

Project GCP/INT/945/ITA
“Information Products for Nile Basin Water Resources Management”

MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE
(Cairo, 3-4 April 2007)

1. Opening Ceremony

The meeting convened in the Conference Room of the Office of the Nile Water Sector, Cairo, Egypt.

On behalf of H.E. Dr. Abu Zeid, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation for Egypt, Dr. Metawie, Chairman of the Nile Water Sector, welcomed the delegates in Egypt and delivered an opening statement. Counsellor Massoni, Chief of the Multilateral Office of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, delivered a statement on behalf of the Government of Italy. Dr. Mohamed Albraithen, Assistant Director General for the Near East, presented a statement on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The statements are attached as Annex A.

Representatives of all participating countries except Eritrea were present. The meeting was also attended by delegations of the Donor and FAO. The list of participants is attached as Annex B.

2. Appointment of Chairperson and Rapporteur, and Adoption of the Agenda

Ambassador Nakaha, Second PSC member for Burundi, was reappointed as Chairperson while the rapporteur was provided by the project.

The draft agenda was considered and approved. The adopted agenda is attached as Annex C.

3. Matters Arising from PSC2

The CTA briefed the meeting on the actions taken on the specific issues raised by PSC2, as presented in Annex D.

The PSC reiterated the importance of involving students in implementing national project activities. National Coordinators will assess if and how students can contribute to the agricultural productivity case study, or other project activities, and discuss the modalities with the project office.

4. General Progress Report for the Period March 2006 to March 2007

The CTA presented a general report on progress and achievements of the project in the period March 2006 to March 2007. The project progress report is attached as Annex E.

The report indicated that overall project progress to date is estimated at some 56% of the total expected outputs. In particular the outputs related to immediate objective 1 are in advanced state of completion. The activities related to immediate objectives 2 and 3 are on track.

The report emphasized the work related to developing geo-referenced information products that illustrate various aspects of the natural resource base and water demand in the Nile basin.

The meeting noted the progress made in the reporting period. The PSC stressed the importance of continued close coordination and cooperation with the other projects and programs under the NBI.

The meeting advised the project office to involve the respective national focal point institutions in adding relevant documents to the Nile Google spatial text library system.

6. Progress of the Basin Wide Survey of Current and Projected Water Use in Rainfed and Irrigated Agriculture in the Nile Basin

The CTA presented the progress made in developing and implementing the basin wide survey of current and future water use in irrigated and rainfed agriculture. He highlighted the aim of the study to provide decision makers with a thorough assessment of the linkage between agriculture and water at Nile basin scale.

The report emphasized the compilation of the agricultural production database at district level, as well as the activities related to the development of scenarios of demand for agricultural produce for 2030.

The meeting noted the progress made. Clarifications were provided on the linkage between FAO Aquastat and the Nile Basin agricultural production database. The meeting stressed the importance of continued close coordination with the Efficient Water Use in Agricultural Production (EWUAP) project of the Shared Vision Program (SVP) and the agricultural components of NELSAP.

7. Project Communication Strategy

The CTA presented the progress made in disseminating project outputs and results to a wide range of stakeholders. Communication means include the project web page and poster set.

The meeting advised to add: 1) technical reports, 2) PSC minutes, 3) the project document, and 4) periodic press releases to the project web site. It was further agreed to include links with relevant web pages.

It was agreed that a FAO communication expert would design a public communication effort to disseminate project outputs to a wider range of stakeholders, in particular at national level.

The meeting encouraged the focal point institutions to prepare TV material of national project activities and outputs. The project office can provide some support for this activity.

The PSC stressed the importance of disseminating the results of the demand scenario exercise to relevant national parties and instructed the project office to prepare a communication strategy to achieve this objective.

8. Briefing on Nile Basin Initiative Activities

On behalf of the Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, Dr. Hesham Ghany, Regional Project Manager of the SVP Water Resources Planning and Management Project, briefed the meeting on the recent developments and progress of the NBI Program. He stressed the importance of the capacity building component included in all projects. The PSC was also informed about the policy shift to make the SVP projects more responsive to the needs of the Subsidiary Action Program (SAP) and the future permanent Nile institution.

The presentation is attached as Annex F.

9. Detailed Workplan for the Period April 2007 to February 2008

The CTA presented an itemized workplan for the period up to February 2008.

The main thrust of the activities in the coming year is on the basin wide survey of current and projected agricultural water use in the Nile Basin. In this regard, and in line with the project policy to concentrate resources, the meeting agreed to discontinue the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) case study.

A mission of an international expert with strong experience in using the Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) for flow measurement in sediment rich rivers will be organized to the FPI Sudan during August 2007. Aim of the mission is to establish the correct ADCP settings for hydraulic monitoring in this specific environment.

The PSC agreed that national workshops on the Nile Decision Support Tool (Nile DST) would be organized in order to strengthen the Nile DST knowledge and user base. The national Nile DST experts will facilitate the events. The national coordinators will set the workshop agenda and identify qualified trainees. The project office can support participation of a number of trainees from outside the focal point institution.

The meeting discussed the Hydromet Forum. It instructed the project office to continue with this activity and coordinate with the Secretariat of the Nile Basin Initiative (Nile SEC) on sustainable hosting arrangements for the forum.

The workplan was endorsed and is attached as Annex G.

10. Legal and Institutional Case Study

The CTA presented a proposal for organizing an advanced regional training in negotiation skills and international water law. The program will be based on a training module prepared by the FAO Development Law Service in collaboration with Dr. Richard Paisley, based on his experience during the 2006 Bujumbura workshop. The training aims to integrate international water law and negotiation skills in order to strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms.

The advanced training will complete output 2.4 related to the institutional and legal aspects of integrated water resources management. The meeting endorsed the proposal.

11. Detailed Budget for the Period April 2007 to February 2008

The CTA presented the detailed budget proposal for the period April 2007 to February 2008. The PSC will discuss the budget for the remaining months during PSC4. The PSC discussed the budget and requested clarifications on a number of issues.

The meeting endorsed the budget, which is attached as Annex H.

12. Coordination and Collaboration with the other NBI Projects

The CTA presented a report on the activities undertaken in the reporting period to ensure adequate coordination and cooperation with the other projects and programs under the umbrella of the Nile Basin Initiative.

The meeting discussed the report and emphasized the role of the National Coordinators to adequately inform the national members of the Nile Technical Advisory Committee (Nile TAC) on the activities and progress of the project.

The CTA was instructed to continue exploring possibilities for further cooperation with all NBI activities. In particular, he should explore how project outputs can be merged with other NBI activities in a manner that does not affect the originally planned targets.

13. Issues to Be Raised by the Tri Partite Review

Mr. Jacob Burke, FAO Senior Technical Officer, presented the mandate and purpose of the project Tri Partite Review (TPR) meeting. Aim of this forum is to discuss project issues of strategic nature related to continued relevance, focus, implementation schedule, and available resources.

PSC members discussed the issue raised and resolved to organize a consultative meeting to discuss the agenda of the First Tripartite Review Meeting, scheduled for the afternoon of Wednesday 4 April 2007.

14. Landau Network - Centro Volta

Mr. Jacob Burke, FAO Senior Technical Officer, presented the scope and agenda of the workshop of the Landau Network - Centro Volta (LNCV), scheduled for 21-23 June 2007 in Como, Italy. The workshop aims to discuss "The Agricultural Water Variable in the Nile Basin: Mapping the Issues and Examining Prospects to 2030". The event will also deliberate on the role of virtual water trade.

The meeting was informed that LNCV could support participation of one Nile Basin expert per riparian country who has relevant knowledge of water and agricultural development issues at Nile basin scale. The PSC was requested to identify qualified candidates.

The LNCV event is open to experts from the Nile Basin in the fields of agricultural and water, and the PSC was encouraged to seek funding from other sources to facilitate their participation. The LNCV was requested to send official invitation letters shortly to the respective national focal point institutions as well as to the Secretariat of the Nile Basin Initiative.

15. Any Other Business

The meeting advised that national project activities by the host country would be exhibited in conjunction with the PSC meeting.

No other issues were raised.

16. Dates and Venue of the Next Meeting

The fourth PSC meeting will be organized in the first half of December 2007. The PSC accepted the offer from Kenya to host the next PSC meeting.

17. Adoption of the Minutes and Closure of the Meeting

The minutes were presented, discussed in detail, and adopted. The Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Participating countries

.....Date

Ambassador Nakaha, Chairperson of the PSC

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy

..... Date

Counsellor Mauro Massoni
Chief "Ufficio II"
Directorate General for Development Cooperation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

..... Date

Mr. P. Steduto, Chief NRLW

- Annex A: Opening Statements
- Annex B: List of Participants
- Annex C: Adopted Agenda
- Annex D: Follow-Up Action PSC2
- Annex E: Project Progress Report for the Period March 2006 to March 2007
- Annex F: Presentation on Progress of NBI
- Annex G: Detailed Workplan
- Annex H: Detailed budget