

## Synthesising research for adaptive water governance

*Twin2Go reviewed, consolidated, and synthesised research on adaptive and integrated water resources management from basins around the world. The aim was to draw insights relevant to policy and research on issues around adaptive water governance in the context of climate change, and to make them transferable to other basins. Twin2Go further promoted sharing of research results with practitioners and high level decision makers through effective dialogue. Twin2Go was funded as a Coordinating Activity under the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme from June 2009 until September 2011. This final newsletter gives you an update about Twin2Go's outcomes and related news.*

### Towards adaptive water governance

What features of water governance systems can help increase the ability to respond to climate change? How can reforms and policy planning processes promote a more adaptive approach in water governance? To answer these questions the Twin2Go project analysed governance systems in 29 case studies from river basins around the world. The analyses show that no simplistic prescriptions for governance reform exist. However, there are some general lessons that can be learned for improving the ability of water governance systems to respond to climate change – the implementation of which should be tailored to specific societal and environmental conditions:

- Polycentric governance systems are better able to respond to climate change than centralised or fragmented systems. Polycentric systems are characterised by decentralised decision making – where functions, responsibilities and authorities are distributed to various levels of administration – but also by effective vertical (across administrative levels) and horizontal (across sectors and geographical areas) coordination.
- Water resources governance systems that take into account existing uncertainties in decision making are also more likely to respond adequately to future climate change. Proactive ways of dealing with uncertainties include the use of multiple scenarios for decision making, or applying flexible management options that can be adjusted to changing circumstances.
- A sound legal and administrative framework for water resources management is a precondition for good performance in water-related adaptation – but it needs to be complemented by sufficient implementation capacity.

But how can we bring about change in existing water governance practices? How can so called “best practices” be transferred across countries and basins? Together with experts and practitioners, Twin2Go analysed 48 case studies of implementing better practices in water governance and identified barriers and opportunities for implementation and transfer. The following recommendations have been drawn:

#### Recommendations for transfer and implementation of better practices in water governance

- Thoroughly assess and consider existing biophysical conditions as well as governance frameworks: powerful actors, existing principles and practices of water resources management, and cultural specifics may affect the implementation of better governance practices.
- Consider a gradual implementation of new water governance practices – including in time scale and financing – as maturity might require many years.
- Ensure horizontal and vertical coordination among those who are directly and indirectly involved in implementing governance practices.
- Involve stakeholders at the early stages of better practices transfer and implementation in order to increase ownership and ensure support in all implementation phases.
- Complement the transfer and implementation of better practices in water governance with capacity development, information sharing and communication in order to ensure long-term sustainability.

*The main outcomes and recommendations of TwizGo have been summarised in two policy briefs available from the download section at <http://www.twin2go.uos.de>*

### Four successful international policy workshops

A key goal of Twin2Go was the effective dissemination of research results, policy lessons learned, and recommendations to policy and decision makers. In order to achieve this, a series of dialogue workshops was organised back-to-back with important water conferences and meetings relevant to the Twin2Go target regions. This approach ensured a high level of participation and helped reach a broad base of policy and decisions makers as well as practitioners. During the policy workshops Twin2Go presented recent results and policy lessons drawn from comparative research, expert consultations, and analysis. Panel discussions and interaction with the audience facilitated an exchange of insights from research and practical experience.

#### Side-event at UNECE Water Convention Workshop



The first in the series of policy workshops took place on 13 April 2011, in the context of the 2nd Workshop on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change in Transboundary Basins, hosted by the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Water Convention in Geneva. Given the

UNECE Water Convention Secretariat's involvement in this part of the world, this workshop specifically focussed on the Twin2Go target region of Russia and the New Independent States (NIS). More than 30 participants and four panellists shared views on the different opportunities and barriers in introducing and implementing more adaptive water governance practices. In speaking about obstacles the panellists stressed the importance of institutional resistance to change, as well as other cultural issues such as perceived value of water. In terms of opportunities the panel stressed the importance of education and scientific input for adaptive governance.

#### Co-located workshop at the Singapore International Water Week



In order to reach an audience with a South and South East Asian focus, Twin2Go organised the second policy workshop as a co-located event at the Singapore International Water Week on 4 July 2011. The panel included speakers from the Departments of Water Resources in Thailand and in

Assam, India; the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat in Nepal; and the Centre of Sustainable Water Resources Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Vietnam. Together with more than 30

workshop participants, they discussed policies and programmes that can support the transition towards a more adaptive water governance at the local, federal, national and transboundary levels as well as the specific national framework conditions influencing this process.

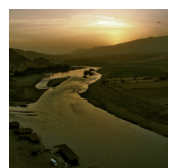
#### Twin2Go seminar at the World Water Week in Stockholm

On 25 August 2011, the third in the series of Twin2Go policy workshops took place at the Stockholm World Water Week. Twin2Go collaborated with members of its Advisory Board, namely the Global Water System Project (GWSP), the Global Water Partnership (GWP), and UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to set up and host the event. The seminar titled "Governing Water Wisely: Adaptive Approaches to Water Resources Management" attracted more than 60 international participants. Together with the panel speakers – who represented transboundary river basin organisations (RBOs), international organisations, national governments, and NGOs – the participants discussed barriers and opportunities for introducing more adaptive governance approaches, the importance of coordinated action, and policy programmes to support transition in water governance.



#### Twin2Go Africa Policy Workshop

The fourth and last in the series of Twin2Go policy workshops took place on 14 September 2011, back-to-back with the 9th GWP-Southern Africa Consulting Partners Meeting, held in Gauteng, South Africa. This enabled Twin2Go to share and discuss the project's policy lessons and recommendations with more than 45 delegates representing Country Water Partnerships from Southern Africa as well as RBOs and regional GWP programmes. A panel discussion with speakers from national governments, academia, and RBOs discussed how improved coordination and innovative ways of dealing with uncertainties can be implemented in practice. This discussion was followed by a working group session to review and discuss Twin2Go's recommendations for the transfer and implementation of better practices in water governance.



For more information on the Twin2Go policy workshops please visit <http://www.twin2go.uos.de/workshops/policy-review-workshops>

## Publications of interest

Throughout the past two years, Twin2Go has issued a number of publications, reports and datasets that document the research and stakeholder dialogues undertaken and summarise main outcomes for different target groups. The following publications – and other relevant deliverables – are available for download at <http://www.twin2go.uos.de>



### Best Practice Guidelines

#### Lessons learned for successful transfer and implementation in adaptive water governance

Several tools and practices have been applied in river basin management to help improve performance and adaptive capacity. This brochure provides practitioners and decision makers with recommendations and lessons learned to promote the successful transfer and implementation of new practices and innovative tools across river basins, discussing aspects of strategic planning, coordination, stakeholder engagement and capacity development in adaptive water governance.



### Policy Brief 1

#### Responding to climate change: towards more adaptive water governance systems

The brief summarises the main outcomes of the comparative governance analysis carried out within Twin2Go and provides recommendations for policy and decision makers that are involved in water governance reforms within governments and international donor organisations.



### Policy Brief 2

#### Lessons learned for successful transfer and implementation of better practices in water governance

The main success precondition for water governance reforms lies in achieving adequate compatibility between the new practices and the pre-existing socio-economic, administrative, and environmental settings. This policy brief provides lessons learned and recommendations for those who aim to transfer and implement better practices in water governance.

## The Twin2Go Water Governance Database – Advancing the frontier of knowledge

Twin2Go's survey of 29 river basin case studies uncovered significant findings, and proved that comparative analyses of a large number of cases are feasible and valuable for water governance research. This work encouraged Twin2Go partners to continue their efforts beyond the project's end and so to further advance the comparative study. The objective for the future is to include additional case studies and to refine the survey based on a broader dataset. The inclusion of cases from regions that were not part of the Twin2Go original survey will be particularly beneficial. To this end, Twin2Go has developed an online database, which answers the following purposes:

- **To facilitate collaborations and collect further case study data as a basis for refined analyses in the future**  
This section allows new case studies to be added to the dataset. It is possible to download the questionnaire and send the completed file back, or to insert data online through web forms. When choosing the latter option, standardised data are already pre-filled, and a simple quality check indicates if data improvements are needed. Both options allow data collection to be interrupted and continued at a later point, which helps to adjust the process to personal schedules.
- **To make available case study data to the interested public**  
This section allows online visitors to view and comment on existing case study data. Here it is possible (a) to view all indicators for a case study, (b) to focus on selected indicators for a case, and (c) to compare various case studies with regard to a chosen indicator. Moreover, a statistical overview shows frequency distributions for all indicators, allowing the comparison of a selected case study to the entirety of available cases.
- **To provide background information on the Twin2Go approach**  
This section offers information about the conceptual background, questionnaire, analysis approaches, and main findings of the survey.

*The database is accessible on the Twin2Go website and on [www.watgovernance.uos.de](http://www.watgovernance.uos.de). If you are interested in collaboration and consider adding a new case study, please contact the database team at [info@twin2go.eu](mailto:info@twin2go.eu).*

### BRAHMATWINN publishes project results



The BRAHMATWINN findings and results were recently published online in the Copernicus publication *Advances in Science and Research*, Vol. 7, 2011, which is available for download at [www.adv-sci-res.net/7/index.html](http://www.adv-sci-res.net/7/index.html)

The publication is of interest for research planning and structuring: the results show the integrated structure of a climate change related integrated land and water resources management (ILWRM) project and the interdisciplinary cooperation that is required to address the complex nature of such a research task.

### New GWSP Policy Brief



The GWSP has issued a policy brief on Water Security, including insights and recommendations of the GWSP Scientific Community, with contributions and comments from invited scientists – the results gained from the Twin2Go governance analysis are also included.

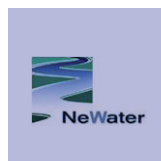
Recommendations are formulated on how to improve water governance and how to implement institutional and mentality change. This policy brief is available for download at [www.gwsp.org/fileadmin/documents\\_news/Think\\_piece\\_final.pdf](http://www.gwsp.org/fileadmin/documents_news/Think_piece_final.pdf)

### Two new publications from NeWater and ASEMWaterNet



Huntjens, P. (2011) *Water Management and Water Governance in a Changing Climate – Experiences and insights on climate change adaptation from Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia*. PhD-thesis at University of Osnabrueck, Germany. Eburon Academic Publishers, 2011

The research presented here is funded by NeWater and ASEMWaterNet: this book strengthens the conceptual foundations and practical value of adaptive approaches to water management and water governance in a changing climate. On the basis of a broad comparative analysis of policies and practices in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, it focuses on the capacity of management regimes to cope with the two most common extreme weather events – floods and droughts.



Huntjens, P., Pahl-Wostl, C., Flachner, Z., Neto, S., Koskova, R., Schlueter, M., Nabide Kiti, I., Dickens, C., Camkin, J. (2011) *Adaptive Water Management and Policy Learning in a Changing Climate: A formal comparative analysis of eight water management regimes in Europe, Africa and Asia*. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 145–163

This article is a product of NeWater: it provides an evidence-based and policy relevant contribution to understanding the phenomenon of policy learning and its structural constraints in the field of river basin management, in particular related to coping with current and future climatic hazards, such as floods and droughts. This has been done by a formal comparative analysis of eight water management regimes, by using multi-value QCA, focusing on the relationship between regime characteristics (as explanatory variables) and different levels of policy learning (as output value).

The newsletters are also available on our website [www.twin2go.eu](http://www.twin2go.eu)

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