

Working Group Discussions - Day 1

1. Why a river basin approach?

Group 1

- There is a drastic need to change governance in Alborz Basin
- Hence establishment of a basin-level committee is highly desirable
- Step by step approach is recommended
- Land and water basin committee (land aspect is also important)
- Institutional and legal arrangements should be developed after a detailed study (within consultancy services of project)
- Committee should have enough legal authority to be successful
- It should work under the provincial governments relevant working group under the jurisdiction of the governor

Group 2

- Basin approach is the way to go. There are points of strength and weaknesses.
- In Iran stakeholders do not play a role in the higher levels, yet stakeholder participation is needed at all levels – not only at basin level, but equally at Provincial and National level. The type of stakeholder participation at these higher levels may differ.
- The driving force for a basin-wide approach is to create a mechanism for coordination and to create awareness on water management issues.
- It is important to dovetail the new institutions with existing arrangements. A legal basis for river basin management is required.
- Developing a basin approach should be supported by capacity building. Driving force – general list of IWRM attributes
- Grassroots cannot participate unless they have the appropriate institutions through which they can work

Discussion:

To come to effective river basin management is a process that takes a considerable period of time – along the way conflicts may have to be resolved.

Important questions that need to be answered are:

- To whom will the basin organization be responsible?
- What authority will it have? Will it be a coordinating structure or an organization with authority over the stakeholders?

A question was asked on who would lose and who would win from river basin management. An equally important question is: who is included and who is not? In particular: how will women be included in the Basin Water Committee?

2. What should be the functions and responsibilities of the Basin Committee?

Group 3

Water management at basin level is urgently required to coordinate water use and avoid adverse impact on different water uses.

The BWC should be seriously empowered by cabinet decision. By law it should have powers to sanction and enforce its decisions and to take sanctions. The role of the government should be to change to a supervisory role.

The BWC should systematically interact with the different stakeholders. Participation of the land and water users should be genuine and well-structured and planning should be bottom-up. One suggestion is to incorporate the local water master (*miraab*) in the committees.

Socio-economic studies and cultural studies are required as part of the preparation of the BWC. Models successful elsewhere cannot be automatically copied.

Planning should be from the bottom up.
Should avoid duplication by delegating authority to the BWC.

Discussion

With respect to farmer representation in the BWC: if one refers to water masters, then these are not necessarily representative of stakeholders. Water masters should not be the only representatives. They should be there but so should other representatives selected from the WUAs.

Group 4

- Difficult because we had to assume that the BWC already existed
- Not enough time for debate details
- One should start with the development of the BWC with an assessment of needs and water management issues
- Studies needed
- Guiding policies of BWC need to be sorted out
- Capacity building of task holders is vital if they are to participate
- Action plan need for BWC to function
- Legal support needed
- BWC members should be the same age so that it functions well
- Objective of improving livelihoods of people living in and around the basin
- Create a logical structure but this will need to be managed
- Everything should be done in a sustainable fashion. Should recognise the rights of coming generations
- Development of strategy and action plan
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Facilitating for necessary research and study
- Management within defined responsibility framework
- Needs assessment
- Awareness raising, education, extension services
- Facilitating participation
- Lobbying for legal support
- Moving in the direction of sustainable development
- Facilitating increases in the incomes of local communities
- Planning for achieving committees goals
- Capacity building for increased effectiveness
- Coordination with relevant stakeholders and government agencies

3. What do lessons from other basins tell us on how the BWC should function?

Group 5

- Urumyah Lake set aside for time being as basin management is not operational in this area
- One model might be successful in any country but is not necessarily transferable. The Tarim model maybe difficult to copy because in Iran the bottom up approach is more important, in keeping with traditions.
- Several experiences point to the importance of stakeholder involvement:
 - Because in the Talam Dam stakeholders were not involved, there was considerable resistance
 - In Heraz basin in contrast, the activities had the consent of farmers, yet there was no legal basis
- Appropriate laws needed – also on the legal status of WUAs
- Discussed China and TN but no final decisions. Needed these in written form prior to the workshop so that we could look at them in detail
- Difficult to copy Chinese institutional models from China in TN. China is top to bottom but this is not doable in Iran. More consultation with farmers needed
- Organisation must be in keep with traditions of the region. There are local sensibilities in this region

Important lessons from the cases from China and India:

- Possibilities of employment generation to be explored
- Importance of building trust
- Use of incentives and sanction
- The value of participation
- The need for training and capacity building
- The importance of investing in the irrigation network
- The importance of accessible and reliable information
- Legislation to underpin the efforts

Group 6

Q Law says that responsibility of management of demand is given to Jihad and Agriculture. However, many factors/stakeholders are involved. Some may be less up to date on what is needed

A. Yes fair point

Comment (Kremer): Reasons for questions: when you go on a journey you need to know whether it would be difficult. Lessons are that IWRM journey will be difficult. If there are to be winners and losers who will be the losers? How will losers be able to express themselves? How will conflicts be resolved? What about conflict between BWC and other government institutions? This the reality in other countries. Conflicts can be resolved with some organisations giving up power. How can BWCs be made accountable? To government or to users?

Comment (Helen Shahriahi) More important to talk about excluded and included. For example, women are likely to be excluded. Women do most of work in this country are but they are not involved in decision making.