



Local Watershed Management: The Key to Sustainable Water Resources Management

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Watersheds and River Basins



- Watersheds are the basic “building blocks” of river basins.
- Economic development has impacts on both river basins and watersheds
- “River basins” and “watersheds” are often managed by different agencies of government
- Local communities are often most affected by changes in “watershed functions”

Watershed and River Basin Management – key development issues



- Promoting investments that are environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically sound
- Promoting appropriate policies and institutions to support these objectives
- Balancing local community needs with those of society as a whole

Benefitting communities: the Nam Ngum River Basin Project in Lao PDR



Key initiatives under NNRBDP:

- Land use planning
- Land and water management practices
- Policy support and institutional initiatives
- Capacity building
- Hydropower optimization

Watershed planning



- Promoting village land use planning and land use allocation (LUP/LA)
- Collection of basic information on land and water use, climate and hydrologic data, demographics, etc.
- Preparing Watershed Management Plans
- Using Plans to inform the village, district and provincial development planning process

Land and water management



- Promoting good watershed management practices using improved agricultural and livestock technology
- Building the capacity of district governments to deliver extension services and promote “conservation agriculture”
- Providing agricultural extension to farmers to adopt appropriate technology
- Providing credit to farmers to adopt improved agricultural technology

Policy and institutional initiatives

- Promoting coordination between agencies involved in river basin and watershed management
- Defining the role of agencies
- Supporting the establishment of the Water Resources and Environment Administration
- Establishing river basin management organizations at the sub-basin and basin level



Lessons learned



- Process takes a long time (longer than anticipated)
- Processes evolve to suit the local situation
- Communication between stakeholders at all levels is key
- Local “ownership” of the process is a must
- Flexibility of agencies to change and adapt – at both an institutional and policy level

Future challenges



- Keeping the process going through sustained financing and political support
- Strengthening and refining the institutions (RBOs) and policies
- Enhancing opportunities for broader stakeholder involvement and participation
- Developing feedback mechanisms to inform decision-makers and communities of the benefits of sustainable watershed management