

Designing Institutional Systems for Basin Management Organizations

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The Tonle Sap

- Largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia
- Unique hydrological system
- Largest seasonally flooded forest habitat in Southeast Asia
- Refuge of the largest colonies of endangered water birds in Southeast Asia
- One of the most productive fisheries in the world

To protect the Tonle Sap:

- A royal decree designated the lake as a multiple-use management area in 1993
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization nominated the lake as a biosphere reserve in 1997 leading to identification of 3 ecological zones:
 - the open lake at the center
 - a freshwater swamp forest surrounding it
 - seasonally flooded grasslands at the margins

Threats to the Tonle Sap

- Overexploitation of fisheries and wildlife resources
- Dry season encroachment and clearance of the flooded forest
- Degradation of natural vegetation in the watersheds

Cambodia National Mekong Committee

- Established in 1957
- Has a membership of 10 ministries
- Linked to the Mekong River Commission
- Advises the Government on all matters concerning the water sector and related resources
- Promotes basin planning and management

Basin-Wide Management

- The Government recognizes the need for basin-wide approaches to better drive, coordinate, and streamline infrastructure development and natural resource management
- Basin-wide assessments have not been carried out
- Need to study best applicable model for basin management
- Need to involve communities
- Need to balance protection with sustainable development

Pathways

- Strengthen existing institutions?
- Establish new organization?
 - Might duplicate, compete with existing institutions
 - Requires additional financial resources

The Proposed Tonle Sap Basin Coordination Committee

- To be set up within the Cambodia National Mekong Committee by legislation
- Coordinative mechanisms working laterally and vertically towards basin management
- Ex-officio membership of heads of all 10 ministries, the governors of the provinces lying entirely or partially within the Tonle Sap basin, and other stakeholders to be invited on ad-hoc basis

Functions of the Committee

- Measurement of baseline conditions and needs in the Tonle Sap basin
- Data management
- General planning at the regional scale
- Encouragement of protective action and directed development
- Monitoring and reporting of progress
- Awareness raising and communication

Management of Sub-Basins

- 12 tributaries to the Tonle Sap
 - Separate committees for each sub-basin
 - Task forces at the district levels
- * Need for active community participation at all levels and close coordination amongst parties*

Pilot Testing

- Organizational design to be tested in a selected provincial setting
- Proposed pilot in Pursat Province

Financing Basin Management in Developed Countries

Texas Water Code provides basin authorities:

- Powers to conserve, control, and utilize waters of the state
- Authority to discover, develop, and produce groundwater
- Means to impose user charges for service to parties requesting the same

Financing Basin Management in Developing Countries

- Rely generally on user fees for surface water or from potable water provided to municipalities
- Need to balance capacity to pay and needed resources for basin management

Basin Management Models must reflect:

- Physical conditions of basins
- Cultural traditions
- Stage of development reached

Tonle Sap Basin Management Structure Needs to be:

- Authentic
- Indigenous
- Self-reliant
- Sovereign
- Civilized
- Creative

For More Information

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