



EXTERNAL EXPERT ADVISORY BOARD (EEAB) REPORT –
FIThydro SC & CSMB KICK-OFF MEETINGS, VIENNA, 3-5 APRIL 2017

1. Introduction

The FIThydro Steering Committee (SC) meeting on Monday, April 3, 2017 was followed by the kick-off workshop of the Case Studies Management Board (CSMB) on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 4th & 5th. A field visit to the Freudenua hydroelectric station and nature-like fishway took place on Wednesday afternoon. The field trip and meetings were hosted by partner VERBUND Hydro Power GmbH at the Europaplatz office in Vienna. These meetings were held earlier than originally planned to expedite the process of data gathering, and site selection as recommended by the EEAB in the first report, following the inaugural FIThydro kick-off meeting, held at TUM Raitenhaslach, 21-23 November 2016.

2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee updates on each WP (Work Package) on Monday, were informative, showed good progress, and better understanding of the dependencies between WPs, compared to the inaugural FIThydro kick-off meeting. Presentations, generally reflected EEAB recommendations from the inaugural meeting, with more emphasis on integration within and between regions, adopting more Pan-European approaches where feasible, as well as considering how connections will be made between WPs, and how learning opportunities can be maximized. The one exception was WP2, where some continued concern about limited progress was expressed, even though a survey was circulated to be completed by partner companies. Lack of responses by partners, may be associated with less than vigorous follow-up by the WP2 Leader (Laurent David), issues of task clarity, or reluctance by some partners to share information and data. The need for more intensive efforts to achieve the WP2 objectives, assist partners overcome any reservations they may have, and further support its Leader in gathering and sharing data and information from partner companies, was identified. The FIThydro Coordinator (Peter Rutschmann) offered additional support to the WP2 Leader for further interaction with partners. It is crucial to the overall FIThydro project that this be followed-up with both the WP2 Leader and any partners who may be reluctant to share information, and firm decisions be made to overcome any difficulties.

EEAB continues to be concerned with the lack of responses by some partners and the rather weak management of WP2. The EEAB recommends that additional support be provided to the WP2 Leader from the Coordinator, perhaps through

Kordula Schwarzwälder, and that interaction among WPs may more efficiently be conducted through direct contact with the WP2 subtask leaders.

The Coordinator has established contact with the Coordinator of the AMBER project and will continue mutually beneficial exchanges. The Coordinator's recommendation to add Dr. Robert Fenz to the EEAB was accepted. Financial support for all EEAB members to attend the annual FIThydro meeting was confirmed. For in-between meetings, there will be financial support from the Coordinator's budget for one EEAB member to attend in person, and the choice was left up to the meeting organizers, who may consider expertise needed and availability. There may be opportunities for other EEAB members to participate by teleconferencing. Furthermore, e-mail requests for advice may be addressed to EEAB members. The EEAB supports these efforts.

3. Case Studies

The presentations at the CSMB kick-off on Tuesday provided additional information and clarified issues further, particularly from the view point of the operators. While some operators were quite transparent about their needs, others seemed reluctant to provide information and data without further clarification (see 2 above). In addition, it seems that limited evaluations and very few rigorous scientific studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of mitigation measures implemented at test site HPPs (hydroelectric power projects). Although ably handled by Chair Atle Harby, concern with lack of progress led to more direct questions by the end of the day. Leaders and EEAB members developed a strategy to separate participants in three smaller groups, and have workshop style discussions on Wednesday morning, by asking each group to answer the same questions. On Wednesday, this format provided renewed momentum, succeeded in overcoming stalled discussions, and brought more transparency and clarity of purpose, although more effort is still required for WP2. Discussions on Tuesday and Wednesday, expanded on more specific ideas to improve communication, keep track of progress in each task, and more clearly identify maximum benefits from synergistic actions.

The EEAB recommends that CSMB and WP Leaders establish internal reporting with commitments and deadlines to be updated bimonthly. Items for this reporting, should include: 1) Scientific progress; 2) Innovation; 3) Synergies between WP tasks; 4) Solutions to implementation difficulties; 5) Dissemination. Such reporting should highlight those areas (or partners) where problems persist and deal with them appropriately.

The above recommendation is a more tangible way to facilitate better communication on interdependent tasks between WPs and ensure improved tracking of progress, particularly synergistic activities. This is in line with a parallel recommendation in the first report of the EEAB.

Furthermore, following the presentation of the FIThydro project to the Water Framework Directive working group ECOSTAT, the EEAB once again recommends:

- 1) that the test cases be framed in the context of the current EU legislation, which includes the water body type, if natural or heavily modified, if relevant mitigation measures are already envisaged in the River Basin Management Plan Programme of Measures or if/how they will be included, if conservation objectives stemming from the Habitat Directive are to be achieved in the HPP area, etc.
- 2) that the scales of the aquatic system impacted by each HPP (i.e. upstream and downstream reaches) are identified consistently, along with the relevant ecosystem limiting factors (i.e. fish populations, sediment load, water quality, etc.).
- 3) that all project partners frame or report their work in the same, WFD/HD compliant way from the outset, regardless of what country they operate in, to ensure comparable outputs.

EEAB will provide support to the CSMB in these areas, if needed.

External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB) members

Christos Katopodis, P.Eng., FCSCCE (attended 3-5 April)

Dr. Martina Bussettini (attended 3-4 April & ECOSTAT 5 April)

Dr. Robert Fenz (attended 5 April)

Prof Colin Bean (was unable to attend)