



Dear GIWA friends,

At the start of a new year I make some reflections of the past and the future. Last year, 2000, was a difficult year for GIWA. Major problems surfaced in developing the Assessment Protocol into a useful tool and in building the global network with megaregional hosts, sub-regional focal points and task forces. There were difficulties in the development of the Core Team organisation, and there was a slow start of the network building. A significant schedule delay was unavoidable.

However, we shall not forget that the year also brought major achievements to GIWA. The Plymouth group delivered the full methodology including the causal chain component. The methodology was successfully tested in the Baltic and in the Gulf of Thailand. My honour to the excellent work done by these task teams and in particular to the chairmen of the task teams, Prof. Wilhelm Hogland at the University of Kalmar and Prof. Anond Snidvongs at the Chulalongkorn University.

The Core Team was reorganised and strengthened and focus was concentrated on priority issues. Much effort has been devoted to strengthened partnership with other international waters programmes.

This year, 2001, will be an important year for GIWA. During the first months the methodology will be peer reviewed and the final version issued. The last part of the network will be completed in the same period of time. Then the fun starts, assessment work will be conducted throughout the globe and the first global scoping results will be presented at the 1st GIWA General Assembly in Kalmar in June.

I am confident that the GIWA project is in good shape and ready for these challenges. I am proud of all the competent people associated with GIWA, our Core Team members and all the task teams around the globe and the GIWA achievements made so far.

In this issue of the Newsletter you will be able to read about our Test Teams' experiences, the Peer Review process and other ongoing activities.

Dag Daler, GIWA Project Manager

Test Teams' Experiences

Test teams from the Baltic region and the Gulf of Thailand were assigned in the summer of 2000 to test the UNEP/GEF GIWA Assessment Methodology, developed under overall co-ordination of the University of Plymouth. The reports produced by the test teams are now available at the GIWA internal Web site, and will be published at the open GIWA Web site once the Peer Review process is finalised.

Baltic Test Team



The Baltic test team at one of the workshops in Kalmar.

The Baltic test team has presented three reports on the GIWA Methodology: the GIWA Assessment Protocol Testing, the Detailed Impact Assessment, and the Causal Chain Analysis. The test team consists of experienced environmental scientists and socio-economists from as much as nine countries in the Baltic drainage area. They have large experience from the region, and together they cover issues like hydrology, pollution and biodiversity in aquatic systems, fisheries and global changes.

The reports are the results of three workshops held in St Petersburg, Russia and Kalmar, Sweden during the second half of 2000. During the first workshop held in St Petersburg the component "Scoping/scaling" of the GIWA assessment methodology was tested. At the second workshop held in Kalmar the component "Environmental and socio-economic impact assessment" was reviewed. The third and final workshop, also held in Kalmar, was dedicated to the "Causal chain analysis", which aims at identifying the linkages between issues affecting the transboundary aquatic environment and their causes.

Gulf of Thailand Test Team



Experts participating in one of the workshops during the GIWA Methodology testing in the Gulf of Thailand.

The Gulf of Thailand test team has finalised two reports, both the GIWA Assessment Protocol Testing and the Detailed Impact Assessment. The Gulf of Thailand test team is composed of experts from Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and additionally experts from international organisations. The participants represent a wide range of relevant environmental sciences, socio-economy, social science and environmental health.

The first workshop conducted by the team aimed at testing the scoping and detailed impact assessment methodologies. The purpose of the scoping is to identify priority issues for remedial action and intervention. The two most serious issues identified for the region were loss of ecosystems or ecotones (mangrove) and overexploitation of fisheries and other living resources. Indicators for these two issues were identified to facilitate a quantitative assessment of their impact. At the second workshop environmental impact indicators for other important issues were identified, and data from valuation studies were evaluated socio-economically.

Kalmar University Board Meeting

In the middle of December, the Kalmar University Board received an update on recent developments of the GIWA project by Dr. Ulf Lidman, appointed University/GIWA co-ordinator. After the presentation, the Board discussed the interface for co-operation and different suggestions for joint projects, such as possibilities for GIWA associated students to join international courses at the University, Master and PhD programmes, and access to important international networks. The Board pointed out that GIWA is a very important project of interest and of high priority to the University, and concluded that the GIWA process will be closely followed and further supported.

Methods Peer Review Process

The peer review process is moving ahead. Detailed plans are now finalised regarding the Peer Review Board meeting taking place in Kalmar on the 2nd March under leadership of Prof. Bo Wiman, Kalmar University.

Invitations to participate in the Open Peer Review have been distributed widely. We thank those international organisations that helped distributing the invitation to individual experts.

In the open peer review process we hope to have comments from scientists, experts, students, institutions and stakeholders interested in aspects of the present GIWA Assessment Methodology. The Core Team have been asked to extend the open peer review schedule. Hence, **the Open Peer Review site (www.giwa.net/review/index.html) will now be open for comments until 25 February 2001.**

Core Team Staff Developments

Ms Linda Holm, an environmental engineer at the University of Technology in Luleå will assist the Core Team in managing the methods peer review processes. She will primarily assist in reporting on the evaluation of the methodology, and also work with the organisation of the Peer Review Board meeting. Ms Sara Gräslund, a PhD student in marine ecotoxicology at Stockholm University, earlier working as an intern at UNEP Nairobi, will have the editor function of the GIWA Newsletter, be responsible for reporting to UNEPLink, and she will also assist in the network building in Africa.

www.giwa.net

The GIWA Web site has been selected by ISI (the Institute for Scientific Information, www.isinet.com) for inclusion in their Current Web Contents, a collection of evaluated Web sites. It is a quality mark indicating that the Web site has been reviewed by ISI editorial experts, and it guarantees authenticity, relevance and timeliness. The motivation for ISI to include GIWA's site is that it publishes important, high-quality material on the Web. We are proud!

GIWA Events and Milestones

- All three reports from the Methodology testing have been finalised by the Baltic test team
- The Gulf of Thailand test team has finalised the two first reports from the Methodology testing. The third report will be available when the Causal Chain Analysis workshop has been held.
- The GIWA Methods Open Peer Review process is extended to the 25th of February
- The Peer Review Board will meet in Kalmar 2 March under leadership of the University of Kalmar
- GIWA Steering Group will meet in Kalmar on the 3rd of March
- The first UNEP/GEF GIWA General Assembly will be held in Kalmar in June 2001