

Towards an International Nitrogen Management System

Update and newsletter

24th December 2014

Dear Colleague

This is the first in a series of regular newsletters regarding the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase of the GEF funded project "*Targeted Research for improving understanding of the Global Nitrogen Cycle towards the establishment of an International Nitrogen Management System*" that we are now preparing with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The first important news is that the PPG phase has now finally started, and will enable us to draw in your input as we develop the full project, ready for submission at the end of June 2015.

Many of you will have last heard from us in the Summer, when we requested you to update your Pro-Forma 'Expression of Interest'. Thanks to all of you who submitted updated information. This is essential as we start to design the details.

In the next steps we will be exchanging information with partners as the project details develop, and as we prepare for a Full Partner Meeting (Lisbon, provisionally 2nd week of April). We very much hope you will join us. As the details are refined this then will allow us to move toward Letters of Commitment (May-June 2015), which will detail the anticipated roles and contributions, financing and estimated contributions-in-kind. I hope that you find the attached update useful. These Newsletters will be posted on the INMS project website (www.inms.international – going live soon), along with further information on the project, key documents, topics for discussion etc.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any comments: inms@ceh.ac.uk

With best regards



Prof. Mark Sutton

On behalf of the 'Towards INMS' team

INI Chair and Co-Chair of the UNECE Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen



Towards INMS. Newsletter No. 1, Dec 2014

Fertile Words

In the introduction to ‘Our Nutrient World’, which was prepared jointly between INI and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM), we included a section entitled “Fertile Words”. We realized that different words can mean different things to different people – and we need to take care.

It is the same with the words connected to INMS. Here are a couple of points that have emerged in discussion with several stakeholders.

1. We need to take care over our choice of names. We should be clear to distinguish between an eventual International Nitrogen Management System (INMS) and the present GEF Project which works towards this goal. With this in mind, we propose to refer to the GEF/UNEP project itself as “**Towards INMS**”.

2. The idea of INMS is gradually becoming clear to people. Some have asked: “Is INMS a policy decision-making process?” The answer is very clearly, NO. Rather **INMS is a science-policy support process** that brings together people, information, approaches, indicators, cost-benefit analysis, regional demonstration, etc as a basis to support governments and others through international nitrogen policy processes.

The big message is to count the co-benefits of a joined-up nitrogen approach. By addressing better management across the nitrogen cycle, we can contribute to improving Economy-Wide Nitrogen Use Efficiency, while reducing surplus that would often be wasted as pollution.

This approach builds the ‘gravity of common cause’ to help overcome the barriers to change. It is relevant for all forms of nitrogen, and the associated threats to Water, Air, Greenhouse gases, Ecosystems and Soils.

At the same time it can show how better nitrogen management would contribute to food, energy security and wealth generation by promoting actions across the wider Green Economy.

Developing the INMS Cooperation

As the project ‘Towards INMS’ starts to bring many different players together, there is the strong chance that some organizations may be new to you. We propose to introduce a few of the Toward INMS partners in each Newsletter.

In the examples that follow we here focus on a selection of international processes that are highly relevant for nitrogen.

Firstly, we should say that **INMS Project Preparation Grant (PPG)** is funded through the International Waters Focal Area of the **Global Environment**

Facility (GEF), and is implemented by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**. It is executed through the UK Natural Environment Research Council (**NERC**), and its **Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH)**, based in Edinburgh, in behalf of the **International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)**. We provide more detail on the contact points at the end of the newsletter.

Towards INMS is also feeding into the work of the **Global Programme of Action on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)**, as well as its **Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM)**. UNEP provides the secretariat for these activities under the lead of Vincent Sweeney and Chris Cox, who are both based in UNEP's Nairobi office. The GPNM itself is currently chaired by Greg Crosby of the US Department of Agriculture. These links imply a strong connection between the global nitrogen cycle, agriculture and the marine environment. However, this is only one part of the story, if the co-benefits are to be realized. These include cleaner air, less GHG emissions, improved biodiversity and soil protection, which should feed back to strengthen the GPA's contributions for the marine environment.

Other key partners in the Toward INMS network include the **Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen (TFRN)** of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which is currently chaired by Mark Sutton (CEH) and Tommy Dalgaard (University of Aarhus, Denmark). This is a part of the **Geneva Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP)** which has strong official engagement from many countries: from Canada to Kazakhstan. The UNECE Secretariat is another INMS Partner, where the lead contacts are Alben Karadjova, Alisher Mamadzhanov and Annukka Lipponen, based at the UN's Geneva headquarters, with the Secretariat also supporting the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

A key priority of the Parties of these UNECE conventions is to engage with EECCA countries (Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia) in order to establish the basis for eventual ratification of the relevant treaties. The TFRN is supporting this through its **Expert Panel on Nitrogen in EECCA countries**. One recent product from the TFRN is the new UNECE document "Guidance on Ammonia Mitigation", prepared under the lead of Shabtai Bittman from Canada, co-chair of the TFRN **Expert Panel on Mitigation of Agricultural Nitrogen (EPMAN)**.

The **OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)** is also fast developing its profile on nitrogen. Having already established its regional approach for nitrogen balances over agricultural land, it is now working with colleagues from INI and TFRN to further develop these approaches. This includes refinement of the concept of "Economy-wide Nitrogen Use Efficiency", as a complement to its traditional nitrogen balance and loss indicators, where the link is Myriam Linster, working with the support of Albert Bleeker (ECN, Petten) on behalf of INI. Under the lead of Gerard Bonnis, OECD is also currently reviewing nitrogen policies around the world. It has also been examining the idea of nitrogen as an overall high-level indicator for environmental quality, which could in future complement its carbon indicator set.

The United Nations **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** also has a key interest in nitrogen, which is included as part of its list of Aichi Targets for global biodiversity protection, where our lead contact is David Coates, based at the CBD Secretariat in Montreal. INI has already been the delivery partner for the nitrogen deposition and nitrogen loss indicators for several years, which has also contributed to development of a smart Phone application for the indicators, the *Aichi Passport App*.

Toward INMS: Preparation timeline 2009 to 2015

This section provides some background on the timeline of events that have brought us to this stage and on the next steps through 2015.

Major Past Milestones

- Scoping Workshop for a Global Nitrogen Assessment, Paris (Apr. 2009)
- Scoping Workshop for GNA, during launch of European Nitrogen Assessment, Edinburgh (Apr. 2011).
- Engagement with UNEP and GEF toward an international nitrogen project, GPA 3rd Intergovernmental Review, Manila (Jan. 2012)
- First Stakeholder Workshop toward Global Nitrogen Assessment, London (July 2012).
- Detailed INMS concept developed (Nov 2012)
- Invitation for partners to express interest in INMS (Feb. 2013)
- Submission of the INMS Project Identification Form (PIF) (Summer 2013)
- Negotiation of INMS Scope with UNEP & GEF Secretariat (through 2013)
- Workshop on INMS development, at N2013 INI conference, Kampala (Nov. 2013)
- Final sign off of the accepted PIF (Feb. 2014)
- Workshop on TFRN engagement within INMS, Madrid (Mar. 2014)
- Start of the 'Toward INMS' PPG Phase (Autumn 2014)

Present

- PPG Phase of the Project has begun – during which the proposal will be refined, for delivery to UNEP/GEF and then GEF CEO for endorsement (submission: Jun. 2015).

Next Steps

- Preparation of the INMS Regional Demonstrations, including Workshop co-sponsored between BASF and Toward INMS to further refine regional actions (March 2015)
- Plenary workshop on 'Toward INMS' all partners (Lisbon, April 2015)
- Workshop to develop global integrated assessment modeling for nitrogen, co-sponsored between Towards INMS and the 'INMS pump-priming' project funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) (Edinburgh, May 2015)
- Partners draft and agree 'Letters of Commitment' (April-May 2015)
- Endorsement of the project by the GEF Secretariat and STAP Committees, Summer 2015
- Launch of the project at the 8th International Waters Conference (IWC8), (Autumn 2015)
- Provisional project start date, early 2016 – duration four years.

What do we need to achieve during the PPG Phase?

The following activities are required during the PPG Phase, which will take place in cooperation the Executing Agency and the project partners:

- Further develop buy-in from partners as regards the overall strategy
- Refine the project design, work packages and roles
- Confirm budgetary commitments, including both cash contributions and contributions-in-kind (CIK). *Guidance* regarding CIK will be developed and added to the website in due course.
- Confirm our governance structure and consortium agreement, including setting terms-of-reference for the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
- Translate the agreed strategy and plan into the required detailed package of Project Documents (inc. the 'ProDoc') to be submitted to GEF for endorsement.
- Refine the approach for Demonstration Activities and generate a baseline for each case.

Website

A website is being set up at www.inms.international . This will provide a point for exchange with partners, host key documents and also to allow information exchange on topics, such the Demonstration Studies. Watch this space.

Who's Who

GEF projects are structured with four layers: the GEF (the donor), Implementing Agency (the project 'customer' and overall oversight), Executing Agency (the project 'delivery organization' and co-ordinator) and, of course, the Project Partners.

For this project, the **Implementing Agency (IA)** is UNEP. UNEP is represented by Isabelle van der Beck, who provides project oversight.

The legal **Executing Agency (EA)** is provided by the UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), through its *Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH)*, based in Edinburgh. NERC-CEH provides this function on behalf of the *International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)* which leads the public outreach of the Executing Agency.

The core team of the EA at CEH comprises **Professor Mark Sutton, Dr Clare Howard, Dr William Brownlie** (scientific and technical aspects) and **Mrs Agnieszka Becher** (contractual and financial aspects). We look forward to speaking and emailing with you!

For efficiency it is best to contract us through the following email address: inms@ceh.ac.uk.

As the **Toward INMS** Project Preparation Grant phase develops, you will see increasing engagement from other partners of the **INI global network**. This includes actions relation to dissemination and science-policy engagement activities, and contributions from the INI regional centres: Africa, Latin America, North America, Europe, South Asia, East Asia.

The International Nitrogen Initiative contributes to several international processes relevant for nitrogen including **UNEP**, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (**GPNM**), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (**CBD**), the **OECD** Working Party on Environmental Indicators, the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen (**TFRN**) of the **LRTAP** Convention, and many regional bodies. Through this network approach, the *Toward INMS* project is planned to contribute to the work activities of each of these actions.

Contact the Executing Agency

An e-mail address has been set up for the project, at: inms@ceh.ac.uk

Please use this address if you have a query regarding the project.

Previously e-mails have gone from/to INIchair@ceh.ac.uk. We will continue to use this account for INI business, but please send e-mails regarding INMS related activities to the new e-mail address.

Key Meetings Ahead

Full Partner Meeting

A full partner meeting is planned in April 2015, to further discussions on the project. All partners/interested organizations are welcome to attend. A doodle poll has been set up at <http://doodle.com/3zksapw5587rv3rc> and circulated to all partners to ask for availability in the last three weeks of April. It is intended that the meeting will take 2 days.

The meeting will take place immediately preceding the annual meeting of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen (TFRN). INMS partners who have not previously engaged with TFRN are welcome to attend, and should indicate their interest by adding a comment on the doodle poll.

INMS and Integrated Assessment Modelling

In parallel to the INMS project in preparation, a three year project (funded through the ‘International Opportunities Fund’ of the UK Natural Environment Research Council), has begun, which addresses the Integrated Assessment Modelling needs of a future Integrated Nitrogen Management System. The project is entitled ‘INMS pump-priming’ (INMSpp).

The project is led by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the University of Edinburgh, and will be conducted in conjunction with organizations involved in the modelling of nitrogen at a variety of scales. The project will hold a workshop (5th-6th May) alongside a meeting of the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling (TFIAM) of the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution in May (6th-8th May), in Edinburgh, UK.

The INMSpp project (with resources at £350,000 GBP) represents an important initial commitment by the UK to get the INMS work started.

Key Documents

Key documents will be posted on the website during the PPG Phase. In addition, the agreed PIF document is attached along with this newsletter.

A summary of the PIF and the aims of the project, will be created to improve partner and stakeholder dialogue and will be disseminated through the website and e-mail, in the New Year.

Further documents to be posted will include guidance on ‘Contributions in Kind’ for partners and developing the rationale for the Demonstration Areas.

Contributions for Next Issues

As the INMS-PPG process gets going, we would welcome short contributions, news updates etc for future issues. Just email your ideas to inms@ceh.ac.uk

Logo Competition: As part of the next Newsletter we will launch a competition to develop a logo for *Towards INMS*.
