

International Hydrological Programme

17th session of the Intergovernmental Council
(Paris, 3 – 7 July 2006)

PROPOSED CATEGORY II WATER-RELATED CENTRES

Item 8.2 of the provisional agenda

SUMMARY

This document reports on new proposals received from Member States for the establishment of category II centres under the auspices of UNESCO.

Decision required: The Council is requested to examine the proposals submitted by Member States and to endorse the technical concepts of new category II UNESCO water-related centres to be established under the auspices of UNESCO, subject to the decision of the governing bodies of UNESCO, as outlined in paragraphs 4, 7 and 11.

BACKGROUND

1. The demand for the establishment and operation of water-related centres under the auspices of UNESCO has increased dramatically over the past several years due to the increased importance of water issues at local, regional and global scale and the recognition that IHP is an effective and proven framework in which to establish international or regional centres. The IHP network of centres now includes one category I centre (UNESCO-IHE) and twelve centres under the auspices of UNESCO (category II). This network of centres is proving to be an excellent delivery mechanism for IHP activities, in particular since water and associated ecosystems has become a principal priority for UNESCO. This document reports on the four new proposals received from Member States for the establishment of category II centres under the auspices of UNESCO.

Regional Centre for Water Management Research in Arid Zones (Pakistan)

2. The Government of Pakistan has forwarded a proposal to the IHP Secretariat to host a Regional Centre for Water Management Research in Arid Zones. Pakistan would contribute by providing research facilities established by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR). PCRWR also acts as a secretariat for the Pakistan National Committee for the International Hydrological Programme (PNC-IHP). The proposed activities of the centre include the development of innovative, low cost technologies for efficient use of water resources in arid and semi-arid environments as well as facilitation of training and capacity building of professional staff in relevant disciplines of water resources and database development.

3. The Government of Pakistan has proposed that cooperation be established with existing category II centres, in particular those with thematic focus on arid lands (such as the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies of Arid and Semi-Arid Zones in Cairo, Egypt and the newly established Regional Centre for Arid and Semi-arid Regions of Latin America and the Caribbean in La Serena, Chile) and with the global network G-WADI (Water and Development Information for Arid Lands).

4. The proposal received from the government of Pakistan regarding the establishment of the centre was reviewed by the IHP Bureau at its 39th session. The Bureau endorsed the proposal and recommended that the IHP Intergovernmental Council consider the proposal at its next session. The IHP Intergovernmental Council may wish to welcome the proposal and request UNESCO's assistance in preparing the necessary documentation to be submitted to the governing bodies of UNESCO towards the creation of the centre, in accordance with UNESCO's new guidelines for category II centres contained in document 33 C/19.

IHP-HELP International Centre of Water for Food Security at Charles Sturt University (Australia)

5. The Government of Australia has forwarded to the IHP Bureau, at its 39th session, a proposal to establish an IHP-HELP International Centre of Water for Food Security at Charles Sturt University. The proposed centre would implement studies and research related to sustainable water resources development in the context of hydrology of food production in rural and peri-urban irrigated catchments to improve prospects for poverty reduction and achieving Millennium Development Goals. The proposed centre would rely on the twin basin arrangement between a number of IHP-HELP Basins to integrate measurements, to generalize process understanding and model climate variability and change to design enhanced water productivity using an eco-hydrology approach in the watershed context. The proposed centre will investigate how twin basin arrangements can result in equitable water allocation, more efficient conjunctive water use, sustainable irrigation practices and reduced transport of residuals in rural and peri-urban irrigated environments and minimise their impacts on the ecosystem function.

6. The centre would disseminate the results of the research undertaken through seminars, training courses, conferences and periodic publications and would serve as an extensive regional database (of hydrological data, state-of-the-art knowledge, list of scientists, etc.) in order to transfer knowledge and information to other countries and regions. The centre would also facilitate the development of inter-institutional and multinational research and educational activities that support and contribute to the strengthening of the existing scientific and academic institutions of the region.

7. The IHP Bureau endorsed the proposal and recommended that the IHP Intergovernmental Council consider the proposal at its next session. The IHP Intergovernmental Council may wish to welcome the proposal and request UNESCO's assistance in preparing the necessary documentation to be submitted to the governing bodies of UNESCO towards the creation of the centre, in accordance with UNESCO's new guidelines for category II centres contained in document 33 C/19.

International Hydroinformatics Centre for Integrated Water Resources Management (Brazil)

8. The 174th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO welcomed the proposal to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding on water sciences technical cooperation with Itaipu Binacional. Itaipu Binacional is an international organization established under a bilateral treaty between the governments of Brazil and Paraguay. Itaipu Binacional and IHP have an ongoing set of cooperative actions in the region. One of the most important elements within the context of the approved MoU between UNESCO and Itaipu Binacional is the proposal for the establishment of a category II centre on Hydroinformatics for Integrated Water Resources Management under the auspices of UNESCO. The centre is expected to be hosted at the Itaipu Binacional Technological Park.

9. The establishment of this centre has been endorsed by the Brazilian IHP National Committee. Furthermore, at the VI Meeting of the IHP-LAC National Committee and Focal Points (12-13 October, 2005, Kingston, Jamaica), the Resolution IHP-LAC VI-03 was approved in support of the centre. UNESCO has retained an internationally recognized water expert to conduct a fact-finding mission that will yield an independent report on the feasibility of the establishment and implementation of such institution. It is expected that this centre will be a major contributor to several of the programmes and projects carried out by IHP in Latin America, and the products emerging from this collaboration will be of great interest to all Member States.

11. The IHP Bureau at its 39th session noted that the LAC regional meeting had supported the establishment of the centre. The IHP Intergovernmental Council may wish to welcome the proposal and request the UNESCO's assistance in preparing the necessary documentation to be submitted to the governing bodies of UNESCO towards the creation of the centre, in accordance with UNESCO's new guidelines for category II centres contained in document 33 C/19.

Centre on Sustainable Water Engineering and Management (Thailand)

12. The IHP Bureau at its 39th session noted with interest the intention expressed by the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand to establish a category II centre on sustainable water engineering and management in cooperation with UNESCO and expressed its interest in receiving a proposal. It is anticipated that the Government of Thailand will present a proposal for the centre at the 17th session of the Intergovernmental Council.