

Putting IWRM into Practice: A Case Study of Thailand

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Background

IWRM – process for better management of water resources

- encompasses governance, stakeholder participation, and balancing development for resource sustainability

- No general blueprint suitable for each and every country**

Background

- **No general blueprint suitable for each and every country**
- **Rather, the IWRM process has to be adjusted according to the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of each particular country**
- **An IWRM plan can therefore be interpreted as preparing a road-map or action program to put IWRM into practice**

Initiating the Implementation Process in Thailand

- **Recognizing the three basic components of IWRM, i.e., enabling environment, institutional roles, and management tools, Thailand started the process by building consensus among various stakeholders – including government officials, academes, private sector, various water user groups, and NGOs**

Initiating the Implementation Process in Thailand

- **Water dialogues, seminars and workshops were held since 1999**
- **Main objective was put the key elements of the 3 basic components into the national water resource management system and thus institutionalize the IWRM into the government machinery**

Various Steps

The National Water Vision was a product of a multistakeholder workshop in July 1999



Endorsed by the government in July 2000



National Water Vision was translated into a nine-point water policy program through another multi-stakeholder meeting in March 2000



Subsequently endorsed by the government as the National Water Policy in October 2000

Various Steps

- **The Government approved the proposal to establish river basin committees (RBCs) for the country's 25 major rivers and provided budget for the implementation since 1999**
- **Capacity building in IWRM and basin management were standard activities to strengthen the RBCs**
- **Organizational structure and roles of various sub-committees and working groups have evolved such that grassroots participation in RBCs is now an integral part of the system**

Various Steps

- **A comprehensive and integrated water sector budgetary procedure was discussed and formulated through a series of high-level officials and multistakeholder workshop, aiming to strengthen the role of RBCs in developing and approving RBC plans and to group WRM programs according to the national water policy**
- **Government approved the proposed budgetary procedure in June 2002, and is currently being practiced**

Various Steps

- **Preparation of river basin plans – launched in 2001 with the aim to involve stakeholders in the preparation process**
- **Consultants were engaged to work together with various stakeholders including the grassroots level, to identify problems and needs and formulate plans and projects with respect to the potential available water resources and other related resources such as land and forests, towards sustaining the ecosystem of the basin**
- **This in particular is putting IWRM into practice at the river basin level**

Various Steps

- **The Government launched an institutional reform – resulting to the consolidation of water-related agencies and the establishment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) in October 2002**
- **MoNRE is entrusted with regulatory functions for national water resources management while there still remain a few implementing agencies outside the Ministry**

Various Steps

- **A national water law has been drafted which will serve as the master law for water resources. This is expected to be ready for submission to the government in 2004**

Summary

- **A road-map or action program to put IWRM into practice takes time**
- **There is a need for a group of key players who can act as catalysts for changes and who should be motivated and influential enough to obtain government endorsement of the road map and/or action program**
- **Critical factor is to be consistent in pursuing the IWRM objectives and have patience in pursuing the same**

Summary

- **IWRM can be implemented or institutionalized through a step-by-step process**
- **In the preparation of river basin plans, the application of IWRM process is far more important than having a plan *per se***
- **Public awareness and multi-stakeholder participation is a must to ensure acceptance by public and the government**

Thank You !!!