

# Chapter 1

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## Chapter 1 . Improved water governance

These guidelines are intended to support a process of change to improve water governance, particularly at intermediate level and local level. This chapter provides a brief overview of the concept of water governance and why it is important. A fuller discussion can be found in the companion Background and key concepts volume<sup>3</sup>. By intermediate levels, we mean that layer of governance (government, institutions and civil society bodies) that function below national level but above local level. In various countries, these intermediate levels are known as provinces, regions, districts or governorates. By local we mean village, town and community level.

### What is water governance?

Water governance is the set of systems that controls decision making with regard to water management and water service delivery. Simply put, water governance is about who gets what water, when and how. Such decisions often contain a profoundly political element, particularly where there is competition for limited water resources. As a result, systems of water governance usually reflect political and cultural realities at national, intermediate and local levels.

There is a growing understanding that governance of water resources and water services functions more effectively within a system which enables broad participation by civil society, including community based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, private enterprise and the media, networking to support and influence government, including local government. In practice, this means that forums where stakeholders discuss and come to conclusions need to be strengthened, or even established, at different levels and steps need to be taken by government to ensure that these “stakeholder platforms” play a prominent and active role in systems of water governance. The establishment of stakeholder platforms is discussed in Chapter 2.

### Why water governance matters?

As competition for water intensifies, it becomes more and more difficult to find simple technical solutions to water-related problems. Increasingly, solutions involve trade-offs between benefits and costs for different groups, which require management of demand and enforcement of regulations. These trade-offs have a much better chance of being accepted if they are identified and implemented as part of a system of improved local water governance that is focused on addressing problems and improving service delivery, and if stakeholders are actively involved in these processes.

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<sup>3</sup> Moriarty, Patrick; Batchelor, Charles; Laban, Peter; Fahmy Hazem (2007) The EMPOWERS Approach to Water Governance: Background and Key Concepts.

## The main attributes of effective water governance

Effective water governance requires a policy environment that promotes decentralisation, and the combined commitment of relevant government departments and civil society actors, including the private sector. Although there is no single model for effective water governance, these guidelines are based on identifying four important attributes:

- **Integrated management**  
Decision making should take place within an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) framework. Dialogue is highly desirable both horizontally between stakeholders at the same level (e.g. inter-sectoral planning), and vertically between stakeholders at community, district, basin and state levels.
- **Participatory processes**  
All citizens, men and women, poor and well-off, should have a voice in management processes, either directly or through organisations representing their interests.
- **Transparency**  
Information should flow freely between stakeholders, while decisions and decision-making processes should be transparent and open to public scrutiny.
- **A focus on poverty reduction**  
Water management at all levels should be aligned with poverty reduction strategies. In many cases, this requires a higher degree of participation by poor and marginalised people in planning processes, and a recognition of the importance of making water available for small-scale productive use.

## Why local and intermediate level water governance?

These guidelines focus on water governance processes that are the responsibility of decisions makers at local level (i.e. individuals, households, villages and towns) and at intermediate level (i.e. districts, governorates or equivalent structures in each country).

Decisions about water, its development and use, can never be wholly local, or indeed wholly national. Good water governance requires a set of linked and nested institutions from local to national and international levels.

Our focus is on local and intermediate level water governance for three reasons:

- We believe that the agreement and involvement of water users is essential if water management is to be sustainable.
- The vast majority of day-to-day decisions around the provision of water services are taken at intermediate or local levels.

- Much of the current focus on water governance and integrated water resources management has been highly conceptual or, if practical, has addressed issues at large (international, national, river-basin) scale.

There is a general lack of practical tools for implementing water governance, particularly at the local level. These guidelines help to fill this gap.

# Chapter 2

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## Chapter 2. Overview of the approach

These guidelines provide a logical and practical set of processes which, if followed by stakeholders, will lead to practical outputs in the form of water development strategies, plans and activities, and to improved communication and decision making.

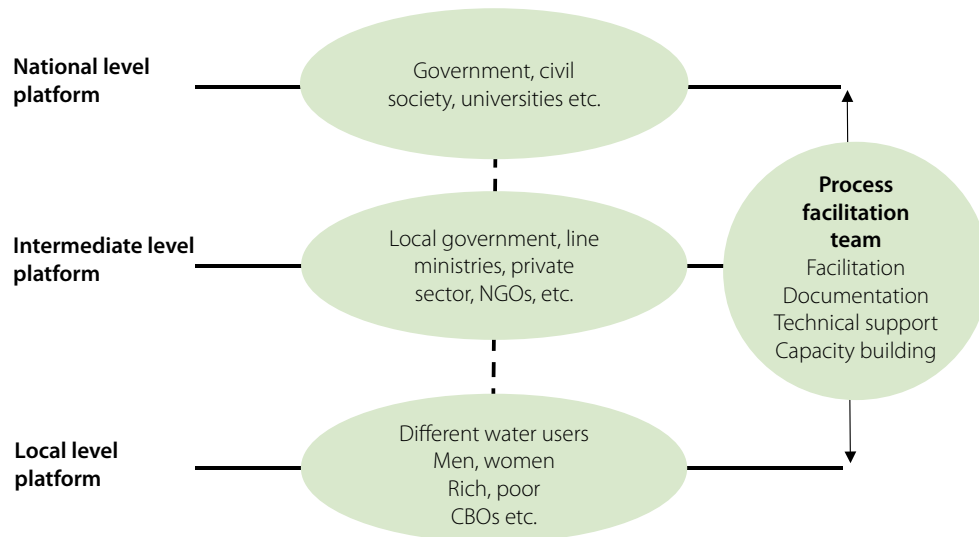
Taken together the guidelines provide a framework by which a facilitation team can guide intermediate and local level stakeholders through a structured process of planning and stakeholder dialogue.

### Stakeholder dialogue and concerted action

The first pillar of the approach is a process of stakeholder dialogue and concerted action (SDCA), which is central to improving local water governance. This is true at all institutional levels (national, intermediate, and local).

The core belief underlying these guidelines is that well informed water stakeholders who communicate effectively with each other on a regular basis will find locally appropriate solutions to pressing water related problems. Strengthening communication between stakeholders enables them to take action that is more effective. Stakeholder dialogue and concerted action implies that you know who the key stakeholders are, and that there is a “stakeholder platform” where they come together to analyse problems, agree a common vision, resolve differences and agree on coordinated action. In other words, these things happen by an organised process. Institutionalising the process of SDCA is therefore a major part of achieving improved water governance.

The establishment of stakeholder platforms calls for considerable effort from stakeholders and facilitators, as stakeholders have a wide array of interests and motivations, and differing levels of power. In particular, ensuring the active involvement of the poorest and most marginalised members of the community calls for dedicated resources and attention. These processes require expert facilitation as described in Chapter 3. In principle, the SDCA process aims to identify and strengthen (and, where necessary, initiate) stakeholder platforms at local and intermediate levels – and to ensure smooth flows of communication within and between these levels (figure 2). Ensuring that the platforms and processes created for improved dialogue are maintained in the long-term is an important element in ensuring improved water governance.



**Figure 2: Typical stakeholders in water governance at different institutional levels. The process facilitation team enhances communication and dialogue within and between stakeholder platforms at different levels.**

In general, successful SDCA processes come from understanding the following:

- That a sufficient degree of strategic consensus is essential based on:
  - Common concerns among relevant stakeholders;
  - Shared and agreed strategies;
  - A desire for active cooperation.
- However, building stakeholder platforms is not easy and consensus is the exception. The behaviour of members tends to be opportunistic and the existence of divergent aims and behaviour among stakeholders must be anticipated.
- Skilled facilitation is needed to achieve consensus and to ensure that communication is maintained between all stakeholders.

## Management cycle

The second pillar of the approach is a management cycle, which has six phases, and which structures and guides the process of SDCA.

The logic and sequencing of the cycle help to ensure that decisions are based on a clear and logical flow of thought and action. They also focus the process of dialogue on the identification and implementation of specific activities and outputs. Although the use of management cycles in water management is not new, this approach differs from most in many respects, including:

- The fundamental importance of stakeholder involvement during all phases; and
- Explicit acknowledgment of the uncertainty that exists in nearly all aspects of water service delivery and water resource management, especially future demand. This challenge is handled by incorporating scenario building into relevant phases of the cycle.

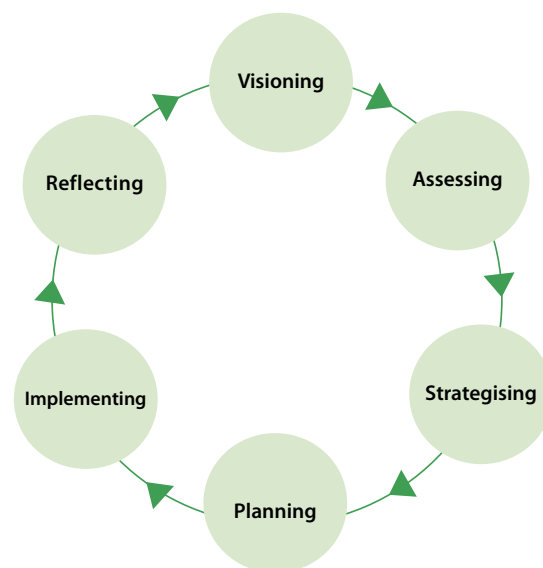


Figure 3: The phases of the management cycle

As shown in figure 3, the six phases of the management cycle are:

**Phase 1: Visioning**

**Phase 2: Assessing**

**Phase 3: Strategising**

**Phase 4: Planning**

**Phase 5: Implementing**

**Phase 6: Reflecting**

	Phase 1 Visioning	Phase 2 Assessing	Phase 3 Strategising	Phase 4 Planning	Phase 5 Implementing	Phase 6 Reflecting
Inputs and activities	Create a stakeholder platform	Water auditing	Narrative scenario building	Select activities methods and tools	Implementation of plans	Post implementation review
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Agree on domain(s) and scale(s) of interest	Create a common information base	Strategy development taking account of scenarios	Identify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders & other actors	Supervision and progress monitoring	Feedback & dissemination of lessons learnt to all stakeholders
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Problem identification	Problem analysis and opportunity identification	Analysis to test whether strategy(ies) have potential to achieve vision	Produce costings, work schedules etc. & issue contracts	Stakeholder dialogue and resolution of disputes	Follow up activities aimed at ensuring sustainability
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Develop a SMART vision	Awareness raising and information sharing	If necessary, conflict resolution	Capacity development	Awareness raising and information sharing	Transparency and value for money analysis
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	<b>Visioning</b>	<b>Assessing</b>	<b>Strategising</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Implementing</b>	<b>Reflecting</b>
Outputs	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional stakeholder platform</li> <li>• SMART vision for the domain of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed and shared information base</li> <li>• Agreement among stakeholders on the opportunities for tackling water-related problems along with potential risks and constraints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An agreed set of narrative scenarios</li> <li>• If necessary, a revised SMART vision for the domain of interest</li> <li>• Agreement amongst stakeholders on a strategy or set of strategies that have potential to achieve the SMART vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed work plan(s)</li> <li>• A financial plan and approvals needed to commence implementation</li> <li>• If relevant agreed contracts, HRD plans, M&amp;E plans &amp; any other outputs related to mobilisation of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed work programme</li> <li>• Stakeholders who have taken ownership of the work</li> <li>• M&amp;E documentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented lessons regarding outcomes and processes followed</li> <li>• Set of transparency and value for money documents</li> </ul>

**Figure 4: An overview of the phases together with typical inputs, activities and output related to each one. The management cycle and these phases are explored in detail in Chapter 4, while details of tools and methods required in the activities are provided in Chapter 5.**

In practice, these phases divide into three main clusters:

- **Visioning, Assessing, and Strategising:** An intensive, time limited period of initial activity, typically less than six months, during which a shared medium to long term vision and a strategy for water development are created. This calls for strong facilitation.
- **Planning and Implementing:** An indefinite period in which different aspects of the strategy are prioritised, planned in detail and implemented.
- **Reflecting:** This is presented as a discrete phase following implementation and feeding back into visioning. However, reflecting is a continuous process.

The idea of a cycle reflects the reality that good local water governance is about a continuous process of experimentation, adaptation and learning, which makes it possible to find locally appropriate solutions. Long-term visions and strategies need to be updated regularly based on new information and the impacts of activities on the ground. The idea of scenario building will be introduced more fully in Chapter 4, when it will be seen that this is the method of linking visions to strategies, while explicitly including uncertainty.

This process happens more than once in the cycle, as visions and strategies are adjusted to meet new realities. Rather than a set of activities to be worked through once, the cycle represents a new way of working, with an emphasis on a virtuous process of strategic and integrated planning fed by an ongoing process of learning from experience. The aim of these guidelines is to embed the processes of integrated planning and joint learning and the capacities and attitudes necessary to maintain them within the day to day work of stakeholders.

The concepts of stakeholder dialogue and concerted action and the management cycle are relatively easy to understand, but putting them into practice is a challenge. Facilitation teams require time, skill and perseverance to build relationships with stakeholders, to increase awareness and to overcome resistance to change. Stakeholder representatives who are actively involved in stakeholder platforms have to build constructive relationships with other stakeholders, many of whom may have limited confidence in dialogue or limited capacity to engage in it.

### Key issues addressed in the approach

The EMPOWERS approach takes account of a number of important and potentially difficult issues intrinsic to water governance.

#### **Scale, boundaries, and institutions**

Managing water resources and providing water services is complicated by the nature of water as a finite but renewable resource that is in a constant state of movement. The actions of many individuals at local level can, when viewed at the larger scale of a river basin or aquifer, have serious unforeseen negative results (pollution, falling water levels, etc.). Water also cuts across organisational boundaries, such as villages or governorates, and is the responsibility of different institutions (government departments, village committees, etc.) at different institutional levels.

The guidelines emphasise communication and information sharing between users and institutions to help to maintain a balance between this complex mix of issues relating to scale, boundaries, and institutions. A number of analytical tools are designed to identify the different stakeholders involved in water and to analyse their roles, and responsibilities.

There is an emphasis on ensuring that what happens at any given level (local, intermediate, national) is relevant to, and informed by, what takes place at other levels. Special attention needs to be given to ensuring that there are effective linkages between the local and intermediate

level processes. These processes should happen in parallel, each level informing the other what is happening and activities at one level influencing activities at another. While it is possible to work in isolation at local or intermediate level, this is unlikely to lead to the fundamental change required in water governance.

### **Trade-offs and conflicting goals**

In areas with high levels of competition for water, there are almost always trade-offs between the goals and aspirations of different stakeholders. For example, providing more domestic water for the poor may mean that there is less (or more expensive) water for irrigated agriculture. Maintaining ecological flows in a water course may result in less water being available for other uses. Decisions on whether (or which) trade-offs are acceptable are political decisions. However, good communication, and good planning can reduce the magnitude and cost of a trade-off, while improved communication and transparent decision making can also, to some extent, help to reduce the potential for conflict. This ameliorating effect should not be exaggerated: various forms of compensation will normally be required.

### **Information: quality, reliability, accessibility**

Access to reliable information is a critical element for mediating and conferring power in interactions between stakeholders in general and, more specifically, between government and civil society. Without information, debate is uninformed and society has no basis to challenge incorrect or biased positions. Effective planning and conflict resolution is near to impossible if stakeholders work with differing perceptions and information. Yet, such situations are not uncommon. For example, different government departments, when attempting to integrate planning procedures, often lack a common information base. Official information can also be manipulated for reasons of political expediency, either to justify planned courses of action or to show that past policies and actions have been more successful than was actually the case. For these reasons, the assessment phase of the management cycle places high importance on establishing a commonly owned and trusted set of quality information as the basis for decision making.

### **Adaptive management**

The dynamic nature of the physical processes and societal responses related to water management poses a great challenge, especially because of the variability in water availability and demand from year to year and between different areas. Uncertainty is generally high, with continuous changes in the availability of resources, the condition of infrastructure and user demand. Local populations often respond to forces that are far beyond the control of government departments or water management professionals. As a result, water management plans need to be problem-focused, dynamic in nature and matched to the specific challenges in an area. In other words, approaches and institutions need to be adaptive, and capable of responding to changing conditions. Adaptive management is based on accepting that in complex situations there can never be sufficient information to reach a settled “optimum” decision. The emphasis is on flexible planning backed by strong monitoring and information management systems that allow constant adaptation and the upgrading of plans and activities.

Such a level of responsiveness is only possible if information is updated, and if monitoring and evaluation systems continually provide decision makers with reliable information.

The use of a management cycle, and the strong emphasis on information management, learning and reflecting is designed to ensure that the key features of adaptive management are built into local water governance.

### **Policy alignment**

Policies, legislation and fiscal measures have profound effects on what happens at district and local levels, most importantly in setting boundaries for stakeholder involvement in decision making, and in clearly articulating their roles and responsibilities. It is crucially important that there is an alignment of the policies, legislation and fiscal measures that influence water management, service delivery and level of demand. Decisions outside the water sector, such as those about energy prices, trade agreements and poverty reduction strategies also often impact on water management and demand. While policy alignment goes beyond the scope of these guidelines, it is a critical enabling factor that will affect water governance in any country.

### **Capacity and funding**

The approach outlined in these guidelines is dependent on adequate funding and capacity being available, not only for construction, but also for activities associated with establishing and facilitating stakeholder platforms. In fact, the main investment required is to develop the capacity to support the stakeholder platforms and their interactions. This cost is balanced by improved stakeholder buy-in and increasing ownership of water governance. Capacity development is dealt with in Chapter 3.

Finally, it should be emphasised that those using these guidelines should show flexibility and respect for the needs of the stakeholders: after all, it is their process. The phases represent, and contribute to, a certain logic and way of thinking. However, within reason, the pace and sequencing of different phases and activities must be driven by the needs of the stakeholders. The most important thing is that those facilitating such processes understand the overall logic of the approach, as well as the objectives of each phase and activity.

# Chapter 3

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### **Chapter 3. Facilitation and capacity development**

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## Chapter 3. Facilitation and capacity development

### Role of facilitation teams

Successful implementation of the EMPOWERS approach requires facilitation of the twin processes of stakeholder dialogue and collective action (SDCA) and the management cycle. It also requires the development of capacity among stakeholders to understand and fulfil their roles within these processes. Specialists who support the SDCA and management processes, also need to build their own capacities if they are to be effective.

Two distinct phases of facilitation and capacity development are envisaged. In the initial phase, stakeholders are completely new to the approach and require considerable support from a facilitation team. This initial phase might last for 12 months or through to the end of the planning phase of the cycle, during which time stakeholders start to take ownership of the SDCA and management processes. During the second phase, the facilitation team provides continuous but lower-level support to the SDCA and management processes, but is also available to help with conflict resolution and to resolve problems that may arise with stakeholder platforms. The required level and exact nature of support is likely to vary enormously and to be influenced by such factors as size of stakeholder platform, the levels of conflict between stakeholders and the complexity of the water-related challenges.

The facilitation team in this context is concerned with “process facilitation” – that is helping stakeholders to keep the process on track over a long period. The facilitators work with stakeholders over a long period and should, if they are working well, come to be trusted and become knowledgeable about the issues, problems and dynamics between stakeholders. This is a different and more challenging role than that of facilitating a meeting, where the facilitator(s) and stakeholders may not be well known to each other or have a long-term relationship. In these EMPOWERS guidelines we are, unless otherwise stated, referring to this deeper process facilitation role.

Although some members of a process facilitation team may be employees of stakeholders (e.g. staff from a relevant ministry), they should endeavour to respect their role within the process as intermediaries or honest brokers. As such, their role is to build consensus and not take sides if there is conflict between stakeholders.

Specialists who are new to processes of stakeholder dialogue often need capacity development themselves to fully understand the approach as well as time to adapt to their role of supporting a process. Specialists are required to take part in discussions, rather than act only as information providers, and to translate knowledge and recommendations into a language that can be understood by non-specialists.

## Size and skills of a facilitation team

Ideally, a facilitation team capable of working within a single governorate, and/or three to five parallel village processes, will comprise two to four people with a range of disciplinary backgrounds; both topic expertise (e.g. natural resources, engineering, agriculture or social sciences) and process skills (project and programme management, facilitation, and process documentation). Larger intervention processes require larger (or more) teams. Teamwork is crucial, and each team member must also be able to tackle a wide range of tasks. It is important that teams are willing and able to call on specialist advice from government agencies, universities, experienced NGOs and/or private sector organisations.

Developing the self-confidence and capacity of the facilitation team itself takes time. It is crucial that each team has at least one member who has experience and skills in facilitation and participatory approaches who can provide hands-on training for other team members. Training can also take the form of short training courses and exposure visits to other projects that are already using these techniques.

## Institutional homes for facilitation teams

Facilitation teams can be employed by relevant ministries or provided by a range of institutions, including NGOs or the private sector. Although it can be argued that team members should be independent of key stakeholders, continuity and establishment of long-term relationships are also important factors, especially when facilitating communication between local and intermediate level stakeholders. There is, therefore, a strong case for teams being located within relevant ministries or organisations that can guarantee long-term employment. However, their independence in the process must be established if they are to be trusted by all stakeholders.

## Role of facilitation teams in institutionalising SDCA approaches

Facilitation teams have a vital role in ensuring that the approaches proposed in these guidelines have a long lasting impact on water governance. They can help achieve this goal by:

- Ensuring a high probability of improved outcomes from stakeholder-driven planning processes;
- Facilitating a process in such a way that the approach is internalised and owned by stakeholders;
- Ensuring a rapid resolution of the conflicts that inevitably arise and that might otherwise derail the long-term uptake of new approaches that incorporate lessons learnt by stakeholders.

## Logistical arrangements and budgets

This approach adds to the cost of implementing projects and programmes. However, this cost should be recouped over time if the approach increases the likelihood of finding sustainable solutions to water-related problems. It can be argued that the approach has a high potential to tackle water-related aspects of poverty and to react rapidly to tackle water-related challenges as they emerge. It is vital that logistical arrangements are discussed and accounted for well in advance of a relevant project or a programme of work. Facilitation teams can only do a good job and show a high level of commitment if they have access to transport, office space, communication and IT services and support staff. Budgets may also be needed to cover expenses associated with a number of activities such as managing information, setting up workshops, carrying out awareness campaigns and conducting exposure visits for key stakeholders, and for capacity development of facilitation team members.

## Entry points and links to democratic institutions

As part of the process of getting organised, the facilitation team needs to collect basic information about demographics, institutions, water resources, climate, water-related infrastructure and previous and ongoing relevant projects. Although information is collected in more detail in the assessment phase of the management cycle, facilitation teams also need to make use of readily-available information when prioritising and selecting the villages in which to work and when identifying initial entry points or points of contact with stakeholders. Initial contacts are often with people or organisations who later become important stakeholders, such as mayors or local government councillors, other prominent individuals (e.g. politicians, business people), or influential NGOs or CBOs in the area.

As far as possible, facilitation teams should work constructively with, and give support to, democratically-elected representatives and institutions. This ensures that attempts to improve water governance are linked to existing systems of democratic accountability and reduces the risk of conflict if new water-related institutions are created.

# Chapter 4

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## **Chapter 4. The management cycle**

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Phase 2: Assessing

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Phase 3: Strategising

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Phase 4: Planning

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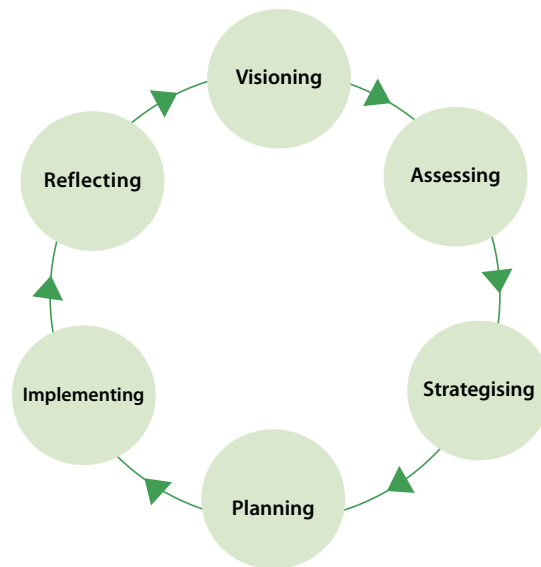
Phase 5: Implementing

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Phase 6: Reflecting

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## Chapter 4. The management cycle



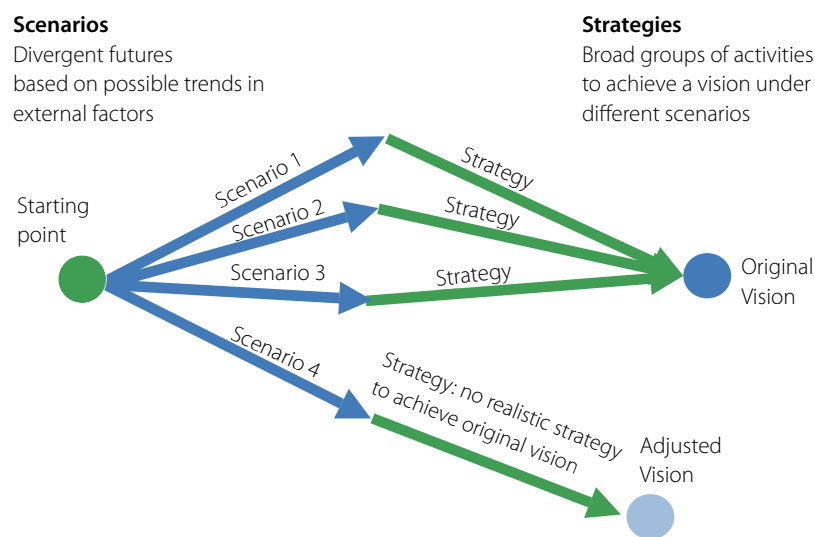
This chapter provides a step-by-step guide to implementing the approach. For each of the phases (shown above), a guidance for implementation is provided and a list of useful tools or methods is included. These tools and methods will be found in Chapter 5. The description of each phase includes boxes with suggested objectives and outputs, as well as an outline of a possible process with suggested timing of activities and time requirements.

The early phases of the cycle are about developing a clear and shared future vision and a preferred strategy to achieve that vision. In the first phase, visioning, stakeholders create an initial vision of the future. Since the data is not always clear, and the future is uncertain, they also develop a number of different scenarios reflecting a variety of possible future situations. In the second phase, assessing, they find and assess the data they need to move forward and to check that their vision is realistic. In the third phase, strategising, they develop a strategy or strategies to reach the vision under as many scenarios as feasible. Some scenarios may be so difficult, that no realistic strategy can be devised, and the vision may then need to be adjusted. This is not a one-off process: these phases are repeated to adjust to changing circumstances.

### Scenario building

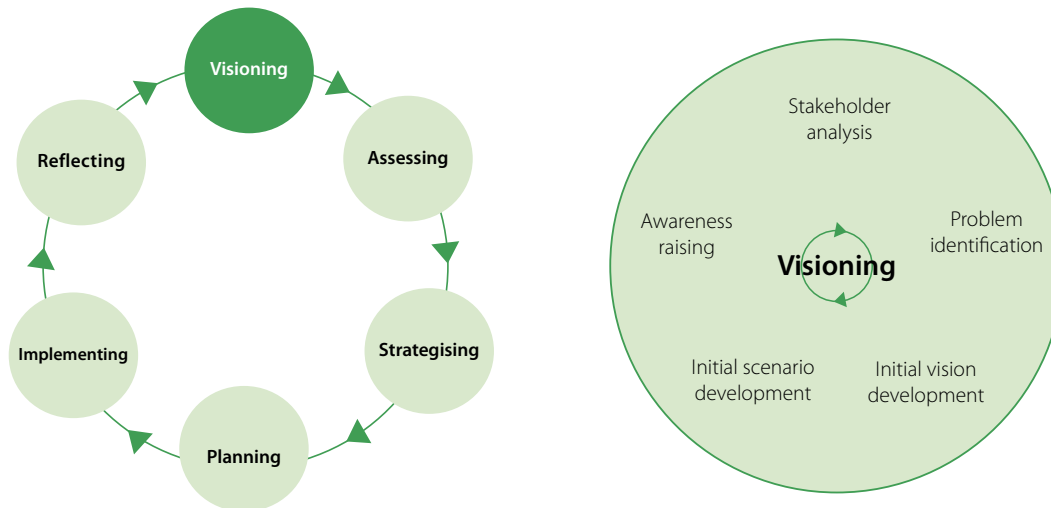
Scenario building is a method of working between visioning and strategising, rather than a phase in the management cycle, and it is used more than once in the cycle. A scenario is a plausible description about the way the world might turn out tomorrow. While it is not a firm forecast, it is based on current trends and areas of knowledge and uncertainty. Developing a set of narrative scenarios helps to provide a basis for identifying possible pathways (strategies)

towards the shared vision. In the visioning phase, scenarios help towards an outline strategy. In the strategy phase, when the strategy is becoming clearer and more concrete, scenarios are refined or reworked to take account of new information, opportunities, threats or uncertainties. This iterative process of revisiting, improving and adjusting the vision, scenarios and strategy is one of the core strengths of the EMPOWERS approach in that it keeps the process embedded in reality and it allows planning to adjust to new situations.



**Figure 5: The role of scenario building in devising strategies to achieve a vision. The most robust strategies achieve the vision under most scenarios. However, under some scenarios there is no realistic strategy and the vision must be adjusted.**

## Phase 1: Visioning



### The aim

A visioning process is used to develop a precise and shared description of how an individual or a group of stakeholders would like the water resources and water services to be in their area of interest at some future time. The overall aim of the visioning phase is to come to a shared understanding between the main stakeholders at intermediate and local levels about the main water-related problems which affect them, and to develop an initial vision for local-level water management and service delivery.

### The challenge

Visioning helps stakeholders to think beyond the day-to-day reality of problem solving, and to imagine an achievable medium to long-term future for which they can plan – typically 5-15 years ahead at local level, and 10-25 years ahead for the intermediate level. It may prove useful to differentiate between short, medium and long-term visions each with their own target date for achievement.

#### Objectives of visioning phase

- Establish the active participation of stakeholders and/or their representatives in the activities of a stakeholder platform
- Facilitate semi-structured discussions on the nature and severity of water-related problems
- Reach agreement on a preliminary vision of future water services and water resources
- Agree on the process to be followed and the broad scope and timetable of follow-up activities

In the context of integrated water resources management, it is crucial that the process produces a vision that is shared and owned by all stakeholders, including the more marginalised.

Local and intermediate level visions should also inform, and be informed by national and intermediate level policy and strategies; it is vital that there is consistency across visions created at different spatial scales. A governorate-level vision will be different to a vision developed for a village, but there needs to be mutual consistency and compatibility between the visions if conflicts are to be avoided.

#### **Outputs from the visioning phase**

Outputs from the visioning phase are likely to include:

- Initial awareness amongst main stakeholders that a participatory process is taking place that may affect them
- Outputs from initial stakeholder analysis including a good understanding of the main stakeholder groups and potential problems or conflicts between them
- Stakeholder platforms at different levels that have been strengthened (or where necessary created)
- A set of problem trees that represent stakeholders' views of water-related problems, in the areas and at the scales of interest
- Initial visions, scenarios and possibly strategies that, although unrefined, have the support of the main stakeholders

To be useful for strategic planning, a vision must be more than an unattainable wish list. Visions should be rooted in an understanding of trends in water supply and demand, and of how potential risks and constraints might make it difficult to achieve a vision.

In searching for a preliminary common vision, the biggest challenge is to raise awareness and enthusiasm for the process.

#### **Getting started**

Identifying stakeholders is a key component of visioning. Some stakeholders and/or their representatives are relatively easy to identify. However, attention is needed to ensure that women, marginalised groups, representatives of civil society and the interests of the environment are represented when stakeholder platforms are established or strengthened. All members of the facilitation team, including those employed by key stakeholders, must be clear that their role is to find and include stakeholders from a range of organisations and backgrounds.

#### **Key activities and tools**

- Stakeholder analysis is used to identify a range of different stakeholders, as well as their relative importance to water governance processes.
- Special attention is required to identify the poor and marginalised and ensure that they are properly involved and represented. This takes time and resources because they tend to be less organised, lacking in confidence and capacity and poorly represented. Nevertheless, their involvement from the outset is essential.

- A carefully targeted and planned awareness-raising and capacity development programme is almost always needed when initiating a programme of improved local water governance, and requires reinforcement at key points in the process. Existing water strategies at national, intermediate or local level should be used as a starting point for dialogue. Although this process may take time, it provides an excellent opportunity to build relationships and confidence between stakeholders and the facilitation team.
- The facilitation teams should organise workshops during which initial problem identification takes place, using problem trees, as well as visioning, scenario building and strategising. This will enable stakeholders to prioritise water-related problems and identify opportunities to tackle them. This activity will help to define a timetable and the roles and responsibilities for stakeholders and the facilitation teams.
- Semi-structured discussions with main stakeholders can be used to identify existing approaches to managing water resources and any existing water management visions, strategies or plans.
- Effective stakeholder platforms must be created, either by initiating new bodies or by strengthening existing platforms, such as water users' associations. Strengthening or establishing platforms takes time and sensitivity on the part of the facilitation teams especially in regions that have a long history of top-down approaches to water management. Platforms need to be developed at both intermediate and local levels, and in some processes also at national level. Where there are many different water uses, or when tension or conflict exists between water users, it may be necessary to start with more than one platform at any given level.

### **Visioning process**

The visioning process plays an important role in bringing the main stakeholders together and in ensuring that discussions and water management strategies and plans focus on priority problems. This problem-focused approach helps to avoid the risk that strategies and plans do not match either the vision of the main stakeholders or the priority problems in the area. Good communication and sharing of information between stakeholders and stakeholder platforms at different levels will help to align their strategies and plans.

A process for carrying out the activities in the visioning phase is proposed in the box Process for the Visioning Phase. This sequence of activities may change depending on the context, the activities of other projects, and on existing water management plans. It may be necessary to repeat elements of the visioning phase as new information becomes available, or as additional key stakeholders are identified or show an interest in becoming involved. In most cases, this initial vision will need to be refined or even completely changed after the collection and analysis of information in the assessing and strategising phases. It is an iterative process. The pace at which activities are completed should be dictated by the requirements of ensuring a good and inclusive process in the local context. However, a programmatic balance has to be struck by facilitators between allowing time for dialogue and moving the process forward. Visions should be described using a mixture of narrative and numerical targets in a way that is unambiguous and not open to misinterpretation, or this may give rise to conflicts at some future date.

The process of developing a vision has a higher probability of success if it is supported by trained and experienced facilitators, who have been well briefed. It is quite likely that conflict resolution will be needed. It is also important that facilitators ensure that marginalised groups have had a voice in the visioning process and that gender and environmental issues have not been ignored. The whole process needs to be carefully facilitated to ensure that it is not captured and/or dominated by powerful elites

**Methods and tools useful in visioning**

- Problem tree analysis p. 66
- Semi-structured discussions p. 69
- Visioning p. 52
- Scenario building p. 52
- Strategy development p. 57
- Stakeholder identification p. 99

## Process for visioning phase

### 1. Initial contact with main stakeholders at local and intermediate levels

#### Objectives

- To identify and meet relevant stakeholders and their representatives
- To inform them about the approach and ascertain their willingness to take part in the proposed process
- To prepare subsequent steps in the process

#### Activities

- Introduction to the approach, its aims and objectives
- Initial stakeholder analysis
- Semi-structured discussions

#### Tips

- Ensure that stakeholders understand that participation or adequate representation in stakeholder platforms of women and the poorest is essential. Ensure that active measures are in place to have them represented in future activities.

### 2. Problem tree analysis and initial vision development

#### Objectives

- To identify key water resource and water service related problems
- To begin to identify the outlines of local or intermediate water visions, scenarios and strategies for the areas and scales of interest
- To start to identify key information needs for the assessment phase

#### Activities

- Semi-structured discussions and workshops to develop problem tree and initial vision

#### Tips

- These activities can typically be undertaken in a period of one to two days with stakeholders
- Do not assume that participants in meetings and stakeholder platforms have been adequately briefed. Take time to re-introduce the approach and process
- Make sure that women and the poorest are represented. Ask “who is not at this meeting?”

### 3. Begin programme of training and awareness raising

#### Objectives

- Over time, to raise awareness and understanding of key issues related to water

#### Activities

- A structured programme of exposure visits, training, etc.

### 4. Regular informal contact

#### Objectives

- To ensure a good process
- To maintain enthusiasm and buy-in of the main stakeholders between formal activities
- To troubleshoot and resolve conflicts where necessary

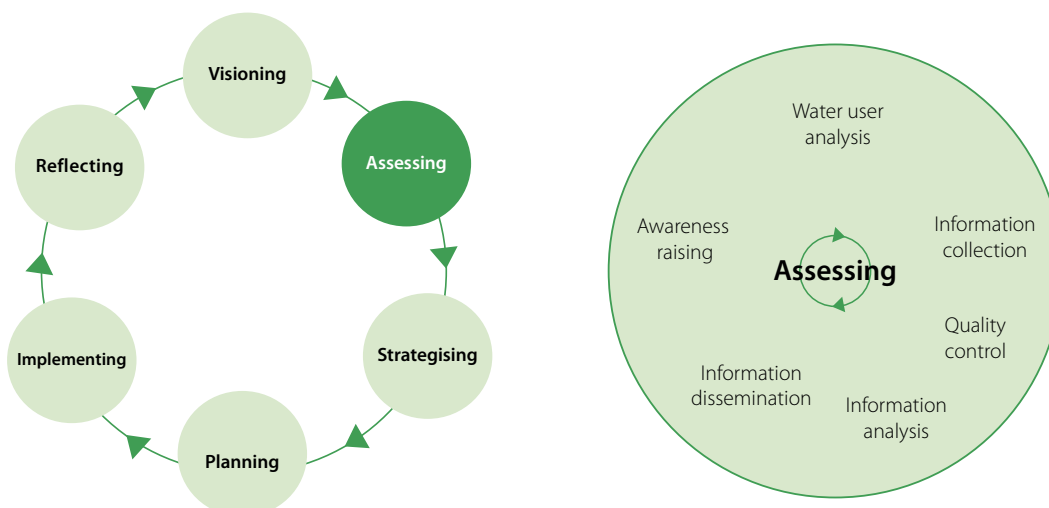
#### Activities

- Regular short visits and telephone contact with the main stakeholders

#### Tips

- Informal interaction between facilitation team members and stakeholders is crucial to a good process. It will be required throughout the cycle

## Phase 2: Assessing



### The aim

The assessing phase is used to ensure that all stakeholders have access to good quality information about water resources, water supply infrastructure, demand for and access to water services, and other important areas of knowledge, including sanitation coverage. This aim of the assessing phase is therefore to carry out a water resource assessment (WRA) to create a common information base that can be used as a basis for informed decision making in subsequent phases of the management cycle.

### The challenge

The main challenge is to develop a common information base that is acceptable to all stakeholders. Without good quality information, stakeholder dialogue is uninformed and stakeholders have no basis to challenge factually incorrect or biased positions. Effective planning is near to impossible if stakeholders are working with their own different information.

Important challenges of the assessing phase include:

- Establishing systems of managing water-related information that make information freely accessible to stakeholders;
- Reaching a common understanding amongst all stakeholders of the key political and institutional processes that determine water-related decision making;
- Promoting frank stakeholder dialogue on factors that influence water management but are ignored because they are too sensitive (e.g. corruption, political interference);
- Dispelling myths and misconceptions on the causes, scale and severity, of water-related problems;
- Building the capacity and confidence of local level stakeholders, so that they can engage effectively in stakeholder dialogue on complex topics related to water supply and demand.

## Getting started

Working with stakeholders, the initial steps in performing a water resource assessment are to:

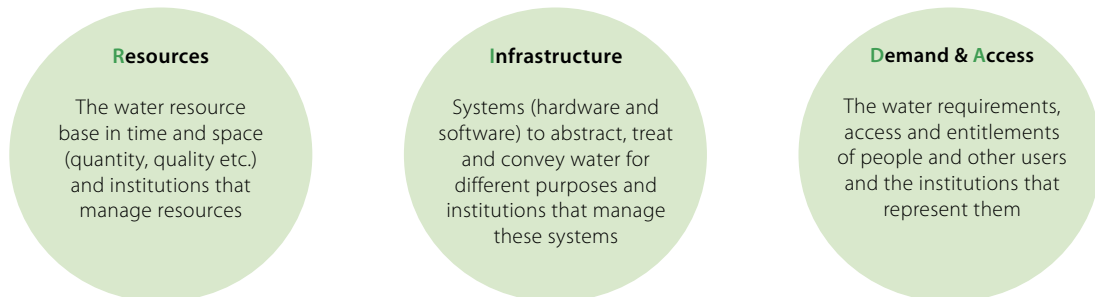
- Specify initial spatial and temporal boundaries for information collection. The spatial boundaries can be physical (such as watersheds) or institutional (such as village boundaries). The temporal boundaries are time limits (past and future) for considering key trends. The focus may be primarily at one particular level (e.g. intermediate), but it is important to collect sufficient information at higher and lower levels to be able to make judgements regarding, for example, upstream and downstream impacts and dependencies. This information may include groundwater recharge estimates; water use allocations or downstream water users' rights. National policy must also be taken into account – there is no point in encouraging local flood irrigation, for example, if that is against national policy;
- Specify details about the information required: such as the required degree of disaggregation, the scale of maps, the levels of precision;
- Identify easily available secondary sources of information (i.e. existing information collected and packaged from other sources), and decide what primary data will have to be collected to fill gaps and to bring existing information up to date;
- Decide on the level of specialist support (if any) and analytical tools that may be needed.

## Key activities and tools

- Make a carefully targeted Water Resource Assessment (WRA) to ensure that relevant information is made available when and where it is needed. Ideally, local-level WRAs are carried out in conjunction with (or after) district/governorate level WRAs, in part because this makes most efficient use of resources.
- Consolidate and quality control information as a critical part of making WRAs, (much secondary information is wrong and/or out of date). It is also quite common for information to have been fabricated, as a result of political pressure or for other reasons.
- Use the Resource-Infrastructure-Demand-Access (RIDA) framework to give structure to water resource assessments. The concept of RIDA is that users (their demand for and access to water) are linked to water resources by water supply infrastructure, and that each of these three system elements (resources, infrastructure, users) has its own set of institutions, boundaries and characteristics that must be addressed to develop a comprehensive and integrated understanding. Based on this analysis it may be necessary to change (expand) the area of interest, for example, to include a major water source outside village boundaries.

### Objectives of the assessing phase

- Carry out a water resource assessment for the area of interest
- Establish a common information base that can be used as a basis for reaching consensus on problem analysis and solution identification
- Ensure that stakeholders have access to water-related information in a form appropriate to their level of knowledge
- Identify myths and misconceptions that might exist on the causes, scale and severity of water-related problems
- Identify opportunities for solving these problems as well as constraints and risks



**Figure 6: The RIDA framework can be used to help to structure water resource assessment, covering resources, infrastructure (including institutions), demand and access.**

- Carry out a user group analysis to identify different categories of water users, their rights and access as well as the degree of responsibility they can take for managing their water resources and related infrastructure. Categories of users may be broad, not necessarily precisely identified groups. Accountability and rights analysis can be a useful tool in this respect.
- Use water balance calculations in conjunction with RIDA to give numerical support to the analysis of water resources and of problems identified in the Visioning Phase. Computer based models may be useful in certain cases, if justified by costs and potential benefits.
- Carry out institutional analysis to identify the functionality of the formal and informal institutions involved in managing water resources and water services. Understanding the decision making processes surrounding water governance is important given the overall aims of the approach. Ideally, institutional analysis at the local level should be linked both to user-group analysis and to wider intermediate level analysis. The RIDA framework should be used to structure the analysis.

#### **Methods and tools useful in assessing**

- Resources, Infrastructure, Demand, Access (RIDA) p. 79
- Quality assurance and control p. 85
- Water balance estimation p. 87
- Time series analysis p. 90
- Modelling p. 92
- Information management p. 94
- Institutional analysis p. 106
- Accountability and rights analysis p. 75
- Problem tree analysis p. 66
- Other participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools p. 64

- Creating an information base and protocols to collect, store, quality control, analyse, and disseminate information is an important part of the assessing phase. Information management software, such as databases, systems analysis tools, spreadsheets and geographic information systems (GIS) can be useful to analyse and present spatial information in forms that support stakeholder dialogue.
- Revisit and finalise problem trees in the light of new information and analysis.
- Develop a village summary sheet to ensure that village-level stakeholders have access to and ownership of final outputs from the assessing phase. An example is given in Appendix 1.

#### **Outputs from the assessing phase**

Outputs from the assessing phase are likely to include:

- An information base (on a computer or well-kept filing system) to support stakeholder dialogue and to improve the quality of outputs from the strategising and planning steps. The system will contain key institutional, societal, and physical information relating to water resources and water services
- Stakeholders who are actively involved in linked platforms and who have resolved potential conflicts over information about causes of problems and opportunities for solving problems
- A summary village report that presents the information held in the information base in a way that is accessible and comprehensible to non-specialists

#### **Assessment process**

The primary aim of the assessment phase is to identify the causes of water-related problems and viable options for solving them. This phase also provides an opportunity for stakeholders to reach a shared understanding of the causes of water-related problems, based on analysis and updating of the problem trees developed during the visioning phase. The main responsibility for undertaking a WRA rests with the stakeholder platforms. However, it is likely that the relevant work will be led by an intermediate-level stakeholder, the facilitation team or a private sector organisation. Whoever leads the process, it is highly desirable that all stakeholders participate actively in the WRA. Although there is no fixed formula or iterative sequence for undertaking a water resource assessment, in generic terms, there are five main steps:

- **Awareness raising**  
Ensure that stakeholders become fully involved. Particular attention has to be given to ensuring that the poor and other marginalised groups are aware of the process and are able to participate or are sufficiently represented.
- **User group analysis**  
Ensure that water resource assessments are poverty and gender focused. This phase revolves around building a complete understanding of different water-user categories, and their rights and responsibilities. Who has access to and who maintains control over water? What divisions exist in society related to wealth, gender, ethnicity or other reasons? This understanding will be used as a basis for disaggregating data collected in subsequent phases.

- **Gathering information and quality control**

Identify and access existing (secondary) sources of information, carry out quality control and consolidate it into an information-base using the RIDA framework. Where necessary, collect and quality control additional primary data, especially for access and demand related issues. Triangulation of data from different sources and levels is useful to ensure internal consistency.

- **Data analysis**

Investigate further the causes of water-related problems, and possible solutions. This can involve a range of analytical and statistical techniques including time series and water balance analysis, structured using the RIDA framework. This phase requires the development of information systems, using spreadsheets and GIS and, in more complex cases, data-bases and modelling.

- **Disseminate** information to key stakeholders in a format that is likely to support stakeholder understanding and involvement.

In gathering, analysing and disseminating information, it is critical that equal weight is given to both hard (technical) and soft (societal and perception based) information. There is a tendency to give more attention to technical information, as it is more easily quantified and analysed. However, techniques and tools to look systematically at softer information should also be used where appropriate.

### **Tips and tricks**

- Take a professional approach to analysing information and involve experts whenever relevant.
- Involve local-level stakeholders in data collection, quality control and analysis. Although they may not have a good understanding of the causes of water problems, they are often the experts as far as local-level realities are concerned.
- Ideally, local-level assessments should be carried out in conjunction with, or after, intermediate level assessments. This makes efficient use of resources and it is usually easier to justify specialist inputs for detailed analysis of societal and technical problems at intermediate level, covering a large number of villages and towns. For similar reasons, there are advantages if an intermediate-level WRA is carried out after a national-level WRA.
- It is essential that information collected during the assessment phase is available in appropriate formats, such as village summary sheets, and is widely agreed. Activities such as visioning and strategising are much more difficult if there is conflict over the reliability of key water related information.

**Process for the assessing phase:****1. Collect, consolidate and quality control already existing available data for the area of interest****Objectives**

- To provide background information to problem analysis and solution identification
- To identify gaps and primary information needs

**Activities**

- Collect existing (secondary) information required for the RIDA analysis (see checklist in RIDA tool)
- Involve stakeholders in information identification, collection, analysis and quality control

**Tips and tricks**

- Brainstorming exercises with stakeholders (from the local and intermediate levels) are the best means of identifying good sources of secondary information
- Comparing information from different sources and verification with local-level stakeholders is usually the best means of quality control

**2. Establish an information base to store information for the area of interest****Objectives**

- To provide an accessible and structured means for storing information – ideally, this will be a computer-based system, but at the local level it could be as simple as a good filing system
- To establish an institutional structure for 'owning' and managing the information base. Depending on context, overall responsibility for managing the information base may lie at local, intermediate level or higher levels
- To establish a system for sharing information between stakeholders at a given level and between different levels

**Activities**

- Set up information management and storage system
- Develop GIS information base
- Establish arrangements for sustainability (e.g. long-term financial support for information base managers and for maintaining and replacing hardware)

**Tips**

- Only include quality-controlled information in the information base.
- Use the RIDA framework when setting up the information base

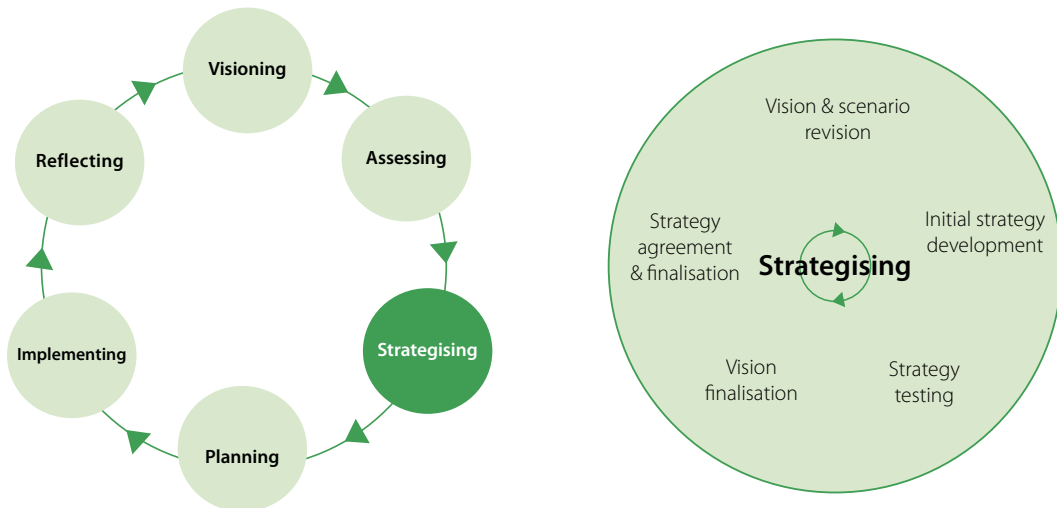
**3. Carry out primary data collection and analysis for the area of interest****Objectives**

- To update and fill gaps in the secondary data
- To collect key information relating to access, rights, responsibilities, demand and perceptions
- To help identify the causes of water-related problems and also of potential solutions

**Activities**

- Awareness raising and training of local teams
- Information collection using PRA and other tools
- More in-depth information gathering and analysis with the accountability/rights analysis tool
- Collation and analysis of information
- Entry of information into information base
- Use of a range of analytical tools

## Phase 3: Strategising



### The aim

A strategy is a medium to long-term planning framework within which specific activities are described. Over time, an effective strategy leads to achievement of the vision. The aim of the strategising phase is for stakeholders to decide on a broad range of practical actions that can be taken to achieve their vision – under a range of possible future scenarios.

### The challenge

For any given scenario there may be different strategies that might enable the vision to be achieved. The aim of the first three phases of the process is to produce strategies that have a high-level of stakeholder ownership and that take account of the uncertainty that exists in water resource availability and demand. It is also important that strategies take account of the specific needs and demands of marginalised social groups and the environment.

#### Objectives of the strategising phase

- Stakeholders reach consensus on a comprehensive water-related vision and a set of scenarios against which strategies to achieve the vision can be assessed
- Stakeholders use information from the assessing phase to evaluate the viability, risks and potential negative trade-offs associated with the vision and strategies
- Stakeholders reach consensus on a single preferred strategy to be used in the planning phase

The main challenge in developing water resource strategies is to take full account of the inevitable uncertainty that relates to any decision. Water resources and demand come with inherent uncertainty and variability and this has long term implications. In recent years, “scenario building” has become increasingly popular in water-related planning. This is primarily because

it covers all possible outcomes, “worst case” as well as more likely or hoped for outcomes, and therefore explicitly addresses the impacts of uncertainty. This contrasts with traditional approaches to planning, based on “best guess” projections of trends in key factors such as water resource availability, the condition of infrastructure and societal demand.

### **Getting started**

To ensure that activities in the strategising phase develop into a high quality process and outputs, it is essential that information that was collected during the assessment phase is widely available in appropriate formats. Information prepared during the assessment phase should be circulated well in advance of the first strategising activities. In preparing for this phase, ensure once again that all stakeholders are aware of what is happening, and understand the crucial nature of this phase in identifying a medium term strategy that has direct implications for them. Special attention is required to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised members of the community are involved.

### **Key activities and tools**

- Reassess and amend vision. In practice, first visions tend to be over-optimistic and need to be repeatedly adjusted in the light of assessing, scenario building and strategy development.
- Scenario building helps stakeholders to come to grips with the inherent uncertainty involved in planning for improved water management and/or water service delivery. Scenarios represent a range of possible future circumstances against which strategies and plans to achieve the vision must be assessed.
- Strategy development recognises that there are many possible strategies, each of which has different levels of cost, risk and positive or negative trade-offs. The potential of each strategy to be adapted in the light of new information also varies.
- In general, testing or evaluating strategies against scenarios and visions, using information from the assessing phase, requires specialist knowledge as checks need to be made on, for example, the availability of safe water resources and the capacity of infrastructure. Modelling approaches can be very helpful during this activity, particularly in assessing and evaluating different combinations of scenarios and strategies.
- Economic and financial cost-benefit analysis is an important tool to help assess risk, and to weigh the relative merits of various approaches. As with all modelling approaches, this also calls for specialist skills and inputs.

### **Strategising process**

Traditional approaches to solving water-related problems are based on processes of strategy development that include:

- Assessment of present and future needs for water and of various means of meeting these needs;
- Identification and resolution of conflicts between different uses and users;
- Seeking sustainable options that are economically viable and politically and socially acceptable;
- Learning from experience as different approaches are tried.

The strategising phase in our framework includes all these activities. However, they take place within a process of stakeholder dialogue that has some additional attributes.

- It is problem and vision focused, addressing clearly identified problems, within a context of achieving a clearly articulated long term vision.
- It acknowledges that there are always multiple paths to resolving problems and achieving visions, and that deciding between them is, at least partly, a political issue.
- It recognises that different courses of action are associated with different levels of risk, and that effective planning seeks to minimise immediate and long-term risks.

During the strategising phase, stakeholders, working with the process facilitation teams:

- Revisit and update the initial vision that was produced in the visioning phase. This revision takes place during a vision development workshop, at which the vision is made SMART (specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound), taking account of information collected during the assessing phase and updated problem trees.
- Review and update water-related scenarios from the visioning phase and also make them SMART. If scenarios were not produced during the visioning phase, they will need to be developed from scratch in a scenario building workshop.
- Develop a number of broad strategies, to test whether the vision can be met under all scenarios. If not, the vision may need to be adapted. Modelling approaches and cost-benefit analysis can be used to make a more formal assessment of the likely impact of various strategies on the vision.
- Undertake more detailed strategy development, with the aim of identifying a series of activities which, taken together will allow the vision achieved in full. This should result in a preferred strategy (or a set of strategies) able to achieve the vision in the most probable scenario(s), and preferably in all of them.

As in earlier phases of the management cycle, awareness raising is crucial, so that key stakeholders understand the benefits of the approach and understand what is expected of them. Further capacity building may also be necessary. It is essential to identify the main assumptions and critical factors through the scenario building process to provide a baseline for reflection and lesson learning. Taken together, the vision, scenarios, and strategies form a valuable part of the final local water management strategy document.

#### **Outputs from the strategising phase**

Outputs from the strategising phase are likely to include:

- A detailed water development vision that has the support of all stakeholders, is consistent with national and regional water policies and recognises biophysical societal constraints on water supply and demand
- A set of narrative scenarios based on important and uncertain factors that affect water management and service delivery but are outside the control of key stakeholders
- A strategy or set of strategies for achieving the vision, with a high level of stakeholder ownership and able to be used as the basis for detailed planning

#### **Output from phases 1-3**

- A local water management strategy document for the area of interest, consisting of a vision, key data from assessments; scenarios and an agreed strategy

## Process for strategising phase

### 1. Visioning and scenario building workshop

#### Objectives

- To develop a commonly owned SMART vision of water resources and water services in the area of interest
- To develop a set of commonly owned scenarios for use in subsequent strategising

#### Activities

- SMART vision development workshop
- Scenario building workshop

#### Tips

- The time required for the workshop will typically be one to two days
- Both visioning and scenario building require guidance from facilitators, and specialists to produce high quality outputs. This is particularly true of making both vision and scenarios SMART
- High quality, agreed, accessible, and appropriate information is crucial for these activities

### 2. Analysis and refinement of vision and scenarios

#### Objectives

- To check the internal consistency of scenarios, to add data and to make them SMART
- To write up the vision and scenarios
- To agree a definitive version of scenarios among stakeholders

#### Activities

- Prepare a summary scenario building report
- Share draft and finalising summary report

#### Tips

- It is essential that information provided to stakeholders is in a format and language that they can easily understand. Good communications skills and materials from the facilitation and capacity development team are as important as capacity development and training for stakeholders

### 3. Strategy development workshop

#### Objectives

- To develop a set of broad strategies that will allow the vision to be achieved under different scenarios
- To select the best strategy for further development

#### Activities

- Strategy workshop

#### Tips

- The time required for this workshop is typically one day
- Strategising is a complex process that requires active facilitation to achieve good results. Participants must be supported in working through the logic of their suggestions and in re-formulating them if necessary
- If advanced tools such as modelling and cost-benefit analysis are used, this should not be done during workshops, and the results must be presented in an appropriate format

### 4. Finalisation of strategy, write up and feedback

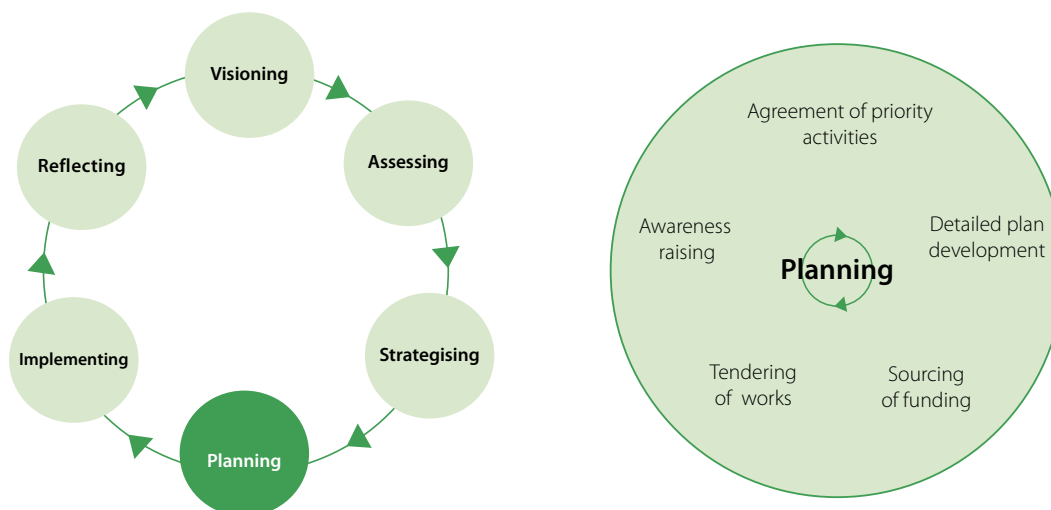
#### Activities

- Make favoured strategy SMART
- Discuss and agree any final variations with small group of stakeholders at local and intermediate level
- Write up and formally deliver strategy to stakeholders

#### Tips

- The final strategy with supporting materials is an important document and should be finished to a high quality
- The formal presentation of the final document should be attended by stakeholders from both intermediate and local level

## Phase 4: Planning



### The aim

A plan is a coherent set of decisions relating to the use of resources that, taken together and done well, leads to achievement of objectives. A plan includes an explicit statement of the methods to be used, costs, responsibilities, schedules of activities and agreed targets. Planning is a final preparatory step for turning a strategy into reality, preparing in detail for implementation. The aim of the planning phase is to select priority activities from the agreed strategy, to develop high quality plans for implementing them, and to ensure sufficient funding for their implementation.

### The challenge

Because of the broad, long-term nature of the vision and strategy, there will normally be many activities within a strategy which have to be prioritised and implemented over an extended period. Often limited financing is available and additional sources of funding need to be identified.

#### Objectives of the planning phase

The objectives of the planning step are to:

- Come to an agreed prioritisation and scheduling of the different activities that make up the strategy, and that taken together will achieve the vision
- Develop plans for activities and identify and secure funding
- Maintain a sense of stakeholder ownership for the larger process while focusing on specific actions

Planning is particularly challenging, because of the level of precision and detail required in making realistic plans that can be implemented. Skills are required for fund-raising and specialist knowledge is needed for project implementation. Moreover, what has been, until this point, a cohesive process involving all stakeholders, starts to cater for specific sub-groups, creating relative winners and losers.

A key challenge, therefore, is to maintain the broader process of dialogue while producing high quality project plans and getting them funded.

### Getting started

The first step in the planning phase is to convert the agreed strategy into a prioritised and phased set of activities, which have the potential to achieve the vision. Preparation for this step consists primarily of ensuring that there is clarity about the preferred strategy, and that the relevant specialist skills are available for drawing up, costing and evaluating the activities that make up the strategy.

#### Outputs from the planning phase

The main outputs from the planning phase are:

- Detailed work and financial plans for specific activities within the strategy
- Approvals from organisations funding planned work
- Agreement on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and other actors (e.g. contractors)
- Agreement on institutional arrangements for managing and maintaining new infrastructure

### Key activities and tools

Several workshops are required, with facilitation to ensure a smooth transition from the generalities of strategy development to the specifics of project planning. It is essential that stakeholders whose projects are not prioritised for immediate action understand the reasons why, feel that decisions have been taken in an honest and transparent manner and continue to feel part of the wider process of implementing the strategy and achieving the vision.

#### Methods and tools useful in planning

- PRA tools **p. 64**
- Problem tree analysis **p. 66**
- SWOT analysis **p. 71**
- Planning tools **p. 60**
- Prioritisation and ranking **p. 73**
- Cost-benefit analysis **p. 96**

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools can be used during workshops for prioritising and planning. Problem trees can also be used to help identify goals, objectives and exact areas of intervention, and to outline the scope of proposed activities. Existing problem trees can be refined, or new ones developed for specific activities. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities, threats) can be very useful in identifying risks – and focusing on the potential within communities and other stakeholders.

Funding proposals and action plans have to be drafted as outputs of this phase. While materials for these will come from workshops, the actual drafting should be done by a small team.

### **Planning process**

The activities listed above need to become part of a broader process to reach agreement on plans and priorities. A number of steps can be identified to achieve this.

- Working with the stakeholders in a prioritisation workshop to develop a ranked and phased list of all the activities (together with their associated stakeholder groups) that together make up the preferred strategy. Criteria and justifications for selecting the preferred strategy have to be communicated to the wider community affected by such choices. Transparency and openness are crucial to maintain buy-in to the process by all relevant groups.
- Depending on the number of stakeholders and individuals involved, this may require a number of workshops to cover all the stakeholders, sectors or user groups identified in previous phases. Each workshop identifies potential projects.
- This is followed by a synthesis workshop to bring together all groups and identify priority projects.
- Once priorities have been agreed, planning workshops can be carried out with the stakeholders who will be involved in each activity or group of activities. Participants identify background ideas and materials for detailed plans, as well as detailed project descriptors. These include project-specific goals, objectives, activities, expected outputs, key stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, budgets and funding requirements. Problem trees, PRA tools and SWOT analysis are all useful tools for these workshops.
- Cost-benefit analysis of different interventions is a crucial tool to help in decision making. It is important to ensure that these analyses and subsequent decisions do not negatively impact on marginalised groups.
- Following the prioritisation and planning workshops, a smaller group works to develop action plans and funding proposals. This group should be small enough to work effectively but at the same time remain representative. Ideally it should contain members of representative organisations such as CBOs, as well as other stakeholders and technical support staff where required.

During the preparation of detailed plans, it is important to identify and address sustainability issues, particularly relating to capacity development.

Competitive tendering procedures should be used for activities that require large capital expenditure or in, for example, the preparation of contracts for civil works to ensure that costs are minimised. It is also important to ensure that there is transparency with regard to the financial plans and tendering processes. All stakeholders should have access to financial information and to cost-benefit and value-for-money analysis. If relevant, steps should also be taken at this stage to minimise the likelihood that potential benefits are captured by elites.

The planning process should consider requirements for capacity development for individuals or institutions that may have to take on new roles and/or responsibilities.

Continued emphasis is needed on communication, dialogue and information sharing with the wider stakeholder group involved in developing plans to achieve the vision. This should be institutionalised into an ongoing process, closely linked to the learning process in the reflecting phase.

## **Process for the planning phase**

### **1. Prioritisation workshop(s)**

#### **Objectives**

- To develop a priority list of activities related to the chosen strategy
- To identify stakeholders for each activity

#### **Activities**

- Prioritisation workshop(s) with different stakeholders and water users

#### **Tips**

- These workshops will typically last for one day each
- Developing a schedule of activities helps to show people that their interests will be addressed eventually, even if they have not been given priority for immediate implementation

### **2. Planning workshop(s)**

#### **Objectives**

- To identify the outlines of project activities: goals, objectives, activities, outputs, stakeholders
- To identify members to join the project/proposal writing team

#### **Activities**

- Problem tree (specific for activity)
- Develop list of specific goals, objectives, activities – problem statement
- Analyse power and knowledge of stakeholders
- SWOT analysis – focused on objectives (for risk assessment and to identify stakeholders own potentials)
- Develop an action plan for proposed projects

### **3. Development of action plans and funding proposals**

#### **Objectives**

- To have a clear, well written project action plan and/or funding proposal

#### **Activities**

- Write action plan, and where necessary a funding proposal
- Communicate with wider group of involved stakeholders, particularly where decision making is required

#### **Tips**

- Considerable time may be needed to write and negotiate, particularly in large or complex proposals. It is important to keep stakeholders up to date on the latest developments in a pro-active manner

### **4. Tendering and awarding contracts for activities**

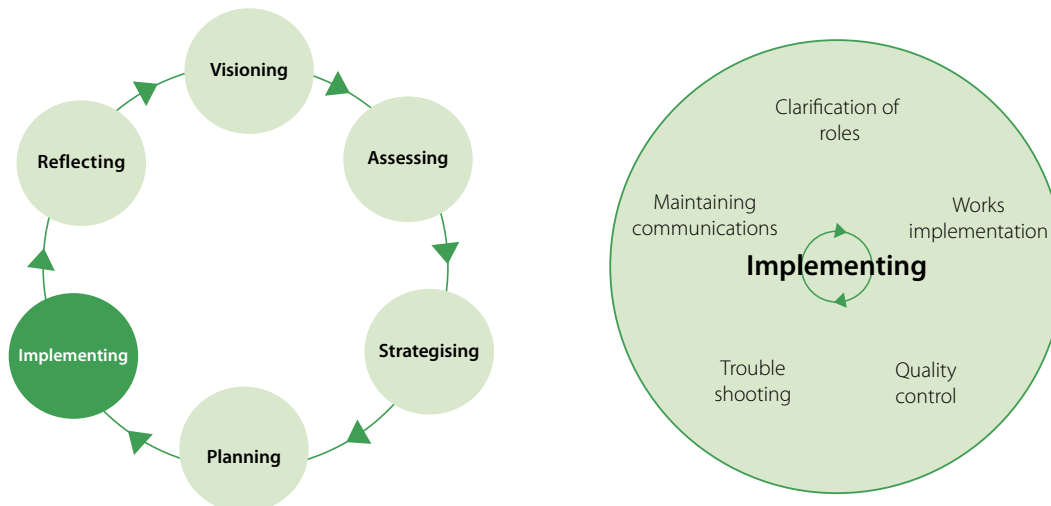
#### **Objectives**

- To identify, in a transparent manner, a preferred contractor to carry out work

#### **Activities**

- Establish a tendering procedure – ensure a legal and transparent process (announcements in newspapers etc.) – under the control of the recipients (within the rules of funding agencies)

## Phase 5: Implementing



### The aim

Implementation is the phase where visions and plans become a reality. This is where programmes are put into effect, where infrastructure is strengthened and where new ways of working are introduced. The aim is to achieve objectives, with a focus on effectiveness, cost-efficiency and quality.

### The challenge

Implementation brings a new set of challenges to ensure high quality work, transparent financial arrangements, effective capacity development and all the aspects of good project management. Day to day control of implementation is likely to be with specialist agencies or companies. The role of the facilitation team is to ensure that stakeholder involvement and a focus on the poor continue (so that benefits are not captured by elites) and that lessons learned during implementation are incorporated into the management cycle.

#### Objectives of the implementing phase

- To manage the implementation of the activities identified and planned for in previous phases in an effective, cost-efficient, and high quality way
- To ensure that new infrastructure, new institutions and new sources of water are sustainable in every respect
- To ensure that any unforeseen conflicts that might arise during this stage are resolved
- To ensure transparency with regard to finances
- To ensure that potential benefits are not captured by elites at the expense of poorer social groups

### Getting started

A number of actions need to be taken before work can begin to implement the detailed action plan. These include:

- Scheduling activities and identifying potential bottlenecks
- Ensuring that mechanisms exist to handle unforeseen problems or conflicts.
- Establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, linked to the reflecting phase.

The facilitation team is unlikely to lead these activities, although they should remain involved and support the overall process.

### Key activities and tools

A number of tools have been included in Chapter 5. However, these offer only a brief introduction to complex processes, which must be carried out within the norms and legal frameworks of the country.

Key decisions, activities and tools for this phase include:

- Deciding the extent to which plans are to be implemented by stakeholders and/or users. Costs can be minimised and ownership can be enhanced if stakeholders and/or users take a high level of responsibility for implementing a plan.
- Activities which by their nature are one-off or short-term, such as constructing infrastructure or strengthening the capacity of an institution (which are different in nature to continuous or long-term activities such as operation and maintenance), are best handled using methods and tools that can be found in project management manuals.
- Monitoring and evaluation, and quality control are important components of implementing a plan. When work is done by stakeholders and/or users, agreed quality standards must be met. When work is done under contract, quality standards should be specified during the tendering process and in subsequent contracts. In some cases, there will be minimum legal standards.

#### Tools useful in the implementing phase

- Actor and task analysis p. 102
- Quality assurance and control p. 85
- Capacity development p. 113
- Conflict management p. 121
- Monitoring and evaluation p. 125
- Process documentation p. 130

#### Process for the implementing phase

Typical activities for the facilitation and capacity development team include:

- Ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders
- Maintaining the wider dialogue related to the vision, and ensuring that the activities undertaken in this step feed into it

There is no indicative time frame for this step, as it is entirely context specific.

## Implementing process

There are no large workshop type activities for implementation, expect where these are part of activities such as capacity development or awareness raising. A small, representative implementation team should be identified from stakeholder groups directly involved in the work.

### Outputs from the implementing phase

The main outputs of implementation are:

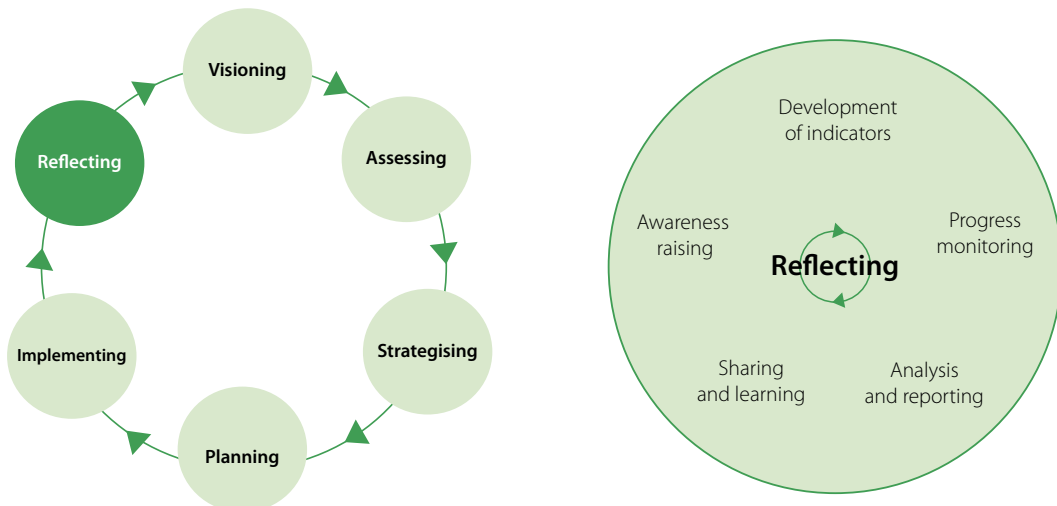
- Projects carried out within budget to a high quality and in accordance with agreed plans
- Clear agreements and understandings about roles, responsibilities and ownership of projects
- Results from M&E that support reflection and learning

This group should be small enough to enable effective decision making, but large enough to ensure that affected stakeholders are kept up to date on progress. This is particularly important in addressing problems and making remedial decisions.

Activities where stakeholder involvement is particularly appropriate include:

- Monitoring and evaluation, quality control, capacity development to ensure sustainability.
- Ensuring that relevant outputs of M&E are fed into learning and reflection within the wider process of achieving the vision.
- Troubleshooting and conflict resolution where necessary.
- Communication and awareness raising about activities and about the links between activities and the wider vision.

## Phase 6: Reflecting



### The aim

To take time out of processes for explicit learning and sharing. The aim of the reflecting phase is to build an effective process of continuous reflection and learning from experience into the management cycle – and hence into the day to day application of water governance.

### The challenge

Reflection is illustrated within the management cycle as a specific phase between implementation and visioning – underlining the objective of institutionalised learning and adaptive management. However, in practice, reflection is also a cross-cutting theme at every stage of the cycle. The challenge is to build a habit of reflection, learning and adaptation into all activities in the management cycle.

This means:

#### Objectives of the reflecting phase

- To build capacity for reflection and learning into stakeholder platforms, and into interactions between platforms at local and intermediate levels
  - To institute process documentation activities to support learning
  - To create a framework for information and knowledge management, and for communications that support learning
- 
- Persuading busy people to take time out from their day to day tasks to reflect in a structured way based upon their experiences; and
  - Ensuring that this reflection leads to real changes in how things are done.

## Getting started

Monitoring and learning frameworks are almost always seen as a “good idea”, but are often ignored or downgraded in importance as resources and focus shift to “doing things”. The most important issue is therefore to create a desire for learning and a feeling among stakeholders that by creating mechanisms for learning and sharing lessons, they can improve their own lives – be it as service users or providers. Learning is an important part of the wider empowerment and sustainability agenda set by this framework of guidelines.

Involving poor and marginalised people in this process is particularly challenging, as they often have the least time and resources to attend meetings and take part in the necessary processes for reflection and learning.

### Tools useful in the reflecting phase

- Information management p. 94
- Process documentation p. 130
- Monitoring and evaluation p. 125
- Benchmarking p. 127
- Semi-structured discussion p. 69

## Key activities and tools

The main element required for reflection and learning is a stakeholder platform. Creating awareness of the importance of structured learning and adaptation in such platforms should begin at the start of the whole process, as part of the visioning phase. A range of information management tools exists to support learning and reflection, including process documentation; monitoring frameworks; benchmarking; information management. However, it is important that the platforms are not overwhelmed by inappropriately complex information. A key role of the facilitation team is to mediate the flow of information between stakeholders at different levels to ensure that it is appropriate and accessible. This is true both in the initial phases and in long-term maintenance work.

## Reflecting process

Reflection takes place whenever a group of people decides to look objectively at things that happened and to understand why they happened, and the manner in which they came about. Allowing space for structured and unstructured learning throughout the whole management cycle is essential. This can be created in the form of brief reflection periods at the end of each major activity (workshops etc.), aided by process documentation highlighting changes and exploring some of the reasons behind them. Learning should be supported by monitoring key indicators. However, care should be taken to ensure that monitoring is light and appropriate to the needs of the local stakeholders, rather than designed to meet the needs of outside agencies. Sharing and comparing experiences between stakeholders with similar interests and activities (for example between village CBOs) can be a powerful tool for reflection, and can be supported by benchmarking. Sharing experiences and structured learning between stakeholders at different levels (i.e. village and governorate) is also essential. This needs to be mainstreamed into the wider process of communication and information flow between platforms at different levels.

### **Outputs from the reflecting phase**

- Active participation of stakeholders in learning and reflection
- Ongoing process of information exchange between key stakeholders
- Framework showing progress towards achievement of the vision, including quantitative and qualitative indications

It is important, if the learning process is to be effective, that those who take part in reflecting and learning activities have a sufficiently powerful representative function within the stakeholder institution from which they are drawn, so that results and conclusions are fed back, acted on and lead to change. In the absence of such an internal institutional process, learning is likely to remain at the level of individuals only.

### **Process for the reflecting phase**

#### **Objectives**

- Active involvement of stakeholders in learning and reflection
- Ongoing process of information exchange between key stakeholders

#### **Activities**



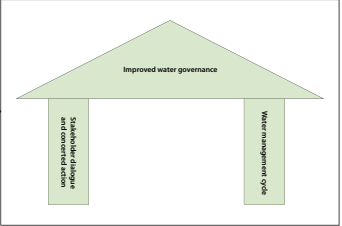
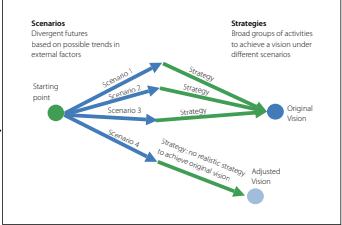

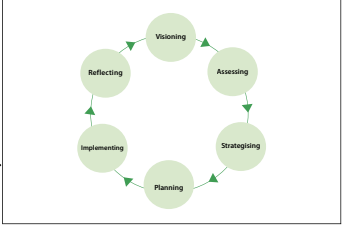

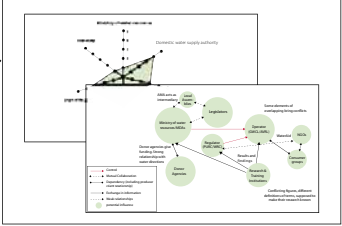
- Raise awareness of learning and reflection within multi-stakeholder platforms
- Support learning objectives within wider information management systems (i.e. monitor key indicators)
- Make information products and outputs of process documentation available to stakeholders in an appropriate format
- Identify and develop information and knowledge management processes and procedures, including good and frequent communication between levels

#### **Tips**

- The resources which can be put towards reflection and learning vary greatly between stakeholders and levels. At intermediate level, reflection will need to be underpinned by formal information management systems and communication strategies. At local level it can be more informal, although it should, as much as possible, be based on the outputs of a locally owned monitoring programme
- It is important to ensure that dialogue continues between levels (as well as within each level), as it is here that the interplay between policy and practice is observed most closely



# Overview of the EMPOWERS Approach

Source Documents	Description	Concepts, methods and tools
 <p>Background and key concepts</p>  <p>Guidelines, methods and tools: Chapters 1-3</p>	<p><b>Overall Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve local water governance and the access of the poor to water and water services</li> </ul> <p>↓</p> <p><b>Fundamental building blocks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory processes and stakeholder dialogue that encourage communication both horizontally between stakeholders at same level and vertically between, stakeholders at different levels.</li> <li>Strategic management that is based upon agreed information and decision making that is transparent and open to public scrutiny.</li> </ul>	 
 <p>Guidelines, methods and tools: Chapter 4</p>	<p><b>A strategic approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A framework for stakeholder dialogue based on programme cycle management.</li> <li>A strategic approach to improved planning based on combined visioning, scenario building and strategy development.</li> </ul>	
 <p>Guidelines, methods and tools: Chapter 5</p>	<p><b>A water governance toolbox</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive set of tools and methods for use in the EMPOWERS approach</li> <li>With practical tips and tricks, as well as pointers for further information sources</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Outputs and outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed SMART Visions and Strategies</li> <li>Achievable Plans that take implicit account of uncertainty</li> <li>A shared base of agreed information</li> <li>Improved pro-poor water management and service delivery based on better relations and communications between stakeholders</li> </ul>	