



NEWSLETTER

Number 4 March 2007

This quarter's African Water newsletter again takes the form of an email bulletin including:

- website update
- the latest news on FP7;
- an announcement about the 2007 UKRO conference – you could get funding to attend!
- a report of the first African Water training workshop;
- networking with African scientists;
- a summary of the 7th WATERNET/WARFSA/GWP-SA symposium.

Website update

www.africanwater.net, the virtual home of African Water, is continuously updated with information relevant for science cooperation in Africa. New items are presented on the entry pages of the various sub-sites and the most relevant ones are also collected on the home page to give you an overview right from the beginning. In the News section of the homepage, we also inform viewers about new entries in the Links sections, which are growing constantly.

The web statistics show an average of 21 visitors per day, which means a slight increase in the last quarter. They have been referred to African Water mostly through Google using search terms like African Water, Water Projects, Funding Water Africa, etc. Around 150 people have subscribed to the AW newsletter.

The following information has recently been added to the website:

Final Topics for FP7 - For the work programme of FP7, the documents containing the final topics for the "People" and the "Environment" programme have been published and are also prepared for downloading (<http://www.africanwater.net/index.php?id=15>)

The deadline for submission of Environment proposals under the first call is 2nd May 2007.

Portuguese information - Since African Water addresses all of Africa, some information in Portuguese has been added to the website:

- information about FP7 topics (<http://www.africanwater.net/index.php?id=15>)
- the African Water project leaflet (<http://www.africanwater.net/index.php?id=7>)

New links - Several new links to research projects dealing with water in Africa have been added, the last one pointing to the *Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI)*.

FP7 news

FP7 is now fully underway. The first FP7 calls for proposal were announced on 22nd December 2006 – a total of 42 calls spread across all the different parts of the programme.

Note that deadlines vary across different themes. The Environment (including Climate Change) theme has a deadline of 2nd May 2007. Researchers interested in areas related to water research should note, however, that other themes (for example Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Technology, Information and Communication Technologies, Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies, and Space) many also include relevant topics.

Work programmes set out the precise topics included in each theme. Every theme includes some SICA projects. SICA (Specific International Co-operation Actions) are projects targeted towards specific regions (for example, Africa); they allow organisations from countries in the appropriate region to collaborate with European organisations on specific topics.

In addition, African partners can also join with European partners in projects on any of the other topics in the work programme, as long as participation is in addition to the European partners and necessary to the project itself.

The Marie Curie programme, which focuses on research careers, training and fellowships also has a number of actions in which international participation is welcomed. Of particular interest may be Incoming and Outgoing International Fellowships. These are individual post-doctoral fellowships of 12 - 24 months, allowing researchers from outside Europe to undertake a fellowship within Europe (Incoming) or one from Europe to undertake a fellowship outside of Europe (Outgoing). Deadlines for both schemes are 14th August 2007. Other Marie Curie deadlines vary; all schemes are open to any area of research.

All FP7 applications are made electronically, using the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS). The EPSS system has been developed and tested over recent months. It is now ready to be launched for most areas. Those wanting to submit a proposal as the coordinator must register for the system and get a password. (Note that if you are a project partner, however, your coordinator will do this). Registration is through the CORDIS website (see below); go to the page for the theme/programme you are applying for, for the correct EPSS link.

The new European Research Council (ERC) had a launch conference in Berlin. The ERC's first call (deadline 25th April 2007) is for Starting Independent Research Grants. Open to all 'frontier' areas of science, technology, social science and humanities, these allow researchers to establish or extend their first research team. The researcher can be from anywhere in the world, as long as they are based in Europe for the project, and their team can include partners from any country.

Guides for Applicants are available for each area, and each different type of project. These are essential reading for anyone involved in submitting a proposal.

The Model Grant Agreement, covering contractual and financial conditions) is due to be finalised by the end of the March 2007. Detailed Financial Guidelines, with examples, should follow shortly afterwards.

For further information:

CORDIS FP7 page, with links to documents and submission mechanisms for each theme:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

CORDIS partner search facility:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners_en.html

Registration to be an expert evaluator:

<https://cordis.europa.eu/emmp7/>

Beyond the practicalities of FP7, the European Commission's Research Directorate General is due to publish next month a 'Green Paper' on the European Research Area (ERA). This paper, entitled 'The European Research Area: New Perspectives' will assess the current situation in terms of meeting the objectives for the ERA originally set out in a Communication in 2000, and will look at what the next steps might be in the achievement of the ERA. It is expected that the paper will have a significant focus on the international dimension in research, recognising the impact of increased globalisation of research on the ERA.

2007 UKRO conference – you could get funding to attend!

Each year the UK Research Office organises a two-day Annual Conference aimed primarily at European Research Liaison Officers. This year, the conference will be held at Imperial College, London, UK on 5th and 6th July 2007. The conference will have a strong focus on FP7.

African Water will sponsor two representatives from African research organisations to attend the 2007 conference. African Water will cover travel and subsistence costs (economy airfares and train travel, and UK government subsistence rates), plus registration fees for the conference.

Nominated representatives should not be researchers, but should be European Research Liaison Officers, Research Managers or Administrators, Fundraising or Policy Support personnel. The Conference provides an excellent forum for discussion and networking with key speakers from the European Institutions on a wide range of EU policies and funding opportunities.

The application form will be added to the website soon. To apply please download and complete the application form and submit by email to African Water (info-africanwater@ceh.ac.uk). The closing date for applications is 30th April 2007. The two successful applicants will be informed by 11th May 2007 and asked to confirm in writing that they will attend.

For more information, there is an article about the 2006 conference in African Water Newsletter 2 (September 2006). Copies of presentations from that and previous conferences can be found at: http://www.ukro.ac.uk/annual_conference/index.htm.

Please note that failing to secure sponsorship from African Water does not preclude you from attending the conference with your own funding. Details of the conference programme and registration facility will be added to the African Water website as soon as they are available.

First African Water training workshop

The first training workshop took place in Pretoria, South Africa from 31st January to 2nd February 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to provide interested researchers involved in the water research and related areas, as well as research administrators and trainers, with all of the necessary information to participate in FP7. 32 delegates attended, drawn mostly from South Africa, with representatives also attending from Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

The workshop content was primarily delivered by Amanda Crowfoot from the UK Research Office (UKRO) based in Brussels and Neil Runnalls from the UK Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). The following topics were addressed:

- Introduction to the European Union institutions
- Introduction to the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research and technological development
- Water-related research opportunities in FP7
- Proposal preparation, including: consortium building, proposal writing; and proposal submission
- Discussion of African experiences of participating in the Framework Programme
- Marie Curie Programme
- Opportunities beyond the Framework Programme
- Discussion on institutional strategies for participation

In addition to the above, presentations were given by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of South Africa together with associated institutions that are implementing instruments to support South African researchers to access the FP7 programme. This part of the programme mostly addressed the needs of the South African research community. The presentations focused on:

- ESASTAP: Opportunities for South Africa's participation in FP by Mmboneni Muofhe
- ST-EAP: Europe Africa partnership in S&T by Takalani Nemaungani
- National Contact Point (NCP) Support for SA participants in FP by Renee le Roux

The presentations were well received and the discussions were considered informative by the participants. There was lots of interest from participants, and some active discussion, with lots of good questions. There was some very positive feedback informally, and participants certainly seemed to welcome the fact that this had been organised. The workshop also provided an opportunity for the delegates to network amongst themselves.

Presentations from the workshop will be available to download from the African Water website.

Further regional training workshops are planned later in the year in East Africa and West Africa.

Networking with African scientists

Water sciences and technologies constitute one of the main flagship programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). An African Task Team on Water Sciences and Technology Development, of which the Water Research Commission of South Africa (WRC) is a partner, was constituted to support implementation of this initiative. The first meeting was held in Pretoria, South Africa and the second meeting of the task team was held in Cairo, Egypt. The task team as constituted consisted of representatives from Algeria, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, France, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda. During the task team meeting in Cairo held on 19th November 2006, the programme of African Water was introduced and incorporated as part of the business planning processes.

The governance and financing mechanism proposals to support the implementation of the water sciences initiative was submitted to an inter-ministerial dialogue arranged in Cairo, Egypt on 22nd November 2006. The dialogue was attended by science and technology and water ministers from Lesotho, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe, senior representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Africa, and representatives from the Office of Science and Technology of NEPAD and the African Union (AU) Commission. Throughout the day, delegates discussed issues related to criteria and guidelines, financial mechanisms and governance for the network of centres of excellence in water science and technology (the network), before agreeing to its establishment. A number of resolutions emanated from the meeting which must be implemented in the comprehensive business plan to be tabled at the 3rd AMCOST Summit/Conference/Symposium to be held in Nairobi, Kenya during September 2007. At the meeting, African Water was introduced through a presentation to the ministers.

7th WATERNET/WARFSA/GWP-SA symposium

WaterNet is a regional network for capacity building in integrated water resources management (IWRM) in Southern Africa, which was founded in 2000 and which currently has a membership of 49 university departments and research institutions in fourteen countries. The Water Research Fund for Southern Africa WARFSA was established in 1999 and promotes research activities in water-related topics, having so far funded 70 research projects in 10 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Both are affiliate programmes of the SADC Water Division (SADC WD). The WaterNet/WARFSA Symposia were held in six different countries in the region, each time hosted by one or more member institutions of the two programmes. The Global Water Partnership – Southern Africa participated in the last two symposia as co-organisers. The 7th symposium was held in Lilongwe, Malawi in November 2006. At one of the sessions, the African Water programme was introduced, and brochures were distributed. The 8th symposium will be held in Zimbabwe in 2007 – see the website for more information. (<http://www.iwsd.co.zw/waternet.cfm?pid=56>).