



Evaluation Summary

5th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference

GEF International Waters:LEARN strengthens International Waters (IW) management by facilitating learning and information sharing among IW projects, partners and stakeholders. See <http://www.iwlearn.net> for details.

- ◆ Some 26% (77/293) of participants submitted evaluation forms
- ◆ Overall, participants of the 5th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference (IWC5) considered the event a success (3.84). They found it directly applicable to their work functions (3.7) and that it allowed sufficient time for networking (3.6). To a lesser extent, they felt it enhanced their understanding of results-based management (3.2) and that it communicated strategies for mainstreaming climatic variability and change (3.2).
- ◆ The project management workshops (all four of them) and innovation marketplace were the most highly regarded sessions of the conference.
- ◆ The small table dialogue modality remains a good concept but was again flawed in its execution. It should be split over two days and have expert facilitation.
- ◆ Respondents want more focus on technological innovation and project results/achievements in the core program, although were not specific as to what conference modality should be used.
- ◆ Key factors that made the conference worthwhile for participants: Face-to-face networking (48), Experience sharing/Feedback on approaches/Exposure to IW Portfolio (36), Understand the GEF, GEF5, Programmatic Approaches (18), Technical Field trip(s) (7), Pre-conference technical workshops (6), Innovation Marketplace (5), GEF IW:LEARN (4), Presenting results (3), Climate Discussion (3), Integrated Approaches Discussion (2)
- ◆ In terms of IWC5 sessions, the evaluators wanted to hear more on climatic variability and change, TDA-SAP approaches, Sustainability (Life After GEF), Development of Indicators/Project Management, GEF5 Planning and Results-Based Management.
- ◆ In the next IWC, people would like to see time spent on the following topics: Governance/Legal Frameworks, Community Engagement/Stakeholder Involvement, Innovative Technical Approaches, Resource Mobilization, Science-Governance Links and a Role for Projects and Government Representatives
- ◆ IW:LEARN and the GEF received extensive recommendations both institutionally and for the next IWC

Introduction

The 5th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC5) was executed from October 26th to October 29th, 2009 in Cairns, Australia (with two days of pre-conference workshops preceding the events). AustraliaAID officially hosted the IWC5, providing major support to the event. The IWC5 was jointly organized by two planning committees, one consisting of the GEF, the GEF agencies and IW:LEARN staff, and a second Australia Host Committee including the Government and several water management institutions who chaired the pre-conference workshops.

The general purpose of the IWC is to share experiences and innovative practices among the GEF's multi-billion dollar International Waters portfolio, promote learning and capacity building and encourage GEF International Waters projects to apply evolving GEF policies and procedures during implementation. In addition, the IWC5 focused on two major themes:

- ◆ Mainstreaming Climatic Variability & Change in International Waters Management
- ◆ Results-based Management

The IWC5 included the participation of 293 people, including government representatives, IW project managers, staff of international organizations, NGO's, the private sector and also key participation from Australian centers of excellence. Some 73 countries were represented as well as 66 GEF International Waters projects and 3 GEF Strategic Partnerships (including 33 projects represented by their project managers).

Information and documents (agenda, participants, presentations, proceedings and conclusions, youtube feature stories, reflection videos and other materials) emerging from the conference can be downloaded from: <http://www.iwlearn.net/iwc2009>.

This summary evaluation report of the conference is based on participant responses to an evaluation questionnaire.

The report follows the following structure:

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Who responded?.....	4
Key Findings/General Sentiments	4
Conclusions/Key Recommendations	5
1. What is your overall rating of 5th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC5)? ...	6
2. To what extent is the knowledge you gained through this IWC directly applicable to your current work or functions?.....	6
3. To what extent did IWC5 increase your understanding of how to apply results-based management to your project management?.....	7
4. To what extent did the IWC5 help communicate possible strategies for mainstreaming climatic variability & change in GEF project programming?	7
5. To what extent did the IWC agenda allow enough time for (informal) networking?	7
6. How would you rate logistical aspects of the conference?	8
7. Did you feel adequately prepared for the Conference? Was there sufficient information provided in advance?.....	8
8. (With an eye to emissions reduction) Would it be possible to obtain the results and benefits of the IWC5 by holding the meeting virtually?	8
Session Overview	9
9. Pre-Conference Technical Workshop.....	9
10. Update on New Technologies and Panel Discussion on GEF-IW Project Needs.....	9
11. Asia-Pacific Region Achievements and Initiatives.....	10
12. Small Table Dialogue on Mainstreaming Climatic Variability and Change.....	10
13. Results-Based Management Session.....	10

14. GEF IW Experience Sharing and Learning Portfolio	11
15. Private Sector Involvement Roundtable	11
16. Project Management Workshop	11
17. Who Wants to be a Results-Based Manager?.....	11
18. Film Festival.....	12
19. Innovation Marketplace.....	12
20. Reflecting on the four days of the IWC5, what are the three key factors that made this a worthwhile experience for you? How did this Conference benefit you, your GEF IW project and/or home institution?.....	12
21. What steps do you plan to take (if any) in terms of mainstreaming climatic variability and change, results-based management and/or private sector engagement as a result of your experience in the IWC5?.....	14
22. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent more time, regardless of whether they were addressed in IWC5 or not? What new issues or questions emerged that remain unanswered from the Conference?	16
23. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent less time in the Conference?.....	19
24. What advice can you give GEF IW:LEARN to improve assistance or services to your project?	19
25. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or concerns?.....	21
Comparisons to past IWC's	22

Who responded?

Some 77 out of 293 participants in the 5th Biennial GEF IWC submitted evaluation forms, or roughly 26.3% (marginally better than the response rate at IWC4). The 77 broke down as follows:

- ◆ 29 (37.7%) GEF Project Manager or Staff
- ◆ 11 (14.3%) Government Representative
- ◆ 13 (16.9%) GEF Agency
- ◆ 9 (11.7%) Other international organization or transboundary commission
- ◆ 2 (2.6%) Private Sector or NGO
- ◆ 13 (16.9%) Other

Key Findings/General Sentiments

Overall, participants of the 5th Biennial GEF International Waters Conference (IWC5) considered the event a success (3.84). They found it directly applicable to their work functions (3.7) and that it allowed sufficient time for networking (3.6). To a lesser extent, they felt it enhanced their understanding of results-based management (3.2) and that it communicated strategies for mainstreaming climatic variability and change (3.2).

The IWC5 consolidated the approach of the IWC4, in terms of retaining its new modalities like small table dialogues, innovation marketplace (exhibit area), project management workshops, participant workshops, technical sessions (pre-conference workshops) and built on others (expanded site visits, welcome reception). In general, most of the positive lessons of IWC4 were replicated, whilst some of the negative ones were not corrected.

Respondents displayed significant inconsistency in sentiment and observations, in that the evaluation results display many extremes in opinion. The average rating of all participants for all sessions is 3.54/5, where as the standard deviation of all those results is 0.8. This suggests a variety of opinion. Why is this? Plenty of explanations exist...ranging from the variety in sessions and types of sessions (as well as perceptions of success), to the wide variety of participants. Besides the usual mix of inter alia, project managers, international organization staff, government representatives, the IWC5 fielded many scientists. The conference thus had to play host to decision-makers, scientists, NGO personnel and others and the evaluation data bears this mix of success and shortfalls out.

Reviewing the data, one can state that broadly speaking, by all measures the IWC5 was a success defined by the evaluation data. There remain however, legions of problems to be corrected and lessons-learned to be absorbed in the design of the IWC6. The IWC5 can be argued to have achieved its general purposes in service to the GEF IW portfolio (this is borne out heavily by the responses to question #20 on why the experience was worthwhile). It performed less well on addressing the primary conference themes, although even that was considered above satisfactory.

Other key findings and recommendations for the future include:

- ◆ The **project management workshops (all four of them) and innovation marketplace** were the most highly regarded sessions of the conference.
- ◆ Participants regarded the project management workshops (all four topics) highly, but they **should not be concurrent next time**.
- ◆ The small table dialogue modality **remains a good concept but was again flawed in its execution**. It should be split over two days and have expert facilitation.
- ◆ There was **insufficient GEF IW project input** into both the design of the IWC5 and its sessions.
- ◆ Respondents want more **focus on technological innovation and project results/achievements** in the core program, although were not specific as to what conference modality should be used.
- ◆ For networking success, the concept of **lunchtime sponsor speaking should be abolished**.
- ◆ Participants desired a higher-quality approach to primary conference themes (in this case mainstreaming climatic variability and change and also results-based management), with greater attention to **known approaches and workable solutions** and less to general discussion.
- ◆ Key factors that made the conference worthwhile for participants: Face-to-face networking (48), Experience sharing/Feedback on approaches/Exposure to IW Portfolio (36), Understand the GEF, GEF5, Programmatic Approaches (18), Technical Field trip(s) (7), Pre-conference technical workshops (6), Innovation Marketplace (5), GEF IW:LEARN (4), Presenting results (3), Climate (3), Integrated Approaches (2)
- ◆ Many participants pledged to engage in a variety of follow-up actions
 - Regarding climatic variability and change, they pledge to incorporate considerations, develop transboundary water management models, solicit stakeholder inputs and climate proof their projects
 - On results-based management, some will review methodologies, stress the benefits of monitoring, review existing logical frameworks and prepare better sets of indicators
 - Many wrote that they will engage the private sector, speaking a language they understand
 - Some will engage the GEF STAP and applied science practitioners
 - Others plan to develop new risk assessment methodologies
- ◆ Some IWC5 participants have rather poor handwriting.

Conclusions: Other Recommendations for the Future

- ◆ Perhaps could have had a few **specific project coordinator sessions** to build relationships at project management level
- ◆ In terms of IWC5 sessions, the evaluators wanted to hear **more on climatic variability and change, TDA-SAP approaches, Sustainability (Life After GEF), Development of Indicators/Project Management, GEF5 Planning and Results-Based Management**.
 - Some would like to hear more on how **climatic variability and change will impact the TDA-SAP process**.

- People would have liked to spend more time on the key factors in the **sustainability of project initiatives & results**, as well as the **GEF role in wider initiatives**.
- ◆ In the next IWC, people would like to see time spent on the following topics: Governance/Legal Frameworks, Community Engagement/Stakeholder Involvement, Innovative Technical Approaches, Resource Mobilization, Science-Governance Links and a Role for Projects and Government Representatives
- ◆ Participants would like to see **more time for bilateral discussions**.
- ◆ Some more general recommendations include:
 - We should have spent a **roundtable on innovation in the portfolio** rather than leaving it to the poster session
 - For each session GEF should **ensure each presenter is communicating well with target audiences** i.e. vet presenters more carefully.
 - No real issues, but **one extra day would have taken the pressure off** for more informal meetings
 - Trying to identify new priorities without **scaling up on "old" priorities**, which have not yet been sufficiently addressed.
- ◆ The GEF IW:LEARN project received some specific recommendations to:
 - improve its interactions with projects, advertise its services more and ask projects to designate an IW:LEARN focal point within each GEF IW project
 - improve external (to the GEF IW Portfolio) connections
 - focus more on project results
- ◆ Some selected recommendations for the design of the next IWC include:
 - GEF **projects under implementation should have been surveyed** for input in the planning/information for the IWC
 - Have GEF IW **project managers as session coordinators**
 - Take into account **regional/gender balance/diversity**
 - **Resolve visa problems early on.**
 - Use **inquisitive facilitation or a journalist in plenary** to enhance interaction.
 - Set up a **"speakers corner"** where people can present during coffee breaks and other sessions where participants are out and about

1. What is your overall rating of 5th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC5)?

Number of respondents: 75 (97%)
 Average Response: **3.84/5**
 Standard Deviation: 0.88
 Ratings: 1(1), 2(4), 3(18), 4(35), 5(17)

The vast majority of participants considered the 5th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference to be an **overall success**. 42 people gave an above-average rating, with just 5 people giving the conference a failing grade. From the first bloc of questions, this question had the lowest standard deviation, indicating the strongest consensus among participants.

Additional Comments

- ◆ Generally the contents of the conference were good but the time was not enough/very tight
- ◆ Field trips on 2nd day worked well

2. To what extent is the knowledge you gained through this IWC directly applicable to your current work or functions?

Number of respondents: 76 (99%)
 Average Response: **3.7/5**
 Standard Deviation: 1.00

Ratings: 1(1), 2(8), 3(21), 4(27), 5(19)

Nearly all respondents affirmed that they gained **applicable knowledge** through the conference.

Additional Comments

- ◆ In future, try to encourage people to **talk about new stuff**. Everyone knows about climate change, bleaching, overfishing and the same old graphs.
- ◆ There was sufficient time for networking out of formal sessions, but you should have been careful to have **more sessions on technical issues** and wider coverage of multidisciplinary approaches.

3. To what extent did IWC5 increase your understanding of how to apply results-based management to your project management?

Number of respondents: 75 (97%)

Average Response: **3.2/5**

Standard Deviation: 1.16

Ratings: 1(6), 2(16), 3(21), 4(22), 5(10)

Participants had a more **evenly divided response** on the issue of whether their understanding of how to apply results-based management was improved. Decidedly more people gave less than satisfactory markings, although the highest number of participants still gave the session a 4/5. With the highest standard deviation (from this set of questions), participants were quite divided.

4. To what extent did the IWC5 help communicate possible strategies for mainstreaming climatic variability & change in GEF project programming?

Number of respondents: 74 (96%)

Average Response: **3.2/5**

Standard Deviation: 1.06

Ratings: 1(5), 2(11), 3(27), 4(23), 5(8)

Participants also expressed **mixed feelings** on the question of whether the IWC5 communicated strategies for mainstreaming climatic variability and change into GEF project programming. Relative to the overall conference evaluation, participants felt the theme was addressed only satisfactorily, although a majority of evaluators still gave the conference a 3/5 or higher on this question.

Additional Comments

- ◆ **Split the small table dialogue sessions over 2 days** and provide different questions/themes/regional focus to the 2nd round.
- ◆ **Discussions should have focused immediately on strategies for mainstreaming.**
- ◆ **How to apply was covered ok, but actual results was not. I think that's more important!**
- ◆ **The conference was not effective at all in offering strategies on mainstreaming climatic variability and change**
- ◆ **What is really "mainstreaming climatic variability and change"? Concrete discussion was missing**

5. To what extent did the IWC agenda allow enough time for (informal) networking?

Number of respondents: 76 (99%)

Average Response: **3.6/5**

Standard Deviation: 1.09

Ratings: 1(3), 2(9), 3(20), 4(26), 5(18)

Most participants felt that the conference provided **sufficient time for informal networking**.

Additional Comments

- ◆ Good opportunities for networking, however sometimes perhaps too structured, e.g. 2 talks at lunch which sometimes put one in a difficult situation of talking through or leaving a presentation
- ◆ **No more lunchtime talks**, they are a terrible idea
- ◆ A dinner would have been good.
- ◆ As networking is key, it would have been nice to have **two hours each day** to do networking and bilateral meetings

6. How would you rate logistical aspects of the conference?

Number of respondents: 74 (96%)

Average Response: **3.85/5**

Standard Deviation: 1.09

Ratings: 1(3), 2(7), 3(11), 4(30), 5(23)

Participants **rated logistical arrangements highly**, with the vast majority rating them average or above average.

Additional Comments

Participants again requested **catering to the needs of non-English speakers**. Specifically, there should be translation in French and other languages.

7. Did you feel adequately prepared for the Conference? Was there sufficient information provided in advance?

Number of respondents: 76 (96%)

Average Response: **3.6/5**

Standard Deviation: 1.07

Ratings: 1(2), 2(11), 3(19), 4(27), 5(17)

Most participants felt **adequately prepared** for the conference.

Additional Comments

One participant suggested that each **project prepare a presentation**. Whether or not they are presented, each could **follow a standard results template** for presentation virtually (iwlearn.net) or be given during a general presentation slot. Anecdotally, many projects complained that they did not give presentations. Although many solicitations were made and opportunities provided (especially during the pre-conference workshops), apparently this was not effectively communicated to them.

8. (With an eye to emissions reduction) Would it be possible to obtain the results and benefits of the IWC5 by holding the meeting virtually?

	Numbers	Percentage
No	51	66.2
Maybe	18	23.4
Yes	6	6
No Response	2	2.6

A super-majority **rejected the idea of holding the IWC virtually**.

Additional Comments

- ◆ With an eye to emissions reduction it would have been better to select a more central town in Australia, and in general countries where the average trip for participants is shorter.

Session Overview

Before embarking the results of individual sessions, it is worth taking a broad look at the overall evaluation results. The results here should be taken with a grain of salt as they constitute an apples and orange comparison. For example, most people did not specify which pre-conference workshop or project management workshop they attended. Furthermore, people confused the project management workshops with the participant workshops (which were forgotten in terms of the evaluation form). Finally, the evaluation form created some confusion by separating out the private sector involvement roundtable, which ran concurrently with the other project management workshops.* People evaluated the session even though they had not attended it. Nevertheless, the results below highlight the **overall popularity of the project management workshops**, both their topics and format (Life After GEF, Private Sector Roundtable, TDA-SAP and Indicators). The **innovation marketplace was also clearly a success**. Unfortunately, participants **widely panned the two sessions explicitly devoted to the conference themes**.

- ◆ Project Management Workshop **4.12**
- ◆ Who Wants to be a Results-Based Manager? **4.00**
- ◆ Innovation Marketplace **3.96**
- ◆ GEF IW Experience Sharing and Learning Portfolio **3.81**
- ◆ Pre-Conference Technical Workshop **3.72**
- ◆ Asia-Pacific Region Achievements and Initiatives **3.53**
- ◆ Film Festival **3.53**
- ◆ Private Sector Involvement Roundtable **3.46***
- ◆ Update on New Technologies and Panel Discussion on GEF-IW Project Needs **3.34**
- ◆ Results-Based Management Session **3.35**
- ◆ Small Table Dialogue on Mainstreaming Climatic Variability and Change **3.29**

9. Pre-Conference Technical Workshop

Number of respondents: 47 (60%)
Average Response: **3.72/5**
Standard Deviation: 0.88
Ratings: 1(2), 2(0), 3(14), 4(24), 5(7)

Participants **highly regarded the pre-conference workshops** generally speaking, with just two people rejecting them. It is clear from the number of responses that less people attended these workshops than the conference proper.

Additional Comments

- ◆ The pre-conference workshops were hardly attended by GEF staff and so had limited purpose.
- ◆ The pre-conference marine session had some excellent talks, but it perhaps should have been more diverse and international (i.e. too dominated by host country).
- ◆ The freshwater pre-conference session had no pedagogical thread"

10. Update on New Technologies and Panel Discussion on GEF-IW Project Needs

Number of respondents: 50 (64%)
Average Response: **3.34/5**
Standard Deviation: 0.89
Ratings: 1(1), 2(5), 3(26), 4(12), 5(6)

Participants gave the GEF STAP session a passing grade.

Additional Comments

- ◆ The STAP session was interesting, but technologies were beyond or inappropriate for many GEF beneficiary countries.

11. Asia-Pacific Region Achievements and Initiatives

Number of respondents: 51 (65%)
Average Response: **3.53/5**
Standard Deviation: 0.80
Ratings: 1(0), 2(6), 3(16), 4(25), 5(4)

Participants responded favorably to the host-region session.

12. Small Table Dialogue on Mainstreaming Climatic Variability and Change

Number of respondents: 69 (88%)
Average Response: **3.29/5**
Standard Deviation: 1.13
Ratings: 1(5), 2(14), 3(13), 4(30), 5(7)

Participants expressed very **mixed feelings about the small table dialogue session** although on the whole still giving a satisfactory rating. Five people rejected the session outright whereas seven people rated it highly successful. It is hard to make a final determination about the session with such disparities. From this bloc of questions, the small table dialogues also resulted in the highest standard deviation, further confirming the mixed feelings.

Additional Comments

- ◆ The round table sessions were **poorly organized (but a good idea)**
- ◆ More time allowed for roundtable dialogues would have given more opportunity.
- ◆ I would have liked to have learned something more, **technically speaking**, about climate variability and change
- ◆ The small table dialogue was (again) poorly facilitated and will have poor outputs.
- ◆ The small table dialogue on mainstreaming climate change was dismal. These same questions were discussed during the pre-conference workshops. No need to repeat the exercise.

13. Results-Based Management Session

Number of respondents: 62 (79%)
Average Response: **3.35/5**
Standard Deviation: 1.03
Ratings: 1(2), 2(11), 3(20), 4(21), 5(8)

The results-based management session fared slightly better in terms of evaluation than the small table dialogues.

Additional Comments

- ◆ This lacked real substance and guidance for project managers. Q: What is different from the status quo? **Why RBM and not adaptive management** which is based on results?
- ◆ RBM session was technically weak and didn't learn much there.

14. GEF IW Experience Sharing and Learning Portfolio

Number of respondents: 57 (73%)
Average Response: **3.8/5**
Standard Deviation: 0.90
Ratings: 1(0), 2(5), 3(14), 4(25), 5(13)

The Learning Portfolio session, which introduced a unique set of GEF IW projects, was the fourth most popular session.

Additional Comments

- ◆ This felt really bad - it was like a muppet show where the projects did not get too much of a voice. Too advance planned.

15. Private Sector Involvement Roundtable

Number of respondents: 26
Average Response: 3.46
Standard Deviation: 0.95
Ratings: 1(0), 2(5), 3(7), 4(11), 5(3)

The ratings for this session were a bit skewed as the session became a project management workshop and thus should not have been individually highlighted. That being said, the people who did evaluate were **pleased with the private sector roundtable**.

16. Project Management Workshop

Number of respondents: 33
Average Response: 4.12
Standard Deviation: 0.74
Ratings: 1(0), 2(1), 3(4), 4(18), 5(10)

The project management workshops were an **overwhelming favorite** among participants. With the lowest standard deviation among the session evaluations, participants were quite certain of this high ranking.

Additional Comments

- ◆ Perhaps could have had a few **specific project coordinator sessions** to build relationships at project management level
- ◆ The parallel sessions were best in terms of **maximizing knowledge sharing and participation** across participants
- ◆ Again the issue was time - **parallel sessions are also depressing** as you have to choose hence miss

17. Who Wants to be a Results-Based Manager?

Number of respondents: 56
Average Response: 4

Standard Deviation: 1.10
Ratings: 1(3), 2(2), 3(9), 4(20), 5(22)

The results-based management game, a lighter follow-up to the earlier formal results-based management session, earned the most #5 rankings of any session.

18. Film Festival

Number of respondents: 51
Average Response: 3.53
Standard Deviation: 0.97
Ratings: 1(0), 2(9), 3(14), 4(20), 5(8)

The film festival sustained withering critique in the comments session, but in the end still earned an above average ranking.

Additional Comments

- ◆ The film festival I felt was forgotten by the end of the day.

19. Innovation Marketplace

Number of respondents: 75 (96%)
Average Response: 3.96
Standard Deviation: 0.93
Ratings: 1(0), 2(3), 3(18), 4(33), 5(21)

The innovation marketplace grew ever more popular after the IWC5. In fact, it earned the highest number of combined #4 and #5 rankings of any session.

Additional Comments

- ◆ Refreshments worked well in innovation marketplace

20. Reflecting on the four days of the IWC5, what are the three key factors that made this a worthwhile experience for you? How did this Conference benefit you, your GEF IW project and/or home institution?

Participants offered a variety of responses to this all-important question. That being said, the responses can be clustered to an extent as follows.

Face-to-face networking (48): "Exchange at all levels, between IA's, projects, networking. This was the main benefit of IWC5."

No less than 48 people made reference to **face-to-face networking as the sine qua non** of the GEF Biennial International Waters Conference. They made reference to it in various ways and some people were more specific. In terms of people, they stressed the importance of meeting other GEF IW project managers, GEF Agency staff (including World Bank task team leaders) and new contacts (in general). They experienced value in **creating new partnerships** and meeting people dealing with the same problems and issues. Some people desired more time for networking, especially informally. In general, people felt that the IWC5 contained good participation both in terms of contributions and the presence of key people. They also stressed the importance of the **innovation marketplace as a networking tool**. Once again, the need to **create more networking/bilateral meeting space** was stressed as well as **distaste with the concept of lunchtime talks**.

Experience sharing/Feedback on approaches/Exposure to IW Portfolio (36)

Some 36 people mentioned experience (or information) sharing as making the IWC5 a worthwhile event. Although many participants mentioned this generically, some elaborated further. They highlighted experience sharing on indicator use, adaptive management, learning approaches, project experience, management frameworks, communication strategies and community development. It is apparent from the evaluation, that many IWC5 participants derived the simple pleasure of **learning about the rest of the GEF IW portfolio**, discovering relevant sister projects and common challenges.

Understand the GEF, GEF5, Programmatic Approaches (18)

18 participants enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the GEF, learn about plans for GEF5 and various other aspects of GEF IW project management as well as programmatic approaches. Some people wrote that they appreciated the change learn more about how the GEF works and who is behind decision-making. Regarding GEF5, people liked the glance at the GEF5 Strategy. One person indicated that they better understood the GEF's position on project management, complaining that the Agencies relay mixed messages. Others wrote that they also received direct input on their project management. One person did complain however, that the conference was about promoting GEF, respecting task managers and imposing projects on others.

Technical Field trip(s) (7)

People highlighted the technical field trips as making the IWC5 an excellent experience. This was the first time three options were offered to participants. Some pointed out the **high utility of having the trip on the second day**. If participants mentioned a trip, they generally mentioned the trip to the Great Barrier Reef.

Pre-conference technical workshops (6)

Six participants wrote that the pre-conference workshops (on technical issues) made the overall IWC5 a worthwhile experience. They appreciated being able to **access excellent scientific knowledge** and knowledge sharing in the fields of research and project management.

Innovation Marketplace (5)

Some participants highlighted the innovation marketplace as a key factor in making the IWC5 worthwhile. This was often in connection with the networking factor.

GEF IW:LEARN (4)

Learning more about GEF IW:LEARN and its services came up four times in evaluations.

Presenting results (3)

Only three people made direct reference, but others obliquely or anecdotally indicated they see the IWC5 as the place to **present project results**. For them this constitutes a key factor.

Climate (3)

A few participants said learning more about mainstreaming climatic variability and change formed a critical part of their IWC5 experience.

Integrated Approaches (2)

A couple participants enjoyed learning more about **integrated ecosystem-based management**.

Other topics and General shout outs

- ◆ Indicators and monitoring/evaluation concepts in terms of results oriented impacts
- ◆ Transboundary issues / Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
- ◆ Consolidated approaches
- ◆ Coral Reefs
- ◆ Improved IWRM knowledge and lessons learnt will enable sharing with my colleagues
- ◆ Seeing the global picture within which our projects focus
- ◆ Experience sharing and learning portfolio session: the conference benefited on water governance issues
- ◆ I was provided an opportunity to see what other outreach material is around
- ◆ I may have identified some interesting future job opportunities
- ◆ Capacity building
- ◆ Technical assistance
- ◆ Good mix of scientific/technical with socioeconomic/institutional
- ◆ Very real revelations of challenges/frustrations and potential solutions expressed by (especially new) GEF projects
- ◆ Great geographical spread - diverse locations, common themes, shared visions-great!
- ◆ Introduced our project
- ◆ Gender mainstreaming in water management is essential
- ◆ Exposure to best practice in IWRM
- ◆ Adaptive Australian experiences in EAF management
- ◆ The SIDS are often marginalized and the Cairns conference afforded the Pacific an opportunity to profiles issues of relevance to the region
- ◆ Identified a need for funding back the Tracking Tool information from GEFSEC consolidated to projects

21. What steps do you plan to take (if any) in terms of mainstreaming climatic variability and change, results-based management and/or private sector engagement as a result of your experience in the IWC5?

Climatic variability and change

The majority of participants responding to this evaluation question addressed steps they would take to mainstream climatic variability and change into international waters project programming. Some of these included:

- ◆ **Develop adaptation projects** on natural resource management portfolio
- ◆ **Incorporate related considerations** to future projects
- ◆ I'll go back to my contacts from preconference workshop to share individual, specific issues in the conduct of 2 main CC(SPA)/IW projects
- ◆ **Develop a transboundary water management model** considering possible scenarios based on climate change
- ◆ Include climate change impacts in the **project document**
- ◆ Will be awaiting more information on **TDA/SAP methodology**
- ◆ Mainstreaming climatic variability and change into all **project preparation phase**
- ◆ Climate **increased focus in Tisza** project
- ◆ **Assess monitoring programmes and solicit stakeholder advice** on priority actions that need to be integrated
- ◆ We will seek to add value through a **MSP under GEF5 that mainstreams climate variability and change into demonstrations**
- ◆ **Extrapolate current methods** of coping with stress and levels of disaster to envision future socioeconomic system needs
- ◆ I will relook at the Western Indian Ocean-LaB Strategic Action Programme to see if climate change/variability is **adequately integrated** (I believe it is) and probably develop a project concept

- ◆ **Analyze the project** in the face of climate change and adapt accordingly
- ◆ Pay attention to outcomes of UNFCCC Copenhagen
- ◆ Review project logical framework indicators and when necessary include new ones on climatic resilience in order to "**climate proof**" projects

Results-based Management

As concerns results-based management, most people indicated they would revisit their methodologies and logical frameworks.

- ◆ **Review methodologies** and seek ways to apply more on Results-based Management
- ◆ Revise logical framework, Strategic Action Programme and prioritize key specific measurable actions
- ◆ Continue to **stress benefits of monitoring** (performance, etc) feedback to improved management and demonstrate
- ◆ Review of existing logical framework and indicators
- ◆ **Prepare a good set of indicators** to monitor results

Private Sector

Participants expressed some doubt and wanted more information, but did not question the **importance of engaging the private sector**.

- ◆ Think a lot more about private sector involvement.
- ◆ Partnership between public and private sector is important but the way of understanding and mutual work is very hard to be established on the field.
- ◆ Need to get **more information on private sector** issues, but will certainly involve them in my work.
- ◆ **Talk the language they understand** and relate to their needs.

Science

- ◆ Work more closely with the GEF Scientific and Advisory Panel and **applied science practitioners**.

Risk

- ◆ Learn more about the **new risk assessment methodologies**
- ◆ Focusing on activities of **risk assessment center** and integration at a much larger scale into next phase

Capacity building

- ◆ Organize presentations and training activities
- ◆ Systematic program of capacity building

General/Other

- ◆ Targeted **communication strategies**
- ◆ Try to apply as much as possible what I could capture from conference
- ◆ Initiate a **dialogue forum** with other groups of common thinking and agreement to work together
- ◆ **Improve visualization** of our project outcomes
- ◆ Hold presentations at **decision-maker meetings** (regional)
- ◆ For me, one of the main considerations I will take forward is for IWC6 which is in the Mediterranean, where we (along with WB) have a large GEF programmatic investment. In particular, I'm wondering if and how the project can also benefit from how many world experts visit their site. Is it possible for participants to contribute their technical advice and

experience to the project? Think about this...I know it is not practical with such a large group, but you could imagine a situation where a learning environment is fostered through actual doing. For example, maybe the project could treat IWC6 as a MTR and get advice from the group on a range of issues, eg. ToR's for studies, TDA/SAP Update, problematic demos, governance, etc. The project is both freshwater and marine (something for everyone!) and has many, many executing partners, so maybe there is some how an opportunity for the group to interact with the project and contribute to it. Climatic variability and change, results based management and developing partnerships with the public and private sector are already a key part of my work and projects. Identify possibility for their integration in all our projects where the context is conducive. I think and believe that for the time being as well as future, any project (water related) should look at those three topics stipulated above for the better output on the ground. Already doing this but have learned some useful lessons and best practices

22. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent more time, regardless of whether they were addressed in IWC5 or not? What new issues or questions emerged that remain unanswered from the Conference?

Participants provided a rich quite of ideas on how to programme the next IWC, alternately validating the IWC5 topics or proposing new ones for future IWC5. They also offered some course corrections. In terms of IWC5 sessions, the evaluators wanted to hear **more on climatic variability and change, TDA-SAP approaches, Sustainability (Life After GEF), Development of Indicators/Project Management, GEF5 Planning and Results-Based Management.**

IWC5 Sessions That Should Have Been Longer

Climatic Variability and Change (12)

The greatest number of evaluators wanted to see more time devoted to mainstreaming climatic variability and change. Interestingly, some pointed out that one cannot really separate water management from climate management. Although most people wrote this generically, some people added more detail:

- ◆ How to **enhance national coordination** between climate change focal points and other focal points and sectors
- ◆ **High seas** (impact of climate variability and change)
- ◆ Resilience
- ◆ How to **enhance climate resistance** of project interventions
- ◆ Forecasting scenarios
- ◆ **Intersectoral (from other focal areas) good practices** of natural resource management programs in GEF IW and CC, IW and BD - especially those which are addressing aspects of climate variability and change
- ◆ Some elicitation of discussions of practical technical and socioeconomic, **coping responses** to increased climate variability and intensity - some good examples to stimulate creative solutions

TDA-SAP (7)

Many participants wanted to hear more on TDA-SAP methodologies and approaches. Some would like to hear more on how **climatic variability and change will impact the TDA-SAP process**. One person also indicated that they would like to hear more on how to **mainstream SAP's into national development plans and annual budget processes**.

Indicators/Project Management (7)

Indicators (or project management) were referenced seven times in the evaluation forms. People genuinely liked the indicators development session and wanted to hear more of it.

They would also like to see **practical sessions that focus on how to a) develop, b) implement and c) evaluate and monitor GEF IW projects**. Also, some individuals wanted hear more on:

- ◆ selection of adequate indicators, case study for baseline formulation
- ◆ indicators evaluation
- ◆ specific indicators for **demonstration projects** (capacity building level)

Sustainability (6)

The sustainability (called Life After GEF) session also proved exceedingly popular, with several people wishing more time had been spent on it. People would have liked to spend more time on the key factors in the **sustainability of project initiatives & results**, as well as the **GEF role in wider initiatives**. In fact, some felt that this sessions should have been a plenary session.

GEF5 Planning (5)

Many participants also desired more time on the Fifth Replenishment of the GEF (GEF5) and its implications. People wanted to hear and be more involved with discussion on the **GEF5 strategy and new project opportunities**.

Results-based Management (3)

A few people mentioned results-based management as well. One person in particular suggested that the session should have also focused on **concrete ways to advance GEF IW project reporting on MDG's**.

Consensus on New Topics/Sessions

Governance/Legal Frameworks (8)

Several people brought up governance and legal frameworks as being notably absent from the IWC. There was a bit of cherry-picking in the in the comments. Evaluators mentioned a few subtopics of governance that particularly interested them. Nevertheless they should be considered for the next IWC:

- ◆ Conventions and Agreements (UN Treaties on International Waters)
- ◆ Ocean Governance
- ◆ Policy reform, institutional capacity building and governance for large marine ecosystem management.
- ◆ Establishment of river basin commissions
- ◆ Gender and water

Community Engagement/Stakeholder Involvement (5)

Community engagement and the accompanying stakeholder involvement came up several times as well. One person wrote that, "it would be useful to include **technical workshops on community development successes** and lessons. Where, how and why has change in behavior been achieved?"

Innovative Technical Approaches

A few people wanted to see more on **innovative technical approaches**. This was the intent of the pre-conference workshops, but of course, not all participants attended those. One person wrote that they would like to see more, "Exchange of experiences on specific approaches/technologies e.g. community-based management, wetland technology, etc. (I liked this session in the previous IWC)"

Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization also emerged a couple of times in the evaluations, namely how funds can be accessed.

Science-Governance Links

Some participants expressed desire for a session addressing links between decision-makers (politicians) and scientists. They would like to see discussion on the **science-to-governance continuum** and lessons on convincing **politicians to listen to scientists**.

Role for Projects and Government Representatives

Lastly, although not specifically calling for a session, some participants felt it would be worthwhile in general, to have more opportunity to **hear from governments and projects in plenary sessions** (and otherwise). People felt again that the plenaries were too GEF and Agency driven.

Post-facto Corrections to IWC5

Some participants offered post-facto corrections to the IWC5. They are noteworthy should any of the IWC5 sessions be repeated:

- ◆ A focus group session on the IW learning approach where old projects would have been worthwhile as a follow-up to the Learning Project plenary session.
- ◆ More **applied workshops** would have been useful
- ◆ I thought the topics were relevant and the time allocations appropriate, but the way things were structured sometimes I feel like I didn't learn much new about climate variability, results-based management, TDA/SAP, etc. There was **not enough analysis of key issues** and messages. Also, I was disappointed that three of the most relevant sessions (TDA/SAP, indicators, etc.) were **running concurrently**.
- ◆ Results based management should have addressed **decision making in the absence of data**, i.e. how do we justify using precautionary principle to politicians.
- ◆ **Group sessions by region and issue** so that regional projects can learn relevant lessons from each other.
- ◆ **More time for bilateral discussions**.

New Areas for Future IWC's

These topics were only mentioned once each in the evaluations but may be considered for future IWC topics:

- ◆ Conference paid no attention to the both **polar areas** over the earth
- ◆ **Demonstration pilot project examples** and constraints and lessons learned
- ◆ Socioeconomic issues relevant to IW projects
- ◆ Collaborative processes with sister projects for better information/data sharing and avoiding duplication of efforts
- ◆ **Groundwater-surface water interaction** and regional management
- ◆ Coral Triangle Initiative/Climate Change Issues on **Fisheries**
- ◆ Many **smaller countries** have difficulty in meeting GEF requirements for project development.
- ◆ Many plenary sessions with expert panels and audience response delivery on topics such as work in LMEs (rather than just defining LMEs) more attention on capacity of implementation
- ◆ Land-based pollution reduction
- ◆ Groundwater and surface overabstraction reduction to ensure enough water gets into the seas with good quality

23. On what topic(s), if any, would you have rather spent less time in the Conference?

This session was of course, the place for IWC5 participants to bludgeon the conference sessions they didn't like. Some people did do this. The incidences of more than one person commenting on a session have been included and are as follows:

Plenary Sessions (7)

Some seven people blasted the plenary sessions, where, without any specifics on which one, criticized what they perceived as lecture-style presentations that went too long. In some cases, people felt there was too much pontification and that speeches were too long and self-aggrandizing. People felt in particular, that the closing plenary was too long, too focused on Agencies and unfocused.

Small Table Dialogues (7)

The small table dialogues suffered withering critique at the hands of the evaluators, albeit with some constructive critique. It was felt that the small table session was "absolutely too long" and didn't give "tangible results". People also thought there was too much presentation interrupting the conversation and also too much focus on individual tables in during discussion. That being said, some people said that conceptually the small table dialogues remain a good idea.

Results-based Management (5)

The results-based management session earned some critique as well. People felt that it was "not new" and that "administrative/evaluation results-based info is needed but was probably overemphasized."

Lunchtime Talks

Essentially people want these scrapped, feeling that they do a disservice both to the speaker and also to people wanting to either eat or network with peers during lunch.

Results-Based Manager Game

Despite its success in the overall voting, the results-based manager game was bashed by three participants. One person said that it was too American.

Additionally a handful of people also wanted a shorter Coral Triangle Initiative and also GEF5 session.

Constructive Critique

Some constructive critique did materialize in responses to this question:

- ◆ We should have spent a **roundtable on innovation in the portfolio** rather than leaving it to the poster session
- ◆ For each session GEF should **ensure each presenter is communicating well with target audiences** i.e. vet presenters more carefully.
- ◆ No real issues, but **one extra day would have taken the pressure off** for more informal meetings
- ◆ Trying to identify new priorities without **scaling up on "old" priorities**, which have not yet been sufficiently addressed.

24. What advice can you give GEF IW:LEARN to improve assistance or services to your project?

Participants were asked to provide advice to the GEF IW:LEARN project on its services and what it can do to improve assistance to GEF projects. It should be noted that one of the GEF IW:LEARN project's services is the IWC itself.

Project Interaction (12)

The vast majority of responses concerned various suggestions that coalesce around IW:LEARN **improving its interaction with projects**. One person wrote, "Be pro-active - work with projects, assist and support projects to create websites and share information - help them learn from experience." Many wrote that IW:LEARN should, "**advertise your services more** and act like a business and or service industry." Others wrote that IW:LEARN should regularly provoke projects with exchange opportunities, **pay practical visits to project sites** and regularly listen to its users. In general IW:LEARN should, "...orient 100 percent to GEF IW projects only, not to GEF IW agencies or GEF Secretariat." To help improve interaction, one participant offered up an excellent recommendation:

- ◆ My suggestion is that you should enforce a project requirement for **an in-project IW:LEARN liaison point** who is responsible for capturing and cajoling information/knowledge flows

Website & Website Toolkit

Participations made suggestions and comments regarding iwlearn.net:

- ◆ Speedup the process of establishing the next platform for iwlearn.net
- ◆ Assist in the establishment of a website
- ◆ IWL web services could be more proactive (my site has been out of date (technology wise) for quite a while
- ◆ Specify up front on the IW:LEARN website the type of services IW:LEARN offers.
- ◆ Send announcements to projects on available services e.g. for 2010 \$X available for exchange on a competitive basis
- ◆ Improve technical quality/accessibility
- ◆ Be aware that not everyone has access to high speed broadband
- ◆ Send email notification when changes/improvements are done for the site

External Relations (to GEF IW portfolio) (4)

While not presently in GEF IW:LEARN's mandate, quite a few people suggested that GEF IW:LEARN also be responsible for interacting with initiatives outside the world of GEF IW projects.

- ◆ **Highlight relevant documents** which have been finalized in other parts of the world to be useful to our project
- ◆ Promote outside of the GEF circle
- ◆ More linkages with **projects and activities of other agencies** (not funded by GEF)
- ◆ Work externally with partners

Focus on Project Results

Others recommended a more concrete focus on project results and lessons learned:

- ◆ Get to know the results of the implemented projects
- ◆ More lessons learned and less focus on exchange process

Other Recommendations

Other participants provided the following individual recommendations to GEF IW:LEARN:

- ◆ Future climate scenarios & **climate models**

- ◆ All **monitoring tools**, after developed and finalized, should be posted on IW:LEARN with guidance notes, so that IW communities have a chance to familiarize themselves with not only their formats but also the intention/philosophy behind them. Maybe online discussion on them as well
- ◆ Publish **more IW Experience Notes**
- ◆ When the project is already adopted for implementation IW:LEARN would help in process of **implementation at national level** with support in workshops and spreading lessons-learned.
- ◆ Create more awareness and let those who are near to GEF projects visit the projects and demonstrate it for the owners of the project
- ◆ Facilitation of regional/sub-regional **dialogues**
- ◆ **Technical advice on results-based management and indicators**
- ◆ Support in terms of ToR, contract, etc instead of spending extra time re-writing ToR's and contracts
- ◆ SAP Implementation
- ◆ Encourage lessons learning and best practice documentation about **monitoring and evaluation** and provide tools for M&E capacity building
- ◆ Consider **funding capacity building** including formal academic degrees
- ◆ Further encourage **institutional exchange** of knowledge and best practice
- ◆ To **clarify the procedures and steps to apply for GEF IW family** as well as requirements
- ◆ Introduce **training kits**
- ◆ They should actively and continuously support projects for experience sharing also to **avoid duplication of activities/projects**

Management Recommendations

Participants also made the following structural recommendations for the management of GEF IW:LEARN and the GEF Learning Portfolio in general:

- ◆ **Better coordination among IW:LEARN's** (currently they all contact us individually and they all seem to start their data collection from scratch and not using data from IW:LEARN)
- ◆ More staff/support for IW:LEARN - they provide a very good services but are clearly over-stretched.

25. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or concerns?

Recommendations for Design Process of Future IWC's

- ◆ I may have missed it but perhaps the GEF **projects under implementation should have been surveyed** for input in the planning/information for the IWC
- ◆ Have GEF IW **project managers as session coordinators**
- ◆ Ask session coordinators to take into account **regional/gender balance/diversity**
- ◆ Please let the project's voice be very loud in the conference! **Don't manage the voice** too much
- ◆ Explore more the **needs of the projects** and accommodate them in the next IW.
- ◆ GEF IW diversity and inclusion - review % of Europeans males in plenary on stage. We should set benchmarks for % of beneficiary countries, % of women on plenary stage, % of TTL's and program managers leading plenary/small room/pre-conference sessions. We need to show our GEF IW constituency that south participants and women can become leaders in our field.
- ◆ It's unfortunate that most of the participants missed the pre-conference workshops, which provided valuable information and methods/approaches that would have been useful to GEF project implementers.
- ◆ **Resolve visa problems early on.**

- ◆ There is a danger of academics talking all of the time at the conference. We need simple and appropriate practice for the sustainability of livelihoods.
- ◆ Although this conference was good for networking, it was **short on technical depth** - some projects were showcased but time was too short for real depth.
 - I was expecting to learn more at a technical level about climate variability, RBM, IW other stuff, but while the exchange was fantastic, the technical side could have been richer and more rigorous.
- ◆ **Regurgitation of institutional jargon** to avoid real issues should be avoided.
- ◆ I am personally very satisfied and glad I came. It was enjoyable and useful. On suggestion: **organize these events in GEF-eligible countries**; they can use the boost.
- ◆ Not enough client/country focused, too dominated by agency and their ideas and issues
- ◆ **More thoughts should be put into outcomes** for each session.

Recommendations for Future IWC Sessions

- ◆ **Times need to be strictly kept**, unfair to some presenters, increased stress for all, reduced networking opportunities.
- ◆ Use **inquisitive facilitation or a journalist in plenary** to enhance interaction.
- ◆ After Jeopardy and Who Wants to be a RBM Project Manager, maybe ""speed dating"" for project managers at next IWC.
- ◆ Implications of **human right to water**
- ◆ **More on integration**, surface/ground/marine water and land/water management
- ◆ Set up a **"speakers corner"** where people can present during coffee breaks and other sessions where participants are out and about

Recommendations to GEF Secretariat

- ◆ Improve the tracking tool
- ◆ GEF needs to market itself better outside those that already know about it

Comparisons to past IWC's

The first two Biennial GEF International Waters conferences did not produce evaluation summaries. The 2002 Conference in Dalian, China did produce a needs assessment (IWC2). The evaluation summaries from the last three IWC's (three through five) offered some common questions on which rough (very rough) comparisons can be made. It should be stressed that this comparison doesn't assume ceteris paribus. In the areas where comparison is possible, the IWC5 and IWC4 were overwhelmingly considered an improvement over the IWC3.

Question	2009 Cairns	2007 Cape Town	2005 Salvador
Response Rate	77/293 (26.2%)	79/314 (25.2%)	96/293 (32.7%)
Overall Conference	3.84/5	3.9/5	3.0/5
Logistics	3.85/5	4.18/5	3.4/5
Networking Opportunities	3.62/5	4.0/5	3.3/5
Exhibit Area (Innovation Marketplace)	3.96/5	4.07/5	3.2/5
Knowledge Gained	3.72/5	3.6/5	2.8/5
Exchange Innovations	-	3.3/5	2.8/5
Informal Discussion Time	-	4.0/5	2.6/5