

New JRC information systems to promote dialogue under EU Water Initiative

At the World Water Week in Stockholm, under the EU Water Initiative (EUWI), the Joint Research Centre introduced two new information systems, essential tools for effective knowledge management among the international water community. The tools promote dialogue between stakeholders on water issues all over the world, and keep the public up-to-date with current activities in the water sector.

The two new and updated information systems, www.euwi.net (EUWI) and www.aquaknow.net, (Aquaknow) are an important part of the EU Water Initiative to improve access to water and sanitation in developing countries. The information systems are essential tools to facilitate the harmonisation of policies of the EUWI community and provide a platform where stakeholders can easily establish virtual dialogue, share information and communicate with each other in order to face water and sanitation challenges.

A third of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water and has poor or non-existent sanitation. At the World Water Week, in view of the current economic and climate change situation, the need for all actors in the water sector to work together was underlined to achieve economically and environmentally sustainable development.

Prof. Kairu from the Africa Civil Society Network on Water & Sanitation (ANEW) commented that, "the EUWI has allowed ANEW to bring together hundreds of representatives from African civil society to discuss critical water and sanitation issues". He added, "we look forward to collaborating with EUWI to manage the high demand from civil society to deal with the challenges ahead".

Under EUWI, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) offers technical and scientific support to EuropeAid and the Development Directorate-General (DG DEV) in preparing and monitoring policies in the water sector. The EUWI website is oriented towards decision makers in the water sector. More than 1 500 stakeholders including non-governmental organisations, Member States, and representatives from international organisations come together in online forums of regional and thematic working groups in order to collaborate on the water management policies in developing countries. The public can use the website to find out about recent activities in the EUWI, and the different calls for tender that have been launched.

Aquaknow is a knowledge management system which has been designed for use by practitioners worldwide. It is a virtual platform where information, data, and documents can be shared online. People working in the water sector, whether in Africa or in Latin America, can use the online Geographical Information System (GIS) tools to manage their meteorological or hydrological data.

The European Commission and the EUWI partners issued in parallel the online Water Guidelines, best practices for managing water projects all over the world used for capacity building. A dynamic tool for water project management, the guidelines are constantly being updated by practitioners, and will be used for the implementation of the African and Latin American Centres of Excellence on Water.

Background information:

The EU Water Initiative (EUWI)

The EUWI, launched in Johannesburg at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development, is an international political initiative and uses a partnership approach, bringing together national governments, donors, the water industry, NGOs and other water actors. It strives to reinforce political commitment to water and sanitation, and to create a strong and integrated framework for EU action. The EUWI has five specific objectives:



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strengthening political commitment to action and innovation-oriented partnership;

promoting better water governance, capacity building and awareness;
improving the efficiency and effectiveness of water management through multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination;
strengthening cooperation by promoting river-basin approaches in national and transboundary waters;
identifying additional sources of funding and mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing.

World Water Week

World Water Week is an initiative organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute since 1991. It brings together more than 2000 participants from all over the world. This 2009 edition was held under the title "Responding to Global Changes: Accessing Water for the Common Good".

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