



# Virtual Meeting Space (VMS)

<http://portal.worldwaterforum5.org>

## User Guide

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*This user guide explains how you can use the VMS to make a difference to the world through the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. The VMS is constantly improving, and the Forum's VMS team is working to make it fully correspond to your needs. Any additional questions, requests for information or suggestions for improvement of the Virtual Meeting Space may be directed to Colin Herron at [colin.anthony.herron@gmail.com](mailto:colin.anthony.herron@gmail.com), in English, French or Spanish.*

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. What is the Virtual Meeting Space?

The 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum's Virtual Meeting Space (VMS) is an interactive portal for those interested in identifying and sharing solutions to the most crucial water-related issues in the world today. Using Microsoft SharePoint technology, the VMS is a central place for the preparation of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum's thematic, regional, political and major group processes, fostering collaboration and interaction between these processes. By connecting thousands of knowledgeable individuals and organizations from around the world, it enhances the communication, exchange, networking and collaboration within the water sector, as well as allowing water experts to discuss with professionals from other disciplines.

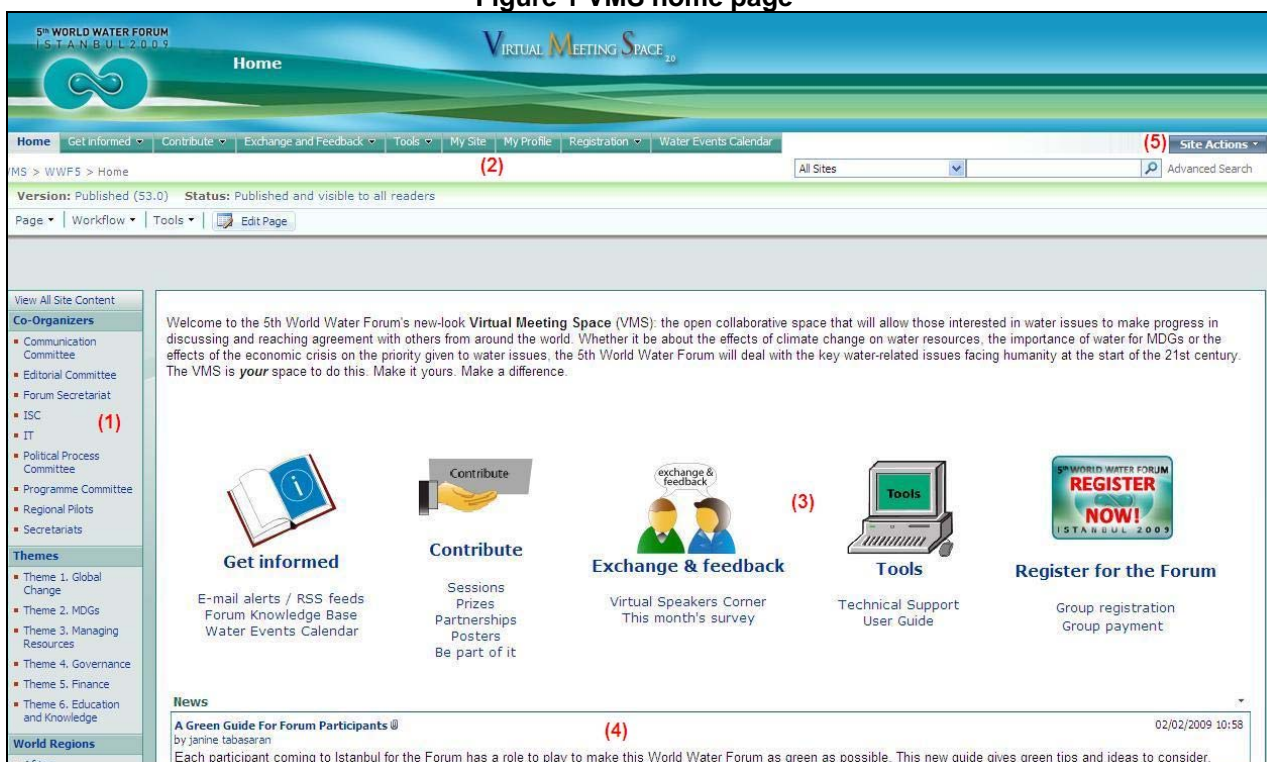
## 1.2. How do I log onto the VMS?

The VMS is accessible through <http://portal.worldwaterforum5.org>, through any web browser and from any computer. If you have not yet logged in, you will only be able to view some of the VMS features with anonymous access. To actively use the VMS, you will need to enter a user name and password. If you have not yet created a free account, please fill in your details [here](#). If you have forgotten your password, please [click here](#). Please note that both your username and password are case-sensitive. When you first log into the VMS, we recommend that you personalize your password by [clicking here](#).

## 1.3. What will I see when I first log on?

The VMS home page (figure 1) is the starting point for your participation in the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. In the left-hand menu (1) are the working spaces for the Forum's themes, regions, political processes and major groups. In the top menu bar (2), you will find the main features available in the VMS, which remain the same throughout the VMS. These features are also visible in the centre of the home page (3). Below them (4), you will find the latest VMS news, documents uploaded, announcements made and comments posted on discussion fora. Finally, on the top-right corner of the page (5), you can search the VMS for information and other users.

Figure 1 VMS home page



## 2. How can I [get informed](#) on the Forum?

### 2.1 Browsing the VMS and using the search engine

The Virtual Meeting Space is a mine of useful information on the various components of the Forum, which you are free to either browse or search. To see what is available on any given theme, topic, region or major group, you can browse through their workspaces from the left-hand menu. Alternatively, to find information on a particular subject, you should use the search engine (see figure 2). Just type in the word you are looking for in the text box and click on the magnifying glass or push “enter”. Clicking on the [advanced search](#) icon allows you to search for documents with specific criteria, as well as other system users.

Figure 2 VMS search engine





### 2.2 E-mail alerts and RSS feeds

To be automatically informed as soon as there are any new developments in the issues you are interested in, click on “[E-mail alerts / RSS feeds](#)” (see figure 3).

Figure 3 RSS feeds and alerts page

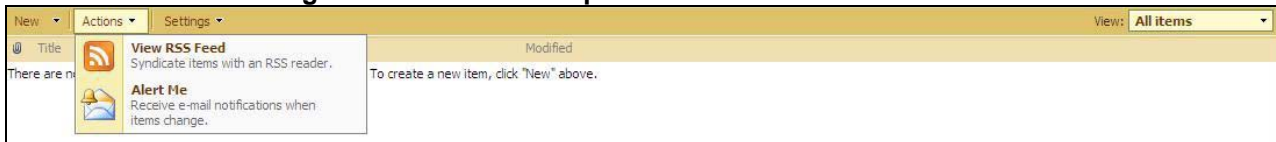


Clicking on the “alert me” icon () , or ticking the “alert me” box on this page, activates the corresponding e-mail alert. Alerts allow you to be automatically informed by e-mail whenever there is a new development in any area. Each e-mail alert that is sent to you contains the text of the new item and a link to react on the item in the VMS. When subscribing to an alert, you can choose if you would like to receive these alerts as soon as a change is made, daily or weekly.

To view RSS feeds on any issue, you should click on the corresponding icon (). RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds are used to deliver news updates to an RSS reader, so that the latest news from various sources is available in one space, whenever you decide to view them, instead of having to search for them in different sites. [Click here](#) for a list of some of the most common RSS readers available free of charge over the Internet.

You may also subscribe to RSS feeds and alerts from within any workspace of which you are a member. To do so, simply click on the title of the section you are interested in (library, document production, etc), then from the next page click on the “Actions” option (see figure 4).

**Figure 4 Manual subscription to alerts and/or RSS feeds**



## 2.3 [Forum Knowledge Base](#)

The World Water Fora are a continual process, and each one builds on the successes and pitfalls of the previous editions. With this in mind, the Forum Knowledge Base contains useful reference material from the 3rd, 4th and 5th World Water Fora. When preparing the various components of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, you can consult the Knowledge Base to find out what has gone before.

## 3. How can I [contribute](#) to the Forum?

### 3.1 [Sessions](#)

An open contribution process to the sessions went on through the VMS and by e-mail from August to October 2008. Over 700 [contributions](#) are available on the VMS for your perusal. These contributions are used as building blocks for the sessions at the Forum, the [summaries](#) of which you can also find on the VMS. The session process is open and participatory, and you are free to read the summaries, reflect on the issues, and comment on them through the [discussion fora](#) available in the VMS for this purpose.

### 3.2 [Prizes](#)

Four water prizes are being organized in coordination with the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, and the application procedure for all of them is or has been available through the VMS. The four prizes and their deadlines are:

- Hassan II Great World Water Prize: November 14<sup>th</sup>
- Kyoto World Water Grand Prize: November 30<sup>th</sup>
- “Compromiso México” Water Prize: February 6<sup>th</sup>
- Turkish Republic Prime Minister’s Water Prize: February 15<sup>th</sup>

### 3.3 [Partnership Bazaar](#)

With the aim of enhancing existing partnerships and facilitating the creations of new ones, in line with the general objective of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the Partnership Bazaar has been set up through the VMS to allow organizations to apply to hold partnership events, announce them to the world, and invite participation in them. A partnership is any gathering of individuals or organizations with common objectives but different geographical, cultural, sectoral or ideological backgrounds and perspectives.

### 3.4 [Campaign/Project Posters](#)

This component of the Forum aims to provide space in the Forum venue for posters on the many innovative water-related campaigns from around the world, as well as on projects that have aimed to improve the state of water resources. This will provide a thought-provoking venue for quiet reflection and sharing of lessons learnt. Applications are being received through the VMS up to February 15<sup>th</sup>, and according to space, will be considered for inclusion in the Forum venue.

### 3.5 [Be part of a workgroup](#)

On the “[be part of it](#)” page (see figure 5), you can select which workgroups you would like to be a member of. Ticking the workgroup(s) you are interested in will automatically add you to the

corresponding consultative group, enabling you to take a more active role in the preparation of that issue for the Forum. Please refer to [annex 1](#) for a definition of user roles.

**Figure 5 The “be part of it” form**



The screenshot shows a web form titled "be part of it" with a list of themes and sites. At the top, there is a "Themes" section with a checkbox. Below it, there is a "Sites" section with a list of items, each with a checkbox. The items are:

- Theme 1 : Global Change & Risk Management
- Topic 1.1 : Adapting to Climate Change
- Topic 1.2 : Water-related Migration, Changing Land Use and Human Settlements
- Topic 1.3 : Managing Disasters

Being a member of a consultative group will allow you to view and comment on the documents produced by the coordinators and consortia. By this means, you can easily bring your experience and perspective to the debate facilitated by the workgroup.

#### **4. How can I [exchange ideas and network with others](#) through the VMS?**

##### **4.1 [My Profile / My Site](#)**

To let other users know about you, your work and your areas of expertise, you should first [update your profile](#). Selecting your organization from the list will attach that organization to your profile, meaning that it will also appear after your name whenever you do something in the VMS. The more you write about yourself, the easier it will be to network with other users with similar ideas.

Once you have completed the profile form, you will be taken to [My Site](#), your personal home page within the VMS that has shortcuts to all of your workgroups and allows you to organize your documents, links and colleagues. Each user that has clicked on his or her [My Profile](#) has a personal home page that you can search, to find individuals or organizations that are interested in and knowledgeable about similar activities. In your My Site, you may upload documents related to your work, or even advertise your reports and projects.

##### **4.2 [Virtual Speakers Corner](#)**

The Virtual Speakers Corner is a free and open space for anyone with something to say about water. It allows you to announce your events and projects, inviting people to take part in them, or just sharing your views on any water-related issue.

##### **4.3 [This Month's Survey](#)**

The monthly surveys allow you to give your feedback on the aspect of the Forum being focused on this month, and see the results of previous surveys. This is your opportunity to tell the organizers and the world your opinion on the Forum.

#### **5. How can I [configure the VMS](#) for my needs?**

##### **5.1 [Technical Support](#)**

Through the “Technical Support” feature, you can either make a request to the system administrators, or view the existing discussion fora, to see if your question has already been asked (and answered). We aim to reply to all questions within 72 hours.

## 5.2 View your user rights

On the “Tools” page, you can also see which VMS workgroups you are a member of. Clicking on any of the links will allow you to see who else is a member of that group.

## 6. How can I take part in the processes I’m interested in?

### 6.1 How can I contribute to the different workspaces?

In the workspaces of the themes, topics, regions, major groups and political processes, any VMS user may take part in the discussion forums and surveys, and whatever other means the workgroup has developed for public consultation. Additionally, as explained above, if you are particularly interested in any one issue, you may add yourself to that issue’s consultative group, by visiting the [“Be part of it”](#) page.

### 6.2 How can I work within a workspace?

When you enter any workspace, you will see a number of functionalities both in the centre and the left-hand side of the screen (see figure 6). These functionalities are either “private” for the working and consultative groups, or “public”, meaning that all VMS users can view the information in question. You will only see the functionalities that your user rights allow you to use. Within each workspace, the **public** functionalities are the following:

- **Latest News:** facilitates the sharing of the latest information on the issue at hand;
- **Survey:** allows workgroups to canvass the opinion of others on any given topic;
- **Water Events Calendar:** a list of all events in the world of water. You may view a filtered list of the events related to each topic, theme, region or major group by clicking on “related events” from the central screen of each space’s home page;
- **Discussion:** allows the workgroup to exchange views on any given issue;
- **Library:** to share any relevant document or report, either produced by the workgroup or by third parties;
- **Wiki Pages:** can be used to develop common texts within workgroups;
- **Links:** a list of useful web links related to the issue.

Each workgroup’s **private** functionalities are as follows:

- **Document Production:** allows workgroups to produce, share and improve their joint documents, keeping track of versions and storing them in a single place;
- **Team Calendar:** the various milestones on the road to the Forum, such as meetings and teleconferences;
- **Team Work Planner:** a Gantt planner to assign responsibility for and follow up on the workgroup’s various tasks.


Figure 6 Workspace home page



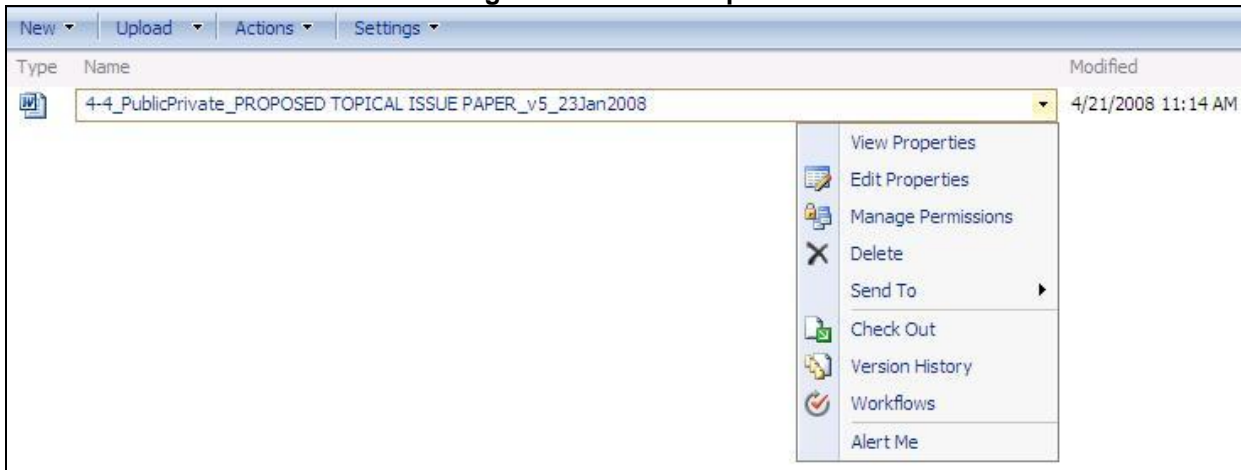
Within each of these functionalities, depending on your user status within that workgroup, you may carry out the following actions:

- **Upload** a new item, by clicking on “upload” in the top menu;
- **Consult** an existing item, by simply clicking directly on the name of the item in question;
- **Create** a new folder to group together information, by clicking on “new” in the top menu;
- **Subscribe to an alert** to be informed by e-mail of any changes made to the space, by clicking on the “actions” menu and selecting “alert me” (see [section 2.3](#));
- You may also have access to a number of **other options**, including viewing the version history, creating advanced workflows, managing permissions, deleting documents and document check out, by clicking on the down arrow next to the item, shown in figure 7.

### 6.3 How can I contribute to the production of a document within a workspace?

To make any changes to a document, first check it out by clicking on the down arrow next to that document (see figure 7) and selecting “check out”. Checking out a document blocks it so that no other user can modify the document at the same time, and therefore avoids there being several different versions. When a document is checked out, you will see this icon  next to it. Other users will still be able to view the saved version of the file, but will not be able to make any to it until you check it back in. You can see who has checked it out by passing over the “checked out” icon. We recommend you do not keep a file checked out for more than two days.

**Figure 7 Document options**



Once your document is checked out, you should do the following to edit it:

- Open the file, by clicking on the file name again, and saving it to your own computer.
- We recommend you make any changes in the “track changes” mode of your document editing tool, to ensure that other users can easily identify the changes.
- Once you have finished editing the document, you should close it and save the changes.
- Back in the corresponding workspace in the VMS, click on “upload” (in the central menu) to upload your new version. This will automatically replace the previous version of the document, and check it back in. All users that have activated an “alert” or an RSS feed for that section of the workspace will be informed that a new version has been posted.

If you are a member of the workgroup, at any time you may review the document's version history, by clicking on “version history” in the “other options” menu, shown in figure 7. From this page, you may view the changes that have been made to the document. If you have the appropriate rights, you can also restore a previous version of the document, by clicking on the arrow to the right of the version you would like to restore.

When a document is ready for review by a larger group, please place it in the Library, to invite more contributions. All VMS users can read files in the Library section, and may comment on them through discussion fora. Unless you are a member of the workgroup, you cannot however directly make changes to the document.

## **[7. Water Events Calendar](#)**

This a list of all events related to water, that may be added to by any VMS user. This information is also directly linked to the events pages of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum and World Water Council websites. Any VMS user is free to upload his or her event, which will instantly be visible to the water community, and searchable on Internet search engines. Take this opportunity to let others know about your event!

## Annex 1 User roles

Within each user space, by default there are five main groups of user roles, with differing rights accorded to each. You can view the groups that you are members of by [clicking here](#). These rights can be modified by the space's coordinator or support staff, to give different groups greater access to the collaborative process. These roles and rights are described below (please note that the exact names may vary for some particular workgroups):

- **Support staff:** those individuals from the Secretariat of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum and World Water Council who work to support each of the components of the Forum. They have full control over their spaces.
- **Coordinators:** those who are ultimately in charge of the process, and therefore its space on the VMS. They may make changes to the page layout, add new users to their space, create new and edit all existing items within their space, and approve texts as “final”.
- **Members of the consortium:** the closest collaborators of the coordinators, they have the right to create, edit and comment on all texts and other items within the space, but not to approve texts, add users or make changes to the page layout.
- **Consultative group:** a larger group of users who may review all parts of the space in question, and give their feedback through the discussion fora and surveys, so as to improve the openness and positions represented in the outputs. You may request to be a part of the consultative group for any process through the VMS home page.
- **Visitors:** system users who may only consult the “public” parts of the space (please refer to section 6.2 for the definition of “public” and “private” functionalities).

These roles within any particular space and their according rights are shown in graphical form below.

Groups of users / Rights	Read items in public areas	Read items in private areas	Add / edit / delete items	Modify page layout	Approve items	Add users to the space	Modify user rights within the space
<b>Support staff</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Coordinators</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Members of the consortium</b>	X	X	X	X			
<b>Consultative group</b>	X	X					
<b>Visitors</b>	X						

By default, any new VMS user is a visitor to each of the spaces. As explained in item 3.5 above, if you are interested in taking part a particular process, you may request to be part of that consultative group by filling in the request form available through the VMS home page.