

Briefing Note

Revised Conditions of Accreditation and Change of Host Institution

The revised “Conditions of Accreditation for RWPs and CWPs” document is being presented to this meeting of the Steering Committee for final approval. Once approved this will conclude a process of revision carried out over a period of nearly 2 years including presentations of previous drafts to 2 Regional Days’ meetings (Sept 2010 and Aug 2011) and for information at the May 2011 SC meeting.

Legal Status of RWPs and CWPs:

The present Conditions of Accreditation assume that all RWPs and CWPs function within the context of the legal and financial umbrella of a local Host Institution (HI). This has been the norm for the GWP Network since its inception. However, a number of RWPs and CWPs have recently raised the possibility of establishing their own independent legal status. There are several good reasons for this, including the possibility of engaging directly with donors and other financial partners in programme management and delivery. The August 2011 Regional Days meetings requested that the GWPO further explore the implications of allowing RWPs to establishing independent legal status. The Steering Committee approval of this revised draft Conditions of Accreditation is therefore with the understanding that such a study would be completed by the GWPO in the near future.

Change and/or Rotation of Host Institutions

The GWP is a global action “Network of Partners”. The governance of the Network is, as a matter of principle, *owned* by the Partners and managed according to principles enshrined in GWP’s core values. The Partners are represented in various country and regional governance structures through Regional and Country Water Partnerships which must deliver cost-effective services to the Network.

GWP’s core funding is presently provided largely by international development assistance. The donor governments are increasingly seeking clear evidence of impact as they assess the results from their investments. The GWP is thus obligated to make the best use of the limited funding available. It is now clearly recognised that changes in HI through routine rotation or non-performance-related reasons is counter-productive. Therefore the Conditions of Accreditation state that:

Careful thought should be given prior to recommending a change of HI due to the negative impacts of moving the Secretariat, such as loss of institutional knowledge and cost of moving, which can reduce the performance of the RWP for a substantial period of time. A change may however be justified if the quality of the hosting services is below what is required, if the location prevents the RWP from effective operations throughout the region, if the host acts as a capture mechanism turning the RWP into one of the host’s programmes, or if the security situation at the location calls for a change.

A change in Host Institution can have serious impacts on the performance of the Partnership in the respective region or country. Some considerations follow:

1. In selecting the HI, substantial time of GWPO needs to be invested to ensure that the selected HI can meet the GWPO financial and other requirements. In addition, GWPO’s Steering Committee has mandated its Secretariat to undertake an audit of systems and administrative procedures to Host Institutions, with the aim of providing orientation to all new HI, which adds to the cost.

2. Once the HI has been selected and appointed, the Region needs to recruit Secretariat staff. It is clear that it is not so easy to recruit Regional Secretariat staff for a two or three year term without possibility of extension. As some of the GWPO Network Officer's time is involved as a participant in the selection process, this is an additional cost.
3. Following the appointment of the RWP Secretariat staff members, especially the Regional Coordinator and the financial officer of the HI, are given training in GWPO operations, activities, financial reporting and other arrangements. The Regional staff would be expected to visit GWPO Stockholm for about a week, to receive such training by GWPO's finance team, communication team, and the respective Network Officer. GWPO staff time for this training can be substantial, removing GWPO staff from their day to day normal activities. The costs to the region are also considerable, comprising travel and accommodation costs, as well as staff time, which creates an important dent in the regional budget.
4. The Regional Secretariat is required to carry the institutional memory of the RWP. This means that all records, documents and databases must be physically and securely transferred from the old HI to the new one. The process often includes an international move that entail considerable time and efficiency losses for the region as well as for GWPO.
5. There are additional costs for efficiency losses related to the learning period of the incoming HI, Regional Coordinator and Communications Officer, which takes usually more than one year. There is also a decrease in efficiency at the end of the former HI's appointment period, when the focus of its activity is the preparation to hand over the responsibilities to another institution. Likewise, there is a loss in momentum of ongoing activities as well as working relationships with Partner organisations that have to be developed all over again, which certainly affects the RWP's performance.

The GWP 5-Year Evaluation commissioned by the GWP donors in 2008 raised the issue of HI rotation and its impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of GWP. This evaluation strongly recommended that Regional Secretariats should not rotate in order to preserve institutional knowledge. In addition, the Learning Review Teams made similar recommendations to South Asia and South East Asia (2007) Southern Africa (2008) and Central America (2009). Moreover, the principle of non-rotation was also stated by the Regional Chair of Chairs, Mr Reginald Tekateka, during the Regional Chairs and Coordinators meeting held in Stockholm on 14 August 2009.

Recommendation to the GWP Steering Committee

The GWPO Secretariat therefore recommends to the GWP Steering Committee that the revised Conditions of Accreditation be approved, with a clear statement that:

- A change in Host Institution is strongly discouraged, unless in the exceptional circumstances of poor performance, and
- Routine rotations of Host Institution within Regions and Countries are expected to cease. This may require changes to be made in the Regional Statutes of certain regions.

As part of this approval of the Conditions of Accreditation, the GWP Steering Committee also is requested to **take note of** the proposed study on the establishment of RWPs and CWPs as independent legal entities, to be completed by the GWPO with the results presented to the forthcoming May 2012 Steering Committee meeting.