



Fifth WESNet Core Group Meeting

0930 – 1130 hrs, 07 June 2005
UNDP, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003

Present:

1. Preeti Soni (PS), UNDP
2. Mark Ellery (ME), World Bank
3. A J James (AJJ), Pragmatix
4. Tejinder Kaur (TK), Pragmatix

The following items were discussed and decided:

1. Newsletter

- a. **Format:** Format of the newsletter was discussed and it was agreed that it could be a 'digest' of existing information on the sector in India – drawing on (1) the 'best' of existing newsletters and (2) independently collected information. Although some contents will be repeated and could also be available in other newsletters, this is the point of a 'digest' form of newsletter. It would summarize and give the best of what is available in that particular period, to the members.
- b. **Timing:** It was agreed that the e-newsletter should be monthly (with links to other newsletters) whereas the printed version should be quarterly and more detailed one (UNICEF have offered to print). Since other agencies also have monthly newsletters, WES-Net has to plan the issue based on when the other newsletters come out. Therefore first a scan of timing of existing newsletters needs to be done.

Action: TK to check with other agencies about timings of their e-newsletters and set a date accordingly.

2. Website

- a. **Portal:** For the website, although IRC have offered a portal (after waiving annual charges of € 1000) and training for a Webmaster (also free of cost), WES-Net needs to find :
 - **Webmaster** – who should be a technical person and can post information on the website, add links, change formats, (put ads on the website - probably at a later stage), a database of information, etc., and generally manage the technical aspects of the website and ;
 - **Content Manager** - responsible for finding and editing the information that needs to go on the website.
- b. **Content:** The same Content Manager may be able to coordinate the information that goes into the Newsletter as well – and into the database of relevant sector specific information (e.g., reports, government orders, policies, workshop and conference summaries, field notes, etc.)

3. Database

- a. **Technical aspects:** It was agreed that the website will need a database to provide single-window 'clearing house' for sector-specific information and links to other databases (e.g., the UN, CSE, IWMI, etc). This requires understanding the design of these other available databases and then designing a compatible database for WES-Net (i.e. one that is compatible and thus access other available databases). CABI is a Commonwealth database that has over 20,000 entries, accessible through keyword searches. Alternatively, we could also buy a commercially available version of Endnote or GreenNote and customize it to link to other databases. However, a technical person who is able to design and customize our database may not have the content knowledge to put in new information.
- b. **Content issues:** The same Content Manager for the website and the newsletter could be responsible for sourcing new information – and arranging for 1-page summaries with keywords that could be put into the database, along with the actual pdfs of the documents (wherever needed scans it), so that it becomes a useable and searchable database.

4. Coordination of Research and Ongoing Activities

- a. **Collecting information:** The Group discussed that the existing organizations should share their annual research plans and information about ongoing projects and studies. While the WES-Net National Coordinator can arrange to collect this information, past experience has shown that on her own it is not easy to elicit responses from lower level staff. Instead, it would help if the Head of the Organization agreed to do so, and passed down an internal order within the organization. Given this, the Coordinator can 'legitimately' push junior staff to deliver.
- b. **Discussing a joint action research plan:** Once the information is available, a consolidated version could be emailed around, and form the basis for discussion at a subsequent meeting. This way, even if actual coordination is not forthcoming, at least initially everyone will be aware of what the others are doing.

5. Referral service

Who's responsibility?: Similar to the coordination, a list of potential referees has to be drawn up, with their areas of expertise. They have to be contacted by WES-Net to elicit their consent to be used as referees. An informal MoU could be signed with them, after which information can be sent to them for review. But, while the National Coordinator will have to be responsible for arranging for the list and the MoUs, the actual material will have to be sorted and sent to different people according to their classification. This may have to be done by the Content Manager! (one more content manager!).

6. Regional Workshops

IRC's interest: The Resource Centre Development (RCD) section within IRC has expressed interest in supporting these workshops. They already have Resource Centres in Kerala, Gujarat and Uttaranchal. These could be the regional 'hubs' to kick off the state-level initiatives of WES-Net. We therefore need to plan 4-5 regional workshops, with a clear agenda of eliciting interest of regional/state partners, forming regional WES-Net Core Groups and a clearly defined and agreed action plan. Although it would be best to start as soon as possible, it cannot be before August (when the next National Meeting of WES-Net is planned), and there are at least 3 other large national-level workshops being planned till December (DFID's Livelihood Summit in September 2005; AFPRO's conference on Rainwater Harvesting in November and AKF's planned Livelihood Summit in November/ December 2005).