

## Network of River Basin Organizations (NARBO)

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### Participatory Processes in IWRM

by

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#### Participatory Process

The principle of **participation** derives from an acceptance that people are at the heart of development. They are not only the ultimate beneficiaries of development, but are also the agents of development.

Participation of stakeholders in planning and water resources management is a process (UNESCAP, 2003). This process enables stakeholders to influence or share control over development initiatives and over decisions and resources that affect themselves.



Source: Gender and Water Alliance

Progress in such a process depends very much on the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of each locality. In general, participation processes would have far-reaching impact if they were initiated as part of a pro-active policy of government. On the other hand, the impact tends to be superficial and short-lived when the processes are driven by external factors and no supporting policy. (UNESCAP, 2003)

It is commonly accepted that the participatory process involves four main phases: (i) initiating; (ii) preparing; (iii) implementing; and (iv) sustaining. The activities in each of these four phases must be carefully studied, planned, prepared and implemented to respond to urgent needs. Stakeholders need to understand the importance of each activity in each of the four phases, and of their involvement in the decision-making process (UNESCAP, 2003).

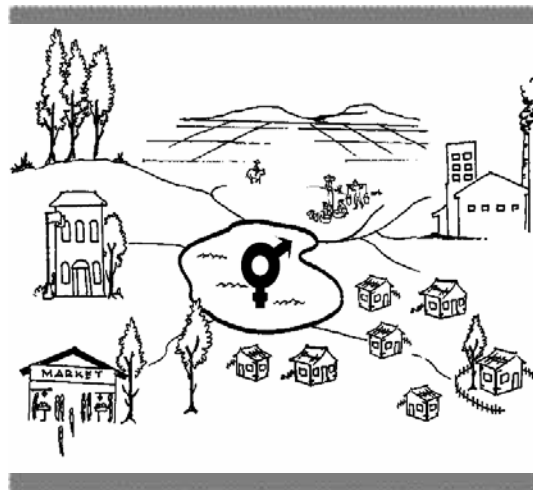
There are no single answers and blueprints in fostering participation – different countries have different histories and structures that determine how to best move to more effective participation.

## Integrated Water Resources Management

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a process.

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) defines IWRM as *a process to improve the planning, conservation, development, and management of water, forest, land, and aquatic resources in a river basin context to maximize economic benefits and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital environmental systems.*

The USAID defines IWRM as *a participatory planning and implementation process based on sound science which brings together stakeholders to determine how to meet society's long-term needs for water and coastal resources while maintaining essential ecological services and economic benefits.*



Source: Gender and Water Alliance

## Why Participation?

The benefits of participation can be considerable. These include the improved performance and sustainability of policies, programs, and projects, as well as enhanced capacity and skills of stakeholders.

Participation in the formulation of fundamental goals of an activity empowers stakeholders and fosters a sense of local ownership. These facilitate effective project implementation, conscientious monitoring of activities, and substantial outcomes. When people involved feel that their participation is meaningful, the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of development initiatives improve. When people have influence over decisions that affect their lives and the resources involved, the sense of ownership developed motivates their sustained commitment.

Participation smoothens the transitions: from activity conceptualization → poverty assessment → design → capacity building → implementation → monitoring and evaluation.

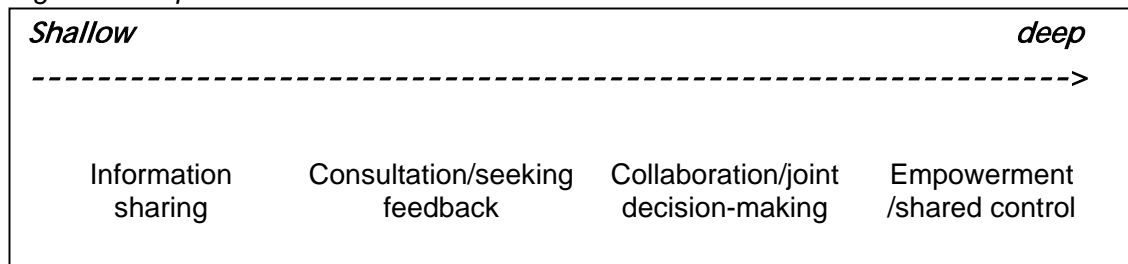
Participation enhances the social capital, promote sound governance, result to higher quality data, increase the probability of project success, and minimize external criticism.

A consensus has emerged over the past decade or more that those affected by development initiatives have a right to participate in them.

## Modes of Participation

Participation ranges from superficial to deep – from passive exchange of information to full engagement. Stakeholders may be engaged in many ways, from merely that ‘development’ is happening to taking part in projects that serve to help them take charge of their own development.

Fig. 1 Participation Scale



**Information sharing** (or gathering) is at the passive or shallow end of the participation scale. This may involve disseminating information about an intended program or asking stakeholders to give information that will be used by others to help plan or evaluate a project or other activity. In both cases, communication is one-way rather than interactive.

**Consultation** refers to people being asked for their opinion about something while development professionals listen to their views. Typically, the people involved exercised no responsibility in formulating the original plan or the decisions that went into it, and the development professionals are under no obligation to incorporate their view. Yet consultation can be more or less participatory and can evolve into collaboration or shared control. On one hand, if people are involved in defining a desired change, or in identifying a problem and its solution, consultation can lead to greater networking and a sense of ownership. On the other hand, many consultative processes focus solely on obtaining ‘buy in’ for the already planned activity, or prescribed policy or program. Consultation processes that primarily seek feedback to a predefined plan or strategy fall near the shallow end of the depth of participation continuum.

**Collaboration/joint decision-making** and **empowerment/shared control** represent what most participatory development practitioners consider to be genuine participation. In each of these stages, stakeholders are actively engaged and sustained results are achieved. In collaboration, for example, people are invited by outsiders to meet a pre-determined objective: the development professional or organization identifies the problem or issues to be discussed and calls a group together to collaborate on that topic. The stakeholders may not have initiated the collaboration, but they significantly influence the results. Groups or sub-groups are formed that build networks and improve structures or practices. People themselves and the projects on which they work change as a result of their interaction. The stakeholders’ ideas change the project design or implementation plan, or contribute to a new policy or strategy. Most importantly, the development professional or organization that solicited stakeholder involvement takes the people’s perspectives seriously and acts on them.

**Shared control** involves deeper participation than collaboration. People become empowered by accepting increasing responsibility for developing and implementing action plans that are accountable to group members and for either creating or strengthening local institutions. The development professionals become facilitators of a locally-driven process. Stakeholders assume control and ownership of their component of the project or program, and make decisions accordingly. At this level, local participation is most sustainable because the people concerned have a stake in maintaining structures or practices. Participatory monitoring – in which groups or organizations assess their own actions using procedures and performance indicators they selected when finalizing their plans – reinforces empowerment and sustainability.

Participation should not be maximized – that is, incorporated everywhere at the same depth and breadth – but rather, optimized. The type of participation chosen should be based on the context and task. What may be needed is strong and broad stakeholder participation at strategic and appropriate times, and focused participation at other times.

### Why IWRM?

IWRM is globally accepted. It makes good sense and is a key element in the national water policy of many countries. IWRM incorporates social and environmental considerations directly into policy and decision-making and directly involves the stakeholders. It offers solution to the problems of scarce water resources, growing water demands, and conflicting water uses. (Alavian, World Bank Institute, 2003)

However, the role of IWRM will vary depending on the development stage of the country. Developing countries, countries in transition and developed countries will all have different ways of implementing the IWRM process and derive different benefits. Developing countries may see sound water resources management as a factor in addressing poverty, hunger, health and environmental sustainability. Countries in transition may see IWRM as a rational approach to improvement of their resource management thus assisting the continued development of their economies. Developed countries may find valuable inspiration in the IWRM processes and may choose to design their own variety. (Jonch-Clausen, 2004)

### What constitutes IWRM?



**River basin planning and management.** IWRM will be undertaken in a river basin context because river basins form the natural unit to manage water resources. River basin organizations will help facilitate stakeholder consultation and participation, and to help improve planning, information gathering, monitoring and advisory services to local and national authorities.

**Water allocation.** Competing uses of water impacts most on the poor who are insufficiently empowered to claim water rights. Water allocation through markets of transferable water rights will be supported.

**Environmental protection and social measures.** Environmental and social impact assessment procedures will be rigorously applied. Any adverse environmental effects

will be properly mitigated, the number of affected people will be minimized, and those adversely affected will be adequately compensated.

**Flood protection and control.** A proactive approach to reduce the severe economic and social costs of natural disasters will be pursued by promoting the use of combined structural and non-structural approaches to flood protection, including flood insurance.

**Watershed and wetland protection.** Wetlands have important functions in the river basin, including flood alleviation, groundwater recharge, water quality improvement, ecosystem maintenance, and biodiversity conservation. Watershed and wetland conservation and improvement in a river basin context will be promoted.

### Why Participation in IWRM?

Given water's life-sustaining characteristics, **participation is a key ingredient** in its conservation and management.

Participation in IWRM is consistent with the Dublin Principles (1992). The UN Conference on Water and Development in Dublin, Ireland, January 1992 consolidated these principles as:



- (i) Water is a single, finite resource (holistic principle);
- (ii) **Water management and development should include stakeholders (participatory principle);**
- (iii) Water is an economic good (economic principle); and
- (iv) Women play a central role in management and conservation of water (gender principle).

which provided an important mind set for water resources management.

With the complexity of the water sector where there are multiple stakeholders within and outside the sector, and with a variety of interests and goals, managing water effectively inherently implies that the use of water resources and its corresponding benefits are efficient, equitable and environmentally sustainable. Effective water management entails ensuring that the **disparate voices of all stakeholders are heard and engaged in decisions** on development and management of water resources.

Effective water governance requires the **consultation and participation of all stakeholders from all sectors** – government agencies, water users, service providers and civil society – and at all levels of the decision-making process. There is a need to strengthen the institutions created in a dialogue process and to share experiences on effective water governance between countries. Governments play a central role as they have the responsibility to set the overall policies and laws for the development and management of water resources. Governments, however, cannot operate in isolation. There is in general a need to strengthen and engage civil society.

## The Role of ADB

ADB water operations are guided generally by ADB's policies for water, governance, poverty reduction, environment, energy, and forest.

ADB's water policy 'Water for All' guides ADB water operations with a focus on water sector reforms, integrated management of water resources in river basins, delivery of water services, and water conservation.

ADB's governance policy commits ADB to assist its Developing Member Countries (DMCs) in enhancing capabilities in the four cornerstones of effective governance: (i) accountability, (ii) **participation**, (iii) predictability, and (iv) transparency.

ADB's policy on poverty reduction focuses on the key elements of: (i) robust, sustained, pro-poor economic growth; (ii) social development, including human development and improvement in the status of women; and (iii) better governance.

ADB's environment policy addresses the need (i) for more upstream environmental assessment (EA), (ii) for more structured consultation in the conduct of EA, and (iii) for greater emphasis on monitoring and compliance with environmental requirements during project implementation.

ADB's energy policy spells out the major issues and concerns in the energy sector and outlines the operational implications of policy choices so that the selection and pursuit of energy sector activities for any given DMC will be in line with the Bank's overall strategy, the country strategy, and sector policies.

ADB's forest policy underscores the involvement of beneficiaries at an early stage of project development through to implementation and management to ensure that investments in the forestry sector are sustainable.

### ADB's Water Policy: An Affirmation of the Need for Participation in IWRM

The following highlights the water policy actions that the ADB envisions within the context of participation:

- ADB will support the establishment of river basin organizations to facilitate stakeholder consultation and participation.
- River basin management concerns need to be matched pragmatically with the requirements of local government jurisdictions through stakeholder consultation. ADB will support the development of structures that respond to these needs.



- ADB will support the organization of community involvement in resource monitoring and management on a river basin basis.

- Reallocation of water among competing uses is rapidly becoming a common challenge in the region. This impacts most on the poor who are insufficiently empowered to claim water rights. ADB will encourage the DMCs to adopt participatory and negotiated approaches for water allocation.
- ADB will assist governments to develop collaborative frameworks with riparian stakeholders, including an assessment of the downstream impact of any ADB-financed water project, in a river basin context.
- ADB will promote participation in the management of water resources at all levels and collaborate in fashioning partnerships between governments, private agencies, NGOs, and communities. Getting the poor to participate, and mainstreaming them into community thought and action, will be a key area of ADB work.
- ADB will dialogue with its development partners to jointly establish the regional research and capacity-building network as a complementary capacity building ingredient in the water sector.
- Because project planning and implementation are commonly fragmented among many institutions, ADB will focus on the development of effective cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, such as a neutral apex body that can oversee the policy formulation and sector reform process.
- Participation will be the cornerstone of ADB's country water sector strategies; institutional arrangements for participation, particularly at the community level, will be strengthened.
- Water projects supported by ADB will incorporate carefully designed components that promote the participation of civil society in identifying needs and issues, designing solutions, and establishing mechanisms for monitoring and dispute resolution. Tools, including guidelines for the design and implementation of successful participatory processes in water sector activities, will be developed.
- ADB will adopt a cautious approach to large water resource projects – particularly those involving dams and storage – given the record of environmental and social hazards associated with such projects. All such projects will need to be justified in the public interest, and all government and non-government stakeholders in the country must agree on the justification.
- ADB will strengthen women's ability to participate more effectively through discrete programs targeted at educating women, empowering them, and enabling their involvement in community-based decision-making.
- Evidence from scores of water projects shows that the poor are increasingly willing to pay for water services that are predictable and effective. ADB will continue to press for and support policies that provide for explicit participation of the poor in water-related projects.

In promoting its policy on effective governance through the participatory development process, ADB would help expand participation in several ways, such as through (i) participation in projects, (ii) the public sector / private sector interface, (iii) decentralization of economic functions (empowerment of local government), and (iv) cooperation with NGOs.

Through communication and information systems, ADB will (i) raise awareness on IWRM among politicians, decision-makers in the water sector, professionals, interest groups, and the public at large, and (ii) encourage their active participation at all levels of the decision-making process on water resources development and management.

Most of the issues and concerns in the water sector that have been articulated and debated in various forums at the international, regional, and country levels, may be addressed by improving governance in the sector, including fostering participation. The ADB is well positioned to address these issues and concerns. In the final analysis, however, it is the combined and concerted efforts of all national stakeholders – politicians, decision-makers in the water sector, professionals, interest groups, and the public at large - in their respective countries that would bring about the necessary changes to address the issues and concerns.



## Exercise in IWRM Participatory Process

### 1. Objectives of the Exercise:

This exercise aims to facilitate an understanding of participation in the context of IWRM. It will

- Demonstrate the need for participation in IWRM for sustainable development; and
- Identify stakeholders in IWRM.

### 2. Duration: 22 minutes film showing on Upstream Downstream; followed by 15 minutes discussion

### 3. Procedure:

Step 1 Introduction of the film.

Step 2 After the film, the participants will answer the following questions:

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WHO ARE THE IWRM STAKEHOLDERS SHOWN IN THE FILM?

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WHAT MODES OF PARTICIPATION CAN YOU SEE IN THE FILM?

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ARE THERE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH RIVER BASIN PROBLEMS IN YOUR COUNTRY?

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Step 3 Discussion on the questions and responses.

## References

Asian Development Bank, Water for All: The Water Policy of the Asian Development Bank, 2001.

Asian Development Bank, Poverty and Social Development Papers. Modes of Participation: Experiences from RETA 5894 by C.F. Malvicini and A. Sweetser, 2003.

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Governance:

<http://adb.org/Documents/Policies/Governance/default.asp?p=policies>

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Governance/default.asp?p=govpol>

Poverty Reduction Policy:

[http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Poverty\\_Reduction/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Poverty_Reduction/default.asp)

Forestry Policy:

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Forestry/default.asp>

Environment Policy:

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Environment/default.asp>

Energy Policy:

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Energy/default.asp>

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UNESCAP, Guidelines on Participatory Planning and Management for Flood Mitigation and Preparedness, Water Resources Series No. 82; 2003.

Various web sites