

“Water is everybody’s business”

Concept Paper for Regional Forum on Local Water Governance

Amman, Jordan, June 6+7, 2007

Focus of the Forum

The Forum will focus on enhancing **"Policy support for local level ownership and involvement in Sustainable Local Water Governance in the MENA region through participatory planning and stakeholder approaches"**. Policy support is understood in a broad sense and referring to national and governorate policies and practices to support these approaches at the institutional and implementation level.

Objectives of the Forum

- Explore modalities for embedding participatory stakeholder approaches in local and national planning and policy formulation in different countries of the MENA Region.
- Enhance a policy environment conducive to such approaches in countries of the MENA Region.
- Initiate initiatives to up-scale participatory stakeholder planning approaches in other countries of the MENA Region (including funding support).

Rational for the Forum

Improving local water governance, which we understand to include all aspects of management, decision making and planning around sustainable water resource management, water demand management, and water service delivery, is crucial to impact equitable development and management of the MENA region's scarce water resources. Many different actors, from national governments to local end-users, have an important role to play in creating the necessary conducive environment (policy, legislation, accountability, funding, capacity development) to allow for the necessary improvements in local water governance.

Different approaches - from state-controlled to community bottom-up – have been tried out to make water resource management more effective. This Forum will look into the policy and

institutional arrangements necessary to enable local government and community organizations to engage in the planning and management of water resources that is equitable, effective and sustainable. As a basis for discussions recent experience in Jordan, Palestine and Egypt with participatory stakeholder approaches to planning and implementation (EMPOWERS) will be considered as a case study. Emphasis will be given to:

- Decentralization of planning and decision-making to appropriate levels.
- How to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders and end-users.
- How to develop capacity in relevant stakeholders at intermediate level (local government, NGOs, CBOs) to enable end-user involvement in water resource management.
- How to ensure that marginalized groups (men and women) are not excluded from water governance;
- How to ensure that locally appropriate solutions and tools be developed through the use of participatory action-research.
- How to enhance transparency in information on water resource management.
- How to develop educational materials and resources for all levels and sectors (mass media, children, youth, local government, etc.).

Proposed Programme of the Policy Forum.

The Forum is divided in two days: Key Notes and a panel discussion with senior policy and decision-makers on the first day, and a workshop with high-level representatives of government and non-government stakeholders to further discuss the implications for policy and practice of proposed recommendations for and panel discussions on participatory planning and stakeholder approaches in the water sector in the MENA Region.

First day:

- ❖ Opening addresses by His Royal Majesty King Abdallah II of Jordan and the Ministers of Water in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine;
Key Note addresses on:
 - @ A critical overview of the main water issues and existing policy frameworks in the MENA Region: H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, and President of the Arab Water Council.
 - @ Two critical notes on main challenges facing implementing and adapting policies in the region from a community development point of view. (H.E. Dr. Azmi Al-Shueibi and Ms Iklas AbuZneimeh)
 - @ Presentation of recommendations for policy and practice in local water governance as proposed by (i) the Regional Symposium on “Water is everybody’s business; end-user ownership and involvement in integrated water resource management” (Cairo, November

2005) and by (ii) the Country Policy Workshops on participatory planning approaches in the water sector held in Amman, Cairo and Jericho end of 2006 and early 2007. (Dr. Patrick Moriarty, IRC/EMPOWERS Partnership).

- ❖ A panel discussion with 8-10 high level personalities debating – from different perspectives – the implications of above recommendations for policy and practice as related to local water governance.

Second day

- ❖ Review of the first day
- ❖ Presentation of short cases studies on the interference of policy and practice in applying participatory planning and stakeholder approaches in the water sector. Each case will highlight some of the questions raised in the key note addresses and the panel discussion of the first day.
- ❖ Plenary discussion on the case studies
- ❖ Sub-Group discussions on themes selected from the discussions on day 1 and 2.
- ❖ Final Conclusion of the Forum

Day 3 (optional): Visit to Petra or Jarash

Patronage and Chair

The Forum will be under the patronage of the Royal Court of Jordan and Chaired by the President of the Arab Water Council.

Target audience

- Policy Makers of relevant ministries and NGOs in relevant countries (Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and other Middle East)
- Representatives of donor organizations in the region (EC, IDB, WB, WHO, Arab Gulf Fund, IDRC, JICA, DFID, GTZ, DGCS/Italy, DGCS/ Netherlands)
- Regional Networks: Arab Water Council, IUCN, RUAF
- Other international NGOs and Research Organizations (CARE International, IDRC, INWRDAN, IRC, IUCN)

Background Documents as inputs to Forum

- Key note on critical overview of the main water issues and existing policy frameworks in the Middle East

- Key note on challenges for the water sector if participatory stakeholder approaches should be mainstreamed.
- Key note on community concerns with regards to sustainable water resources management.
- Recommendations for policy and practice as formulated in EMPOWERS Symposium 2005 in Cairo
- Outputs from the three Country Policy Workshops (December 2006/Jordan; January 2007.Egypt and March 2007/Palestine)
- Background Document 1. Water at stake; Rationale for this Regional Policy Forum
- Background Document 2. Summary of Water Policies in the Middle East: legislative and institutional frameworks for water in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.
- Background Document 3. Participatory Strategic Water Planning Approach, Results + Impact (3 case studies) + resulting key policy issues
- Background Document 4. Overview of EMPOWERS Activities.
- Brochures, Magazines and Newsletters
- Governorate Water Strategies for Jenin/Palestine, Balqa/Jordan and Beni Sueif/Egypt
- Village Water Dossiers for Jenin/Palestine, Balqa/Jordan and Beni Sueif/Egypt
- EMPOWERS Guideline for Improved Local Water Governance (Arabic and English).
- Background Booklet to the Guidelines