Regional Workshop on Transboundary Water Cooperation in the context of the SDGs in South Asia and beyond

Facilitating Transboundary Water Cooperation in South Asia: A Case Study of Kabul River Basin (KRB)

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Introduction to KRB

Precedent on Water Sharing

Case for Benefit Sharing

Enabling Transboundary Cooperation

Challenges
Introduction to Kabul River Basin

• Shared river basin between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

• Emerges from the glaciers of HKH and eventually joins Indus River.

• Importance for Pakistan & Afghanistan.

• No formal Af-Pak transboundary cooperation framework.

• Increasing water stress in the River Basin.

Image Source: Orphan River, SIWI & MCiT, 2015
Historical Precedent for Water Sharing

- Indo-Pak Indus Water Treaty often considered as a guiding principle.

- Challenges with IWT approach:
  1. Downstream environmental considerations.
  2. Suitable in case of multiple river arteries.
  3. Focused on water distribution.

- Need for sustainable & innovative approaches.
Concept of Benefit Sharing

- Strategy to facilitate transboundary water cooperation.
- Sharing benefits from water instead of quantities.
- Focused on social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Water development not a zero sum game!
Towards Implementation

- Benefit sharing approach for Kabul River Basin.

- Two pronged approach:
  
  i. Credible scientific evidence base.
  
  ii. Strong Public Policy Engagement.

- Track-II dialogue process can be helpful.
Project Objectives

Objectives:

i. Develop a case for cooperative benefit sharing regime for Kabul River Basin based on robust scientific and social analysis.

ii. Strengthen linkages among cross border stakeholders of Kabul River Basin to build trust and confidence for cooperative water resource management.

iii. Capacity building and sensitization of local stakeholders for an optimized water resources management framework for Kabul River Basin.
Project Partners

Donor

Pakistan

Afghanistan

USG-Supported partners
Model Development
- Data acquisition
- Engagement of students
- Develop glacial hydrologic model
- Develop water resources systems optimization model

Stakeholder Management
- Mapping and Strategy
- Online surveys
- Stakeholder workshop
- Outreach in Afghanistan
- Policy Dialogue (Pakistan)
- Policy Dialogue (Afghanistan).
- Final Launch Event

Assessment of Unilateral Actions
- Identification of potential actions
- Simulation of actions
- Outlining adverse policy implications

Assessment of Cooperation Benefits for Hydropower
- Identification of potential options
- Simulation of options
- Political economy analysis
- Develop case for potential benefits

Develop Case for Infrastructure Development
- Identify analysis components
- Develop policy case for infrastructure development

Research Papers
1. Model Development
2. Simulations

Discussion Paper on Model Development

Policy Papers
1. Adverse impacts of unilateral actions
2. Cooperation benefits for hydropower

Report on Political Economy Analysis

Working Paper: Infrastructure Development in KRB

Framework Paper: Benefit Sharing Regime for KRB
Challenges

- Data access & availability.
- Need for independent credible local research institutes.
- Logistical challenges for transboundary exchanges.
Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. . . . Our basic function [is] to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible - Milton Friedman