Water management capacity building through the FREEWAT platform

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Groundwater governance comprises the promotion of responsible collective action to ensure socially sustainable utilisation, control and protection of groundwater resources (Foster van der Gun, 2016). To this purpose, sharing the same collective knowledge is essential (Brugnach Ingram, 2012). To achieve this task, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can provide relevant tools. An innovative ICT tool is the result of the H2020 FREEWAT project (www.freewat.eu), aimed at developing a free and open source software tools for water resources management (WRM) and to perform extensive capacity building activities.

The capacity building activities performed during the project aimed at: (i) building knowledge capacity on using innovative scientific software for WRM; (ii) improving the professional level of technical staff in water authorities, water utilities, private companies, and any other organization involved in WRM; and (iii) disseminating the use of the FREEWAT platform as a standard software for modelling surface-/sub-surface water quantity and quality. To guide and to demonstrate the FREEWAT platform capabilities, several training courses where held worldwide. A compilation of manuals, lectures, tutorials and exercises were prepared and improved with the feedbacks collected during these courses.

More than 1000 persons were trained in the use of FREEWAT during these activities, coming from more than 400 institutions worldwide. About 40% of the downloads of the software and the training material are for training purposes, and this clearly shows that ICT tools are not still widespread instruments used in WRM and that these kind of training is needed.

Acknowledgments

References

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