

A Water Hyacinth Resource Manual

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PROBLEMS associated with water hyacinth infestations are well documented throughout those parts of the developing world where the weed has become a menace. Annual recurrent costs associated with water hyacinth globally have been estimated to more than US\$100m (Joffe and Cooke 1997). Solutions to the problem of water hyacinth infestations are many and varied, and depend upon the particular situation in which the weed has appeared, the level of infestation, and the kinds of communities and facilities that are being affected, but are usually divided into three categories: biological control, chemical control and physical control. In addition to these, a wide range of processes and applications has been developed for the utilisation of water hyacinth.

The extensive published and unpublished literature on water hyacinth control and utilisation is characterised by a dearth of information in two key areas: 1. control decision-making and the integration of control options, and 2. the integrating of control and utilisation. To overcome these obstacles to the effective control and utilisation of the weed, we propose to develop a comprehensive, authoritative and practical water hyacinth resource manual. The manual will be targeted principally at decision-makers and project implementers in developing countries, but would have information which would be of value and interest to anyone involved in water hyacinth control and utilisation. The contents of the resource manual will include:

- details of all currently available control options;
- a guide to weed utilisation;
- guidelines for integration of different control options;
- guidelines for integration of control measures with utilisation;
- management decision aids for different infestation scenarios;

- how to design an integrated control and utilisation project; and
- a comprehensive directory of resources and information sources.

The project is a collaborative undertaking involving several organisations (CABI Bioscience, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Anamed, Clean Lakes Inc., the United Nations Environment Programme) and forms part of the work program of the IUCN Africa Regional Office and the Global Invasive Species Group (GISP). It will link directly with and provide information for the IUCN initiative 'Wetlands and Harmful Invasive Species in Africa—Awareness and Information'. A team of four technical editors, assisted by a professional editor, will produce the manual. The team will include specialists in physical, chemical and biological control, wetland management and utilisation of water hyacinth. The editors will use an iterative (Delphi) process of consultation with a large group of specialists working on water hyacinth from around the world, on the content of drafts of the manual. It plans to consult widely amongst the members of the IOBC Global Working Group on Water Hyacinth. This will ensure that the contents and recommendations are as authoritative and complete as possible.

The plan is to have a first draft of the manual prepared by mid 2001, with a final publication date 9–12 months after that. Further information can be obtained from Garry Hill at <g.hill@cabi.org>.

Reference

- Joffe, S. and Cooke, S. 1997. Management of water hyacinth and other invasive aquatic weeds. Issues for the World Bank. Washington, DC, World Bank internal report, 36p.

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