

Working Group Discussions - Day 2

1. How can we activate and ensure the sustainability of the Alborz BWC drawing the lessons from those presented cases?

Group 4

- We must raise awareness. Without knowledge there will be no support
- Training and capacity building.
- Cultural development – raising awareness at the community level so that there is better support.
- The committee should be independent. Financial autonomy
- Incentives for stakeholders to participate.
- Committee should make use of the services of specialists. Committees are established to be trusted institutions but not as knowledge centres
- Obtain legal support
- Stakeholders should be interested and have a conviction. If he/she believe that it will survive it will
- PR and communication
- Transparency is crucial.
- Awareness and participation are mutually reinforcing.

2. How can we make the best use of the Alborz Basin Water Fund and promote participatory water and soil conservation activities?

- **How should it be operated?**
- **What are the issues and problems that are likely to cause delays?**
- **How can they be resolved?**

Group 6

Monitoring: Group feels that there should be a group of 5 trustees. There should be 2 revolving members

Issues that cause delays: legal problems, financial problems, sanctions, tariffs, red tape, lack of cooperation between agencies

Comment Najafi: In this list we have lots of problems. The question was how to use the BWF to solve these problems.

WUAs are NGOs so you should have elaborated on issues relating to NGOs. Also if the government provides too much support they are in effect intervening.

Comment Fardanesh: New legislation may introduce more red tape. We thought that it would be best if the fund is non-governmental.

Comment Ueda: This fund needs to be authorised by council of ministers. There needs to be a 2-3 year pilot. Economic aspect: some environmental work is not economic but necessary and valuable all the same e.g. mitigation of upstream/ downstream problems.

3. What are the biggest challenges for the farmer Water Users' Associations (WUAs) development under the Alborz project?

- **What kind of support should the project provide?**
- **What kind of support is needed from the government?**
- **Suggestions and ideas for the 2nd workshop next fall on WUA development for Iran?**

Group 3

- There are no limits on water use hence there is no incentive for farmers to join WUAs
- Charges to join WUAs are also a disincentive for farmers to join WUAs
- Disparity in size of land holding is another challenge. Some farmers have very small plots
- Different crops need different amounts of water. Some farmers may grow crops requiring a lot more water than others
- Lack of transparency of government agencies
- Lack of a manual for best irrigation practices. These may exist but these are not being used
- These are problems that beset ongoing projects
- Sometimes we cannot get enough water.
- Lack of transparency on water fees. We do not know what WUAs are spending money on
- Lack of social studies and appreciation of the culture of the local community. Ignoring this can cause problems
- Water users do not know about technical aspects (e.g. water cycles, water requirements etc). There are thick books but
- A lack of legal framework for WUAs. We went to see the Director General of Cooperatives but they could not help. But this is our best point of contact?
- We should have legal entitlements to water (like deeds to a house). There should be contracts to accompany the legal entitlement
- We had time constraints.....

Dr Shiati (report from a second working group that tackled the same question)

We covered all these points in addition:

- Lack of belief and commitment on behalf of farmers and government
- A reason for capacity development and awareness raising.
- Absence of a legislative framework. We have the directive of the council of ministers but practically we do have a relevant organisation that is backed by legislation

Q Should the entitlement be in the name of the farmer or the WUA? You have referred to a number of challenges so if they are overcome everything will move ahead? We don't want WUAs to suffer the same fate as cooperatives. There was training for cooperatives but they are not functioning there is nothing there.

Comment: The law exists for issuance of water entitlements. We need support of farmers. Otherwise all show and no go. Like other parts of the world, farmers have taken to this type of organisation. We need social studies as a starting point.

Comment Xie: Just like RBOs where a driving force is needed, a study is needed for a WUA driving force. Often there are institutional gaps. Like China, the government

has responsibility to the secondary channel. After that the counties and villages had responsibility but they charged a lot and did very little. So this intermediate level is a problem/headache. Hence idea was introduced to plug this gap. Results are entirely positive.

Comment Bazza: The rationale exists for WUAs in Iran. The big problem is appropriate legislation. WUAs cannot be established under "cooperative" legislation. Starting point should be to review the legislation. Top down establishment of WUAs will not work.