

## Preface

The FRIEND—Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data—research programme is an international collaborative study into regional hydrology. It is Project 1.1 of UNESCO's Fifth International Hydrological Programme. The primary objective of the FRIEND project has been to improve understanding of hydrological variability and similarity across time and space in order to develop hydrological science and practical design methods. To achieve this it has been essential to permit hydrological research to cross national boundaries. This has been done in three ways. Firstly, by developing international hydrological databases of time series and spatial data. Secondly, by establishing project groups that could exchange models and analysis techniques and interpret the results using a common approach. Thirdly, by encouraging the exchange of scientists: promoting collaborative links between operational and research organizations and by running workshops and training courses in database management and regional hydrology. Since its inception in northern Europe in 1985, the project has developed to embrace six major international groups with around 75 participating countries. Two previous proceedings have been published by IAHS presenting the scientific results of the FRIEND project at conferences held in Bolkesjø, Norway (IAHS Publ. no. 187, April 1989) and in Braunschweig, Germany (IAHS Publ. no. 221, August 1994). To complement the papers published in these proceedings CEMAGREF has published the third major FRIEND international report.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, we face increasing uncertainty, not only in the extremes of floods and droughts but in the entire hydrological regime which controls our domestic, agricultural, industrial, energy and environmental use of water. The objectives of these proceedings are to address these issues by developing scientific, technical and applied links between regional hydrology and the development of integrated catchment management systems.

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