

International Course on Wetland Management 2000

Summary Report

Colophon

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Publication: | RIZA, Wetwise Programme, Working Report 2001.046 |
| Authors | Bouke Ottow & Vincent Wigbels |
| Information: | Bouke Ottow RIZA Zuiderwagenplein 2 Postbus 17 8200 AA Lelystad watc@riza.rws.minvenw.nl |
| Telephone: | +31 (320) 298345 |
| Fax: | +31 (320) 298339 |
| Executed by: | Wetland Advisory and Training Centre |
| Date: | Lelystad, February 2001 |

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Contents | 5 |
| 1 SUMMARY | 7 |
| 2 PREPARATION | 9 |
| 3 EXECUTION | 11 |
| 3.1 The programme | 11 |
| 3.2 Participants | 13 |
| 3.3 Trainers | 14 |
| 4 EVALUATION - PARTICIPANTS' OPINION | 17 |
| 4.1 The participants' overall opinion in the course | 17 |
| 4.2 The effect of the course | 17 |
| 4.3 The design of the course | 18 |
| 4.4 The course programme | 19 |
| 4.5 The Final Evaluation | 19 |
| 5 EVALUATION - STAFF OPINION | 21 |
| 5.1 The effect of the course | 21 |
| 5.2 The participants' profile | 22 |
| 5.3 Recommendations for the course set-up and program of 2001 | 22 |
| 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 25 |

1 SUMMARY

The seventh International Course on Wetland Management in 2000 was held from August 31st (official opening) until October 11th. Most of the participants arrived on August 28th and the introduction programme started on August 29th.

The number of potential participants (60) was high enough to apply the criteria for acceptance fully. The selection resulted in 26 serious candidates. The high number of invited candidates was strategic: experience shows that in the end some candidates withdraw for all kinds of reasons. But we aimed for at least 22 candidates. Surprisingly only 17 participants arrived. Even more surprising was the fact that three potential candidates, who were expected to arrive on August 28th did not show up at all, which never happened before. It appeared that they did not feel real commitment to come, chose for another option and did not inform us! It's a point of consideration for the next course.

On average the group of 17 participants were younger than last years. This contributed to the attitude of the group: they were eager to learn as much as possible, gather useful information and write a good management plan. They were in general all the time working very serious, but quite individually. The last remark is the most obvious trend of last years: more and more participants are not only attending the course but also working on projects they were working on already. So the lifeline to their own office and network is nowadays almost as important and time consuming as the course itself. Nevertheless, the execution of the course was in a way easy: they attended every lecture and workshop seriously, worked hard and almost never complained about circumstances. They worked as a team in the groups, but in their free time they acted as individuals more than ever before.

As last year the course programme emphasised on the role of stakeholders more than before. 'Community Involvement' together with 'Basic ecology' formed the basis for thinking over and working on the management plans during the rest of the course. But this does not necessarily result in more emphasis on this topic in their management plans. In general participants paid in their management plans much attention to features of the ecosystem and the role of e.g. keystone species and processes. The same can be said about objectives, measures and planning. Although the role of stakeholders was recognised by all participants, only in a minority of the plans it was worked out well.

Based on last years experience, more attention and time was paid on group work. Mentors were more responsible for their group members. And the group was made much more responsible for both common results and personal growth. Most important in this respect was that mentor and participants were helpful for each other by reading and discussing each others updates of parts of the management plans.

This contributed very much to the result: the course was really satisfactory and enjoyable for both participants and staff. The quality of the management plans on average appeared to be fairly good, some appeared to be very complete and or well written. Most plans improved very much during the course and -even more important- participants noticed that they personally learned a lot. Therefore it was no surprise that the final evaluation showed that more participants than before were very much satisfied with the course results.

Although the course was a success, this evaluation report ends with proposals to improve the embedding of some parts of the course in the course set-up. Not only the programme needs its yearly update, a workbook should be set up: besides of the guidelines on writing a management plan, participants need instructions and

suggestions to be well prepared for lectures, workshops and otherwise. To be able to score their progress, the personal action plan, which was used for the first time this year, should be improved into a more practical applicable action plan for personal growth.

2 PREPARATION

The staff who was involved with the daily preparations consisted of:
Bouke Ottow, project leader and training specialist;
Vincent Wigbels, course leader;
Marina de Vries, responsible for student affairs and logistics and organisational assistance in executing the programme;
Mirjam Stoffer, assistance in executing the programme when needed.

Based on the programme of the previous year and the recommendations by the participants and staff of last year, a programme was drafted as shown in the annex 1.

Autumn 1999 the first potential participants already reported to WATC. The selection process started in January 2000, when already more than 50 potential participants were listed. The selection procedure started by selecting those who matched the skills and knowledge, necessary to participate:

- involvement in wetland management;
- ecological background (BSc level);
- English.

By May the 26 most suitable candidates were selected. In fact two were selected as reserve, because the aim was to get at least 22 and at maximum 24 participants. In the end 22 potential participants appeared to get sufficient funding and were thus invited. Unexpected was the fact that two potential candidates, who were expected to arrive on August 28th did not show up at all, which never happened before. It appeared that they did not feel real commitment to come, chose for another option and did not inform us! One other participant (from India) had to cancel because of unexpected difficulties in getting a visa. And two other participants from Uganda did not get permission to leave because the sponsor still did not confirm the agreement. So surprisingly only 17 participants arrived. It shows that even when the selection is done in time, as was done, it is hard to avoid to end up with less participants than targeted on.

The participants received the course programme, the Ramsar guidelines (to be able to gather enough information to be able to write the management plan) and a letter in which their homework was explained. So they could start collecting necessary basic data on their wetland some two months before the course started. Also they were asked to prepare a draft Chapter I: the description of the site by using the guidelines.

To improve the quality of the management plans even more, the participants were asked to send drafts of chapter one in advance. These drafts were roughly checked by the course leader and participants were given advice to collect not yet included, but relevant data.

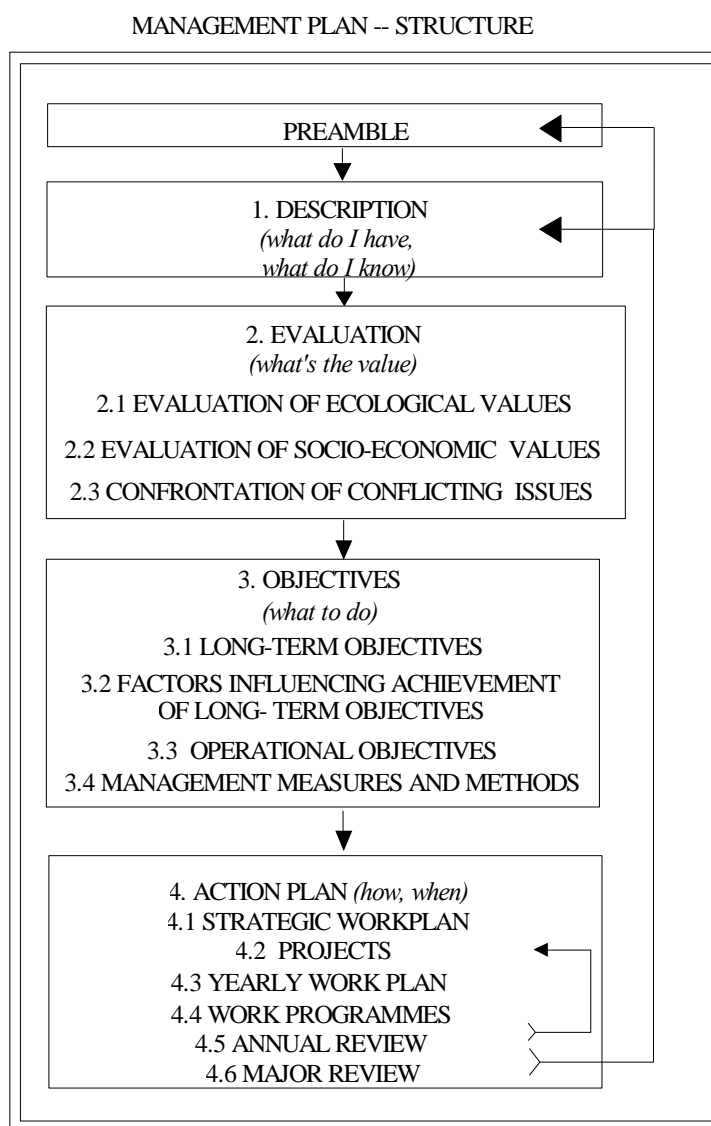
This year 2 Dutch mentors, Ute Menke and Rob Gerits were available. Also two international mentors were invited and arrived a week ahead of the course: Lloyd Thole, a senior manager from Zambia, participant in 1998 and Inga Racinska from Latvia, participant in 1999, was willing to postpone her assignment as assistant to the European Regional Co-ordinator at the Ramsar Bureau till after the course.

3 EXECUTION

3.1 The programme

The structure of the management plan and the course set-up has not been changed (see figure 1). Like before the most important issues of chapters and paragraphs of the management plan were subject of introductory lectures, seminars, sometimes field practice and excursions. Quite a lot of time was reserved to apply the principles on "their own wetlands". Based on the experience of previous years that in spite of improving the cases several times, these cases were not used as an integral part of lectures by lecturers, less attention was given to case studies.

Figure 1. The management plan structure



The diagram illustrates the structure of the planning and demonstrates that regular reviewing is an integral and essential component of the process.

The course was executed according to the programme. Most of the participants started in time working on improvement and extension of the plan during the course. Working on the own wetland during workshops own wetland, within the office and as a group contributed very much to this result. Even most evenings and weekends were real free time this year. As a result in the end almost all participants easily finished their plan within the time frame.

Again 'Stakeholder involvement, Conflict resolution and Socio-economic values, together with adjacent workshops formed the back-bone for thinking over and working on the management plans during the course. The Terschelling week was moved forward one week and during that week more time was spend on stakeholders.

Most lectures were effective and enjoyable, but some need an update because of the changed role and importance of the stakeholder involvement. In fact the currently used guidelines are not dealing clearly with this topic and participants found it rather difficult to integrate the lessons learned into their management plans in such a way that there is a good balance between ecological and socio-economical aspects.

Because of the relatively low number of participants, only four (not five like last year) mentors were involved. Different from previous year was also the role of the mentor. He/she had last years a quite passive role, but based on the remarks of former participants, mentors played a more active role this year. They were in fact active part of the group all time and not sitting aside and waiting for the moment to interfere, to help the process going on. Also they were fully responsible for the management plans of the group members. Working on own wetlands was not done individually, but at least partly as a group activity. This way of working was very much appreciated by the participants: they learned a lot from each other. Exchange of experience and ideas was much more easy thus. It would even have been better if the first presentations of own wetlands would not have been limited to mini-poster presentations. Most participants found it a pity that the introductory oral presentation of participants was not executed this year.

During the course the participants filled in a daily evaluation form, in which they could express their opinion on the lecture or seminar, rank the way the lecture or seminar was executed and contributed to their knowledge and give remarks on general issues.

The number of forms filled in was a bit disappointing this year and was mainly the result of not asking enough for filling them in.

Halfway the course writing a short personal action plan was part of the midcourse evaluation. In general it worked well in terms of keeping on track with personal objectives, but the impact can be improved by filling in a questionnaire and a personal action plan as start of the course.

Based on the disappointing results of last year, this year the optional lectures were just extra lectures and not optional. Accidentally two lectures did not take place: the lecturers did not show up because they forgot to be there! It shows the importance of reminding participating experts because it's not part of their daily practise. The information fair was held separately and not during the extra lectures like last year. This worked out very well: the extra lectures were much more appreciated and only some participants used the time to visit experts elsewhere. The information market was a real success this year: 13 (7 last year) of the 20 invited organisations, both governmental as well as NGO's and private organisations and foundations, showed up. The interest shown by the participants was so impressive for the representatives that based on this experience, they expressed their willingness to

come back next year. Unfortunately only a few of the also invited Riza-experts took time to visit the info-market.

The extra excursion to Engbertsdijkswenen contributed much to a better understanding of management measures and restoration on a practical scale and in a practical way.

On the same day, an extra workshop on principles of setting up a regional course was held for the first time, guided by Bouke Ottow. Eight participants attended this workshop very enthusiastically, but missed the excursion.

The excursion to the Haringvliet, Tiengemeten and Biesbosch also contributed to a better understanding of restoration projects in the Netherlands, but was not very useful in terms of reflection on own problems.

The poster presentations were successful in terms of posters and content but can be improved still by attracting more interest from Riza experts. One morning instead of the whole day, filled with panel discussions showed to be enough. The last excursion to the Oostvaardersplassen was o.k. but on the wrong moment: this site should be used again as an important example for several topics such as ecological relationships and values.

The closing session took place after the board meeting, later in the afternoon. As a result the farewell party was short in time and no adequate time could be given to expressions of gratitude of participants. Extending the farewell party in the evening is not practical, because most participants are leaving very early in the morning.

Most participants want to be back in Lelystadhaven around 22.00 h.

After the course, the mentors evaluated the result of the course, and judged the contents and the set-up of the management plans written by the participants. The results of these evaluations are presented in chapter 4 and 5.

3.2 Participants

The 17 participants originated from 16 different countries (see table 1 and annex 2). The participants formed a heterogeneous group, with as usual the largest contingents from Europe and Africa. But this year, we had an almost equal number of male and female participants.

Table 1. Overview of participants and sponsors

| Participants | Country | Name sponsor |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Mengistu Wondafrash | Ethiopia | R.N. Embassy Nairobi |
| Kwasi Kesse | Ghana | R.N. Embassy Accra |
| John Kareko | Kenya | KWS |
| Joyce Vihenda Engoke | Kenya | KWS |
| Theodorus V. Freeman | Liberia | W.I. West-Africa |
| Babatunde Ojei | Nigeria | W.I. West-Africa |
| Moumouni Sanogo | Mali | W.I. Mali |
| Bao Daming | China | R.N. Embassy Beijing |
| Rahat Jabeen | Pakistan | WWF / PIN-OS |
| Katalin Sipos | Hungary | PIN-MATRA |
| Tatiana Belous | Moldova | PIN-MATRA |
| Ginger (Nikole) Molitor | Slovak Republic | R.N.E. Prague, sprava CHKO |
| Ksenia Kalougina | Russia | PIN-MATRA |
| Maria Osipova | Ukraine | PIN-MATRA |
| Goran Gugic | Croatia | PIN-MATRA |
| Lorena (Claudia) Franco Vidal | Colombia | personal / PIN-OS |
| Angel Alberto Alfonso Martinez | Cuba | R.N. Embassy Mexico |

The atmosphere during the course can be described as very positive, eager to learn, motivated, individually oriented but willing to work as a team in workshops. These participants were more than in previous years willing to co-operate and to share. The group feeling was high and everyone took part in the group work and took part in discussions. The individual approach was prevailing during breaks and evenings in Lelystadhaven: during breaks much if not all time was spent in front of the computer, to email and use internet. In the evening, all participants went as a group to dinner but afterwards the evening was most of the times spent individually or with some closer mates (in most cases someone with a similar origin). The two mentors from abroad tried to organise social evenings and sports events, which failed apart from one evening in the end. Nevertheless, having mentors in Lelystadhaven is very helpful for both participants and staff from a practical point of view.

3.3 Trainers

Like in previous years the participants worked in small groups guided by a mentor during workshops. This year four mentor groups were active under coaching guidance of Lloyd Thole, Inga Racinska, Ute Menke and Rob Gerits.

Table 2. Trainers of the course

| Names | Subject | Organisation |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Mr. Frank Alberts | Guidelines for Management Plans | RIZA |
| Mr. Tom Buijse | Monitoring | RIZA |
| Mr. Khurshid | The Ramsar Convention | Ramsar Bureau |
| Mr. Hans Drost | Restoration Project Principals | RIZA |
| Mr. Mennobart van Eerden | Basic Ecology | RIZA |
| Mr. Robert Verheule | Integrated Water Management | RDIJ-ANI RWS |
| Mrs. Annemarie Groot | Stakeholders Involvement & Conflict resolution | LUW |
| Mr. Bouke Ottow | Cultural Differences, Group work, Stakeholders Terschelling | RIZA |
| Mr. Nico v. Duijvenvoorden & Mr. Henk Post | Case Integrated Water Management | Waterboard Reest & Wieden |
| Mr. Roel Posthoorn | Objectives | RIZA |
| Mr. Jeroen van Wetten | Ecological valuation of wetlands & Socio-economic evaluation of wetlands | NM |
| Mr. Vincent Wigbels | Wetland classification , Operational Objectives, Management Measures, Operational Planning | National Forest Service |
| Mr. Freek Zwart | Terschelling case | National Forest Service |
| Mr. Rob Gerits | Mentor | RIZA |
| Mrs. Ute Menke | Mentor | RIZA |
| Mr. Lloyd Thole | Mentor | RIZA |
| Mrs. Inga Racinska | Mentor | RIZA |
| Mr. Roy Brouwer | Tools for economic evaluation | RIZA |
| Mr. Boris Teunis | GIS | RIZA |
| Mr. Marcel Silvius | Proposal writing | Wetlands International |

The mentors and course leader read and commented on draft management plans of participants. Vincent Wigbels, the course leader, was not only active as course leader and reader but did teach several lectures as well.

Different from other years was that the Dutch mentors did not stay on Terschelling: in an attempt to reduce the costs of the course, on Terschelling both Dutch mentors were replaced by Frank Alberts and Vincent Wigbels. It appeared to be possible to work in this way, but it appeared also not to be preferable for both participants and staff. The Dutch mentors missed the opportunity to support the group members in this important week: both Rob and Ute faced afterwards difficulties in contributing as effectively as before in group work and management plans. And the course leader missed the opportunity to read all plans and give additional remarks to both participants and (new) mentors. Moreover the course leader could not find enough time to arrange all stakeholder visits and prepare other arrangements as it should be done.

4 EVALUATION - PARTICIPANTS' OPINION

On the last day of the course, a two hour final evaluation session was held with the participants. It had a written part and a plenary part. In the final evaluation, the participants gave their opinion on the effect of the course, its organisation and other aspects. In the plenary discussion, held after the written part, the participants all gave a green card for something in the course they had liked very much, and a red card for something they had not liked. The participants then voted (by putting stickers on the cards) which aspects were most important. The outcome was discussed with the whole group.

4.1 The participants' overall opinion on the course

We asked the participants whether the course met their expectations. Their answers were:

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| "yes | 8x |
| "more than expected" | 9x |

This year, significantly more participants answered "more than expected" than in 1999 (3 of the 21) and in 1998 (6 of the 19).

To illustrate the answers, some interesting quotes:

"Before my departure I would like to know the format of management plan. During the course I realised that the key process and stakeholders are most important things for management plan. I don't have the knowledge about this" (Asia)

"It has not only developed my management skills, but has also built up a team building concept in me as well as being able to cope with diverse cultures. I am more confident now!" (Africa)

"I expected it to be more lectures and a lot of work, but it was very active and a lot of fun. I learned a lot, met some great people and managed to produce a partial management plan all at once" (Europe)

"The course meet my expectations, but I still was expecting a little more ecological knowledge to be linked with management. I mean more emphasis on how to translate ecological information into a management plan" (Latin America)

4.2 The effect of the course

Table 3. gives the summary opinion of participants on their satisfaction with their management plan and how much the course has contributed to it. On average, the participants were not very satisfied about their management plans, given the restrictions in time and availability of necessary information. Like last year, none of them were not satisfied.

On average, this year's course participants were a little less satisfied about their own management plan than those of last year. This seems to be a trend. Every year participants are less satisfied about their own management plan. It is to be hoped that this is because every year participants become more critical, also about their own management plans and better see the "white spots" in them.

The participants of this year rated the course's contribution to the management plan as higher than last year's participants. This might reflect the bigger attention the mentors intentionally gave to the management plans than last year.

In general, the participants indicated that the learning objectives of the course have been achieved.

Table 3. Summary opinion of participants on management plans (number of last year between brackets)

| | not at all | no | somewhat | yes | very much so |
|--|------------|----|----------|-----------|--------------|
| satisfaction about own management plan | | | 7 (5) | 9 (11) | 1 (2) |
| Course contribution to management plan | | | (1) | 6 (14) | 11 (7) |

4.3 The design of the course

The evaluation by the participants indicates that overall they found the working in small groups, the role of the mentor, and the excursions helpful. The emphasis on own wetland, the possibility to consult specialists and visit institutions, and the attention given to socio-cultural aspects, were considered very helpful. Those who participated in the workshop on how to set up a training course considered that extremely helpful.

Controversies in the appreciation of certain aspects of the course are not new, but show mixed feelings about mainly the following three important aspects of the course set-up.

Group work: on one hand some participants don't like the amount of group work, on the other hand, other participants feel that it contributes much to the result and effectiveness and are thus very positive. Still the overall feeling is that group work is a kind of backbone in this course and contributes much to the positive effect on personal growth of participants .

Excursions: the remarks of some participants seem to state that participants don't appreciate much the excursions and other side-activities, but this valuation has much to do with the following negative evaluated aspect.

Time pressure: in fact participants value excursions and other activities very much but because of the work pressure they feel, the amount of homework and the length of the days and the course, participants feel that excursions (however useful) take time they should use to keep on track with homework and personal interests. It shows the need to keep lecture time, group work and other activities in balance with home work and free time.

Illustrative are remarks of some participants in the final evaluation:

"For the most part, everything was fine, but I would have liked to have more time to do some work in the library. I also think the first week was a little too easy, but filled with too many activities. The activities were okay, but I lost some of my enthusiasm the first week because we were not doing much related to management planning."

And

"Some excursions are provided in the most intensive part of the course. Are they really necessary in that moment? There is not enough time for all duties (management plan, reading the folders and so on), even not in the evening."

4.4 The course programme

In general, course participants were very happy with the course programme. This was also confirmed by the scores in the daily evaluation during the course. According to the daily evaluation scores, all activities were considered to be important to very important. The highest scores for importance were received by:

- conflict resolution 5.0
- stakeholders involvement 4.9
- objectives 4.8
- Guidelines management plans 4.8
- lecture socio-economic values 4.8
- integrated water management 4.8
- ecological restoration 4.8
- cultural differences 4.7

The following activities were considered as having a high quality and very enjoyable, according to the daily evaluation score:

| activity | quality | enjoyment |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|
| conflict resolution | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| ecological restoration | 4.7 | 4.7 |
| cultural differences | 4.8 | 4.6 |
| | | |

4.5 The Final Evaluation

In the final evaluation, the following activities were mentioned more than twice as having contributed most to the result of the course, on the right the number of times the activity was mentioned as the most important activity:

- stakeholder involvement/conflict resolution 13x
- group work 8x
- field visits/excursions general 6x
- socio-economic values 6x
- ecological values 5x
- games and role plays 4x
- management measures 3x
- workshops and cases 3x
- excursion Terschelling 3x

An interesting remark:

"Games....Until now I did not believe in that kind of activities as instrument for my work. Now changed completely my mind. You cannot imagine how much these activities helped me in realise certain aspects of the work: e.g. to be more practical."

5 EVALUATION - STAFF OPINION

5.1 The effect of the course

After the course, the mentors evaluated the result of the course, viz. the management plans written by the participants. Table 5.1 presents the summary result.

Table 5.1. Quality of management plans according to course staff, numbers of management plans per category (*numbers of last year between brackets*)

| | very poor | poor | acceptable | good | very good |
|--|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| quality of management plans (as a whole) | | 1 (3) | 6 (6) | 8 (10) | 1 (2) |

Explanation:

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| very good | : | complete, correct, consistent (with other parts) |
| good | : | a little less complete, correct and/or consistent, but still good |
| acceptable | : | the incompleteness, incorrectness and/or inconsistency is still acceptable |
| poor | : | the incompleteness, incorrectness and/or inconsistency is not acceptable anymore |
| very poor | : | very incomplete, incorrect and/or inconsistent |

The result is comparable to last years. On average quite a lot of the participants had already some experience in writing a management plan. In spite of this the plans were not significantly better than in previous years. All efforts to draw up an improved plan did not always result in much improvement because of a lack of information and practical skills (no practical management experience).

This is confirmed by the assessment of participants' effort, as shown in table 5.2. The effort of participants was good to very good (much better than last years). The development was also much better than last year, but on average less than good. This can be partly explained because of pre-course knowledge, which was already high. The better result on effort and development can be explained by the partly younger (and thus more eager to learn) group of participants. That the effect of all efforts and growth on the plans was not higher than it was, can be explained by the lack of practical management experience of both persons and their organisations (during all years it appears to be difficult for participants to write a complete and consistent chapter 3 (measures), not to mention chapter 4 (action plan/yearly work plan), which is out of reach of almost all participants).

Table 5.2. Course staff assessment of participants' effort and development during the course, numbers of participants per category
(numbers of last year between brackets)

| | very little | little | some | good | very good |
|---|-------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| participants' effort during the course | | 0 (4) | 5 (6) | 6 (8) | 6 (3) |
| participants' development during the course | | 2 (4) | 4 (8) | 9 (6) | 2 (4) |

5.2 The participants' profile

Besides these assessments, also the participants' match with the intended target group was evaluated, i.e. the participants' involvement in wetland management, their ecological background, and their command of English. Table 5.3 presents the summary result.

Table 5.3. Participants' match with intended target group
(numbers of last year between brackets)

| | very poor | poor | acceptable | good | very good |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| wetland management involvement | | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 6 (7) | 6 (10) |
| ecological background | 0 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (6) | 9 (7) | 3 (5) |
| English | 0 (2) | 2 (5) | 4 (4) | 6 (6) | 5 (4) |

In general, the participants matched the intended target group very well. Those who appeared to be poorly involved in wetland management were involved in training wardens on ecological skills. The figures show the growing level of the ecological background: most participants finished ecological or biological studies. Most of the participants could express themselves sufficiently in English. For two participants English was a handicap in writing the management plan and in expressing their ideas.

5.3 Recommendations for the course set-up and program of 2001

The recommendations are the result of remarks from staff and mentors on the seventh course on Wetland Management in 2000. But also (repeated) remarks given by participants on their daily evaluation forms were taken in consideration.

Mentors and mentor groups:

The more important role mentors played this year, should be continued next year. It's important to look for mentors with both enough practical and theoretical background. They should not only be there, they should have enough insight in the seminars to be able to help participants both individually and as a group effectively.

The two international mentors should stay in Lelystadhaven during the course. But their help mainly concerned practical assistance in household affairs. Hardly any help was asked in writing or improving management plans. Participants worked in general mostly solitary.

As far as the group size is concerned: five is a workable size and six could be an experimental size if needed. The number of groups should preferably be four. Not only because of practical reasons, but moreover in favour of the plenary discussions of the group work results.

Working on own wetlands in the mentor groups appeared to be effective and should be standardised next year: it helps participants much to read each others drafts and discuss results within the group.

Programme and readers

Participants missed the oral presentations of own wetlands in the beginning. The mini-posters are helpful but should be part of the oral presentation of participants.

Stakeholder involvement, Conflict resolution and Socio-economic values, together with adjacent workshops form the back-bone for thinking over and working on the management plans during the course. Most lectures are effective and enjoyable, but some need an update because of the changed role and importance of the stakeholder involvement. In fact the currently used guidelines are not dealing clearly with this topic and participants found it rather difficult to implement the lessons learned into their management plans in such a way that there is a good balance between ecological and socio-economical aspects.

The currently used guidelines are not dealing clearly with the topic of stakeholders and participants found it rather difficult to implement the lessons learned into their management plans in such a way that there is a good balance between ecological and socio-economical aspects.

Case studies form a weak spot in the workshops: cases are not easily accessible and reading cases seems to be too time consuming. The cases should therefore be re-edited in such a way that they meet the required information for the workshops.

This year there was a fairly good ratio between the working pressure on participants and given time to relax, enjoy, visit private contacts. Only the start up in the first week is -according to the feelings of most participants- too slow. This results in no homework in the beginning and a lot of homework in week 2 and 3. In fact the time between the lectures and workshops on evaluation and the days spent on objectives is too short. Not having finished working on chapter 2 means major problems in working on - and understanding the content of chapter 3.

Dutch mentors should stay on Terschelling. The Dutch mentors missed the opportunity to support the group members in this important week: both Rob and Ute faced afterwards difficulties in contributing as effectively as before in group work and management plans. And the course leader missed the opportunity to read all plans and give additional remarks to both participants and (new) mentors.

Mentors should play an active role like this year. Also they should be fully responsible for the management plans of the group members.

Working on own wetlands should be at least partly a group activity: they learn from each other. Exchange of experience and ideas is much more easy thus.

Quite a lot of time was reserved to apply the principles on “their own wetlands”. Based on the experience of previous years that in spite of improving the cases several times, these cases were not used as an integral part of lectures by lecturers, less attention was given to case studies.

Although the course was a success, this evaluation report ends with proposals to improve the embedding of some parts of the course in the course set-up. Not only the programme needs its yearly update, a workbook should be set up: besides of the guidelines on writing a management plan, participants need instructions and suggestions to be well prepared for lectures, workshops and otherwise. To be able to score their progress, the personal action plan, which was used for the first time this year, should be improved into a more practical applicable action plan for personal growth. Another important improvement should be made on the guidelines itself: how and where, in what way to deal with stakeholder involvement in the management plan is not yet a part of the guidelines!

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result

- 17 people from 16 countries participated in the course. Overall, they matched the intended target group profile, but the importance of being experienced in wetland management cannot be over emphasized.
- The group process went very well, but besides the group work many of them acted as individuals. Working in the small groups on own wetlands was very helpful in sharing ideas and knowledge.
- 15 of the 17 participants produced an acceptable to (very) good draft management plan.
- The participants indicated that the course (very much) contributed to their management plans.
- The participants indicated that the course met their expectations and that the learning objectives have been reached.

Preparation

- The selection of participants should take place in March for the first time. Potential participants must be encouraged to start getting funds as soon as possible.
- Participants must be sent a check-list for chapter 1 and brief information on the content of the other chapters.
- Guidelines should be reviewed and "stakeholders" should be addressed.
- Participants can travel on their own to Lelystad, but no train-taxi tickets should be provided. Clear instructions should be send on how to handle and travel from Schiphol to Lelystadhaven. Costs will be compensated on arrival.
- Participants should preferably arrive on Monday and leave on Thursday afternoon or Friday
- Mentors from abroad don't need to arrive a week before: August 21 is preferable.
- The welcome dinner should take place in Natuurpark Lelystad at the end of the excursion. The excursion content should be "site-seeing in and around Flevoland".
- The use of e-mail, internet, fax and phone should be regulated, not only to reduce costs but also to get more interaction between participants during breaks.

Course set-up

- The basic set-up of the course is satisfactory. How to address stakeholders into the management plan and structure should be worked out in the guidelines.
- The number of case studies to be used by the participants should remain one or two. Even than, reducing the reading time by extracting or highlighting the (for workshops) important parts is advisable .
- The role of the personal action plan should be worked out in a clear instruction.

Programme

- The sports event should be organised by a Dutch mentor.
- The Oostvaardersplassen should be used again as an important example for several topics such as ecological relationships and ecological values.
- Dutch mentors should be as well on Terschelling as in previous years.
- The Reest and Wieden case should include the Weerribben and focus on water quality instead of quantity.
- The excursion to Engbertdijksvenen and Biesbosch should be made more meaningful by giving the participants an assignment related to practical management.

-
- Workshops own wetland should be spend, at least partly, in groups to improve the exchange of ideas, experience and mutual help.
 - How to present the results of workshops should be reviewed in order to get a more fruitful discussion.
 - The fieldwork exercise in Junne should be improved in such a way that participants get realistic and relevant tasks, dealing with inventory. The course leader should have an active role in the fieldwork to be able to respond on the results and presentations.
 - The poster presentations at the end of the course worked out very well. But this presentation and the panel discussion should be organised on Tuesday. Monday can be used for an excursion. The presentation of a few plans, focusing on one topic (stakeholders and the role of the manager) as an introduction to a panel discussion worked out well.
 - The workshop on how to set up a training course should be integral part of the programme.
 - The information fair was promising: more organisations should be asked to take part. And adequate information should be provided to these organisations on beforehand.
 - The closing session should take place before the board meeting. As a result adequate time can be given to expressions of gratitude of participants during the farewell party.
 - Extending the farewell party in the evening is not preferable when most participants are leaving very early in the morning. Planning the departure on Thursday afternoon or on Friday would help to give participants a more relaxed farewell party.

Course material

- The case studies and their use still need reconsideration.
- The obligatory reading material must be reduced.

Staffing

- Lecturers should be informed in time and even in the week before they have to show up, to alert them and inform them about participants, programme and progress.
- To have former trainees as mentor worked well. Attention should be paid on the experience on practical wetland management of new mentors.
- The course leader should not be a mentor or a photographer at the same time. More time should be available to discuss with both participants and staff and to read and improve lecture materials and management plans during the course execution.