

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW RIVER BASIN ORGANIZATIONS (RBOS)

From the presentation of the training program in the first week, many things had been learned including technological knowledge and methods to implement integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the river basin.

During the field visits in various water resources projects in Chian Mai province, good practices had been observed and certainly will be of much benefit to all participants. We believe that the participants will convey all the knowledge and good practices they acquired in their respective countries.

River basin organizations (RBO) are gaining recognition in the water sector that their existence is becoming vital to all stakeholders' interests. Below are the significant reasons for the creating RBOs in the basin areas.

New RBO's should be established for the following reasons:

1. The need to set up an organized body to look after the river basin's interests particularly IWRM.
2. The need to manage integrated water resources management development programs in the river basin area.
3. The need for a lead agency to coordinate, manage and facilitate participatory interventions and other IWRM initiatives in the river basin.
4. The need for a decentralization approach in IWRM activities in the basin area.

The essential tasks of RBO are:

1. To formulate a comprehensive master plan for the entire river basin watershed along IWRM concepts
2. To set up a management information system (MIS) for planning and decision-making purposes
3. To design and establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for all IWRM initiatives and intervention measures in the river basin
4. To establish a participatory mechanism where extensive linkages and networking

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structures among stakeholders in the basin are encouraged

5. To formulate and conduct an intensive social marketing and advocacy campaign for the river basin's interest

RBOs are best established through:

1. The Government's initiative and unwavering commitment to institutionalize IWRM in the river basin
2. The participation of indigenous peoples, particularly those from the grass-root level, largely affected by river basin developments
3. The involvement of all stakeholders in the river basin area
4. The technical assistance of international and regional development institutions

Annex

CASE STUDIES

Case in Lao PDR:

The function of the RBO is limited to coordination, monitoring and evaluation on water resources development, management and conservation.

Case in Vietnam:

In Vietnam, a RBO has been established for the biggest river basin. The functions of the RBO is stipulated in the law on water resources with the sole role of coordinating water resources between sectors and all other stakeholders in the basin area

Case in Indonesia:

The establishment of new RBO's are being processed for five river basins, namely: Solo, Jratun-Seluna and Serayu-Bogowonto river basins which are located in Java island, Seputih-Sekampung river basin in Sumatera island, and Jeneberang river basin in Sulawesi island. At present, Solo river basin is incorporated into Jasa Tirta 1, however in the near future will become a separate river basin organization and likely to be named "Jasa Tirta 3".

In the implementation of IWRM in river basins, stake holders should be involved and participate in all phases of water resource management, from planning, maintenance, rehabilitation and conservation activities in the river system and watershed area.

Stakeholders in the river basin should be promoted to participate in the decision making process of water resources development. The level of participation should be suited into the process of socio-economic development in the river basin and the surrounding area.

The aim of all stakeholders' participation is to build the sense of belonging and responsibility of stakeholders and also to up-grade the capability in the management and conservation of river basin.

The methods and level of participation may vary among stakeholders, depending on the scope and level of interest, need and capability of each stakeholder in the river basin.

Stakeholders participating in the river basin management should include:

1. Implementing agencies such as Department of Water Resources, Dept. of Public Health, Agency for Pollution Control, and Hydro-power Electric Coy;
2. Water users such as Municipality, Water Works Authority, Water Users Organization, and Industries;
3. Experts and NGOs which include university professors and researchers, representatives from local NGOs.

Case in Philippines:

The RBO is mandated to coordinate and oversee all development activities in the river basin area. It has a number of functions which includes; planning, policy making, monitoring, coordination, and advocacy. The Philippine experience is not new but the need for a strong legislative framework is very imperative to sustain the RBO's existence. We are making headway in our IWRM practices and there is a gap to be bridged in order to sustain it. **Sustainability** is the key for its success.

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