



Advancing a global network on environmental flows

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What are environmental flows?

Environmental flows describe the quantity, quality and timing of water flows required to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the human livelihoods and well-being that depend on these ecosystems. Where rivers have been regulated for agriculture, industry, hydropower or domestic supplies, it is important to ensure there are sufficient flows for the environment. These in turn support the health of aquatic systems and the well-being of people who depend on them.

Promoting the positive potential

The Global Environmental Flows Network (eFlowNet) is mobilising learning, knowledge sharing and adoption of environmental flows approaches. The network unites water managers, industry, NGOs, local communities, governmental and intergovernmental agencies, and researchers in improving the uptake of environmental flows as a standard tool in sustainable river basin management to allocate water between competing uses including the environment.

A growing partnership

Since its initiation in 2007, eFlowNet has evolved into a functional network with more than 1200 members throughout the world producing tangible outputs such as workshops, publications and capacity building. Participation in eFlowNet is open to all. As of August 2009, it includes a growing coalition of non-governmental, intergovernmental and academic institutions working at the forefront of research, education and implementation of environmental flows.

Key contributors to the Network to date include: the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Deltares, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Swedish Water House (SWH), USAID Global Water for Sustainability Program (GLOWS), World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), UNEP-DHI Centre for Water and Environment (UDC), Conservation International (CI), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and UNESCO-IHE.



A central reference point

eFlowNet catalyses people to access and share the latest information on environmental flows. It supports a variety of activities which benefit stakeholders including an interactive website with case studies, discussion forums, partnership development opportunities, a newsletter as well as workshops and conferences. In the first three years of activity, the Network has sponsored or co-convened a number of seminars and thematic sessions at more than 9 different events. More recently, several partners of eFlowNet have collaborated on the joint publication “Securing Water



for Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: The Importance of Environmental Flow”.

Using connections

Specific outputs of the Network are a first step in influencing the policy agenda on environmental flows. Practical examples of these include fact sheets to review policy implementation and summarise methods on environmental flows, a consolidated online curriculum to ensure training is accessible to a wider constituency, and linking and developing networks at regional and national levels. In addition, eFlowNet will continue to expand, bringing in new organisations to reflect the different geographic, social and economic perspectives on water allocation issues.

Become a supporting member!

Sustaining eFlowNet requires funding to support coordination, communications and events. A co-investment model for funding of the network has been developed, with funding by member organisations and from donors.

Are you a water company with a long-term stake in freshwater quality? A hydropower generator with operational constraints due to climate change and competing uses? A donor agency interested in sustainable water infrastructure? The Network provides an excellent opportunity for co-investment to catalyse collective action and learning on integrated flows management.

