

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HELPDESK
FOR INTEGRATED FLOOD MANAGEMENT

This document sets out the basic objectives, structure and roles of the HelpDesk for Integrated Flood Management. This HelpDesk is a facility that will provide guidance on flood management policy, strategy and institutional development related to flood issues to countries that want to adopt an integrated approach to flood management (IFM). The IFM approach, developed at the turn of the Millennium, aims at balancing development needs and flood risks in river basins within the overall context of Integrated Water Resources Management.

The HelpDesk is hosted by the World Meteorological Organization and is based on its philosophy of working together on weather, climate and water issues. Accordingly, the IFM HelpDesk functions through a decentralized network of technical and financial partner institutions that form the “HelpDesk Support Base”. The Letter of Engagement in the Annex provides the instrument through which institutions participate in the HelpDesk activities.

Preamble

Recognizing that mainstreaming of flood risks in water resources development and management strategies requires a paradigm shift towards an **integrated flood management (IFM)**¹ approach aimed at maximizing the net-benefits from flood plains, minimizing losses of life from flooding, and preserving vital ecosystems and their associated biodiversity within the overall framework of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM);

Concerned about the increasing flood risks due to population growth and consequent anthropogenic activities on flood plains, altered patterns of climate variability and climate change, and enhanced flood vulnerability;

Aware of the development needs and dependence of large parts of the world’s population on floodplain areas for food production and socio-economic development, as well as of the importance of preventing the frequent transformation of flood hazards into flood disasters;

Recalling the experience gained in the last six years under the Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM), a joint initiative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), to support countries in the integrated management of floods within the overall framework of IWRM.

¹ For a detailed description of the concept please see: Integrated Flood Management - Concept Paper, available at http://www.apfm.info/pdf/concept_paper_e.pdf

Emphasizing that IFM has been recognized in major global initiatives related to water management and disaster risk reduction, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, the International Flood Initiative (IFI), and UN-Water, as a balanced and robust development policy concept,.

Noting that the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), included a call for all countries to develop integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans with support to developing countries and that efforts are required to mainstream IFM into those plans and their implementation;

Recognizing the essential role the IFM policy concept plays in the sustainable development of river basins affected by floods both in a transboundary and a national context, and in poverty reduction efforts;

Recognizing the need to facilitate, both technically and financially, the implementation of IFM approaches in countries and river basins so as to develop their capacities to:

- Follow a river basin approach in planning and management;
- Adopt risk management principles (except emergency operations);
- Embrace multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral solutions;
- Engage all stakeholders; and
- Ensure equity and fairness in the development process.

Considering WMO's strategic role in facilitating the provision of information and warnings on severe events related to weather, water, climate and the related natural environment, including flood forecasting and flood risk assessments throughout the world, and the support that WMO Congress expressed in its Fifteenth Session in May 2007 for the plans to establish HelpDesk Services in collaboration with other partners;

HelpDesk for Integrated Flood Management

1. It is hereby established within WMO a HelpDesk for Integrated Flood Management under the Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM).
2. The IFM HelpDesk is a facility that provides guidance on flood management policy, strategy and institutional development related to flood issues to countries that want to adopt the IFM concept. It is based on close partnership with the country and tailored to their specific needs, with the aim of assisting in IFM implementation.
3. The objectives of the IFM HelpDesk are to:
 - Provide quick access to relevant flood management information;
 - Provide guidance and momentum for reform in favour of IFM in countries or river basins in developing long-term flood management policies, strategies and institutional arrangements;

- Serve as a link between flood management practitioners and decision-makers and multi-disciplinary scientific expertise and best practice in various fields such as hydrology, river engineering, legal and institutional development, ecology, sociology and development economics.
 - Provide a continuous and sustainable capacity development mechanism in support of IFM implementation.
4. The target audience of the HelpDesk includes the following groups:
- National, provincial and local government agencies involved in decision making charged with a role in flood management (policy makers, flood management practitioners, development planners, disaster managers, National Hydrological and Meteorological Services, etc.);
 - River Basin Organizations;
 - Bi- and Multi-lateral Organizations involved in Technical and Financial Cooperation;
 - Non-Governmental Organizations, in particular those working with flood affected communities;
 - Voluntary Organizations and Community-based Organizations ; and
 - Universities.

Structure of the IFM HelpDesk

5. The IFM HelpDesk consists of:
- the Technical Support Unit;
 - the Support Base – a network of technical partners; and
 - the Financial Partners.

Technical Support Unit

6. The IFM HelpDesk operates on the platform of the WMO Secretariat, through a dedicated desk within the Technical Support Unit of the APFM and operationally supported by the Hydrology and Water Resources Branch. Overall responsibility for the operation of the HelpDesk is assigned at the level of the Director of the Hydrology and Water Resources Branch (D/HWR) within the Climate and Water Department at WMO. As such D/HWR is the head of the Technical Support Unit. In particular, the Technical Support Unit:
- Serves as the point of contact for incoming requests to the HelpDesk;
 - Routes incoming requests to the HelpDesk Support Base Partners and coordinates follow up;
 - Provides strategic advice concerning flood management policy, strategy and institutional arrangement in response to requests;
 - Provides technical backstopping, but not project management, for the implementation of projects developed under the HelpDesk;

- Maintains, updates and upgrades the HelpDesk website and related information and develops new components (especially flood management tools) as required;
- Develops and maintains, as a basis for the continuous improvement of the HelpDesk Services, a register of received requests and follow up actions taken;
- Strengthens the HelpDesk Support Base and maintains linkages and regular communication with Support Base Partners (see para 7 below) and Financial Partners (see para 13 below), amongst others, by keeping track of available competencies and areas of interest;
- Develops and implements a HelpDesk information/outreach strategy;
- Develops a HelpDesk User Group as and when recommended by the Advisory Committee;
- Provides advocacy for IFM concepts in appropriate international and national policy initiatives,
- Provides coordination and secretarial support for the activities under the APFM (including the HelpDesk), as well as to the Advisory Committee and Management Committee referred to in paragraphs 15 and 16 below; and
- Provides logistical and technical support for capacity building activities under the HelpDesk.

Support Base

7. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the flood management issues, the HelpDesk relies on a network of institutions that form the Support Base and provide the technical back up. Institutions participating in the Support Base, known as Support Base Partners, indicate their readiness to dedicate a minimum of in-kind human resources capacity on a voluntary basis to ensure timely response to the requests received under the HelpDesk , for example in the form of an exploratory visit, initial introductory workshops/trainings, or inputs to formulation of project proposals or other possible services in accordance with the specialized capacity of the respective Support Base Partner.
8. The main areas of activity where those inputs are required, include:
 - (i) Advice and high-level advocacy for flood management policy and strategy formulation;
 - (ii) Technical advice triggered by requests received by the HelpDesk;
 - (iii) Facilitation of workshops and training in support of Integrated Flood Management;
 - (iv) Development and provision of flood management tools and e-learning options for capacity building; and
 - (v) Formulation of high-level objectives/scoping for flood management proposals with countries and river basins requesting HelpDesk Services.
9. Institutions interested in promoting the implementation of integrated approaches to flood management, and willing to provide their support and expertise can become members of

the HelpDesk Support Base by signing a Letter of Engagement, a model of which appears in Appendix I.

10. Membership to the Support Base is open to all institutions that subscribe to the basic concepts and aims of Integrated Flood Management, and are willing to work together to fulfill the objectives of the HelpDesk.
11. The decision on accepting new members to the Support Base is taken based on agreed criteria for eligibility laid down by the "Management Committee" (see paragraph 16 below).
12. Neither the Support Base Partners nor WMO and its Staff shall be held institutionally or personally liable for the advice, guidance and professional opinion generated under the HelpDesk. A clear disclaimer to this effect is provided on the website of the HelpDesk.

Financial Partners

13. Institutions financially supporting² / willing to support the APFM are known as Financial Partners of the APFM. Institutions willing to financially support the activities under the HelpDesk (for the operation of the HelpDesk, project implementation, etc.) form the Financial Partners of the HelpDesk. Both contribute to the APFM Trust Fund, where a separate account for HelpDesk is maintained.

Governance

14. The HelpDesk is governed through the Advisory Committee and the Management Committee of the APFM. The constitutions and terms of reference of these Committees are detailed below.
15. The Advisory Committee comprises the Head of the Technical Support Unit of the APFM, two representatives of the WMO Commission for Hydrology, one representative of the GWP, and representatives of all Support Base Partners and Financial Partners who wish to participate. It is responsible for:
 - Guiding the APFM including the IFM HelpDesk;
 - Developing and maintaining an adequate service spectrum and an effective and efficient working arrangement vis-à-vis beneficiaries, Support Base Partners and Financial Partners;
 - Ensuring multidisciplinary inputs into the activities of the IFM HelpDesk and suggesting approaches to implement IFM concepts in the field;
 - Laying guidelines for prioritizing, where necessary, activities and requests received by the HelpDesk;

² As of 2009, Government of Japan and Government of Switzerland are Financial Partners of the APFM.

- Selecting its representatives on the Management Committee;
 - Ensuring quality assurance under the HelpDesk;
 - Guiding and supporting the advocacy and dissemination process of IFM and the activities of the HelpDesk;
 - Laying down policies for internal and external communication; and
 - Establishing its own modus operandi and procedural rules.
16. The Management Committee comprises two members from the Support Base Partners, as decided by the Advisory Committee, two representatives of the WMO Commission for Hydrology, representatives of all Financial Partners of the APFM and substantive financial contributors among the HelpDesk Financial Partners, and a representative each of the TSU and GWP. The Management Committee, is responsible for:
- Providing oversight to the APFM and the operations of the HelpDesk;
 - Monitoring the progress of implementation of activities developed under the HelpDesk;
 - Determining the level of financial support required for the APFM including the HelpDesk, as well as the corresponding resource mobilization strategy;
 - Deciding on the yearly budget and action plan;
 - Adopting modifications to the governance framework of the APFM, ;
 - Setting criteria of eligibility to qualify as a support base partner as well as the threshold to qualify as a substantive financial contributor; and
 - Establishing its own modus operandi and procedural rules.

Resources

17. The HelpDesk activities are carried out using resources consisting of core in-kind and financial contributions from WMO, voluntary in-kind contributions from Support Base Partners and financial contributions by the Financial Partners to the APFM Trust Fund. Outputs from APFM activities also contribute information and expertise in support of HelpDesk functions.
18. The in-kind and financial contributions from WMO include:
- the provision of professional staff support from the Hydrology and Water Resources Branch of WMO and the Technical Support Unit;
 - the provision of logistics in the form of office space and utilities for the HelpDesk;
 - web hosting for relevant parts of the HelpDesk;
 - provision of technical inputs from the Hydrology and Water Resources Branch of WMO and the APFM

19. The level and extent of in-kind contributions from Support Base Partners is determined in the Letter of Engagement signed by each of them (see Appendix I) and would be reported on an annual basis to the Management Committee.
20. WMO has set up a dedicated budget line within the APFM Trust Fund to receive the voluntary contributions necessary for the operation of the HelpDesk and so as to allow funding to be earmarked for the exclusive use of the HelpDesk.
