

Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA)

Annual Meeting Minutes, 30 August 2014

Notes prepared by Anna Forslund, Mats Eriksson, John Matthews

Participants: Gene Brantly (RTI), Natalie Beckman (State Department), Christine Chan (Chan Environmental Consulting), Joppe Cramwinckel (WBCSD), Paula Diaz* (Conservation International), Julian Doczi* (ODI), Mats Eriksson (SIWI), Bob Pietrowsky (USACE IWR & ICIWaRM), Mark Fletcher (Arup), Anna Forslund (SIWI), Luis E. García (World Bank), Phil Graham (SMHI), Miro Honzak* (Conservation International), Jonathan Kaledin (SIWI Associate Program), Sonja Koepfel* (UNECE), Karin Lexén (SIWI), John Matthews (AGWA), Anil Mishra (UNESCO-IHP), Diego Rodriguez (World Bank), Gary Sharkey (PwC), Susanne Skyllerstedt (GWP), Annie Strand (SIWI), Michael van der Valk (Hydrology.nl, Crossvision), Niels Vlaanderen (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, The Netherlands), Sofia Widforss (SIWI)

* Attended remotely

Please note that attributions of statements to participants below are approximate and based on the highly imperfect recollection of notetakers. Apologies in advance for misattributions and gaps, and corrections are always welcome!

Welcome & introduction

Karin Lexén, as Director of World Water Week and an AGWA Steering Committee member, welcomed everyone to Stockholm and the World Water Week venue.

John Matthews, as AGWA coordinator, welcomed everyone to the AGWA Annual meeting 2014. John introduced Joppe Cramwinckel as the chair of the Annual meeting.

Joppe Cramwinckel thanked for the opportunity to chair the meeting, explained that this meeting had been preceded by the first face-to-face Steering Committee meeting, and then gave the floor to Torkil Jønch-Clausen.

Torkil gave an introduction to the early history of AGWA:

AGWA started in the wake after the UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen and the practical action-oriented Nairobi principles defined the summer before, connecting Diego and John in June 2010 to begin preparing a joint meeting in Stockholm in August 2010. Adaptation was not being given the attention needed and there was a strong need to get the interested actors together. AGWA was the outcome of the meeting and since then has been growing. Initially, two “tracks” were identified: a global track focused on policy issues, and a field track intended to mobilize on the ground action.

Comments from Diego Rodriguez (WB):

The global and field tracks had an uneven beginning, and in AGWA we identified an early major gap in a “middle” track that was focused on technical decision makers who were charged with implementing adaptation but were unsure how to operationalize and bridge disciplinary and institutional barriers, represented at least initially by the development banks. Defining this middle space was necessary to enable the global and field tracks, and AGWA developed rapidly as a place to learn and share experiences. Functioning as an informal network has served well, and has helped individual institutions move forward with more effective action.

Review of the past year

John summarized the activities of the past year so far (see attached paper).

AGWA policy development (Karin Lexen, Sofia Widforss)

- Group of organizations interested in influencing the UNFCCC agenda.
- Joint side event planned in Lima, case studies from Peru and Pakistan.
- Policy meetings planned during SWWW to define next steps.
- *Notes from the team meeting held two days later are available on the AGWA events site.*

Report from the Steering Committee

Bob Pietrowsky and Christine Chan presented the outcomes of the steering committee, focusing on the how AGWA should be organized and structured. Various options have been considered, including continuing as an informal network with two co-chairs, one of which is a “host” for AGWA; becoming an independent organization (such as an NGO), and becoming fully “owned” by a single host organization. Cees van de Guchte from Deltares had also provided the example of the Delta Alliance, which had created a foundation with some initial funding to support a small secretariat that was intended to enable collaboration and networking functions. In all of these cases, the SC also recommended that AGWA become more formal in terms of workplans, budgets, and explicit governance processes, which could accompany all proposed models. It was the SC’s recommendation that we proceed with continuing with the current model, with two co-chairs, one of them being the host, but creating a separate secretariat administered by the host, with the secretariat kept separate from the steering committee, and with the secretariat remaining independent but funded by one of the chairs for the time being. The SC endorsed SIWI’s offer to become a co-chair and to fund the secretariat.

Presentation from Mats Eriksson on the offer from SIWI to host the AGWA secretariat

Mats Eriksson outlined the rationale for SIWI to step in and offer support as host for the AGWA secretariat and thereby filling the gap that appeared as Conservation International (CI) stepped down from this role. He said that SIWI would be happy to support a small but functional secretariat as basis for AGWA’s fundamental functions such as uphold and build the members network, holding regular steering committee and annual meetings, preparing agendas, taking minutes from meetings, and ensure that these are circulated among members. The secretariat would become separate from the steering committee, and the AGWA coordinator would report to the steering committee. SIWI would be happy to support this also financially, and he mentioned that SIWI would be willing to offer John Matthews a 50% consultancy for the rest of the year of 2014 in order to ensure that momentum is kept up and avoid loss of institutional memory. Mats referred to the fact that SIWI has been engaged in AGWA since its commencement and since last year SIWI has also been coordinating the AGWA policy group. The intention of AGWA, e.g., bridging policy and field based activities, fits well with SIWI’s objectives and mandate as an organization. On the small secretariat platform provided by SIWI, member organizations can build on AGWA to move programs and activities forward according to their interest and with the help of dedicated and in-kind funds that they may have at hand.

The presentation was followed by a discussion on the future governance of AGWA and general appreciation of SIWI’s offer to host the secretariat and bear its costs. Some of the points that was highlighted were:

- Although it is appreciated that SIWI is hosting the secretariat, it is important that SIWI is not driving AGWA’s interests but that AGWA continues to be seen as an independent members network.
- An MOU should be created to further define the relationship between the co-chairs.
- As AGWA develop products in its own name, but sometimes with member’s funds, it becomes important to think about the correct intellectual property rights for these products and how they shall be documented.

John M added that while SIWI has offered to cover 50 percent of his salary for AGWA secretariat functions, with Bob at the US Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources covering 50 percent for technical AGWA engagements via Colorado State University.

Joppe Cramwinckel then moderated a discussion about how to approve the arrangement with SIWI as co-chair and a separate secretariat. There was some concern if the steering committee was empowered on its own to make the decision or there should be a vote among the general membership (the so-called “Swedish” or “Uruguayan” means of resolution). Joppe suggested a “Dutch” solution to see if the general membership approved of the SC recommendation. No objections were made in the SC or the general membership, so the arrangement was approved, effective immediately.

Open discussion on how AGWA is organized, how AGWA operates, and how AGWA should/might operate in the future

Anil: AGWA is a significant network and serves to have strategic linkages to UNESCO for ongoing policy dialogues, partnerships. AGWA plays an enabling-supporting role on climate adaptation issues.

Jon K: Unincorporated associations are an extremely valid form of organization and can have clear legal rights and recognized activities, without necessarily becoming a legally recognized NGO.

Gary: How should AGWA interact with other peer organizations, such as other professional associations or networks that are focused on complementary issues or approaches (e.g., insurance or financial risk). Should AGWA become a “meta-network” that can encompass or connect these other groups?

Luis: Should we be concerned about having too much enthusiasm for AGWA? Who will finance support for AGWA activities? Should we serve as a referral service for members of the network or external entities that need support or assistance?

Karin: AGWA as a secretariat should be able to provide this kind of referral service to the network as a whole. But the level of service is dependent on the level of financial support.

Gene: Perhaps we should create a survey of internal assets, interests, and needs within AGWA.

John M: This could be done fairly easily via some online survey tools and has been discussed before within the network.

Jon K: Should AGWA itself function at least occasionally as a consultancy? Our informal legal status should not be a major obstacle if we were to structure ourselves as an unincorporated association.

Anil: AGWA is a platform to create more partnerships.

Joppe: We should do this by building on the AGWA brand.

Mark: AGWA should create a repository of knowledge and expertise to help build a brand. One way to generate more marketing awareness may be to create an AGWA prize that can recognize best practices.

Torkil: The work program document refers to a Help Desk but this seems very weak.

John M: The Help Desk has been functioning for a long time, referring people and institutions to particular thematic, regional, or problem approaches. But it has never been clear how to “institutionalize” or advertise this function within AGWA.

Torkil: AGWA should be a clearing house for action.

Bob P: Should AGWA have a set of principles to define itself and membership? These could be quite general but serve as a means of connecting and showing the corporate nature of the organization.¹

Torkil: AGWA should not have such principles — AGWA should include everybody who wants in.

Bob: But AGWA should stand “for” something, at least as a set of values about what is important and useful in terms of adaptation. Can we make these principles interesting and something we can collectively advocate for? These can in effect advertise and signal to other organizations what AGWA represents.

Karin: In some way we need to safeguard AGWA’s brand so that not activities are being carried out that AGWA members wouldn’t like to be associated with. Therefore some fundamental principles would be important.

Susanne: How have communications functioned to date?

John M: Erratically and unevenly, on the basis of time available. I view it as ongoing capacity gap. Communications is so critical but capacity has been limited. I am hoping that SIWI’s strong comms department can help develop a more systematic approach to communications within AGWA.

Anna: AGWA has strong potential for taking concrete actions with the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme’s water hub and playing a significant leadership role there. We can be both pragmatic and serve a strong networking role.

Joppe: Since we are running out of time, we should probably set up a series of subcommittees to help resolve ongoing issues, and perhaps use the survey mechanism to define interests more effectively. Subcommittees should probably focus topics such as internal governance, definition of principles, and communications and outreach.

Gary and Michael both expressed immediate interest in communications and outreach. Jon K expressed interest in internal governance. Bob expressed interest in defining a set of principles for AGWA.

¹ Bob followed up his comments later with some sample suggestions for principles:
What is AGWA?

AGWA is a network of members who share an appreciation for technically informed, appropriately scaled, transparent and collaborative risk-based decision processes for water resources adaptation to climate change. It’s ultimate aim is to help improve the sustainability of both natural and engineered systems by strengthening their resilience.

AGWA does this by acting as a convener, a catalyst, and a promoter for: (1) furthering practical knowledge; 2) training and building capacity; (3) helping members, partners, and clients to more effectively address adaptation problems; and, (4) influencing contemporary policy by integrating policy development with the lessons learned demonstrated by AGWA pilots and practice.