

Meeting Water Challenges Through Partnerships



The Challenge - Scarcity amidst Plenty

Home to a quarter of the world's population, South Asia is endowed with vast water resources with potential for high economic development though spatial and temporal factors in distribution subject the region to water related disasters such as droughts, floods and storm surges increasingly compounded by climate change and global warming. With over 60% of the regional livelihoods based on agriculture, over 50% of cropped area irrigated and water being central to its culture and religions, it is the critical resource. Countries in the region face periodic water shortages and indications are that some may suffer acute shortages in the near future. Endemic poverty affects one third of the regional population with least access to potable clean water, malnutrition, poor health and unsafe sanitation are major issues. The state is the dominant player in the water sector and issues of governance and political imperatives add to the above challenges.

Regional Cooperation

South Asia Technical Advisory Committee (SASTAC) and its successor, GWP South Asia (GWP-SAS) launched to broaden and facilitate greater stakeholder interaction in December 2002, were responsible for Development of a Regional and Country Water Vision 2025 and Framework for Action. These two institutions guided priority identification and policy formulation in countries and the region. Three South Asia Water Forums and Asia Day events at four World Water Forums were organized by the Region and CWPs. An Inter-Regional Consultative meeting at Manila in 2007 and several other mega events helped the region in sharing best practices on water resources and increasing visibility of the region. GWP-SAS also built strategic alliances and partnerships with global and regional networks, UN System institutions, donors and other GWP regions.

Region of Promise

- High economic growth potential (over 5% GDP)
- Time tested democratic governments and institutions
- High human and social capital
- Strong traditions of sustainable water resources management
- Awareness of IWRM and platforms and forums in place
- Need for national policies on water management appreciated by governments.
- High levels of professional capacity and innovative thinking in water management.

GWP-SAS governance comprises a Regional Council (RC) with gender-based two member representation from each country; a Regional Office (RO) and a Regional Chair; providing administrative oversight both operating previously on two year rotational basis from 2003 in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and changed in 2007 to a three yearly rotation in India. Current Chair is from Pakistan with RO located in Sri Lanka. Nepal is due to take over in 2013.

Think Globally Act Locally

South Asia pioneered the concept of Area Water Partnerships (AWPs) and Zonal Water Partnerships (ZWP) now fully integrated in the global operational strategy of GWP. They were established for field-testing of IWRM principles, promoting stakeholder dialogue and local level participation in water resource management based on an optimised approach. There are currently over 30 working AWPs in the region with more are at identification stage in water stressed areas. AWPs provide broad neutral platforms to include all stakeholders and bring fresh insights to local issues building rapport between adversarial groups and competing interests. These help upscale local issues to policy level and vice versa (Ground water governance and water productivity enhancement - Pakistan, Transboundary water governance - Bangladesh and Sand-mining policy reform - Sri Lanka) and serve as a conduit and active partner in promoting IWRM and CWP activities.



Himalayas- Plenty for how long?

Forging National Policy

Country Water Partnerships (CWPs) working with partners and strategic allies have established themselves as major players in the respective country water sectors over the last decade. CWPs comprising key stakeholders from public and private sectors, NGO, women and youth and civil society collaborated in developing the respective Country Water Visions which guide policy and institutional reform.

The Vision,

Poverty in South Asia will be eradicated and living conditions of all the people will be uplifted to sustainable levels of comfort, health and wellbeing through coordinated and integrated development and management of water resources of the region.

Some Initiatives of Country Water Partnerships.

Bangladesh (BWP)

BWP plays a lead role in country and in the region on issues of flood disaster management, adaptation to climate change, and transboundary water cooperation. Its initiative and leadership in development of preparedness plans and framework for action has influenced policies, promoting of best practises, advocacy and knowledge sharing. . Promoting IWRM related dialogues at all levels and stakeholders through provision of platforms within the country and using existing regional and global forums to highlight resolution has made it an acknowledged and visible water sector proponent by the government and donors. Besides influencing IWRM policy and translating IWRM Concepts at ground level, issues of trans boundary water sharing and climate change adaptation are been priority concerns of BWP. BWP was first to host the SAS Regional Secretariat from 2003-2004 and organised the South Asia Water Forum (SAWAF) in 2004. It has participated actively in World Water Forums since 2002 and responsible for South Asia texts in Asia Pacific Regional Document at WWF5 in Istanbul in 2009. A key contribution to the region was development of a framework to manage flood disasters in the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers examining institutional requirements for basin wide flood management by Bangladesh, India and Nepal. It created Youth Forums in three river basins and has undertaken capacity building and awareness creation on IWRM for water professionals, youth and women. It facilitated establishment of the Bangladesh Water Utility Network (BAWUN) which federated to SAWUN and the Bangladesh Water Integrity Network (BAWIN) working on water integrity.

Bhutan (BhWP)

BhWP played the central role in developing Bhutan's Water Vision and Policy and has also been a key stakeholder in the drafting of the Bhutan Water Bill. It plays a major role in IWRM awareness creation with special focus on school children involving them actively through water quality monitoring and working with the local community, creating understanding of local water resources and watershed management. A number of watershed restoration and community water supply projects are underway and BhWP is preparing a manual on IWRM in the Bhutanese context.

India (IWP)

IWP prepared the India Water Vision 2025 and Framework for Action with active involvement of all stakeholders including policy makers, donors and industry representatives in 1999. IWP was represented in the Commission on Water Policy and the Water Vision is cited in the Water Development Plan of 1999 and National Water Policy 2002 established by the government . IWP pioneered Zonal Water Partnerships (ZWP) in 2006 and working with ZWP on water centric issues such as Drought mitigation in two states of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, Ground water policy of Uttar Pradesh and Framework for Integrated Management of Domestic Water in Bundelkhand covering parts of Uttar and Madya Pradesh and the South India ZWP activities in resolution of interstate transboundary water sharing have been fully recognised in these states. IWP work on awareness on IWRM in Maharashtra and on New State Water Policy in Rajasthan has been acknowledged. IWP and regional partners organised several water related dialogues of regional significance such as a Multi Stakeholder Forum on Flood Mitigation and an RTC on Water, Livelihood and Climate Change Adaptation in November 2008 and 2009 respectively. India hosted both the SASTAC from 1999 to 2003 and SAS Regional Secretariat from 2007 to 2009.



Sooner than Later?

Nepal (NWP)

NWP took the lead role in developing Nepal's Water Vision 2025 that guides many policy initiatives. NWP provides forums, facilitates knowledge sharing and promotes IWRM. NWP Chair was coordinating expert in preparation of Nepal's National Water Plan and development of 10 year Hydropower Policy with Vice chair NWP coordinating hydropower plan preparation indicating its important role. NWP initiated the concept of Local Water Parliament (LWP) a stakeholder body that formulates and implements local IWRM development plans. NWP also organised the first SAWAF in Kathmandu in 2002. A Constituent Assembly in Nepal is currently preparing its new constitution and NWP is instrumental in providing the conceptual framework on water resources development that will be included in the constitution and is of major significance for water resources development as Nepal moves from a unitary to a federal system of governance. NWP in addition is currently focussing on issues of trans boundary rivers and climate change adaptation as major concerns.

Pakistan (PWP)

PWP, with its broad partner base, developed the Pakistan Water Vision 2025 and Framework for Action, fully adopted by the government with over 34 development schemes based on it currently implemented. It organized the 2nd SAWAF in 2002 and side events at the 3rd, 4th and 5th World Water Forums. Its water productivity enhancement initiatives with AWP, especially the Nara Canal AWP program, have been selected by the government for up-scaling to national and international, and horizontal spread to other provinces. It also has the only urban based AWP in the Region, the Karachi Water Partnership which has made significant progress in resolution of the city's water issues. PWP facilitated the formation of the South Asia Water Utility Network (SAWUN) and has continually organized capacity building workshops on IWRM for AWP, Water and Sanitation Utilities and Women and Youth groups and water professionals. PWP held 3 successful 2010 World Water Day Dialogues in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi partnering with a major donor. PWP also wrote the Water Resources Development chapter of the 10th Five Years Development Plan 2010-15 of the Government of Pakistan introducing integrated water resources management principles.

Sri Lanka (SLWP)

SLWP played a major role in developing the Water Vision 2025 and contributed to the formulation of the Draft Water Policy approved by cabinet yet to be backstopped by a National Water Act. 5 Area Water Partnerships established play a significant role in resolution of water issues in their respective areas. SLWP collaborated with the Water Integrity Network (WIN) in resolution of major issues arising as a consequence of illicit clay and sand mining in major rivers. It continues promoting IWRM at all levels including among youth and students including focussing on realising of Water MDG's. SLWP is also working with the relevant agencies on climate change impacts on rural livelihoods and adaptation. Sri Lanka hosted the South Asia Regional office from 2005 to 2007.

Promoting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in South Asia.

Striving for good governance, equity, access, adequacy, quality, productivity and sustainability in the water sector.

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