exhibition stand N° 207** in the IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition to be held in Beijing, China, on 10-14 September 2006 (info at: <http://www.iwa2006beijing.com>).

On 13 September 2006 a presentation will be given by a representative of the European Commission during the **workshop "International Water Research Report"** . This workshop highlights international water research strategies and trends with a particular focus on the EU, North America, East Asia and Australasia. The workshop will also feature EU-China research linkages and the EU Water Initiative.

For further information, please contact Mr. Avelino Gonzalez at: avelino.gonzalez-gonzalez@ec.europa.eu

Climate Change Impacts on the Water Cycle, Resources and Quality Research-Policy interface workshop, Brussels, Belgium, 25-26 September 2006.

The workshop is organised in the frame of the European Commission by DG Research, DG Environment and DG Joint Research Centre. It aims to bring together scientists and water managers to obtain an overview of the key policy challenges on climate change impacts on water, and to review the key results of on-going FP6 or completed EU projects on climate change and water. It aims to explore whether the current scientific outcomes are sufficiently mature to be considered for policy development, as well as the key research topics that would need to be addressed at the European level in the future.

For more information please visit:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/sustdev/environment/ev20060628.htm>

International conference THE ABIOTIC ENVIRONMENT " EVALUATION OF CHANGES AND HAZARDS - case studies (ECAH), Warsaw, Poland, 16 - 17 October 2006.

Following activities of the FP5 Centre of Excellence **REA** the coming conference will address the following subjects:

- Water management and resources
- Marine abiotic environment & resources
- Natural hazards
- Human induced environmental hazards
- Present and past environmental changes
- Preparations for FP7

For more details please visit: www.pgi.gov.pl, quick access: conferences.

**RTD RESULTS: USE, EXPLOITATION AND COMMUNICATION
EXPERIENCES**

Building RTD on previous activities: PLEIADeS

The FP6 project PLEIADeS "Participatory multi-Level EO-assisted tools for Irrigation water management and Agricultural Decision-Support" aims to develop an integrated EO-ICT (Earth Observation-Information and Communication Technologies) -based system for irrigation management. The PLEIADeS project will start in autumn 2006 seeking to further improve and expand the possibilities of the system developed within the framework of the FP5 project DEMETER. The new project will explore complementarities and harmonisation with other technologies (IRRIMED, AGRASER) and assessment or decision-support systems (ADVISOR, MULINO). In total 8 pilot river-basins have been selected as representative irrigation schemes in water-scarce areas (Gadiana-Spain/Portugal, Cuga-Italy, Pinios-Greece, Gediz-Turkey, Tensift-Morocco, Sonora-Mexico, LurÃn-Peru, Rio SÃo Francisco-Brazil).

The former FP5 project DEMETER (<http://www.demeter-ec.net/>) has successfully demonstrated the functionalities of the on-line Space-assisted Irrigation Advisory Service (e-SAIAS or e-SARAS) within the framework of the project that ended in 2005. Recently the e-SARAS portable server was on display at the 4th World Water Forum and Exhibition, held in Mexico City in March 2006. To date three prominent examples are available in terms of immediate exploitation :

- The Spanish user organization ITAP has implemented the e-SARAS prototype developed in the project (slightly adapted to include specific additional requests) in their operational Irrigation Advisory Service for the 2006 irrigation campaign (starting 1 April 2006).
- The Italian partner UniversitÃ; degli Studi di Napoli â€œFederico IIâ€ has founded the spin-off company ARIESPACE (an SME), which is now selling the mobile phone service to farmers in an extended area (Regione Campagna).
- In Portugal,