



About the AWG

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation was launched in Johannesburg in 2002 and is being implemented through the EU Water Initiative – Africa Component. The purpose of this partnership is to make an effective joint (Africa-Europe) contribution to the achievement of water and sanitation related MDGs. The strategic partnership has created an Africa Working Group (AWG) consisting of representatives from AMCOW-TAC, EU Member States, EU Commission, civil society and the private sector working as a joint platform on water-related development issues.

2009 in a nutshell

The last AWG Newsletter was issued in October 2009. Since then many things have happened which will probably have a strong impact on the AWG's future. As most of those following the AWG are aware, 2009 was a year in which we had to focus on "internal" issues. Not because there were no concrete ideas about what could be done within the AWG framework to strengthen the water sector in Africa, but because there was the clear need to revise the formal AWG framework.

Firstly, it was necessary to develop a **new AWG strategy** for several reasons. This has been done in a truly participative process throughout 2009 and we are glad to announce that it has been brought to a successful ending.

Secondly, and of course closely linked to the strategy work, the **multi-annual work plan** for the period until 2013 had to be adopted. Recent developments made existing plans partly inappropriate and it was necessary to define lines of activities which are supporting the new strategy, react on international developments and build on earlier AWG achievements. Again, it is a pleasure to announce that it was possible to finalise this task and we are confident that what has been achieved incorporates many of the ideas which fed into the process.

The strategy can be found on the AWG website, the workplan is coming soon (<http://www.euwi.net/wg/21244/channel/document>).

Thirdly, the **financial basis** for the AWG had to be secured. Throughout 2008 and 2009 the AWG operated mainly on the basis of a budget provided by the ACP-EU Water Facility. While this contract in its original version would have to come to an end in 2009 it was already clear earlier that a large portion of the budget could not be spent at that time. To secure the available funding it was necessary to apply for a no-cost extension for another year on the basis of a 2010 work programme, within the framework of the new multi-annual plan. This application was accepted by EuropeAid just before Christmas and it must be mentioned here that this pleasant closure of 2009 would not have been possible without the good cooperation between all partners involved.

Beside the WF contract another source of funding for the AWG has been secured. A proposal elaborated together with DG DEV to earmark a share of over 1 Mio Euro for 3 years from the EC thematic budget for "EUWI - Policy Development and Implementation for Sustainable Water Management in Africa" has been accepted. This money will be used for different activities along the mentioned theme and details remain to be defined, but it is very likely that several AWG activities from the multi-annual plan will be supported.

The 2nd Africa Water Week

For all these achievements the second Africa Water Week (AWW-2) in Johannesburg was an important milestone. It was the spirit of this meeting and the opportunity to meet and work with so many people interested in strengthening the water sector in Africa that really brought things forward.

Of course the AWG meeting was a highlight for us (see draft minutes!): it discussed and endorsed the new strategy and the multi-annual work plan. But beside that a lot of other things happened.

For instance, communication with two other relevant networks, the Global Framework for Action (GF4A) and the G8 Water Experts, has been established, resulting in a joint message to the PANAFCON. This will hopefully be further developed into a more intense dialogue, striving to explore and to develop synergies and complementarities between these initiatives.

On the thematic level there were two well-attended EUWI side events. The AWG discussed the idea of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) and existing experiences in the water sector and also explored the demand for further related activities. Some 35 participants witnessed interesting statements from the panel and a lively discussion and in the end everyone agreed that there is need for further work on this issue and that the AWG should play a role (see special report! <http://www.euwi.net/wg/21244/channel/document>).

The SWAp session was related to one on Strategic Financial Planning organized by the EUWI Finance Working Group. Building on the case of Lesotho important experiences were presented, which among others demonstrated the added value of an early identification and involvement of relevant stakeholder groups to achieve sustainable and accepted national plans.

The time after AWW-2 has been mainly used for finalising all the documents mentioned earlier (which was only possible because of a really engaged cooperation between all players), but also to already draft concepts and a ToR for the 2010 work programme which will be described later.

And once more the AWG provided a framework to coordinate the contributions of several EU Member States' water experts for the design of the new ACP-EU Water Facility within the 10th European Development Fund.

The workplan of AWG in 2010

As said before, the AWG workplan 2010 was approved during the last AWG meeting. The emphasis in implementation will be on working jointly with AMCOW, getting other global partners involved, broadening the participation among EU member states, generating additional resources and continuing working in a bilingual mode. The activities for 2010 are grouped under the same 4 objectives that the strategy has identified (see also the previous newsletter). Using the existing funds from the Water Facility almost 10 activities have been formulated. The workplan also contains additional activities, which have been proposed by the AWG members but which need additional funding. Most probably, several of these activities can get funding from the recently approved EC thematic budget (see above). The AWG workplan 2010 is available at the AWG website.

Start-up of several AWG studies

In the first quarter of 2010, four activities from the approved workplan 2010 will be started up. These are: 1) mapping of sanitation activities by the EU, 2) CRS guidance paper: a note for using the revised CRS purpose code for sanitation, 3) a study to get insight into the implementation of the EC code of conduct and 4) a study to systemize and disseminate the lessons from the application of SWAps in Africa. For each of these studies, coordination and alignment with the AMCOW workplan will be sought and for each activity a task force will be set up to give guidance and input for the execution of the study. If you are interested in supporting one of these task forces, please let the secretariat of the AWG know. IWRM (including transboundary water management) was identified as another important topic for the AWG. In the

coming months, the troika will take initiative to further develop concrete IWRM activities, assuming that funding will become available from the EC thematic budget. Again a task force will be set up (led by the Netherlands) to help guide this process. If you are interested in supporting this task force, please let us know.

Tentative calendar of AWG meetings in 2010

As outlined in the workplan, the AWG aims to have three meetings with its members in 2010, of which two will be held in Africa. Provisionally, the first meeting is scheduled in May (South Africa), back-to-back with a scheduled AMCOW-TAC meeting. The second and third AWG meeting are planned for the Stockholm Water Week (early September) and for Uganda (November/December, linked to the provisionally planned 3rd Africa water week).

Handing over to the Netherlands

With this last newsletter, all that remains is to hand over the AWG chair from Austria to the Netherlands. After playing an active role as incoming troika member throughout 2009 the team around Peter de Vries and Dick van Ginhoven will coordinate the AWG's work in 2010. And this is also the moment to thank the UK for their engagement in the last three years. Stephen Young and his team leave the troika but will hopefully stay involved in the coming years in something like a core group of interested MS, together with a.o. France and Germany.

It has to be mentioned at this point that the troika position as incoming chair is still vacant. We are confident that we can give you a name in the near future. However, we also want to appeal to other MS to have a look at what the AWG is doing and to consider intensifying their engagement. Like all networks, the AWG is only as strong as its members and the new strategic framework offers multiple opportunities to contribute to the AWG's objectives in line with individual national priorities.

The Austrian team thanks all its partners for the excellent cooperation and the support received for fulfilling a demanding and satisfying task.



Contact us

Please note that Coline van der Ven of the IRC support group will be on maternity leave until June 2010. She will be replaced by Ghislaine Heylen of IRC (tel +31 703044021 or heylen@irc.nl).

If you have any comments on this newsletter, or suggestions for the next one, please send them to Ghislaine Heylen (heylen@irc.nl) or Erma Uytewaal (uytewaal@irc.nl). The next newsletter is scheduled for Summer 2010. This newsletter has been prepared by Thomas Zipper, Erma Uytewaal and Paul van Koppen on behalf of the Africa Working Group troika.