

# The Use of Workshops as a Planning Tool in ILBM: Lessons from Lake Chapala, Mexico.

**Author: Alejandro Juárez-Aguilar**

Corazón de la Tierra, A.C.  
Juan Ruiz de Alarcon #71, Col. Obrera Centro  
Guadalajara, Jalisco. México CP 44140

## Abstract

From November 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 was held the First Latin American Workshop on Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM), organized by the International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC), Corazon de la Tierra, (Heart of Earth, a Mexican civil-society organization); the Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development (SEMADES, Jalisco State government, Mexico), the Water Commission of Jalisco State (CEA) and the Technological Institute of Higher Studies (ITESO, Mexico). The goals pursued were: To foster in Mexico and other Latin American countries the ILBM as a practical approach for basin planning and implementation of sustainable practices; to strengthen the cooperative links between federal, state and municipal government levels with universities, research centers and civil society groups; raising the capabilities to develop and apply integrated projects; and to construct a common ground to apply the ILBM in the sub-basins of the Lerma-Chapala Basin and other watersheds in Latin America.

The use of a workshop to promote ILBM in Latin America was selected as a practical tool, attractive for many institutions which identified it as a opportunity to learn of this approach (scarcely known in the region) and, simultaneously, present their own findings and activities. This paper presents how the Organizing Committee was integrated, the criteria applied to invite and select participants, the methodological structure defined to promote close interaction between participants-speakers and the kind of desired outputs to be obtained. This workshop was designed as a first stepping stone to create a collaborative network on ILBM in Latin America, collecting data about its application in the local basins where the participants work and learning along the process from their particular experiences.

The workshop was organized covering a) the need of the participants (a total amount of 37, with an equilibrated field of activities, see Figure 1) and their institutions to learn about ILBM, and b) the opportunity to present their own works, comparing them with projects developed by others and to approach to their own practices under a new light (the ILBM guide).

<b>Number of Meeting Participants</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Residency of Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 from Mexican States (Estado de Mexico, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico City, Michoacan, Morelos, Queretaro)</li> <li>• 2 from Argentina</li> <li>• 1 from Guatemala</li> </ul>
<b>Participants Field of Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 researchers from public agencies and universities;</li> <li>• 12 members of government agencies of three Mexican states</li> <li>• 2 members of municipal governments</li> <li>• 9 members of civil society organizations</li> <li>• 1 private consultant</li> </ul>
<b>Residency of Workshop Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 from Japan</li> <li>• 1 from Philippines</li> <li>• 1 from USA</li> <li>• 1 from Guatemala</li> <li>• 1 from Mexico</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Summary of participants.

Participants presented a diverse and complementary collection of projects, including issues as fisheries, weed infestation, pollution, eutrophication, run-off, deforestation, etc. In the sixth day all of them formed teams of discussion to identify practical ways to apply the ILBM approach in their basins of origin. In this last part of the workshop was possible to define very precise compromises to be applied in two important Mexican basins: the Lerma-Chapala basin and the Santiago River basin, both with particular characteristics, processes and actors, each one with huge problems derived in good measure from shattered management approaches which haven't took into account the principles of public involvement, developing of sound scientific information, complexity of the basin's components and need of long term compromises.

The 37 participants prepared and signed The Chapala Statement 2008, which briefs the deep discussions of the all six-day workshop, defining compromises and marking a clear path to be followed by them for next three years. Several of these compromises are currently being developed by the institutions that formed the Organizing Committee, some of them at the regional level and others with a Latin American approach.

**Keywords:** ILBM, Lake Chapala, Latin America, methodological structure, compromises.

