

Session:	SESSION TOPIC SYNTHESIS
Topic:	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONS
Questions / Issues to Discuss	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the implications of the IWRM approach for the formulation and implementing water resources management policy ? 2. How is political commitment to IWRM obtained ? 3. How comprehensive and flexible should the policies be, how long should it take to make policy, at what cost ? 4. What are the trade-offs in terms of costs and benefits of participatory approaches in policy formulation and implementation ? 5. Integration and coordination are oft-repeated desirable goals --.what are the practical implications and trade-offs in achieving these goals ? 6. How different is action from analysis ? What are some criteria for intervention/action ?

Introduction

The IWRM approach focuses on the following key principles (Dublin, Rio):

- Water as finite and vulnerable resource requiring a holistic/comprehensive approach that pays attention to rainfall, surface and groundwater; upstream-downstream impacts; multiples uses; inter-sectoral linkages; and integration of human and natural systems.
- Participatory approach to water resources planning and management, including engagement of vulnerable sections of the population and women;
- Water as economic and social good, meeting the needs of all users in a sustainable manner.

IWRM has been defined as: "...a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, and related resources in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems." (GWP, 2000)

Issue: What are the implications of the IWRM approach for the formulation and implementing water resources management policy ?

Enabling Environment for IWRM

An enabling environment of politics, policy, laws and information is needed to facilitate the IWRM approach in any country or river basin context.

Politics. Often not highlighted in IWRM discussions. The interplay of social values, people's aspirations, and competing claims that is triggered by allocating a finite resource among multiple uses highlights the importance of politics in implementing the IWRM approach. Thus political commitment and champions for adoption of IWRM principles and practice is critical.

Issue: How is political commitment to IWRM obtained ?

Policies. Ultimately, strategic development choices and related decisions on the use of water resources have to translate into specific policies for the planning, allocation, and management of the resource. These policies point to the direction of IWRM in the country or basin, over the long and medium term, by:

- (i) linking water resources policy with overall social and economic development (e.g., urbanization);
- (ii) offering a framework for managing water resources at the appropriate level (e.g., river basin, sub-basin, aquifer) and with appropriate inter-sectoral linkages (e.g., to minimize conflicts between key uses, including between water demand and needs of resource protection/ environment); and
- (iii) providing a basis for stakeholder participation and action (e.g., basin organizations, user participation and fees, company contracts, incentives for conservation and efficient use). Sometimes countries move straight to water strategies and address both policies and broad programs of action.

Issue: How comprehensive and flexible should the policies be, how long should it take to make policy, at what cost ?

Laws and regulations. Water law and regulations reflect social and policy choices with respect to WRM. They provide a legal basis or compact for policy and program implementation, including legitimacy for stakeholder institutions and their action; water rights; principles of water use, financing, resource management, protection, monitoring and enforcement. At times, there is overestimation of the power of laws (“give us the law and we will push agenda”) and hence high expectations; and sometimes underestimation (“our situation is too chaotic and laws are not useful”) and hence pessimism.

Information and Participation. Water-related information is usually a support tool for planning for integrated management of the resource (for instance, analysis of data on water availability and demand, land use, economic and social values, costs etc). More important, it is also a means of engaging stakeholders in a dialogue on policies. In addition to traditional means of surveys and focus group meetings, modern technologies permit the possibility of wide dissemination and dialogue with a variety of stakeholders using several tools.

Issue: What are the trade-offs in terms of costs and benefits of participatory approaches in policy formulation and implementation ?

Institutions

Rules. Institutions are both rules and organizational arrangements. Rules define stakeholder roles and relationships in planning and management, specifically in water development, bulk water management, financing of investment and operation, and water distribution and services.

Organizational arrangements are created to operationalize: (i) areas of responsibilities in planning and management; (ii) mechanisms for cooperation/integration among stakeholders to achieve IWRM goals; and (iii) processes that facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders. Usually (i) is most often specified, but there are many ambiguities and challenges regarding (ii) and (iii), especially due to cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial, and inter-jurisdictional complexities.

Stakeholders. There are multiple stakeholders broadly divided into: (i) public sector; (ii) private sector; (iii) communities and water users; (iv) NGOs and think tanks; and (v) broader civil society. Within each of these categories, there are a number of actors whose goals, interests, and perceptions of issues and solutions are likely to be different. Special attention is needed to engage environmental interests and vulnerable sections of the population.

Levels. There are a hierarchy of levels for IWRM decision-making, including (i) local (village, municipality, irrigation scheme etc.); (ii) river basin; (iii) national (with federal set-up and hence strong State governments/local jurisdictions, or without a federal set-up strong central government); and (iv) transnational. IWRM approach is applicable to all of these levels, though the political and legal complexity of implementing IWRM increases with each of the levels.

Issue: Integration and coordination are oft-repeated desirable goals --.what are the practical implications and trade-offs in achieving these goals ?

Financial arrangements, though not usually discussed strictly under “Institutions”, are vital, and provide the fuel to drive the organizations to desired performance objectives. Thus, policies and practices on valuation, pricing, cost sharing, and financing methods are key to sustainable development and management.

A Framework for Analysis and A Framework for Action. Analysis can be comprehensive and holistic. But on-the-ground reality is usually messy and not “best practice”. So intervention in ongoing water management systems should be based on analysis, but should also look for “windows” of opportunity to advance the IWRM agenda and demonstrate early results even if they are not “first best” solutions.

Issue: How different is action from analysis ? What are some criteria for intervention/action

Group solutions... and discussion.
