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**EMPOWERS Working Paper No. 6
(Version 2)**

**Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action for Integrated
Water Resource Management**



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March 2005

Abstract

The Euro-Med Participatory Water Resources Scenarios Project (now known as the EMPOWERS partnership), funded by the European Commission's *MEDA Water*¹ Programme, is working in Egypt, Jordan and the West Bank/Gaza to develop tools and approaches that will lead to improved water governance², with a focus on practical applications at the local level. The principle long-term goal of the project is to improve development and management of water resources at the intermediate and local level by promoting increased participation and representation of stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes. EMPOWERS has also adopted the regional role of disseminating information that relates to local water governance via a web site and regional events such as workshops, conferences and exchange visits.

One of the core assumptions of the EMPOWERS programme is that stakeholder involvement - particularly at the intermediate and local levels - leads to improved use and management of water resources. Improved management implies taking better account of users' needs and engenders collective responsibility for interventions in the water sector.

To this end, the project is developing a participatory planning cycle for Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). This cycle builds on the identification of water-related problems and the development of area specific long-term visions and strategies for water resource development. This strategizing process is supported by the collection and analysis of relevant information on water resources, infrastructure, demand and access and the validation of this information in semi-quantitative Bayesian Networks (computer software). The aim of this planning cycle is to support stakeholders at local and intermediate levels in making the technical and political decisions to develop and manage their water resources within a commonly agreed future vision. The EMPOWERS planning cycle approach is described in more detail in *Working Paper 3* (see references section).

This working paper describes the conceptual background and implementation of the EMPOWERS approach to stakeholder dialogue and concerted action. It is the experience that such stakeholder involvement, especially at the community level, will enhance access and rights, particularly of the under-privileged. It is this larger process of participatory analysis, visioning, scenario building and strategic planning that is the real heart of EMPOWERS stakeholder process. The outcome will be the development of practical tools and the gaining of experience in planning for integrated water resource management (IWRM) at the local level.

¹ MEDA Water Programme is the EC's Euro-Mediterranean Regional Programme for Local Water Management. See <http://www.emwis.org/MEDA/objectives.htm>

² *Water governance* relates to the range of political, social, economic, and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society. EMPOWERS focuses particularly on local water governance – that is governance at levels ranging from the community to district/governorate.

EMPOWERS Working Paper Series

The working paper series³ of the EMPOWERS partnership⁴, is an important part of the wider mission of information dissemination and structuring of lessons learned in the project. One of the principal outputs of EMPOWERS will be guidelines for participatory, pro-poor, and stakeholder-led development and management of water resources. Working papers are intended to systematise and make public the development of these tools. The working papers will be maintained and continuously updated on the project web-site, and will then be used as the basis for developing guidelines and training materials.

Other titles in the working paper series

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³ These papers are work-in-progress. While they reflect a broad consensus among the EMPOWERS partners they do not necessarily reflect the views of every partner on every point.

⁴ This publication has been produced with the assistance of the EC MEDA Water Programme. However, the views expressed in it are the sole responsibility of the EMPOWERS Partnership and may in no way be taken to represent the views of the EC

Part 1: Key concepts for stakeholder approaches in IWRM

1.1. Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action (SDCA)

SDCA is an active and facilitated approach to bring different actors to strategic consensus on how to work together on specific issues of shared concern. It does this by making explicit the different opinions, perceptions, preoccupations, assumptions, and judgments of the actors involved. It identifies opportunities to improve the exchange of information, social organization, and decision-making between stakeholders in order to create the proper conditions for innovations. At the same time it contributes to creating awareness of the constraints and opportunities that affect the performance of relevant actors. SDCA identifies potential actors who do or could act effectively together to remove constraints and make use of opportunities for innovation. Indeed SDCA enhances institutional and technological innovation through active networking, involving all relevant actors including community members, governments, NGOs, academic institutions, and the private sector. Innovation can be seen as the outcome of a mutual learning and social change process taking place among a large number of autonomous actors in mutual interdependence challenging them to create conditions through which innovation can take place. Where innovation implies change it also implies resistance to such change.

1.2. Dialogue and strategic consensus

The cyclic planning approach for Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) developed by the EMPOWERS partnership (see EMPOWERS *Working Paper 3*) has been created to be embedded in, and give structure to, a wider process of dialogue among water stakeholders. Such stakeholders often have different if not contradictory interests, stakes, tasks and responsibilities, interests that may have political, ideological, technical and financial causes. Despite such differences there are also many joint interests among these stakeholders, who range from national authorities, through government agencies, NGOs and the private sector operating at Governorate, District and Municipality levels, to different end-users of water at the grass-roots level. It is our conviction that creating shared objectives, beliefs and visions, not to forget information among these stakeholders is the key issue to come to concerted action in the water sector. Dialogue and planning activities – often in an informal setting – will enhance coordination and cooperation in the provision of water related services: irrigation, drinking water or sanitation; or for wider issues surrounding the management of the resource base itself. Hence the emphasis in EMPOWERS on Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action (SDCA) as the enabling social environment within which improved water governance and IWRM is achieved.

Facilitation of this dialogue is essential to help relevant stakeholders to make explicit their often different opinions, perceptions, preoccupations, assumptions, and judgments. Such a dialogue will also enable them to implement the planning cycle process as described in other working papers (see reference section) and to arrive at strategic consensus for concrete action in IWRM.

Where *Working Papers 3, 4 and 5* elaborate on the water resource planning and assessment frameworks created by EMPOWERS, this *Working Paper (No. 6)* will further detail *how* the enveloping process of stakeholder dialogue and concerted action in which they are applied can be enhanced.

1.3. Innovation

Embarking on a structured and facilitated process of dialogue has in many cases led to innovation in the current ways of dealing with problems and constraints. Innovation can be described, at its most basic, as “the process of introducing or developing something new”. This process can occur in the technological but also in the social/cultural sphere. It often can be seen as the outcome of mutual learning and at the same time as a “social change process” (Engel, 1997). Social but also technological change processes often take place between large numbers of autonomous actors in mutual interdependence. This requires social organization and competence sharing among different actors, as well as important capacities and skills in process facilitation. IWRM is a complex domain, in which SDCA can challenge stakeholders to create the conditions necessary for innovation.

1.4. Management of change

Innovation often implies change; and change implies resistance (Wouters, 2002). Resistance and change can be seen as the two sides of a coin. Resistance is a natural and expected part of change; a force that slows or stops movement. Any system, organization or individual will resist any change that it believes will be harmful to itself.

But often resistance also means protection; resistance can thus also have the function of avoiding undesirable and imposed change (Wouters, 2002). Being an active energy it is also a paradox as well as a source of information about the pace and degree of an enhanced change process. As much as one may wish for it, progress without resistance is impossible. Nonetheless, change when effectively managed can happen relatively smoothly if it is managed by local stakeholders and if it is responding to widely perceived changes in the environment. As the social, institutional and ecological environment is not static, and the effects of a changing external environment on local communities increase, it becomes crucial to sustain and develop local capacities in development and long term visioning to institutionalise the change process.

1.5. Platforms for concerted action

Dialogue, strategic consensus, innovation and concerted action need to be organized and structured in one or another form. This social organization can be carried out and anchored in informal or more formal platforms. Such platforms are especially useful for IWRM with its inter-sectoral complexities of day to day decisions and long-term strategic planning. Social organization in (in)formal platforms for innovation in IWRM can contribute to the following (Engel, 1997):

- Creation of joint learning opportunities and hence innovation
- Mutual probing and exploring of relevant ideas and options

- Pooling of resources and capacities for innovative strategies
- Sharing and validating relevant information
- Joint planning and decision-making
- Concerting actions within a framework of a shared and agreed future vision
- Providing the necessary shared ownership of problems to make difficult decisions for the future

In the broad arena of IWRM, networking and dialogue can lead to different forms of social organization. This can range from loose communication networks for sharing and learning to strategic alignments and resource coalitions of different stakeholders where resources and capacities are pooled to come to joint planning, decision-making and action.

The EMPOWERS Programme will enhance and test modalities for different platforms at different levels. Communities and local stakeholders will be brought together through local water committees or community based organizations or village councils. They have to be supported by stakeholder platforms at the district or governorate level, in which relevant government water authorities, other government institutions, private water service providers and development NGOs all participate. Such SDCA platforms – supported by the framework and activities of the EMPOWERS planning cycle (see **WP3**, **WP4** and **WP5**; reference section) – can analyse constraints, elaborate shared visions and possible scenarios, define priorities, identify opportunities to improve the exchange of information and decision-making process between stakeholders, and strengthen social organization for concerted action. This Working Paper focuses on the steps to be taken in stakeholder analysis, facilitation and setting-up of stakeholder platforms; in short the social organization needed for participation in IWRM. *Working Paper 7* will further elaborate on how, in a participatory way, community platforms can design their own projects in view of the visions, strategies and priorities agreed upon in the planning cycle process described above.

Creation of stakeholder platforms in the water arena is not an easy job. Many obstacles related to diverging or even contradicting agendas, interests and perceptions, especially in the institutional sphere have to be tackled. However, this diversity, often reflecting multiple realities, can also be turned into creative breeding ground for innovation.

1.6. Gender and Right-based Approaches

The approach promoted here gives a high emphasis to ensuring access, and rights, to water by underprivileged groups in local communities, with a strong focus on women and the poorest parts of the population. Special attention is given to the pre-conditions that are necessary for local water-users to assume accountability for the management of their local water resources. *Working Paper 7* on participatory project design at the community/end-users level will further elaborate on these important aspects of EMPOWERS.

1.7. Sustainability and replicability

Planning and management of water resources are long-term activities, that take place across a range of institutional levels and physical scales (from river basins to community projects), and involve a very wide range of stakeholders. Approaches and tools for participatory planning and stakeholder involvement have to be cost and time effective to be replicable and adopted by the institutions involved. This applies equally at community, governorate and national levels. Such replicability is a sine-qua-non for EMPOWERS, in order to make sure that the approaches and tools can be made “sustainable” and have lasting long-term impact. In the remaining years of the EMPOWERS programme, much attention will be given to the potential for replicability and up-scaling of the approaches and tools developed, and to their uptake by the concerned institutions (institutional sustainability). As a general rule a good SDCA process will depend on the following conditions for success (adapted from Engel, 1997):

- Recognizing that building platforms is not easy, as resource coalitions tend to be opportunistic and typically function in an “arena” (i.e. competitive) model rather than in a “platform” model. Consensus is the exception! The existence of divergent behaviour among stakeholders (own/hidden agenda’s, grasping of opportunity, etc) must be recognized. Nevertheless, innovation through SDCA requires a sufficient degree of strategic consensus based on:
 - common concerns – the binding issue at stake;
 - shared and agreed strategies among relevant and more powerful social/institutional actors;
 - active cooperation (or a desire to achieve it) amongst all stakeholders involved.
- Recognizing that, in practice, resource coalitions will often be lead by one or several actors; from whom, over time an effective leadership pattern will emerge. This requires, however, a good analysis of the instruments of power and influence that will be used to forge alliances or to impose one approach on others.
- Identifying clearly defined boundaries to the SDCA platform (of the working domain and of the actors to be involved). Criteria: timeframe; outcome problem diagnosis; purpose of the SDCA; relative importance of actors.
- Clear arrangements to facilitate:
 - effective internal and external communication;
 - transparency and agreement among different stakeholders with respect to interests and agendas;
 - task division, delegation and coordination;
 - access and transfer of resources (knowledge, labor, funds, credit)
 - disagreement.

Part 2. Applying SDCA in EMPOWERS

2.1. Introduction

SDCA, as described above, is used here as the approach to social organization for the implementation of the EMPOWERS planning cycle for IWRM and improved water governance. The two main approaches of EMPOWERS: the Planning Cycle Framework, and the SDCA approach cannot be separated. They have to be considered as two intrinsically connected components creating together the synergy to make the overall approach of EMPOWERS functional, replicable and sustainable; they are the twin pillars upon which improved water



governance and IWRM stand. A stakeholder approach without a focused and structured interest (a planning framework in our case) will not mobilize people and institutions for the longer time-spans essential to both water resource management and water service provision. At the same time, a technically sound planning framework will miss the point if key actors are left out during negotiation, planning and decision-making. The Planning Cycle Framework discussed in *Working Paper 3* (see figure) provides this underlying interest and structure, to underpin an SDCA approach to IWRM.

2.2 Objectives of SDCA

The objectives of SDCA, as it is being applied in EMPOWERS, can be summarized as:

- A comprehensive understanding of the social organization needed in IWRM
- A shared and clear vision of the stakeholders for IWRM at national and local level.
- A shared understanding of the actual roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders in IWRM.
- Identifying other potential stakeholders with clear potential future roles and responsibilities.
- Agreement of key stakeholders to a greater emphasis on pro-poor and right-based approaches
- Suggestions for improvements in IWRM and a shared vision of how to implement these improvements.
- A shared and validated information base, as a basis for action planning

- Shared action plans for IWRM based upon stakeholder led visions, scenarios and strategies at both village and governorate level.
- Proposals to pool resources and capacities for such an action plan

2.3 Establishment of stakeholder platforms

For the EMPOWERS project, stakeholder platforms are being established at three distinct levels in each country. These are: at national level a national steering committee; at governorate (or district in Egypt) a broad based action research coalition; and in selected pilot communities, multi-user groups. The governorate/districts chosen are: Ehnasia District in Beni-Suef Governorate in Egypt; Balqa’a Governorate in Jordan and Jenin Governorate in the West Bank. The main work of the project takes place at the district/governorate level, where the platform consists of all relevant district/governorate stakeholders (government and non-government), together with representatives from national level and the selected communities. In addition, in three selected villages or towns in each district/governorate local platforms are being developed mobilizing water end-users from different interest groups.

Table 1 gives an overview of the stakeholder platforms established at national to district level in each of the three countries.

Table 1: Stakeholder platforms in EMPOWERS

Egypt	Jordan	Palestine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation • National Water Research Centre • Ministry of Agriculture • Potable Water Authority in Beni Suef Governorate • DRTPC/University of Cairo • Egyptian Water Partnership • New partner ?? • CARE Egypt^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Water and Irrigation • Ministry of Agriculture^a • Ministry of Social Development • Ministry of Interior in Balqa Governorate • Ministry of Planning • JoHUD / ZENID • INWRDAM^b • CARE Jordan^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) • Ministry of Agriculture • Ministry of Local Government • Ministry of Environment • Palestine Hydrological Group • Union of Agricultural Work Committees • CARE WBG^c
<p><i>a)</i> In bold face the EMPOWERS partners facilitating the SDCA. <i>b)</i> Islamic Network for Water Resource Development and Management <i>c)</i> The entire Regional Programme of EMPOWERS is supported by IRC, INWRDAM and CARE International.</p>		

The national level stakeholder platforms (or steering committees) ensure that the approaches developed are appropriate to national policy and therefore open to being scaled up and institutionalized.

What is being developed, therefore, is a series of layered stakeholder platforms set up with the express intention of experimenting, learning, and replicating approaches to pro-poor water governance and IWRM. This model of applied learning within a realistic institutional structure can be referred to as a knowledge community or learning alliance (Moriarty et al, 2005).

2.4. SDCA in the EMPOWERS Planning Cycle

Table 2 below identifies the main activities to be implemented as part of this stakeholder approach ,and as the six steps of the planning cycle evolve (see also Planning Matrix in *Working Paper 3*). In this table emphasis is given to those activities that require good and trusted discussion among stakeholders. In most of the cases this will take place in participatory workshops and meetings. Critical milestones for which stakeholder workshops are essential are the following:

- Problem tree analysis at different levels
- Selection of priority communities
- Long-term visions and scenarios
- Strategy development
- Project planning
- Shared analysis of experience`s and lessons learned

Table 2. SDCA for the EMPOWERS Planning Cycle

Step	Objectives	SDCA for planning in IWRM	Outputs
Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholders involved and interested in work ▪ Broad scope of work identified and agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder identification and analysis • Problem analysis • Initial visioning and scenario building • Identifying priority communities for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholder platforms ▪ Problem trees ▪ Initial visions at district or governorate level ▪ Initial scenarios
Assessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main causes of water problems identified ▪ Agreed and shared information-base developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders involved in: • Information collection and analysis • Quality control and cross-checking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RIDA Analysis ▪ Belief Networks ▪ Provisional data base
Strategising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Previous steps integrated to create shared basis for vertically and horizontally integrated action planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update visions and scenarios • Develop broad strategies • Assess & validate vision & scenario/strategy combinations using Bayesian Networks • Select key scenario and related strategies • Prioritise activities • Define decision modalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WRA reports ▪ Community and District Water Fact Sheets ▪ “final” visions, scenarios and strategies for IWRM
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detailed plan(s) for concerted action developed, budgeted and agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan community and governorate level activities • Identify tasks and responsibilities • Define information flows • Prepare project proposals • Define M&E plans • (acquire funding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Logframes for project proposals ▪ Funded IWRM Project Proposals for community, district and governorates
Implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activities implemented according to plans within a transparent and high quality approach and in a concerted way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement activities • Awareness raising • Tendering (transparent) • Capacity building • Information sharing • Quality control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieved results ▪ Capacities build ▪ Information basis improved
Reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation process documented ▪ Achievements monitored ▪ Lessons drawn out of preceding planning cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documenting processes (+ video) • M&E • Learning and reflecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process reports & videos ▪ Evaluation reports ▪ Conclusions drawn as input for next planning cycle

2.5 Facilitating the stakeholder process at institutional levels

The stakeholder platforms in the three countries are currently being facilitated by a multi-disciplinary country team from the EMPOWERS Partnership, consisting of a country coordinator, two field coordinators and a process documentation officer. They are staff of the organizations who have signed a Partnership Agreement in the context of the EMPOWERS Programme funded by the EC/MEDA Water programme (see Table 2/bold face). In the case of EMPOWERS, this project has been started with the consent of the government authorities, although the initiative to take up this approach has been taken by the members of the Partnership.

It is the ambition of EMPOWERS to convince national and governorate champions (policy makers, NGOs) of the effectiveness of this approach so that replication and up-scaling will, in the future be driven by national actors – particularly government. As mentioned earlier, it is assumed that by pro-actively involving all relevant stakeholders, and by developing effective and participatory planning methodologies more sustainable and integrated management of scarce water resources can be attained.

Nevertheless, the EMPOWERS facilitation team finds itself in a potentially difficult if not conflictual position. On one hand it is expected to act as a process facilitator, on the other hand it has a specific stake in the project, i.e to develop and advocate a project approach. Obviously, it is not always easy to distinguish between the role of a promoter of an approach and the role of a “neutral/independent” facilitator who, ideally, should remain an outsider to the main stakeholder group. Nevertheless, a process view and the awareness that a facilitator is not making the decisions (for others) are extremely important to properly fulfil this role. This also applies to pursuing specific agendas, such as national water interests or pro-poor, gender or right-based approaches.

To facilitate such processes, a mediator or facilitator needs to have special skills and capacities. He/she must make sure that the stakeholder process is well run and that all parties feel actively involved, without pursuing his/her own agenda. Experiences elsewhere (ETC, 2003 and Laban et.al, 1999) indicate that in conflict sensitive processes a neutral facilitator is a key condition for success. Without an independent facilitator from the beginning of the process it will lead to more conflicts in the end. A facilitator should create an environment of trust and respect in which shared visions and goals can be developed. He/she needs to know the different parties and their relationships well, as well as the institutional environment of the issue at stake. At the same time s/he needs to be a strategist and have a vision of the possible outcome of a particular meeting. Box 1 below highlights the high professional requirements demanded from a good facilitator in multi-stakeholder processes.

**Box 1:
For Multiple-Stakeholder Processes
facilitators are:**

- Committed
- Flexible
- Responsive
- Balancing
- Inclusive
- Encouraging
- Respectful
- Neutral
- Problem-solving oriented
- Disciplined
- Culturally sensitive
- Capable of meta-communication
- Comfortable with their role

Source: (Hemmati, 2003)

Where the EMPOWERS stakeholder processes are now facilitated by members of the Partnership itself, the intention is that over time this important function will be institutionalized elsewhere. It should be underlined that facilitation, here, does not refer to facilitation of single events, advocacy platforms or other activities that bring together different actors to exchange information and coordinate actions on irregular intervals. It does refer to - in short - guiding “brokering” processes in planning and decision making between government agencies (officials) and local communities (end-users). It also recognizes that actors may opt out and see no interest in remaining involved. As this may occur, it has to be assessed to what extent this will compromise decisions to be taken, and what the price is of having a specific actor abandon the process. In any case, it is an intensive permanent activity where the “facilitator” takes an active role, as indicated in Box 2 below (Laban, 2005a):

Box 2.: Process facilitation at institutional levels

- (i) Facilitating “horizontal” communication and coordination among these players, so that planning and implementation of IWRM is done in an integrated and holistic way. In particular, attention is required to ensure that the often narrow sub-sector agendas of key stakeholders do not come to dominate. Breaking down such barriers to horizontal communication is a key part of the EMPOWERS approach.
- (ii) Facilitating “vertical” communication between different institutional levels of key non-community players, in order to ensure that solutions to problems are responsive to the real needs of local stakeholders, while reflecting national/governorate level priorities; i.e. facilitating locally appropriate as opposed to top down decision making.

2.6 Facilitating the stakeholder process in communities

In the above, the need for professional facilitation of complex processes in the water sector has been highlighted. This need is certainly important in order to bring together different actors (government agencies, NGOs, private sector) at the same institutional level or among different levels (national, governorate, district, and municipalities) in order to create the “horizontal” and “vertical” linkages that are necessary for proper planning and decision-making.

Facilitation of processes, however, should not stop at the level of municipality or village councils. Every community has its own socio-economic configuration determined by culture, wealth, gender, land tenure, access to resources, etc... In most, if not all, communities there will be groups that are more vulnerable, have less resources and access to services, and that have less influence in decision-making. In a vision where it is also considered important that these more marginal groups have their right share to quality water (be it for household or agricultural purposes) and to proper sanitation, process facilitation becomes even more important to make sure that also these groups are involved. It requires additional skills that are sensitive to the recognition that conscious efforts have to be made to actively involve women and the poorest sections of a community. At the same time interests and priorities of different village

organizations have to be taken into account. Process Facilitation as mentioned in Box 2 above needs then to be extended to the functions as mentioned in Box 3 (Laban, 2005a):

Box 3. Process facilitation at the community level	
(i)	Enhancing more active involvement of the most vulnerable segments of society in planning and decision-making in water use and management, so as to ensure their access and control over water resources.
(ii)	Enabling community-based organizations to strengthen their capacities and “claim-making power” towards players in the water and rural development sector that operate at the district, governorate and national level (government agencies, private sector, research and other organizations).
(iii)	Facilitating communication, coordination and planning between such community-based organizations and these other players.

Altogether the five functions mentioned in Box 2 and 3 aim to enhance understanding of the different roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints which affect stakeholders and thus the potential for concerted action. This facilitation function should not be confused with other important functions that EMPOWERS is promoting in the water sector, i.e. in the domains of policy, planning and information management, and which also need to be institutionalised. Annex 1 provides a short list of criteria that can be used for the identification and selection of host institutions for this important facilitation function.

When process facilitation in SDCA is understood in the way described here, it has the potential to become a powerful tool to reach the poorest sections of local communities and especially women. Such facilitation will complement other approaches such as social analysis, advocacy and political pressure. Process facilitation, social analysis and advocacy can make use of the same family of participatory tools such as PRA and Right-Based Analysis (Laban, 2005b; Laban, 2005c).

2.7 Bringing stakeholders to the table

The above discussion deals with the role of the facilitator in the sort of complex processes being undertaken by EMPOWERS. It does not deal with how such a process can be started or how the stakeholders can be brought to the table.

In the EMPOWERS case this is done through the provision by the project of limited amounts of funding for (i) what are referred to as ‘pilot’ activities and (ii) an investment in partner staff for engaging a stakeholder dialogue, and for testing, learning and developing the approaches and methodologies. This availability of financial resources has been critical in engaging the interest of stakeholders from government to village, in what might otherwise seem like a theoretical process. The funding of pilot projects has been crucial to beginning the processes in countries, but is nevertheless something of a two edged sword as it further stretches the capacities of the facilitation teams - adding a role of donor and eventually project manager, to that of facilitator and methodology developer.

Despite this paradox, it is very important to underline that despite the very limited amount for pilot projects (approximately 300,000 Euros per country – to be divided between 4 villages/towns and a district – and less than 25% of the total EMPOWERS budget) and about 250,000 Euros per country per year for staff, small materials and running cost, this financing has been critical to proving the seriousness and good will of the partnership to stakeholders at a range of different levels.

2.8 Tools for stakeholder analysis and action (RAAKS)

Promoting a dialogue and consequently concerted action among different stakeholders requires analysis of these stakeholders and their roles. This refers to different issues, such as forms of cooperation and coordination, information and knowledge sharing, assumed tasks and responsibilities, influence on decision-making, interest and roles in planning and implementation, but also to perceptions, political and institutional agendas, power, resistance to change, etc. In EMPOWERS use is made of a methodology developed by Wageningen Agricultural University, known as RAAKS. A short description is given in Box 4 below. RAAKS stands for Rapid Analysis of Agricultural Knowledge Systems, and the methodology basically refers to participatory actor and network analysis. The heart of the approach is the use of different “windows”, which are used to look at the different perspectives of different stakeholders. For the purpose of IWRM, the results of such an analysis should help to provide the information needed to achieve the objectives mentioned in *section 2.2* above. The analysis specifically:

- Makes explicit the different “appreciations” of stakeholders: perceptions, preoccupations, assumptions and judgments⁵.
- Identifies opportunities to improve exchange of information, social organization and decision-making among actors in order to create the conditions for innovation.
- Creates awareness with respect to constraints and opportunities that affect the performance of actors as innovators.
- Identifies (potential) actors who do, or could, act effectively to remove constraints and make use of opportunities for innovation

Box 4.: A short description of RAAKS as a methodology for stakeholder analysis

The creation of stakeholder platforms working towards a common goal in a specific arena (e.g. water, agricultural or community development), is not an easy job. *Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems* (RAAKS) forms a first step for analysis and decision-making in SDCA. On the basis of a RAAKS analysis, platforms can be formed from key stakeholders who together support a specific development process, having a common agenda and shared interests. RAAKS is a participatory action research approach developed by Wageningen University in the early 1990s. It focuses on clarifying the role and responsibilities of all major actors working in a certain thematic field, such as community water management or agricultural development, identifying possible constraints in coordination, cooperation and communication, and developing appropriate actions.

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⁵ As a participatory action approach, a RAAKS analysis will give important emphasis to involve adequately marginalized groups as women and small farmers.

Cont. Box 4:

RAAKS follows an interactive process with the stakeholder institutions (inside and outside local communities) to draw them into the action research process and encourage ownership of its outcome. The study team makes use of a number of participatory Tools that use checklists of key issues in different areas “Windows of Analysis” such as vision and mandate of the organization as related to study area, tasks and responsibilities, strategic interest, development agendas, institutional structure and resources, information flows and decision patterns. The RAAKS process culminates in a workshop where views of respective actors or institutions are brought together, shared and systematically compared as a basis for joint problem review and action planning. In the context of EMPOWERS Table 5 mentions the RAAKS Tools used and further developed.

The tools mentioned in Table 5 are in the process of being modified for the specific requirements of the EMPOWERS approach and will form an important part of the planned toolbox for local level IWRM that will be developed and tested by EMPOWER

Table 3: RAAKS Tools used in EMPOWERS

EMPOWERS Steps	RAAKS Window
Visioning	
• Actor Identification	A2
• Prime mover analysis	A5
Strategising	
• Task Analysis	B5
• Basic configurations	B6
• Communications Analysis	B7
• Actor potential Analysis	C1
• Defining possible actions	C2

Part 3. A final Word

3.1 EMPOWERS as a Knowledge Community

Taken together, all those involved in the EMPOWERS programme form a knowledge community or learning alliance. In its first year of activity EMPOWERS has focussed on establishing the key platforms for this community at national and governorate (district) level and first testing of the water resource assessment and planning methodologies. Additionally, in the governorates, the project has focused on three selected municipalities or villages, where local platforms have been created consisting of different segments of community level end-users, directly concerned district and governorate officials and other stakeholders relevant for these communities (NGOs and water service providers). In the coming two years, these platforms may be replicated in other municipalities and villages in the same Governorates/Districts. Through the project, the following knowledge will be generated:

- How to work together in stakeholder platforms
- How to collect, analyze, store and share useful information
- **How to plan, develop and manage in a participatory way water use in communities, districts and governorates**
- How to empower and enhance the involvement of the most marginalized groups in society
- How to better understand change processes in a world of increasing water scarcity

Such knowledge generation will be captured in process documentation that will identify how and why key events in the EMPOWERS process have unfolded: new opportunities and insights, difficulties, lessons learned, etc. This learning process will be documented in reports and video, with the help of specific project staff assigned to this task. Expected achievements will be monitored and evaluated according to a detailed framework of indicators and benchmarks. *Working Paper 8* will further describe how EMPOWERS intends to document the above processes and monitor its achievements.

3.2 Actual state of the art (January 2005)

The planning process described in this (and other) working papers has been developed to provide a structure to support stakeholder platforms for improved water governance and IWRM. Implementation of the cycle to date (the first year and a half of project implementation) has been in a 'light' or 'learning' mode, which is approaching its conclusion. Thus far experience has therefore related largely to the first three steps of the cycle, namely: visioning, assessing and strategizing. Based on this learning experience the cycle will be further refined, detailed and updated in the coming two years of EMPOWERS.

The longer term objective is to develop a framework for improved IWRM and local water governance in the three EMPOWERS countries, supported by guidelines, training materials and process documentation. The planning matrix elaborated in *Working Paper 3* (and condensed in table 2 of this WP) is a first draft of the main framework for these guidelines, setting out for each step the objectives, activities, tools, outputs expected and inputs required.

To summarize the earlier discussions, the main lessons learned in this initial stakeholder stage of the EMPOWERS project relate primarily to the difficulties of being at once facilitator, donor, project manager and methodology developer of such a complex process. This is, to some extent, an occupational hazard of any action research of the kind being undertaken by EMPOWERS. However, it is complicated by the learning alliance structure of platforms at multiple levels – all of whom have to be involved and facilitated to play their part in the larger process of innovation and up-scaling. Ensuring the correct balance between the roles currently undertaken by the country teams will be critical to the further success of the approach, as will be identifying as soon as possible local institutions capable of taking over the most important roles, particularly process facilitation and advocacy for the uptake and replication of the approach developed.

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Working Paper No. 4: Moriarty, P., Batchelor, C., Laban, P., (2005). *Using Visions, Scenarios and Strategies within the EMPOWERS Planning Cycle for IWRM*, EMPOWERS, Amman, Jordan

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Working Paper No. 6: Laban, P., Barghout, M., Moriarty, P., Sarsour, S., (2005). *Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action for Integrated Water Resource Management*, , EMPOWERS, Amman, Jordan

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Working Paper No. 7: Participatory Project Identification, Design and Planning (in preparation) <http://www.empowers.info>

Working Paper No. 8: Process Documentation and Monitoring and Evaluation (in preparation) <http://www.empowers.info>

ANNEX 1: Criteria for identification of facilitation host institutes

Institutional position

- Relatively neutral, no specific sector agendas and independent from government
- An existing and well-known non profit organization
- Genuinely indigenous and well-rooted in the country's civil society
- Unconventional and non-bureaucratic
- Wide geographic presence through field offices as well as development programmes
- Accepted by most of not all sectors in civil society and government

Capacities

- Capacity in facilitating interaction and decreasing gaps between local communities and government agencies
- Experience in working with local communities (community development, capacity building,)
- Capable and experience in communicating with government agencies
- Interdisciplinary and diverse staff capacities
- General (but not necessarily very specific) knowledge about water sector
- Familiar with EMPOWERS approaches (ADCA, RAAKS, PTD, PRA, Participatory Planning framework,...)