

EMPOWERS Progress in Year III

Country-Level Milestones

EMPOWERS Partnership:

- Efforts have been made to further EMPOWERS' approaches after the end of this project by initiating new partnerships.
- The EMPOWERS Partnership in Egypt has been further strengthened with two more organizations: CEOSS and FEPI.
- A very motivated group of key stakeholders are now part of the broader EMPOWERS Partnership. They form part and parcel of the implementation of EMPOWERS activities, especially at the governorate/district and community levels.

Country Programmes:

- Linkages created thus far in the project were consolidated through the different water platforms (national, governorate and village).
- Water groups have been created to better enhance the involvement of vulnerable populations into the water decision making process. The different groups (men, women or mixed) participated in data collection, visioning for the villages and strategy setting. Along with community leaders, they wrote the community proposals and are taking part in implementing the community pilots. See www.empowers.info/page/2200
- A first round of community pilot projects was completed and a second round is being implemented. Some of the pilots attracted external funding. See www.empowers.info/page/2084
- Three additional communities were identified in each of EMPOWERS countries to further test and consolidate the PWPC-SDCA approach.
- In all three countries work has been done to develop a Governorate Water Strategy for the coming ten years, following the same process of problem analysis, scenario and strategy building and subsequently the identification of a priority plan.
- Consultation has gone a far distance with government departments for the establishment of Governorate Water Management Information Systems to be housed within the governorate offices.
- Awareness on the benefits of participatory approaches and on rights/responsibilities in local water management has reached a high level among the various stakeholders, including population of target areas, the functionaries of government agencies and civil society organizations as well as decision makers of different levels.

Regional Milestones

- Detailed guidelines for implementing PWPC methodology through SDCA approach were developed; a first version of these guidelines, in English and Arabic, was released. See www.empowers.info/page/120.
- An active, informative and increasingly used public website in English and Arabic is being visited from all over the world.
- A Regional Cross Visits Programme was organized and implemented by EMPOWERS as an End-Users Exchange Programme for local initiatives on public participation in IWRM during the months of August and September 2006 in Jordan and Egypt.
- EMPOWERS Regional Symposium on "End-Users Ownership and Involvement in IWRM" was successfully held in Cairo (Nov. 2005) with the participation of more than 60 persons and presentation of 30 papers mostly from the MENA Region.
- Recommendations for Policy and Practice on Improved Water Governance in the Middle East and North Africa, a major output from EMPOWERS Symposium were published in Arabic and English after being endorsed by several regional and international organizations like IUCN, IDRC, UNESCO-IHE, EMWATER Project, CEDARE, and EMPOWERS partners.
- Several team members participated in different water related activities and events like the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico, CARE MERMU Regional Conference in Egypt, IRC Symposium in the Netherlands, and the IDRC & 3rd World Water Center workshop in Egypt.

What's next?

- Finalize the implementation of the second round pilot projects in the "old" communities, and first round pilots in the "new" communities with more involvement and role of the stakeholders.
- Finalize the development of Governorate Water Strategies through the application of district/governorate level PWPC/SDCA, and continue support to the implementation of the governorate water management information systems.
- Have the EMPOWERS documentary films on water issues in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine broadcasted on local and international TV stations.
- Hold "National Policy Workshops for Scaling Up EMPOWERS" in each of the project countries during December 2006 and January and February 2007.
- Finalize the Working Papers series and issue the Guidelines for Improved Local Water Governance in Arabic and English and the training tool kit.
- Hold the "Regional Forum on Local Water Governance" in Jordan (June 2007) involving policy makers, donors and regional networks in the field of water management.