

Information Systems: an Investment in Equipment, Software and People

The Life-Water Project is focusing on developing well-functioning Information Systems for the twenty-seven Districts identified as Integrated Water Management Districts (IWMD) as part of the decentralization initiative of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation. Information Systems by their very nature and purpose, the gathering and sharing of data, dictate that attention be given to each point along the management chain. To address this the Life-Water project is investing in individual training, as well as equipment and software for use not only at each IWMD, but also at the five Directorates within the project area, as they are key partners in the water management decision-making process. Over 250 people have received over 60 hours of basic computer training.



Qualified computer specialists from various MWRI departments receive extensive on-the-job training directly related to the needs and function of the IWMDs. An incentive driven program specifically designed to motivate trainees, targets are set for the trainees in each District to collect data, develop data bases, create electronic forms or templates, issue reports, and establish useful monitoring and evaluation systems. The most qualified and promising trainees are selected to establish the Information Systems in the new IWMD offices.

This training program empowers people. One illustration is the story of Eng. Wafaa. A newly graduated computer engineer with the MWRI, she was first introduced to integrated water management and water resource computer applications during the pilot phase. She worked hard and was nominated for a staff position in the South Zifta IWMD. There she assisted with the establishment of the Information System that included an intranet interface and MISD data bases for both the District and the associated Directorate. She is now coordinating the LIFE-Water Project's IS activities for the whole Directorate. Another trainee who is now contributing to the



overall project is Eng. Mohamed Mostafa. A civil engineer, he combined previous undergraduate training in GIS and surveying with the applied IWRM Information Systems course work to help prepare an integrated digital mapping system for two Directorates in Qena. He has been asked to help establish this mapping system in Aswan Directorate next. These are but two among many individuals who are putting the training to good use in the start-up and management of the Information Systems in each of the 27 IWMDs and their four Directorates.



Those IWMD that were established first are sharing *lessons learned* with newly forming IWMDs and they in turn are helping to establish

linked Information Systems in their partner Directorates. For those engaged in Integrated Water Management are discovering that the Management and Geographic databases together with the LAN and Internet are proving to be powerful decision making tools for both the Districts and the Directorate.