

Minutes

Meeting of the Working Group, The Water Dialogues South Africa
Friday 29 September 2006, Water Research Commission, Pretoria

Present: Abri Vermeulen (DWAF), Neil MacLeod (eThekweni Municipality), William Moraka (SALGA), Martin Rall (The Mvula Trust), Tony Sanders (WSSA), Mary Galvin (WD Coordinator), Jeff Rudin (SAMWU), Kathy Eales (City of Johannesburg), Jean-Pierre Mas (JOWAM), Jessica Wilson (EMG/ Accounting Agent), Hameda Deedat (South African Water Caucus)

Apologies: Ndala Duma (WIN), Jay Bhagwan (WRC), Bheki Ngubo (DWAF), Karen Breytenbach (Treasury)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mary opened the meeting, took apologies, and asked the meeting to review the minutes. Jessica indicated her discomfort with the minutes being placed on the IWG website with certain references. Mary proposed deleting a certain section for the purpose of placing them on the website.

It was agreed that minutes will continue to be placed on the IWG website. When minutes are reviewed by the Working Group, a member can ask that certain confidential items be removed for the purpose of placing the minutes on the website. It was indicated that this should only be used in extraordinary cases.

ACTION: Mary to remove this section from the minutes before submitting them to the IWG to be placed on the website.

Mary said that she understood the meeting to require a facilitator. She offered to facilitate this meeting and for the Working Group to then review its facilitation.

There was a lengthy discussion around whether the meeting should be facilitated by the Coordinator or by the Accounting Agent, or by an external Facilitator. Neil pointed out that the Coordinator would need to participate actively and would be unable to facilitate effectively. Hameda raised concerns about what hat Jessica would be wearing as a Chair. William raised the issue of an external facilitator's availability.

It was agreed that the role of the Chair would not be to play an ongoing leadership role, but simply to run the meeting.

It was agreed that the role of Chair would be rotated between meetings and, if necessary, an external facilitator would be used when the Working Group begins to debate research issues. Abri agreed to act as Chairperson for this meeting.

Acceptance of Agenda

To ensure that there was time to address point number 7 on the agenda, it was moved under point 3.5. The agenda was approved.

It was agreed to use a standard agenda for future meetings (some of these points were added in the course of the meeting but are reflected here for ease of reading):

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1. Welcome and Apologies
 2. Acceptance of Agenda
 3. Approval of Minutes
 4. Matters Arising
 5. Opening with process question
 6. Reports
 - 6.1 Coordinator's Report
 - 6.2 Financial Report
 - 6.3 Management Committee Report
 - 6.4 IWG Report
 7. Process Section
 8. Research Section
 9. Other Issues
 10. Closing and date of next meeting

2. Opening with process question

Mary said that previous minutes indicated a decision to open meetings with a process question and to ask interested Working Group members to gather after the meeting to review process in more depth. She suggested that members answer: "What burning issue to you hope this meeting to address?".

Given the tight timeframe of this meeting, it was agreed to delay the process question until the next meeting.

3. Stakeholder Dialogue and participation (process section)

3.1 South Africa process report received from the IWG Secretariat

Although most members had already received this report by e-mail from the IWG Secretariat, Mary formally tabled the South African Process Report from the IWG.

It was agreed that each member would review the report and provide Emily from the IWG Secretariat with any feedback within one week's time.

3.2 Summary of issues from stakeholder meetings

Mary presented section 1 of the Coordinator's Report, which details general findings from stakeholder meetings. These included:

- The Working Group has made important progress, but getting the process up and running has meant that it has not been able to engage with many substantive issues. Some stakeholders will be interested in participating since this is expected to change once funding has been received.

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- Many issues have been shelved in anticipation of a Coordinator who will be able to deal with them. There are high expectations of what a Coordinator will achieve.
 - Stakeholders indicated various gaps in Working Group representation. They also pointed to a wider Forum meeting as an important way to widen involvement and get constituencies more fully on board. Most stakeholders agreed that a Forum meeting should be planned once we have a case studies and a research plan to propose or on which to consult.
 - Significant trust has been built amongst stakeholders participating on the Working Group. There is some wariness about how proposed changes or plans to extend representation, form a Management Committee, and embark on research may challenge these relationships.
 - The EMG is to serve as an accounting agent to handle the finances, and the Coordinator is to be managed by the Working Group.
 - Stakeholders are generally wary of the International Working Group in terms of its representation as well as how it relates to and what it offers Water Dialogues South Africa. Stakeholders who have participated in IWG meetings seem more informed, but no less wary.
 - The process of working out the South African reframing questions strengthened relations between stakeholders and was considered valuable. However they are so broad that they are really guiding questions.
 - Although the reframing questions have been drafted for Water Dialogues South Africa, stakeholders have different or uncertain visions of the research and how these questions will be used. The effort to develop these questions into evaluation criteria by a sub-group of the Working Group highlighted some of these differences.
 - There is an understanding that the Coordinator will establish a virtual office, so stakeholders commented that the location appears flexible but needs to be discussed by the Working Group

3.3 Updating the list of The Water Dialogues stakeholders

Mary circulated an updated list of The Water Dialogues Stakeholders and asked members to make any necessary corrections to their details. She proposed that stakeholders be split into a core group and wider group and that they have separate listserves.

It was agreed to have a core group and a wider group, in two listserves; that each group could have two core members; and that the wider list will have an open membership since it is an important element of communication.

The Working Group then went through the list to indicate which members were active on the Working Group and could be considered “core” members and which should be considered members of the “wider group”. Members also indicated individuals who had resigned from their organisation and should be removed from the list entirely.

ACTION: Mary to speak to representatives from the APF, Siza Water, the Treasury Department, and SAAWU to clarify and confirm their members.

ACTION: Each Working Group member to review the list and communicate with Mary about any additions to the wider group list.

ACTION: Mary to develop a proposal about which materials are placed on the core group and the wider group listserv, and how they will be used and whether they need to be moderated.

3.3 Short term steps to improve and widen representation

Mary referred members to section 2 of her report, proposals to improve representation, which she developed through consultation with stakeholders. These included:

- a) Extending the representation of SALGA so that issues from municipalities that are not well-resourced are raised (likely to need the WG to pay travel costs)
- b) Where does SAAWU fit (public sector?) and including one or two water board representatives
- c) Bringing in an additional private sector representative or encouraging WSSA representation
- d) Following up with APF
- e) Extending an invitation to a Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme representative
- f) Including individuals who are au fait with the water sector and/ or research and could contribute significantly to the process as ex officio members

Each of these proposals was discussed. It was agreed:

- (a) SALGA will bring representatives from smaller, less resourced municipalities when their representatives feel it is appropriate.

William said that such municipalities should be involved when issues are relevant to them and that this is not an appropriate time. Mary said that she thought a representative from a less resourced municipality should be invited and they can decide whether and when to come, but they would be included in the process. Neil said we should include municipalities with direct experience, that is from the case studies we select.

- (b) Covered in action above

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- (c) As in the case of municipalities, it was agreed to bring in more private sector representatives when relevant.

Our private sector members are operators, and bring in private sector involved in finance or contractors. Kathy said that we need small scale private sector, since big operators are unlikely to become mainstream. Jeff said that giving them such a position presupposes that they have a role. Abri said that development banks and finance are critical, but it is not necessary for them to serve of the Working Group.

- (d) Covered in action above
- (e) ACTION: Mary to approach the chair of the Masibambane Civil Society Support Programme about representation. It was noted that Mvula is the Implementing Agent for Masibambane in three provinces and that Martin serves on its board (check this).
- (f) This needs more thought since individuals can offer support or trash the process.

3.4 Proposal for an organisational development process

Mary said that relationships between The Water Dialogues structures were becoming complex, particularly with the potential addition of a Management Committee, Academic Review Board, and the wider Forum. She said that the proposed MOU between EMG and the Working Group raised some important issues and that, without addressing relationship issues properly and with expertise, they had the potential to blow up later. She suggested working with an OD consultant for approximately four days to spell out the roles and responsibilities. She indicated that having such a person familiar with The Water Dialogues structures and issues now would mean that someone “objective” would be available to help trouble-shoot at any stage in the process.

Jeff, William, and Neil each raised points that they did not understand what issues might be considered problematic, that roles of the different groups had already been discussed at length, and that there is no need for an OD process since there are standard ways that such structures relate.

Jessica indicated that there are different understandings of EMG’s role, and that the Working Group needs to spell out the job description and conditions of the Coordinator so that EMG can prepare a contract, and that reporting structures also need attention.

ACTION: Mary to draft the roles and responsibilities of various structures to be reviewed by the Management Committee, which can draw on an outsider for assistance if necessary (although this is not expected), and proposed to the Working Group at the next meeting.

7. Management Committee (ManCo)

It was decided to form a Management Committee comprised of four members:

- Accounting Agent (EMG)
- Coordinator
- Abri (Bheki as alternate) from DWAF
- Hameda from Civil Society

The following guidance was provided:

- Some members do not like the International The Water Dialogues logo
- The Coordinator can remain in Durban since it is not clear that a move is needed. Since she will operate a virtual office and since researchers are likely to come from different places in the country, there is not a clear case for any one location. There will be concerns where ever she is, so this will need to be managed. If this decision needs to be revisited in the future, it will be made by mutual agreement with the Coordinator.
- Employing the Coordinator as a consultant for 18 months is unlikely to be accepted by the tax man. If there is no impression of employment, the EMG Board is likely to approve her appointment as a fixed term employee.
- EMG reserves the right to bring two people to Working Group meetings to avoid confusion between roles if necessary—and the Working Group can also request it for specific meetings.

ACTION: ManCo to deal with the issues listed on the agenda, e.g. ensuring that the Coordinator's contract is concluded, obtaining research support, profiling The Water Dialogues, and finalising the budget including office set-up and running costs and an expenses float.

Hameda again raised the issue of EMG needing two seats as Accounting Agent and Civil Society representatives, so that one person is not managing money and representing civil society at the same time. Neil said that this can be managed, since EMG is expressing the view of the sector, not representing it. Jean-Pierre said that we can identify items on the agenda on which EMG acts as Accounting Agent.

3.6.1 Signed Codes of Conduct

Mary reported that she had only been able to track down three signed Codes of Conduct from WIN. A number of members were frustrated by this since they had already signed the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct was circulated and members were asked to sign this copy.

ACTION: Members who did not sign the Code of Conduct at THIS meeting to send a signed Code of Conduct to the Coordinator or bring it to the next meeting.

3.6.2 Creating a basis for dialogue

Mary referred to her reason for posting the APF press release on Orange Farm: to begin to create a common reference basis amongst members and to keep members updates on developments.

Jean Pierre said that members need a place where they can see what is happening, so they do not mind receiving mailings, but it is their choice whether to respond or not. Members can send mailings to the core group, but individual members may want to share this outside the group.

It was agreed that members could indicate that their e-mail to the group should be treated as confidential and not to be circulated outside the group.

In order to ensure more substantive interaction in Working Group meetings, Mary proposed setting aside a portion of meetings to discuss an agreed-upon topic, such as certain re-framing questions. Members were confident that the development of the research will mean that the Working Group engages in substantive discussions.

4. International Working Group

4.1 Delegate selection process for Berlin and process learnings

Mary summarised how the selection was handled in a relatively ad hoc manner that was problematic.

It was agreed that selecting people to participate for such meetings should not rely on volunteers but should be discussed according to the following criteria:

- knowledgeable about the subject
- all members get exposure
- representivity of sector
- use opportunities to piggy back (such as William's participation in the 4th World Water Forum)
- attention to race and gender
- availability from employer

4.2 IWG representation of The Water Dialogues South Africa: link person and accountability

Jessica said that she has been on the IWG for a long time and needs a formal mandate from the Working Group, a new person with such a mandate, or an alternate. There is a link person from each NWG as well as people coming from different interests, as in our own Working Group.

The discussion highlighted the Working Group's dissatisfaction with members who are there without representing countries or sectors. If they are not talking to a constituency, what is their status, mandate, or role? It is a problem if the IWG sticks with what it started out with. The first meetings were meetings of the willing. The NWG should form the basis of the IWG, not the select few.

Mary said that she had asked the IWG to place this on the agenda for Berlin and that Emily's response had been that the issue had been resolved in April and that Mary should inform the Working Group of these developments. Mary responded that she would discuss this with the Working Group. Mary said she was concerned about communication about the IWG since Jessica had subsequently exchanged a series of emails with Emily on the topic.

Jessica said that she is in a difficult position because she sits on the IWG. She explained that, at the last meeting in Berlin, it was agreed that the group that had overseen the scoping process would continue with one or two additions, such as Helen Mbabazo from Uganda to bring the perspective of small-scale providers. Since then, link people from each participating country have been added. Now that the project is really getting going, it might be an appropriate time to revisit the structure, which could happen in Berlin when the project governance is discussed. But the IWG is not the same as the historical one in Berlin two years ago, although the historical members are still there.

ACTION: Jean-Pierre to redraft a letter to the IWG and circulate it to the Working Group. It should include a request to the IWG to motivate for the role of non-link persons and indicate what value they add. The representatives going to Berlin will take the letter and this issue forward.

Kathy said that, from her attendance of the April meeting, it is critical that we need to be represented well. The IWG members see themselves as shaping and influencing international debates, which makes representation significant.

Abri said that the Working Group needed to agree that Jessica be its representative. Members agreed that Jessica will represent the Working Group on the IWG.

4.3 Agenda for Berlin meeting

Jay and Mary had given their input to Emily toward the draft agenda for the Berlin meeting. The draft agenda has been circulated and members are asked to send comments.

ACTION: Jessica to circulate draft agenda for Berlin for comment from the Working Group.

5. Project Reporting (handled out of the agenda's order)

Project reporting was included in the set agenda for future meetings. The Coordinator has circulated a report at this meeting, but it only covered a short period of work.

In terms of liaising with Irish Aid, it was agreed to invite Malcolm to attend Working Group meetings for the Coordinator and the Financial reports, which are at the front of the agenda.

6. Research Status Report

Liaison

Mary referred to this section of her report. She said that she felt that doing such reviews was good for the profile of The Water Dialogues. Hameda asked whether she had been approached as an individual or as the WD Coordinator. Mary said that she did not think this was clear to people contacting her.

It was agreed that Mary would use her discretion in deciding whether to accept such reviews and would include a disclaimer that reviews were written in her own capacity and did not necessarily express the views of The Water Dialogues South Africa.

Research

Other than Jeff's suggestion that Mary use the problem statement in formulating the research question, members were wary to begin a discussion of the points made by Mary on research due to the limited time remaining. Mary said that research was placed near the end of the agenda since she had only spent one of six days specified in her short term contract for research, and that she would be able to engage more fully at the next meeting.

ACTION: Mary to remind all members to give input into the case study matrix, e.g. to suggest cases and provide known references or contacts.

Next meeting: 24 November, 10 am- 2 pm, Mvula Trust, Johannesburg

The meeting closed at approx 2pm with thanks to the Water Research Commission for hosting.