

Numerical Modelling - Policy Interface Workshop: NMPI 2007

1. Background

The “Numerical Modelling Policy Interface Workshop” in short NMPI 2007 is expected to address the interface between policy and numerical modelling in the water environment. Under the theme “Operationalizing Adaptive Capacity” the workshop is expected to develop an international network of multi-disciplinary scientists and practitioners to set an agenda for research to close the gap between numerical modelling and policy development. NMPI 2007 seeks to analyse, define and document the the gap between research results (especially but not restricted to numerical modelling) and policy / strategy implementation. To achieve its aim as well as to make the workshop relevant to current environmental management challenges, it will focus on “decision support” to provide a milieu that links present and future aspects of resource management to adaptation, vulnerability and feedback mechanisms, **Figure 1**. In summary, the objectives of NMPI 2007 are:

I. To develop a network of multidisciplinary scientists to systematically assess, define & document the complexities that define the gap between numerical modelling & policy development

II. To develop a research agenda driven by the findings from objective I

NMPI 2007 is expected to take place from the 12th to the 13th March 2007 in Stuttgart with a follow-up meeting in Nottingham, England. Theme oriented work groups are expected to be formed within the network to address various subtopics related to the main theme.

NMPI 2007 is a joint undertaking of the Universitaet Stuttgart, Germany and the British Geological Survey.

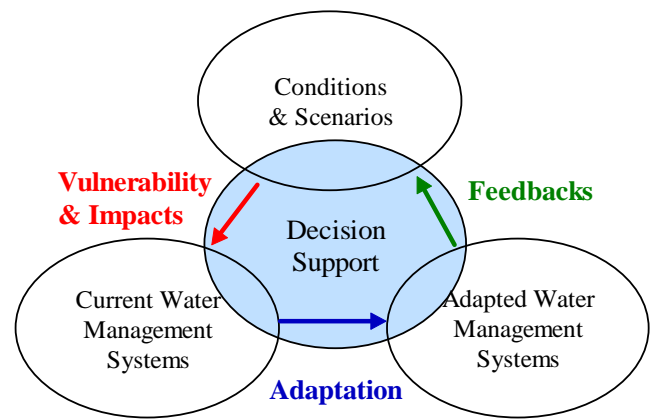


Figure 1 “Decision support” in a water management system illustrating the link between adaptation, feedbacks and vulnerability and impacts

In addition to its thematic clusters, the NMPI network will have a strong regional focus with respect to its outlook on problem identification. Regional work groups already formed include:

- a. Europe Region (EU 27)
- b. Asia Pacific Region (China)
- c. Central and South America Region (Chile, Ecuador, Peru & Panama)
- d. Africa Region (South Africa, Egypt, Ghana)
- e. North America

NMPI 2007 is expected to publish the outcome of its deliberations in the form of a position paper in an edited volume. A wikisite (a website á la wikipedia) is expected to be set up to keep the network active after the workshop. Members will have access to the site to record new developments as well as to discuss new methods and tools aimed at improving the numerical modelling / policy interface.

2. “Network Developer” Concept

NMPI 2007 uses a simple idea based on the so-called “network developer” concept to develop a platform for dialogue between scientists and practitioners to address the main theme of the workshop. Each network developer or ND, as they are known internally, works / coordinates two or maximum three local experts (LEX). The latter forms a unit. A unit is usually thematic but can also be based on the geopolitical nature of a particular theme. Two or more units come together to form working group (WG).

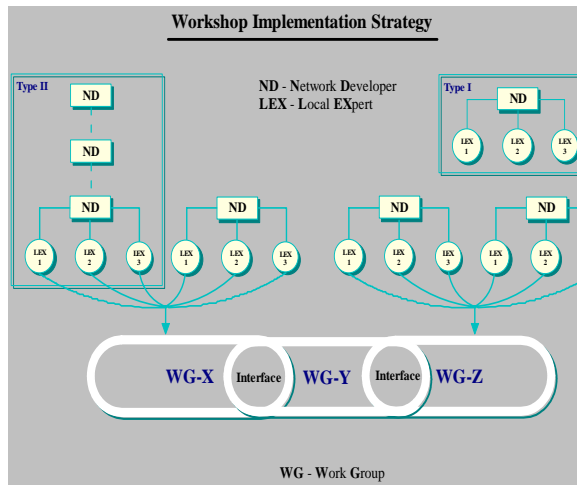


Figure 2 A schematic illustration of the „network developer“ concept as it is implemented as part of preparatory activities towards NMPI 2007.

3. Questionnaire

To aid the planning and development of the workshop, a series of questionnaires have been developed. Aimed at experts from both academia and practice, the questionnaire serves as a rapid appraisal instrument (RAI) to provide organisers with information about pressing issues amongst participants related to the main theme of NMPI 2007. The questionnaire will also help to structure the agenda of the workshop. It also intends to address the interface between numerical model developers, end-users, policy initiators as well as pedagogic dimensions especially with respect to graduate level training. The main issues in terms of model-user interaction include the following:

- ◇ Models as arbiters - If a model is bought into, then the results of the modelling can be used to modify water use, right?
- ◇ Uptake of models - Too often models are developed, staff trained, model handed over and then nothing happens!
- ◇ Basing policy decisions on model output - building confidence of policy makers (non-technical) in model results
- ◇ Linkage of models of different types - technical issue but important for Water Framework Directive, etc

4. Workshop narrative

Around 40 experienced environmental science researchers and practitioners from eight countries and four continents will take part in NMPI 2007. Participants are expected to arrive in Stuttgart, Germany

for the two day event on Sunday, the 11th of March 2007. The first day, 12th of March, will focus on current research and will involve presentation of the most update research in the field. The latter will be followed by an open forum where delegates are expected to deliberate and discuss the presentations. This is expected to set the stage for the second day of NMPI 2007. The first day will be concluded by a dinner banquet to be hosted by the Chairman of the NMPI 2007. The second day, Tuesday 13th of March 2007 will see participants break into four working groups to discuss the global objectives of the workshop from various perspectives.

The working group activity is expected to take place during the first half of the second day's activities. A plenary session that will take place in the afternoon is expected to conclude NMPI 2007. The collation of outputs from each of the four splinter groups is expected to form the basis of the main output of the meeting. The latter will subsequently be edited and published as a reference volume to guide the work of the NMPI network.

The findings of the first NMPI meeting in Stuttgart are expected to form the basis for a follow-up meeting, NMPI II in Nottingham, England to be organised by the British Geological Survey. NMPI II is expected to produce international research consortia to implement the research agenda set in Stuttgart, Germany.

Suggestions

Please direct contributions, recommendations & questions to:

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