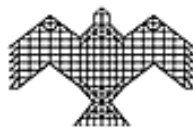


Establishment of Zonal Water Partnerships (ZWP) in India



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Program Co-ordinators: N. Shantha Mohan and N.Sashikumar

Rapporteur and Documentation: Sailen Routray, K.G.Sreeja and Zonal Water Partnership Co-ordinators

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1 Introduction

India is a very large country with an extensive boundary that traverses several square kilometers and hence envisioning India as a country partnership below the global water partnership (GWP) is not only impractical, but also will not be able to present a viable country plan for effectively managing its water resources. The country also has a diverse population, with multiple identities of caste, race, religion and gender along with the constitutional state identities, varied conditions at the ground level with multiple priorities and needs which makes the task of creating a master plan for the entire country through participative processes even more difficult. Given the fact that the country has such a vast and diverse population, the process of developing a plan for water management through the participation of several stakeholders is a complex process and calls for astute planning. In this regard, it is not out of context to consider India a region and develop Zonal Water Partnerships (ZWPs) representing the North, South, East, West, Central and the Northeast that have an independent geographical region equivalent of many of the average countries in the region and elsewhere. However these regions are extremely heterogeneous in terms of their water usage and requirements as well as in the policy, governance and institutional structures that govern them. It must be noted that the South India Water Partnership has already been established and is working on the common issues that has emerged in the southern states for the last three years. It was proposed that the India Country Partnership and the South India Water Partnership (SIWP) along with professionals will facilitate the formation and strengthening of these ZWPs.

2 Objectives

2.1 Objective

- Formation of ZWPs in the North, East, West, Central and North East regions
- Mobilize GWP membership in the ZWPs representing all the sectors.
- Facilitate the establishment of equitable and effective governance structures in the ZWPs.
- Enable ZWPs to provide a viable critical constituency for the India region that can serve as the zonal focal points for both GWP and India Water Partnership.
- Facilitate the building of capacity in IWRM and its application for representative members of the zone.
- Facilitate experience sharing, networking and the development of ZWP work plans
- Support the building and strengthening of Area Water Partnerships (AWPs)
- Evolve mechanisms to represent themselves in the IWP and GWP decision making processes.

2.2 Target Audience

- Professionals of water resources sector (NGOs, Networks, Public Institutions, Research and Training Institutions, Government Representatives etc.)

3 Proceedings of Consultation Meeting

3.1 Establishing and Strengthening Zonal Water Partnerships in India, May 29 and 30, 2007 NIAS, Bangalore

Introductory Remarks

The proceedings of the first day involved a series of presentations followed by discussions. The introductory remarks were made by Dr. Prem Vashistha, Visiting Professor, Institute of Human Development, and Executive Secretary, India Water Partnership. The Institute of Human Development, New Delhi is currently the host institute for IWP, with Prof Hashim as the Chairman, and Mr. Vashistha as the Executive Secretary. He introduced Global Water Partnership (GWP) and India Water Partnership (IWP) to the other participants at the workshop, and oriented them regarding the need and importance of the Zonal Water Partnerships (ZWPs). Dr. Vashistha introduced the IWP as a country level water partnership that contributes to the broad goals envisioned by the Global Water Partnership. He said that the IWP has been trying to develop strong networks with partner organizations; but the experience has been mixed due to the fact that the host organizations have been changing, and the initiatives have faltered due to the lack of strong and sustained efforts. He revealed that The Institute of Human Development is keen on sustaining the efforts at strengthening the IWP while it is being hosted at the IHD. He introduced the workshop briefly and the aims of the workshop, and said that the attempt to initiate the establishment of ZWPs is the result of some imaginative work by Dr. N. Shantha Mohan, Professor, NIAS, leading to a grant from GWP; the workshop, he informed, has the primary objective of initiating the work of the ZWPs. He emphasized the problems attendant upon working in partnerships that are interdisciplinary in nature and the need to address them successfully.

Inaugural Address

The inaugural address was delivered by Dr. B V Sreekantan, Honorary Professor, NIAS. Dr. Sreekantan began his presentation by extending a warm welcome to all the participants of the workshop on behalf of the NIAS. In the first part of his presentation he focused on the genesis and history of NIAS and its various activities. He elaborated on how NIAS grew out of the vision of late Sir J.R.D. Tata who wanted to establish a multidisciplinary research institute that can integrate knowledge from various fields for wider dissemination and policy related interventions by building an informed cadre of leaders. Later on

in his presentation he emphasized the fact that water along with fire was one of the most worshipped elements in ancient civilizations that flourished on the banks of rivers. He identified water scarcity as one of the biggest threats to the sustainability of contemporary human civilization. He informed the participants that while the total quantity of water available on the earth was huge, the actual amount of fresh water available is less than one percent of the total. More than 70 % of the fresh water obtained through precipitation is discharged into the sea. Water is also unique in that it has no substitute and cannot be 'created' or industrially manufactured. He said that water scarcity is compounded by water pollution, and the only scientific way of tackling the water problem is to adopt the four R's:

- Redistribute from excess to deficit areas,
- Recovery of all the used water,
- Recycling through partial or complete purification, and
- Reuse.

All this involves technological and management issues as well as political astuteness and will. He cited the example of New York where about three decades ago restaurants would only serve water on demand, because the Hudson River flowing through the city was so polluted that there was a scarcity.



Prof. B.V. Sreekantan and Dr. Prem Vashistha at the inaugural address

Today, water management in U.S.A. has received priority, and surface water is being managed scientifically and extensively as evident from the intensive use of the water of rivers like Colorado. He said that the main technological challenges in water management involve the mapping of water resources, both surface and underground, using advanced satellite technology, construction of major as well as minor dams to harness the water, rainwater harvesting, desalination of sea water, desilting of tanks, drip irrigation, and the interconnecting of rivers. All the above practices, except interconnection of rivers are technically feasible and have been successfully adopted by various

countries. Certain questions still persist over the technological feasibility and desirability of connecting rivers. On the management side, there needs to be a fundamental change in attitude from regarding water as a free commodity, to understanding that water is going to cost in the future. Both the government and corporate sector needs to take a more proactive role in water management, with the industries being compelled to adopt water conservation practices. Architects and engineers need to design buildings, with provisions for conservation and recycling of water. Desalination also needs to be made mandatory in coastal areas. After this brief orientation to the sector, Prof. Sreekantan briefly introduced the GWP as an international network involved in water resource management, which promotes the concept of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) through the creation of various fora at global, regional and national levels, directed towards facilitating change and systematic accumulation, and dissemination of knowledge to support the process of change.

Dr. N. Shantha Mohan, Professor, NIAS, gave a presentation focused on the objectives and the outcomes of the workshop. But before doing this she supplemented the introduction to the GWP provided earlier by Dr. Sreekantan, and she focused on the multi-stakeholder nature of the networks being built by the GWP as well as its mission, vision and strategy. According to her the main objective of the workshop was to introduce and discuss the concept of zonal water partnerships. In the South Asian context, India is unique because of its large size, population, geographical and cultural diversity, and state identities. Since it is impossible to capture the priorities and needs of different areas, within one forum, the idea of different zonal partnerships, which together form the national partnership, was envisaged. The other countries forming the South Asian Partnership, due to their smaller size have only one country wide partnership. China on the other hand, has a regional level partnership at the country level, with each state being treated as a country. While India has not opted for such a radical approach, the concept of zonal level partnerships is being promoted as it is suitable to India's needs.

The ZWPs can be further decentralized to AWP; The ZWPs are responsible for prioritizing issues from the AWP, and feeding into the plans of the IWP. Currently the South India Water Partnership has been established and other partnerships are planned in North, West, East, Central and North East zones. The main issues which need to be discussed during the workshop include how to form partnerships and sustain them in a fluid form, how to mobilize people using inclusive and just processes, governance mechanisms to manage the ZWPs, capacity building among partners, initiation of the AWP and representation of the ZWPs in decision making and making the IWP a critical constituency in decision making in water related issues.

Presentation on Global Water Partnership

Dr. Shantha Mohan gave a full presentation on the GWP. The GWP was established in 1996, in Stockholm, to start dialogue between people united by a concern to develop, manage and share the water resources, and also to support countries in sustainable water management. The GWP is a small flexible organization, operating with a staff of about 20 people at the permanent office, with an emphasis on good governance. Partner organizations are involved in hosting the different Regional and Country partnerships. There is a global annual meet and regional biennial meetings. The tenth anniversary of the partnership was an occasion of much reflection and stocktaking. The attempt all this while has been to ensure flexibility and good governance structures. Single annual general meetings by the partners and biennial meetings for the regional partnerships are an integral part of such processes. The strategic plan of GWP for the period 2004-2008 that aims to ensure an integrated approach to water resource management which is applied as a means to foster equitable and sustainable use of water. This aim can be operationalized through five consolidated outputs: IWRM water policy and strategy development facilitated at various levels, IWRM programmes and tools developed for regional and country needs, linkages between GWP and other networks, sectors and issues (for instance in India, the linkages between water and poverty need to be explored) and Water Partnerships established and consolidated at various levels, and the effective development and management of the GWP network.

The GWP's definition of IWRM can be understood as a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources to maximise the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. IWRM is supposed to promote economic efficiency, social equity and environmental sustainability. The emphasis is on involving a broad range of people in water management policies and decision making. Water resource management means different things to different people, and to different areas. The problems of drought-prone and flood-prone areas are different. Different sets of people like engineers, lawyers, environmentalists and politicians are also concerned with different aspects of water management. The challenge is to understand all these concerns and develop appropriate practices. IWRM not only involves all aspects of the natural water system, but also all sectors like industry, and agriculture, which are dependent on water systems. It tries to fit in within existing national objectives, constraints and institutional hierarchies, and also tries to take into account temporal and spatial variation in distribution of water. IWRM is based on equity, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. It promotes the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, coherence and integration, equity, ethics and accountability for good governance. The key tools used are in existing institutional and legislative frameworks, transboundary organization and capacity building. The key tools involved in such a process have been policies, legislative frameworks, creation

of institutional frameworks and transboundary organizations, and building institutional capacities and human resources. According to her the South Asian regional partnership is faced with special problems like drinking water shortage, pressure of population, droughts etc. The partnership has also however successfully pioneered concepts like Area Water Partnership as a successful way of taking local voices and concerns to regional and national levels. The experiences of the AWP have been varied, and lessons from their success and failures should be learnt. There are over 400 partner organizations in South Asia, and India has been making a demand for zonal level partnerships. There is also a capacity building in IWRM network (Capnet) operating in South Asia. The challenge is to strengthen the existing networks and to build new linkages.

Wide-ranging discussions ensued within the participants regarding the issues raised in the presentations made till then. In response to a question on the achievements of GWP so far, it was pointed out that GWP has been able to evolve certain principles of water management, based on the Rio de Janeiro and Dublin Summits. These principles consider water to be a finite vulnerable resource, and water management needs to be consultative. These principles hold water to be a social good, and not an economic good, and women are perceived to be important stakeholders who need to be brought to the forefront of water management. The work of the GWP has also fed into the processes of the various World Water Forums (WWFs). The first World Water Forum took place in Marrakech in 1997 and the creation of a document on World Water Vision was mandated. These vision documents were discussed in the second WWF that took place in Hague in 2000. In the third WWF that took place in Kyoto in 2003, action plans regarding the vision documents were discussed. The 4th WWF was convened in Mexico City in 2006 and the forum's main theme was "Local actions for a global challenge". This Forum focussed on the experience of the AWP. The proposed conference in 2009 will look at issues of local action, and the issues surrounding the involvement of the government, and the state. There have been substantial achievements out of these processes. However it was also acknowledged that the achievements themselves were discrete in nature, and not continuous and sustained. There are also questions of the feasibility of a single institution to manage such a vast issue. What was emphasized was that the GWP should not be involved in the day to day implementation, but be involved only in critical activities like preparation of toolkit, documentation etc. and can tap into existing human and infrastructural resources. India could also evolve its own model of water resource management, based on its experience. The need of evolving model practices for IWRM and the documentation of experiences and best practices was also emphasized. Similar concerns were also expressed in terms of the necessity of coming out with key documents and a plan of action. The need to use critical resources effectively was also emphasized.

Another major lacuna pointed out in the GWP activities was the lack of involvement of the government and the various institutions of the state. While some participants felt that no action was feasible without active government involvement, others pointed out that the government should be involved only after participation of institutions in critical numbers has been achieved. The GWP has two strengths which can help negotiate with the government better: it is an international body, and it has sufficient institutional membership within the country. It was pointed out that there needs to be some more clarity on certain fundamental concepts, for instance, is water a good or a fundamental right? Other concepts that were questioned were stake holding and participation; broad basing the concept of stakeholders might mean giving importance to more distant stakeholders at the cost of the immediate ones. Moreover one needs to emphasize that the local people are not just partners but primary decision makers in the process. These reservations were made especially keeping the interests of the vulnerable sections like landless labourers and women in mind.

It was highlighted that there was a contradiction in how GWP looks at the issue of water as a right. Many parallel institutes like Pani Panchayat have let market forces determine water allocation, and the GWP is itself a creation of the multinational development banks, many of whom are GWP members, who have promoted this market driven approach. There is thus no uniformity in standards and approach at different levels.

Another remark was that “participation”, most of the times, is itself a process driven by the market and consultation does not go beyond a point, and is sometimes used as a device for legitimizing many undemocratic processes. The example of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was given, which, though officially mandated to ensure the participation of the urban local governmental institutions, still vests most powers with the Central Government. Another participant pointed out the need to learn from the experience of the AWP like the Poorna AWP. The need for addressing issues of institutional coordination was also foregrounded. Questions surrounding water rights, participation and local involvement were raised by a participant from the North East in the context of increasing intensity of dam building activities in the region. In this context, some other participants pointed out the need to accommodate the voices from the below in any consultation process.

A concern expressed was how to co-ordinate between states, geographical regions that have different problems and perspectives. It was felt that local specific issues could be tackled better through area and zonal partnerships. Zonal water partnerships could start with issues, which are common to most states, and then move into more specific or contentious issues. The need for experience sharing at the

local and zonal level was also highlighted. Tools suggested in this context were the creation of case studies and engaging locally elected members of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

It was emphasized that the IWP had so far not been successful in collating and sharing experiences of partners and has not come up with ways of representing the voices from below at the highest levels adequately. With IWP providing institutional support, the time was right for in depth documentation of experiences. Time is also a major constraint as the zonal partnerships have to not only look at identifying and addressing issues locally, but also make a representation globally. The local and global activities need to be balanced carefully, so as to be able to make the local voice heard globally.

India Water Partnership

Dr. Prem Vashistha gave a brief description of the aims and objectives of IWP. He also elaborated on the membership structure of the IWP, which includes institutional members (government departments, universities, registered societies interested in the issue of water), corporate members (any joint stock or public sector company interested in the objectives of IWP) and honorary members (individuals distinguished in the field of water who are exempt from subscription and therefore voting rights). He described the IWP plan of action for the year 2007, within the framework of the five projected outputs of the GWP. The expected outcomes from the 2007 action plan include sensitization of both the government and the communities to IWRM, equitable distribution of water, preparation of action plans at multiple levels, awareness generation and capacity building to effectively use available technologies and practices, preparation of manuals and a tool box on IWRM, documentation and dissemination of activities, and the strengthening networks with sister organizations like Capnet, Women and Water Network (WWN) etc. It is also aimed to have seminars and workshops at the national and zonal levels, initiate basin level planning, to try and input into state level policy making processes by extensively engaging with the state governments, prepare case studies in priority thematic areas, study feasible solutions to transboundary conflicts, and identify low cost technologies.

The IWP country dialogue has already identified a certain set of priority activities, which it can now carry on due to the additional fund granted by the GWP. The main activities include conflict resolution, formation of zonal and area level partnerships, initiation of dialogues at multiple levels, formation of local user groups, gender mainstreaming, advocacy for water rights, promotion of public private partnerships, and governance and capacity building. Each of these requires a certain set of activities, and the resources are allocated based on the importance of the activities. Currently the priority issues

for India are establishment of zonal and sub-zonal partnership, initiation of dialogues with the state and the central governments, and conflict resolution.

South India Zonal Water Partnership: Learning and Experiences

Mr. Bhavani Shankar, South India ZWP shared the experience of the already existing ZWP. He informed that the existing zonal partnership has undertaken modelling exercises of water usage and water sharing of the Cauvery basin and conflict resolution. The partnership was formed because it was felt that organizations based in Delhi cannot capture the diversity and problems of the southern states. The South India Partnership was formed incorporating Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry and Maharashtra. Maharashtra was included in this group of states as it shares many river basins with the southern states, and has similar sets of problems like periodic drought, conflicts with the neighbouring states regarding the sharing of the water of inter-state rivers.

After the initial consultation, a co-ordination committee was formed consisting of four members (two men and two women) from each state. The committee was mandated to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and disseminate information in order to influence the government. Some of the challenges faced in forming the partnership were the need to identify proper representatives in each state, who were passionate and committed to the cause. Political expediency demands that one works within state boundaries, although IWRM itself advocates the management of water resources, using the river basins as basic units rather than the administrative ones. The issue of ground water management has also not been addressed in detail, since there is a lack of a legal framework. To this day, there is no national level bill dealing with ground water. The experience of South India ZWP experience shows that the partnerships need to become critical constituencies, with bargaining power even in bodies like the planning commission. He also stressed the need for the IWP to be more decentralized and play a more facilitative role with the ZWPs.

Questions were raised with regard to the rules governing membership of IWP, and questions surrounding the inclusiveness or otherwise of the existing and proposed networks. It was pointed out that the rules as they currently stand, exclude certain existing networks like the Confederation of Indian Industries etc, from membership. It was suggested that the rules be considered in this light and changed accordingly. There was a consensus on having a relook at the rules governing the IWP, and the need to form the rules governing the ZWPs on the basis of the experience of the IWP. One of the main limitations of the IWP was identified by the participants to be lack of activities to locally mobilize funds. Depending on the GWP for funding is unsustainable. The merits of remaining an informal network and institutionalizing into a formal network were also discussed. It was pointed out that

though informal networks might be better equipped to handle fluid circumstances, it was institutions that had greater negotiation capacity. Institutionalization however required greater funds for programme execution as well as for building institutional memory so as to make sure that networks exist beyond certain active individuals. While every network needs certain individual champions, who demonstrate leadership capacities, networks need to go beyond individuals for sustainable impact.

It was also suggested to fund the salaries of some key people in the anchor institutions at the zonal level in order to facilitate the processes of the partnerships. The discussion on this count veered between two opposing positions; the first one of building the networks completely independently with minimal funding support and secondly to ensure regular funding from the very beginning to ensure the sustainability of the activities. Suggestions were made by one participant to seek a middle ground between these two positions. Thus this set of discussions was essentially about the kind of partnership model which IWP can adopt with its partner organizations. Many organizations have only had a programmatic link with IWP, which sustains only till IWP funds the programmes. On the other hand, there are also some networks which exist where, the network only provides moral support with minimal financial support. These were the two extreme forms of partnership models that were posited and underscored the need to arrive at a consensus. It needs to be acknowledged that many organizations are generally short of funds and manpower, and need funds in order to be able to sustain the work of the network and partnerships. Currently, since the IWP itself did not have funds beyond grants from GWP, there is a need to focus on local resource mobilization. It is crucial to acknowledge that there is a current scarcity of funds, and therefore plan activities only to the extent which existing funds and capacities allow.

Points were also made regarding the need to have clarity in the context of the formation of zones. The experience of the Southern ZWP was discussed in this context. Some were of the opinion that the question surrounding zoning needs to be reopened as the zones have been formed on that basis of administrative units and the basis for intervention in the context of IWRM is the river basin which is the appropriate hydrological unit. Others were of the opinion that since the ZWPs are meant to be flexible formations, various options can be explored even within the already formed zones; some states might be included in two zones and work can be started at small river basins that lie completely within the boundaries of the individual states. The ZWP were posited in the discussion as vehicles, and not as ends in themselves and the need to involve people's organizations was underscored. But some other participants emphasized the need to depoliticize water management at least to a certain minimal extent. They argued for basin level action plans as well as autonomy for the engineers managing the water systems. The reasons given for this were that the formation of zones took place after due deliberation with experts. It was suggested that while one could be flexible and think of sub-

zones, the work can still be carried out under the common name. There was also a debate around the issue of the formation of zones using administrative boundaries or hydrological boundaries. IWRM advocates for hydrological boundaries for intervention and the treatment of the basin as a whole. This was also seen as desirable in order to allow for the natural flow of water and to avoid exacerbating floods or droughts. However political realities dictate that one acts as per state boundaries and state priorities.



It was also suggested that rather than making the ZWPs flexible, one could use AWP to give flexibility and can address local issues, while the ZWP could be more structured. Once the ZWPs have identified issues within their zones, they could also initiate dialogue with neighbouring zones. A tentative consensus evolved about the need to periodically relook at the issue of zoning, but the existing zonal divisions were accepted as a starting point from which work can be initiated. It was also suggested that these critical activities should be area/zone specific and should be based on the learnings from the work of the AWP. It was suggested that the IWP should take up the task of documenting and consolidating the work of the AWP. It was pointed out that there is a lack of information on the workings of the AWP

One of the major problems in forming the partnership would be the identification of partner organizations. One strategy to overcome this could be to identify institutions in the given areas and then asking them to pick the appropriate partners. It was also pointed out that while it was easier to get the southern states into a common platform because of the similarity of the problems they face in

regard to water, in western zones, the problems were more varied between the states. One possible strategy to overcome this would be to address common issues like ground water depletion, at first, before moving to more specific issues. It was also pointed out that the partnerships need to choose some common programmatic interventions at the level the ZWPs to achieve coherence in terms of strategies adopted, and in terms of the production of some minimal set of outputs. It was suggested to produce status papers on the water sector in the states and zones, papers on policy analysis of the water policies of the various states, and case studies to further these ends. There is the need to identify critical activities by consensus that can be undertaken by all the ZWPs, and the need to identify strategies for the optimal utilization of scarce funds. In response to a comment that water is a state subject, and that it made more sense to accept state boundaries, it was pointed out that it was a common misconception that water was a state subject only. The constitution of India says that in case of inter state rivers, water is a union subject. Since 95 percent of the larger rivers are interstate, water is actually a union subject; the Central Government has long abdicated its role in managing the rivers.

It was suggested that the partnerships should start a newsletter, a website or an e-group to disseminate information and for continued discussions. There was an emphasis to concentrate on some visible deliverables and documentation.

3.2 Day 2

The second day's proceedings began with a very brief recapitulation of the first day's proceedings by Mr. Sailen Routray.

Presentation on Governance Issues in Partnerships

Dr. Smita Mishra-Panda, Faculty, KIIT, School of Rural Management and India Coordinator, CAPNET, made a presentation on the issues surrounding governance in partnerships. According to her governance essentially refers to all the rules of the game within a partnership. Distributed governance is a concept being promoted in recent years over other conceptualizations of governance. It is an institutional response to a changing environment, which is supposed to be more broad based and inclusive, polycentric and complementary.

She tried to reopen the assumptions surrounding partnerships as inherently enabling and contextualize the recent thrust on partnership building by funding agencies and multi-lateral lending organizations within the larger context of resurgent global capitalism. She emphasized the need to create

democratic spaces within existing and proposed partnerships. Other desirable processes like the evolution of a shared vision between partners, compatibility, equitable representation, legitimacy, communication and mutual trust and understanding also need to be facilitated. Certain issues like equality and balance between partners as well as an understanding of who has power, connections and articulations, and how to empower those that don't have it are also crucial. She then brought up issues of partnerships within the specific context of IWRM; IWRM requires a framework where different and often competing water interests are supposed to be managed and regulated. This is never so simple or clear; there are multiple issues to be managed within partnerships in IWRM. She asserted that while IWRM as a framework is quite comprehensive and has noble objectives, one needed to develop our own indigenous model of IWRM to handle India's problems. She explained briefly the work and experiences of other networks such as the World Water Network and Gender and Water Alliance.

She also introduced Capnet India, a network working on capacity building for IWRM. Capnet is involved in capacity building, institutionalization, dialogue and advocacy and research. She mentioned that Capnet is currently in a position to fund some activities of the ZWPs, since it has some funds available with it for capacity building. There was thus a synergy between the objectives and strategies of Capnet and IWP currently that needs to be tapped into.

In the discussions, discomfort was expressed with the idea of IWRM, primarily because it was perceived to be thrust upon countries like India by multinational development agencies and could provide excuses for the state to retreat from the sector and the market to enter.

It was also pointed out that despite attempts of integration of various scales, there still exists a gap between micro and macro levels, and IWRM sometimes seems as a strategy where the local people remain confined with local issues without linkages with macro issues and policies. It was also pointed out that IWRM provides an overarching framework and tools that could be adopted from it. IWRM is not about doing away with the state, but making the state more pro-active and attempts should be made at making sure that questions of equity and sustainability stay as non-negotiables. Some reservations were expressed on the operationalisation of IWRM in India in its current definition and pointed out the need for Indianizing and customizing it to harness people's institutions and knowledge that exist in the community. It was pointed out that the IWRM as conceptualized as an integrated framework by GWP might be relatively new; but organizations all over India working on land and water management and livelihoods have been working on the strategies advocated by the IWRM framework, and a lot of integration across sectors and scales has already been achieved. It was also requested that existing lacunae in IWRM be carefully documented so that work could be carried out in terms of developing suitable conceptualizations and working strategies in terms of IWRM in India. In this context examples

of water related interventions of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Gujarat and Gomukh, Pune of evolving a river basin plan from a community perspective were cited.

Another important set of issues raised were surrounding the involvement of people in the practice of IWRM, and the formation and work of the zonal partnerships. It was voiced that the so called distributed governance was becoming a mask for letting the market in; since all stakeholders do not have equitable bargaining power it was argued that the voices from below need to be foregrounded. In the current situation it was difficult to think of common people negotiating with corporates on an equal footing. So the need to foreground issues of equity, and of accommodating the local people's voices, opinions and desires was also discussed.

Group Discussions

Group 1: Governance and legitimacy of the ZWPs and the networks



Group 1 comprised of Ms. Vasanthachari, Ms. Arti Gupta and Mr. Harishwar Dayal. They identified major challenges that the ZWPs might face, and had suggestions regarding managing them. According to the group, the main challenges to effective governance that were perceived as legitimate were the lack of representation of the marginalized sections, lack of information on water management and poor documentation of lessons learned, top down approaches to problems, no institutional set up and lack of responsibility and clarity in terms of the division of roles. There is also a tendency to see water related issues in isolation, and since all stakeholders including government are not involved, there is a lack of continuity and legitimacy.

The group suggested that water related issues need to be seen in an integrated way, and the active participation of people at the local level needs to be emphasized. It was also suggested that information should be shared widely, and that documentation of experiences at multiple levels is needed to increase the negotiation power of the people. While responsible leadership is needed, the leadership should be consciously passed on to the local people in a given timeframe. The need to do away with hierarchies and of building flat organizational structures was emphasized, and it was pointed out that support needs to be extended to local movements to protect resources. Finally a single identity of all the ZWPs was presented as a need so that it strengthens the partnerships helping them to take up the issue effectively and to be able to negotiate with the government from a position of strength. Another participant from outside the group pointed out that ensuring membership from various caste/class/gender groups should be a priority for all the ZWPs.

Group 2: Possible strategic plans and processes of the ZWPs



Group 2 comprised of Mr. Tapan Padhi, Mr. B.S. Bhavani Shankar, Mr. Umesh Pakalapati and Mr. Bikash K. Pati. The presentation was made in the form of possible steps that might be followed by the ZWPs for establishing and strengthening the networks and for fulfilling their mandate. The steps are:

Step 1: Collection & evolving of inventory of member organizations from each zone.

Step 2: Collation of information on structure, function and governance of India Water Partnership.

Step 3: Identification of lead institutions at the state level and anchor persons.

Step 4: Production of status papers on the water sector at the state level by the end of September

Step 5: Dialogue with potential partners to discuss the status papers, prioritization of common issues, enrolment of member organizations particularly small and marginal institutions, formation of the ZWP coordination committees and the decision on action plans.

Step 6: Production of a vision document for each ZWP that can be developed during a capacity building workshop on IWRM.

Group 3: Structural issues surrounding the ZWPs



Group 3 comprised of Ms. Pappiya Sarkar, Ms. Parineeta Dandekar, Mr. Bilal Ahmad Pandow, and Mr. Gilbert Rodrigo. The group made their presentation on the structural issues surrounding the ZWPs. Since all the three groups worked in isolation there was some overlaps between the presentations made by the second and the third groups. The group identified steps for the possible course of action to be undertaken by the ZWPs. These steps are:

Step 1: Identification of lead organizations in each zone, and having a clear idea of roles and responsibilities.

Step 2: Mobilization of partners through meetings and workshops and the identification of common issues

Step 3: Evolution of work plans for each ZWP through consensus

Step 4: Conducting the various activities detailed in the work plans.

All these activities are supposed to happen simultaneously with networking and liasoning with other networks including the IWP and the GWP. If the ZWP conform to administrative boundaries, then the

next step would be to network with the neighbouring zonal partnership with shared river basins. Area water partnership will be the unit of working for the ZWPs. One can initially use river basins as a whole and can then focus only on the intra zone basins before moving on to interzone basins.

Consolidated Discussions

Questions were initially focussed on the issues surrounding governance and legitimacy. The need was pointed out to look at issues of membership and legitimacy of the board of governors in the ZWPs. While IWP in its current form does not allow for individual members (except in an honorary capacity) the need to make the ZWPs fluid in its membership was suggested. The feasibility of individual membership, the membership of local level collectives like women's groups and farmers groups, and the membership of certain types of corporate groups was also suggested to be explored. The need to have a clear understanding of representation of the ZWPs in the functioning of the IWP was also expressed in order to give legitimacy to the partnerships. It was also suggested that AWP should have *ipso facto* memberships in the ZWPs, the network should be built up from the AWPs, and that all basins must be represented. It was also suggested that the by laws governing the IWP should be modified to make it more inclusive. To this point the representative from the IWP replied that currently the by laws of the IWP are yet to be finalized, and this is the right time to raise questions surrounding membership. He saw deliberations surrounding this as one of the major outcomes of the workshop.

The importance and relevance of the proposed vision documents was also debated, but towards the end it was felt that the vision documents can be of a great help in prioritizing and refocusing the relevant issues. It was also felt that some zones which are large; especially the north zone, should have proportionately more funding. The representative from the IWP wanted issues surrounding institutional support etc to be communicated to its President. He said that the IWP was open to collaboration with the ZWPs subject to the approval of the governing board of the network.

Mr. Arvind Kumar, Associate Fellow, NIAS, on behalf of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Director, faculty and staff of NIAS formally proposed the vote of thanks.

Observations by the rapporteurs

Reopening the conceptual framework of IWRM: A lot of the discussions in the workshop focused on the adequacy or otherwise of the framework of IWRM as offered by the GWP for locating interventions in the water sector. There were some reservations that were expressed so as to the suitability of a framework developed in the west to Indian conditions. But a few other participants argued that rejecting IWRM as a desirable goal and practice only because of its non-indigenous origins is to throw the baby out with the bath water. It was also noted down that a lot of practices that are generally attempted within the framework of IWRM are already being practiced by quite a few grassroots organizations and integration across scales and sectors is already happening. There was an evolving consensus that one needs to try and adopt IWRM to India conditions at the same time letting the learnings from the grassroots and the voices from the below affect the evolution of a dynamic conception of IWRM.

- ***Need to foreground Issues of equity in Governance of the partnerships:*** All participants were unanimous in making issues of equity the central guiding principle in the governance of the proposed ZWPs. It was proposed that this can be actualized in practice by making the by laws allow for as inclusive a membership as possible in the partnerships and in taking a bottoms up approach in terms of building up from the AWP. The need to account for local concerns, issues and voices was also highlighted. This was linked to the proposed indigenization of the IWRM framework as mentioned earlier. The need to reformulate the by laws of the IWP itself to make it a more responsive and democratic organization was also voiced.

- ***Funding and sustainability:*** Initially the participants were polarized between two positions of minimal funding and the need of firm financial commitments to be made to the ZWPs for their work to be sustainable. But there was some consensus towards the end to the effect that there is the need for a certain minimal amount of funding required for kick-starting the programme in the anchor institutions, and the avenues of further funding for capacity building, training, and expansion of the networks can be explored with other organizations and networks like the Capnet.

- ***The logic of zoning:*** The logic of zoning with the administrative states as units was also vigorously debated. Some participants were of the opinion that administrative units like states are not very effective units for the practice of IWRM. Other participants pointed out the amount of work and expert knowledge that had gone into the formation of zones. In the end there was some consensus around the fact the issues surrounding zoning can be addressed as and when they emerge; work can be started

with smaller basins/sub-basin that lie more or less completely within the boundaries of one state, and innovative solutions like dual membership of some states in different zones can be attempted.

Conclusion

Anchor institutions have been identified in each zone; these include SAVAE, Srinagar, for the Northern ZWP, RCDC Centre for Water for Life, Bhubaneswar for the Eastern ZWP, Wangjing Women and Girls Society, Wangjing, Manipur for the North Eastern ZWP, and Gomukh, Pune for the Central and Western ZWP. The task ahead for the participants were also identified. All partners need to develop an action plan for initiating ZWP within the next 15 days. The proposal and budget for the activities was circulated and it was suggested that each of the zones map out some activities keeping in mind their budget. Funds would be distributed to the zones based on their size and geographical features. It was also suggested that the currently identified lead institutions should serve as anchor institutes and lead institutions should be identified further at the state level.

The workshop concluded on a successful note; there was emerging consensus on most of the issues discussed and there was progress in evolving plans of action for the ZWPs. The lead organizations were identified and timelines were set for the achievement of the objectives. Discussions focused on issues of critical importance like the relevance of redefining IWRM, participation and equity, zoning, funding and questions of funding and sustainability of networks. The workshop marks a critical watershed not only in terms of initiating the work of the ZWPs, but that of reviewing the work of the IWP as well.

4 Zonal Water Partnership Meetings

Zonal Level workshops were conducted during June to December 2007, at various places following the first national workshop so as to have multi-stakeholder discussions at each zone to collectively prioritize areas of interest in Integrated Water Resource Management of the respective zone. After each zonal level meeting, a core group was identified who would work on the vision document for that particular zone.

The West India Zonal Water Partnership (WIZWP) meeting identified theme areas such as up-scaling of the Integrated Watershed Development and River Basin Management approach, need to take rational and long -term policy positions on the conservation and use of ground water resources, dealing with water-conflicts outside the statutory and administrative framework and the emergence of Regulatory Authorities in the water sector around which discussions were focussed. Representatives from the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Goa, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat from various organizations such as Gomukh, Gangotri, Afarm, Gram Gaurav Pratishthan, Aquadam, Soppecom, Prayas, Primove, Center for Development Studies and Activities, Center for Environment Education, Jaldindi Pratishthan,

Vishwasanskruti, IRMA, National Institute Organisation, Aravali Institute, Sahajeevan, Jaldindi Pratishthan, GIDR and Vishwasanskruti Educational Initiatives and others participated in the WZWP Conference. A reassertion was made that Western Zone and Region has a special role to play as upstream region of most of the rivers that originate in the western region of India and flow across to the Bay-of-Bengal. A core group (CG) consisting of the ten members (along with their organisations) was formed in order to take the work of the WZWP forward. It was agreed that the State representatives in the CG members would decide their own strategy for expanding the network within their own states.

The East India Zonal Water Partnership (EIZWP) meeting brought together multi-stakeholder representatives from various sectors of the states of Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The theme areas around which discussions were focussed were real access of people to water to meet their drinking, irrigation and livelihood needs under the existing legal framework, major water-related conflicts in the region and ways to address them, major threats to water security and ways of ensuring the participation of different users of water in its management.



It was
to form a

decided by consensus
Convening Committee

for the proposed Eastern Zonal Water Partnership which will be responsible for the formation of the Eastern Zonal Water Partnership and carrying forward of the agreed agenda of the partnership.

The North India Zonal Water Partnership (NIZWP) workshop was held at Jammu and Kashmir attended by representatives of several NGOs, senior government officials, media persons and researchers. Priority areas were identified for IWRM in the North Zone based on which Vision document was to be prepared. The North Zone includes the states and union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal

Pradesh, Uttarkhand, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, National Capital territory of Delhi and Chandigarh. (Union territory).As there is considerable diversity within the North Zone, it was proposed to divide this zone into three sub Zones, namely Hill states, Gangetic plane and dry zone and highlight the issues at the sub zone levels.

North East India Zonal Water Partnership (NEIZWP) was established with representatives of all the eastern states and priority areas for action plan were identified at a workshop conducted dealing with various aspects such as water partnership (GWP, IWP & Zonal Water Partnerships), IWRM, water management issues and experiences in the north east and case studies.



A core group of NGOs representing different states of north east India was selected. It was also agreed that these organizations will take the lead role in performing activities of the zonal partnership in their respective states.

The second meeting on National Zonal Water Partnership was held on December 18, 2007 at NIAS to discuss about the vision documents developed by the various zones through zonal level meetings and also to frame an action plan through a consultative process. The vision documents pertaining to each zone was presented at the meeting by the zonal representatives and discussed among all the participants to identify common areas across zones and specific issues pertaining to each zone.

5 Vision Documents

5.1 North India Zonal Water Partnership Vision Document

It was proposed to divide the North Zone into three sub zones, namely Hill states, Gangetic plane and dry zone keeping in view the diversity within the north zone which includes the states and union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarkhand, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, National Capital territory of Delhi and Chandigarh.

The contrasting situations include:

- The Mountain States which have diminishing ground water reserves, face climate change issues of flooding and drought, have irregular rainfall/snow patterns and have inadequate ground water recharge
- Uttar Pradesh where Eastern U.P, close to Bihar has problems of proper utilization of water resources because of lack of proper electricity and drainage and Western U.P with excessive use of ground water and related salinity problems;
- Punjab where because of green revolution, water table has gone down due to over drawing of water (tube wells) and related problems of salinity/ contamination. It has come into dark zone of ground water utilization
- Haryana where fluctuation in water table levels exist, some parts high and others low.
- Rajasthan being a desert ecosystem as well as being served by canals presents another paradoxical situation. Near the head reach of canal there is a water surplus. These areas have water intensive cropping, whereas the tail-enders of the canal gets virtually no water.
- Disputes between Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana exist on distribution and sharing of canal water. The variation in interests between the states is a politically sensitive issue which becomes the priority area at the time of elections.

The range and variety of the problem is very large so that reaching a consensus will take time. Issues which deserve priority in each state will have to be identified and what should be projected as ideal for the zone arrived at. Because of these difficulties, the thrust area in the vision document is not formed. The following major issues have emerged from different sub-zones:

Depletion of Aquifer and Contamination of Water

- *Water intensive agriculture*

Green Revolution saw the problem of intensive cultivation unlike the traditional cultivation, which led to extraction of excessive ground water, in the states of Punjab and Haryana and parts of western Uttar Pradesh for agricultural purposes. The low water consuming crops like pulses and oil seeds were replaced with high yielding varieties having greater demand for irrigation such as paddy and wheat. The number of tube wells has increased many folds. This agriculture practice of growing water

intensive crops like, rice, wheat and sugarcane led to boost in economy but further receding ground water table. Agriculture with irrigation is considered sustainable only if the amount of ground water used is equal to that being replenished. Usually it is extracted much faster than its natural replenishment rate. The state of the World report, 1998 by the World Watch Institute in USA estimates that the gap between water use and sustainable yield of the aquifer is so high that the aquifer under Punjab could be depleted by year 2025. Punjab water table is falling at average rate of 0.23 m per year.

- ***Water Depletion and Contamination***

Rajasthan has already crossed the phase of groundwater 'development' and has entered the phase of groundwater 'management' as dry conditions existed in Rajasthan there was already shortage of water. The situation aggravated in urban areas due to over exploitation for domestic use. Fresh water aquifers are under tremendous pressure of ground water exploitation in order to meet ever-increasing demand for domestic and agricultural needs. The quality of ground water has become immensely polluted in a number of areas in Haryana Punjab and Some parts of Uttar Pradesh, due to intensive use of agriculture chemicals and fertilizers. Increased urbanization and industrialization has further aggravated the problem in the cities. Lack of sewage treatment plants is further leading to river pollution. The bacteriological and chemical pollution of drinking water sources, pose serious threat to public health. Natural contamination risk such as fluoride, arsenic, iron, and salts are increasing in ground water levels which are unfit for drinking and even pose health problems.

- ***Waterlogging and Salinity***

Water logging occurs when drainage is inadequate; there is seepage from unlined canals and over watering of the fields takes place. Combined with salinity occurs due to salt accumulation. Water logging and salinization pose the real threat to the environment in some parts of Punjab Haryana and IGNP Rajasthan area where because of this the water table has gone up. A number of studies revealed that the lands to be irrigated by IGNP in stage II have low groundwater levels. Furthermore, hardpan layers at shallow depth allow no water to permeate downward. Together with the capillary action, this leads to water oozing. Salts in the desert soils further complicate the situation, leading to salinization. According to the available estimates 73 per cent of India's saline water is in the arid region of Rajasthan.

Unequal access to water

The rainfall is only the source of water in the State of Rajasthan, where surface runoffs are high and proper distribution of the remaining water is a major issue. Formation of canal caused excess water to collect at the head reach even in the area which was under desert like condition, whereas Tail enders had limited or no water at all. This lead to unequal access to water. It has been observed

especially in the hills of Jammu and Kashmir Uttarakhand and Himachal the upstream and downstream disputes over fresh drinking water need to be resolved. Upstream because it is where the source of water lies, downstream because they are the water users.

Interstate Water Conflict

This is one issue where two sub Zones are involved. It is a politically sensitive issue, involving various technical issues and norms for distribution.

Inter-State Distribution of Water and Conflict

Soon after independence, Government of India decided to construct a dam Bhakra Nangal in Punjab to harness all the summer surplus water of Satluj. Water from here was taken by canals to Rajasthan Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyojna(IGNP) , this led to the interstate water dispute between Haryana Punjab and Rajasthan.

Another Inter State water conflict is between U.P Haryana and Delhi over drinking water. There is difference in nature of problem here, caused due to extensive development, urbanization and industrialization ,leading to water scarcity and pollution of drinking water. Growth in slums has led to ground water depletion further causing crisis of water for daily needs including drinking water as well as major sanitation problems. There is a problem of water distribution within Delhi.

North Zone has a history of failure in dialogue, due to lack of community participation in general especially in issues regarding water.

5.2 Vision Document for Jammu & Kashmir



The state at present is suffering from immense water scarcity, institutional ambiguity, and lack of infrastructure and poor and haphazard supply network. While listening to the valuable experiences of the participants during the day, it was found that the entire state was facing problems on account of drinking water at alarming proportions. The problems in the rural areas are more severe given the non-availability of portable water and insufficient government supply network.

Taking an overall view of the problems, it was emphasized in the workshop that in the coming years, government need to focus on utilization of ground water resources. Presently only seven per cent of ground water source is being utilized in the state which amply suggests that there was a great deal of scope for increasing the quantum of usage of ground water.

It was found that the government supply was not even catering fully to the consumers in the Srinagar city. There is a huge gap of 10 million gallon per day between the supply and the requirement. Even as the government is expecting a few projects in the coming year to bridge the gap, yet the increase in the population makes it important for the government to keep on increasing the number of water supply schemes in the state. It was revealed in the workshop that every year the state witnesses an increase of 6 MGDP and to cater to this increasing demand, there was need for bringing in new projects. Mention to be made that a 10 MGDP project is coming in the state under Asian Development Bank funding in the next year.

A need to bring in a legislation empowering the state agencies to deal with the encroachers grabbing the water bodies in the state was badly felt in the workshop. Presently, the encroachers are taking the refuge from the courts and in absence of a clear legislation the state authorities could not take a stern action against them.

Similarly, a need to sensitize people and disseminate the information for better and efficient utilization of water was felt in the day long discussions.

Much emphasis was laid on bringing in research work in the water sector. The participants said because of the absence of any research work the NGOs and the government agencies were not in a position to take meaningful and result-oriented steps in the water sector in the Valley.

The state is presently lacking a water policy. It was revealed that there was an immediate need that government besides making long term plans to bring in new projects and deal with increasing water demand, should come up with a water policy.

5.3 North East India Zonal Water Partnership Vision Document

North East India zone, comprising of 8 small states, covers an area of 2.55 lakh sq.km with a population of 3.90 crores as per 2001 census. It is known for its diversity of ethnicity and culture with 250 distinct tribal communities and a wide range of physiographic and eco-climatic conditions, diverse forest structure and composition and rich heritage of flora and fauna. The major Rivers in different States of NE India zone are Brahmaputra, Dibang, Subansiri, Krishnai, Dudhnai, Barak, Manipur, Doyang and Dhaleswari. The major wetlands in the zone are the Brahmaputra Valley of 1,01,232 ha area, Manipur Basin in Manipur of 52,959 ha area, Barak valley spread over 13,400 ha and Sikkim which has more than 10 natural lakes. Rainfall in the basin varies from 1500 mm in the Manipur Basin to 3400 mm in the Barak Basin.

Water Resources potential of NE India is 30 percent of the country's total and the per capita water availability is 18,400 cum which is less than the country average of 2,208 cum. 44 percent of the country's total Hydropower Potential exists in this zone although only 3 percent of it is developed as against 16 percent developed in the country. The potential for irrigation is 4.26 million hectare though only 20 percent of the area is covered by irrigation as against the national average of 56.4 percent. Six percent of the country's total Ground water potential can be found in the NE Zone. The ground water resources developed is only 4.3 percent of the total whereas the national average is 32 percent.

Acute shortage of drinking water in the hill areas, soil erosion in hill areas, poor land management system in the catchment, poor irrigation infrastructure, flood, which is most severe in Brahmaputra valley, deterioration of water quality, loss/deterioration of wetlands, decrease in aquatic bio resources, lack of community participation and the women roles in water management were identified as the major water related problems in the NE Zone. Therefore the major issues identified by the NE zone were over dependence on natural resources, lack of awareness on values and functions of aquatic ecosystems, poor institutional systems for water management, right to livelihood and health and sanitation and women participation in the water management.

Analyzing the existing system, the major Water Management gaps identified were Sectoral management practice, lack of consideration for ecological water requirement, lack of policy and

regulatory mechanism, absence of Basin Level authority for coordination, non-existence of intensive waste management programmes to control pollution, inadequate consideration given for micro hydel project in North Eastern region, Lack of wetland conservation efforts, lack of community and women participation in water management and in the planning and decision making processes, absence of coordination between communities/groups, government sectors and private institutions and lack of education and awareness programmes on Water Management.

Keeping in mind these problems and issues and gaps with the current scenario the conceptual framework developed for the vision document comprises of ensuring development without Impairing Aquatic Ecosystem as Aquatic Ecosystems provide goods and services other than water, recognizing River/Lake Basins as unit of Water Resources Management and developing institutional systems to ensure involvement of people at various levels of water management.

The changes needed in the existing system in order to operationalise the conceptual framework were identified as:

- *Involving People through Community based Institutions*
- *Enhancing communication, education and public awareness*

In order to ensure meaningful participation of the people, community capacity building is extremely necessary through a systematic and sustained communication, education and awareness generation activities.

- *Promotion of cross sectoral management*
- *Policy direction legislation and regulation*
- *Promoting basin based management.*
- *Equitable allocation of water for human and ecological purposes*

- *Catchment Conservation (hill catchment areas)*

In north east India, 53% of the forest land is owned by the communities, individual and communities organizations. Considering the existing land tenure system, participatory management based on the ownership pattern will be the key to the successful conservation programme in the catchments areas.

- *Conserving Water Bodies*

This would involve ensuring that there is enough water to flow in the river throughout the year.

- *Enhancing Water Harvesting Facilities in the hill areas*

Activities such as construction of Gravity Flow Structures, spring protection, Roof top Water harvesting structures and digging of ponds in foot hill areas need to be taken up towards this end.

- *Livelihood Improvement programmes for Local community*
Horticultural and agricultural developmental activities, promotion of animal husbandry activities, Promotion of fruit promotion programme and Promotion of pisciculture were the activities given priority
- *Development of Hydropower*
The stress was laid on Micro hydropower for domestic uses
- *Tapping Ground Water Potential*
Both Irrigation and Drinking water needs would benefit from this.
- *Establishing Natural Disaster Management Systems*
Research work and Capacity building were identified as the two major components of developing disaster management systems
- *Development of Inland Waterways*
Promotion of waterway connectivity and Promotion of economic and transport facilities through development of inland waterways is another priority area.
- *Database Development*
Making tool box for all the states' information was also perceived to be of importance for the zonal water management efforts to yield fruit.

To bring about these changes, the immediate actions proposed were establishment of state chapter after identifying different stakeholders and consulting them for coordination, formalization of NEIZWP, regular information exchange among members, capacity building on IWRM concepts, wetland management, river basin management, research, documentation on water related issues in NE to generate information and strengthening of ZWP, documentation/ studying traditional water rights in NE and management practices, drinking water provisioning, water quality in the hills and the plain areas promotion of slope land agricultural technologies in hill areas and organic farming practices in the region to check soil erosion and ensure water security, building up and linkages with neighbouring water partnerships and other players to take up flood problems in the region, promoting IWRM concepts and gender mainstreaming in water management in the North East region.

Towards this, the role of NEIZWP was conceived to be promoting IWRM practices among the various users group in the region, providing platform for dialogue and interaction, highlighting water problems and issues of NE India, networking people & organizations and capacity building,

developing information system/tool box and generation of education & awareness materials and documentation of traditional knowledge. By the year 2025, NE will have sufficient water of good quality for all users through an efficient management involving all the stakeholders duly ensuring equitable and sustainable utilization of its water resources with due consideration on the quality of life.

5.4 East India Zonal Water Partnership Vision Document

Developing the Vision Document - The Process

Post Bangalore National Workshop, a list of different Non Governmental Organizations, Academic Institutions, Government departments, individuals and People's organizations was prepared drawing from the membership list of India Water Partnership's, Ranchi Workshop on Water Conflicts in Eastern Region and the mailing list of RCDC Centre for Water for Life. A two day workshop was organized during October 2007 for capacity building on IWRM, sharing of water related issues of the respective states and also to discuss about the need for establishing the Zonal Water Partnership and the modalities for the same. In the workshop, participants from four states Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand strongly felt that there was a need for the stakeholders to come together and take up collective initiatives. The workshop led to the formation of the East Zonal Water Partnership. It was also decided in the workshop to first broad base the partnership before formalizing the organizational structure. There was a consensus on having a Convener and a Core Team with two representatives from each state. This core committee headed by the Convener will facilitate broad basing and formalizing the EZWP as well as initiate a common action plan. They are to be directed by a group of Advisors.

Following the first workshop in Bhubaneswar, State-wise papers on the water situation in Jharkhand, Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal were prepared by the Core Group members as an input for the Vision building exercise. The vision building exercise was carried out by the Core Group members and the Advisors during 14th and 15th of December 2007. It was decided that the vision document that will be given a shape during the two day process will be only draft in nature as the body felt that involving the larger group in the Vision building will be very important for having all those involved with the process, on board. Hence the Vision document present here is only draft in nature and it has to be finalized in a larger meeting of the EZWP A wish list was drawn up with the presentation of the state perspectives on water. The idea was to have a vision with a three year perspective. Along with the Vision document, a

set of immediate activities were also planned to give the partnership an identity and also maintain continuity.

Guiding principles for EZWP

The first Eastern Zonal Water Partnership discussed extensively on the partnership and networking related issues. It identified the different reasons for which the partnerships or networks fail, what value this partnership could add for the intervention in the whole region and also to the individual organizations. The concerns articulated has gone into developing a set of guiding principles that will strengthen the partnership and make it more effective.

A logical need for the zone as a geographical unit: The partnership is to be seen as a logical need for the geographical unit - the eastern zone. In other words, all the activities should be taken up in such a manner that it has relevance for the four states involved. The partnership should not be seen as yet another network involving four states without any geographical linkages.

Should add value to the partnering stakeholders: The partnership should add value to the partnering organizations, so that they can see themselves as important players, own it and benefit from it. The benefits could be programmatic addition to the work of the partnering organizations and individuals, building new linkages, getting solidarity support, advantages of being part of a bigger entity, capacity building or even enhanced knowledge.

Knowledge based networking as the common denominator: The partnership will primarily focus on knowledge based networking as that can be sustained without much of external support and will play an important role in holding the constituents together.

Carry forward the IWRM mandate and beyond if needed: The partnership should primarily carry forward the IWRM mandate of GWP. But, while contextualizing IWRM in this region, it will work towards rearticulating IWRM keeping the basics intact in case of any need. The partnership has the flexibility to work beyond the IWRM mandate if needed.

An inclusive process: The partnership is to be an inclusive process so as to involve newer organizations, individuals, government departments, user-groups etc. And also newer knowledge and voice of dissent.

Context of the Eastern Region

The four states in the eastern zone share certain common problems. But at the same time, each state has its own unique set of problems. Floods, for instance, is a major problem in Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa while the major problem in Jharkhand is drought. Likewise, industrial pollution of water resources - both surface and ground - is a major issue in Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal. Whereas, Bihar suffers from no such problem - the reason being there are hardly any major industries in the state. If West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand are grappling with the problem of arsenic contamination of groundwater, Orissa is so far largely free of the menace. Sea erosion is a problem unique to Orissa. Bengal and Orissa are prone to cyclone while Bihar and Jharkhand are landlocked states and they do not have such a problem. Bihar has taken the initiative by putting in place a mechanism for regular water quality testing, and by involving the PRIs in the exercise. Jharkhand is the only state that has to contend with radioactive contamination due to the Jadugoda uranium mines.

The same goes for the policy regime as well. Only Orissa has a well laid out Water Policy while West Bengal and Bihar are at different stages of formulating one. In contrast, no initiative has so far been taken in Jharkhand to put a policy in place for the water sector.

Even within each of the four states, there are large scale variations in the topography and agro climatic conditions. Drought, for example, is a recurring problem in the arid western parts of Orissa while the coastal plains have to contend with floods almost every year.

Common Problems:

Policy Environment

But there are some common problems and issues that cut across all four states in the region. For one thing, water management in all four states is becoming increasingly market-centric with the role of the government as well as the community progressively shrinking. For another, there is hardly any serious engagement with the government by civil society in any of the states.

The implications of government policies and programmes for the people are seldom analyzed critically. The dangers posed by the unbridled construction of pit latrines in coastal areas, for example, has hardly been understood by the vast majority of the people, who stand to suffer due to the resultant pollution of sub surface water.

No state other than Orissa has well laid out policies. Different states are at different levels of policy formulation. Newer policies are meant more to promote the market interests than the interest of common people. Both in the absence of policy or even with the presence of it - water management in these states is more and more market centric with least preparedness at the community level, or the

states' role as a service provider. There is not much serious engagement with the state by the civil societies to address the policy level issues. There is hardly any critical appreciation of states' water or related policies and programmes. (Example: Drinking water as a fundamental right and Swajaldhara / The pit latrines etc.). Sectoral thinking is the order of the day in water resources management. There is hardly any integrated approach to manage natural resources (NRM and within the water sector). World Bank and other donors are influencing the policies in a big way. Not much of a coherent approach to policy and management, exist.

Access and availability of water:

With average annual rainfall of 1000-1500 mm, all four states should ideally have enough water to meet their domestic, agricultural, livelihood and industrial needs. But that is not the case in any of the states. Availability of water is not the problem at all as the states have fairly good precipitation, though the spatial and temporal distribution is a problem in some cases, but accessing water is a problem due to faulty or vacuum in water management. Majority of the people have been accessing water directly and not dependent on the government. The government is not able to manage the heavy run-off that leave very little for people to access. However, the most important reason is the improper management of water resources - both surface and ground.

Access to drinking water is denied to a large number of people in all four states because of the lack of adequate infrastructure. There are either not enough tube wells or a good number of them are defunct. Excessive withdrawal of ground and surface water, coupled with industrial, mining and industrial waste further restrict the availability of safe drinking water. Access to drinking water is also denied or is risky because of serious quality related problems like E- Coli, arsenic, fluoride, iron, nitrates etc.

Flood and Drought

All the four states in the region have the problem of flood and drought. In addition, they seem to be committing the cardinal mistake of trying to address them separately - flood through embankments and drought through relief and irrigation - rather than treating them as two sides of the same coin and addressing them in an integrated manner. None of the states seem to have realized that treating the catchments and holding back maximum possible water in catchments is the best solution to the problem.

Threatened Wetlands

All four states are generously endowed with wetlands, which are precious ecosystems that act as buffer space for water management. But the wetlands in all the states are under threat due to encroachment, eutrophication, pollution and mismanagement. The government is insensitive to the importance of wetlands and has never addressed the problems related with them.

Role of multilateral agencies

A common feature in all four states is the increasing presence of multilateral funding agencies like the World Bank, ADB etc. in the water sector. They are not only influencing the policies and programmes of governments, but are also sowing the seeds of many of the water related conflicts within and between the states.

Interstate and Intrastate Conflicts

- Interstate and Intrastate conflicts with respect to water sharing
- Conflict between catchments and command area
- Sectoral water use conflicts

Curiously, another common thread running through all four states is the fact that each of them has an inter-state dispute with one or more of the other states in the region.

A Wish list

The core group members worked on a list that they wished to happen in the four states. Based on the wish list the vision for the eastern region was developed.

1. Water Security for all- water need for different communities for domestic use, agriculture (irrigation) and other livelihood options, ecosystem need, power production, navigation and industrial purposes are met.
2. States come out with pro-people water policies and enactments that puts the poor at the centre-stage and their social, cultural and economic needs for water gets pre-eminence and they have a say in shaping the water management in the state.
3. People's actual participation in policy making and implementation and not merely as implementers for the tasks that are difficult for the State to undertake.
4. There is a strong presence of the CSO in shaping the water resources management of the states and they should also be in a position to influence policies.
5. The partnership is strengthened by establishment of actual, authentic and current Data Information Center Integrated Water Resource Management takes place with resource, sector and stakeholders

6. Stakeholders of the marginalized sections are capacitated to bargain, and promotion of strong stakeholders network
7. Wetlands get due importance and managed on the basin basis
8. Water quality related problems like, Arsenic, Fluoride, Nitrate, Mica etc. mitigated, and minimum water supply as guaranteed by the constitutional right
9. Ensure participation of women in advocacy & decision making
10. Sector-wise water budgeting
11. Water based livelihoods promoted and protected

Vision

- A strong network of NGOs, Academicians, Institutions, Government Authorities and People's Organizations working on water related issues in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa is established as Eastern Zonal Water Partnership and strengthened, that plays an effective role in shaping water management options for this region.
- Governments of these four states and if needed the Central Government is engaged effectively in policy dialogue for integrated sustainable management of water that leads to wellbeing and economic growth of the citizens.
- The EZWP, in cooperation with other CSOs, plays a watchdog role in implementation of different programs and projects by the government.
- The EZWP plays an effective role in addressing different interstate and intrastate water conflicts.
- In the context of MDGs, the network initiates meaningful work on ensuring drinking water for all. Access to qualitative drinking water and sustainability is the prime concern.
- The network is able to initiate serious discussion on various water management options.

Strategy

Organizational

- Strengthening EZWP by broad basing it. This can be done by bringing in more organizations and stakeholders on Board to discuss and debate on various issues on water and develop a road map for change.
- Knowledge sharing as a means to capacitate the organizations also benefits to hold them together.

- Capacity building of the members of EZWP on IWRM, on partnerships etc. water quality, conflict resolution and other issues of relevance

Information Base

- Collection and collation of data, information and knowledge on water related issues in the state.
- Comprehensive information collected on the hydrological unit level
- Information dissemination to the members of the partnership as well as the stakeholders who need the same to bring in changes in the water management.
- Monitoring
- Monitor MDG related indicators (water) and other programmes on a regular basis and disseminate through the media to sensitize the public

5.5 West India Zonal Water Partnership Vision Document

A meeting of the Zonal Water Partnership was held in Pune in November 2007 to seek a fresh viewpoint from all sectors related to water. The delegates represented a wide range of interests, subjects, regions, approaches, methodologies, and philosophies. The agenda of the meeting was to bring about a synergy of the various perspectives in the water sector.

There is a need to focus on the following themes:

- There is an urgent need to up-scale the Integrated Watershed Development and River Basin Management approach.
- There is a need to take rational and long-term policy positions on the conservation and use of ground water resources.
- There is a need to be able to deal with water-conflicts outside the statutory and administrative framework
- There is a need to grapple with the newly created regulatory authorities in the states.

A preliminary discussion on proposed objectives of the WZWP took place on

- Policy Environment, The Resource Situation and Networking Requirements.
- Sharing and interaction between the Western Zone States of India.
- The Focus on IWRM and IRBM would always be the guiding theme.

- Networking should be done for West Zone states
- Water-related apex institutions at the city, district, state and central government institutions should be included in the scope of this networking.
- WZWP is a sound idea to help society to prepare for the future needs

The Networking Initiative

1. Study and facilitate stakeholder representation in every project defined region.
2. Facilitate data enhancement
3. Balance the dissemination with feedback and lobbying mechanisms.
4. Create and sustain the institutional framework and continuity required to take up these tasks for the next generation of change/

WZWP can be one of the effective hubs for facilitating networking top to down and bottom to top as well as across all lateral margins and borders. As such the WZWP itself must ensure the following continuity.

Core group Objectives

This will include:

- The sharing mechanisms and processes - vertical and horizontal, and in free flow.
- Institutional infrastructure and team-structure
- Making use of the project experiences from the different states

The Way Forward

Study a River Basin Plan and make this study an effective parameter of what happens on the ground - e.g. especially with Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority (MWRRA) which is already in place and moving into implementation mode. WZWP must have its own integrated, all-inclusive, systemic, holistic structure. This can begin with the creation of a database by taking multi-state inputs. Intra-state networking will also have to be strengthened and widened.

Follow up action will need to be taken regarding creating an understanding of the river basin plans. Gathering of data from network partners and other sources should be done. The process has started with the Maharashtra section of the Krishna, presently being pursued under Krishna Khore Study Group

Structural Inputs/Guidelines to Strengthen the WZWP Data base

Guidelines to create the data base can be based on the Mahaweli Ganga pattern. Some data on basins, especially hydrological data is already available. Each state can supply experience of existing or similar experiences. The WZWP can synergize its engagement with Government projects. To create and maintain the database and the technical data, data from various sources will need to be integrated. These include, the government and national level institutions such as the Central Water Commission, other institutions having experience of studying river basins, other sources such as NGOs and fieldworkers, and use group organisations.

There is also a need to get involved in the state mechanism by seeking appointed-status from MWRRA. Government funding can be sought to sustain the kick-start phase and beyond till sustainability or every WZWP partner organisation puts up some funds. The working proposal will define the purpose of WZWP as the members integrate and synergize towards a short-term but concrete goal.

Vision

- A core group (CG) consisting of the ten members (along with their organisations) was formed to take the work of the State representatives in the CG members would decide their own strategy for expanding the network within their own states.
- The WZWP will adopt a policy of 'constructive-engagement' with the MWRRA authorities and get involved with the process of 'participatory' planning for river basins in Maharashtra, where five river Basin Agencies have been statutorily formed.
- The WZWP will critically access the 'guidelines' and manuals prepared by the MWRRA and continue its involvement on the proposed Groundwater Amendment Act (2007).
- The partnership will create a systematic Knowledge Base (KB) on River Basins and River Basin Organisations/Agencies in Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- The KB for WZWP will concentrate on information related to river basins/RBO's strategies-mapping of activities, programmes, projects being taken up by various organisations irrespective of whether they are partners of WZWP or not, through an Integrated River Basin Management Perspective. The KB will strictly avoid duplicating/replicating the data already available or being gathered by other organisations of Government Institutions.
- That a simple normative framework containing basic positions/definitions/ working descriptions on important terms such as 'equitable distribution of water,' 'water entitlements,' 'water rights,' 'minimum reserves for survival,' 'environmental flows,' 'water service privatization' and other such terms will be prepared so that partners have a broad

ideological framework on which the activities can be based. These terms and norms will be fine-tuned and discussed continuously so that the process becomes participatory and iterative.

- The WZWP will proactively extend its activities to other states/regions where Water Regulatory Authorities may be promulgated, or are being drafted/modelled on the lines of MWRRRA. The objective will be to avoid the pitfalls observed in the implementation/enforcement of the MWRRRA, and to increase and expand the spaces available for public participation.
- In order to increase synergies, all documents and experiences will be shared with all partners. All partners will be equally responsible for keeping the activities, interactions and the general spirit and action going.

5.6 Common Vision of the various Zonal Water Partnerships

Common Issues:

Depletion of Aquifer and Contamination of Water

Most of the zones experience the problem of depletion of aquifers and contamination of water in varying degrees. States such as Rajasthan in the north Zone have already crossed the phase of groundwater 'development' and has entered the phase of groundwater 'management' as dry conditions existed in Rajasthan there was already shortage of water. The situation in most urban areas, apart from some parts of the Eastern Zone is grave due to over exploitation for domestic use. Fresh water aquifers are under tremendous pressure of ground water exploitation in order to meet ever-increasing demand for domestic, agricultural, and increasingly industrial needs. This problem is especially acute in the north zone with the quality of ground water has become immensely polluted in a number of areas in Haryana, Punjab, and some parts of Uttar Pradesh. Lack of sewage treatment plants is further leading to river pollution. The bacteriological and chemical pollution of drinking water sources, pose serious threat to public health. Natural contamination risk such as fluoride, arsenic, iron, and salts are increasing in ground water levels which are unfit for drinking and even pose health problems. Waterlogging and salination are also major problems in the northern zone, but are increasingly important in parts of other zones as well.

Access and availability of water

Access to water remains deeply inequitable in all the states in all the zones with class, caste, gender and ethnicity as the varying axes of inequity. There is an urgent need to address this issue in a satisfactory manner. All the zones have enough water resources to meet subsistence needs and allow for economic growth if the resources are managed well. But bad management seems to create problems of access and availability. Majority of the people have been accessing water directly and are not dependent on the government. Access to drinking water is a major issue in all the zones. Excessive withdrawal of ground and surface water, coupled with industrial, mining and industrial waste further restrict the availability of safe drinking water. Access to drinking water is also denied or is risky because of serious quality related problems like E- Coli, arsenic, fluoride, iron, nitrates etc.

Interstate Water Conflict

Interstate water conflicts are a reality in all the zones, with the possible exception of the north-eastern zone due to the relatively low level of water exploitation in that region. In the northern zone conflicts exist between Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan over the waters of the Sutlej River. Conflicts to a lesser extent exist between the states of Jharkhand and Orissa. States of the West Zone also have conflicts over interstate rivers with states outside the zone. In this context the sharing of interstate waters becomes a major issue that needs to be addressed.

Flood and Drought

All the zones in the country suffer from the problems of flood and drought. In addition, they seem to be committing the cardinal mistake of trying to address them separately - flood through embankments and drought through relief and irrigation - rather than treating them as two sides of the same coin and addressing them in an integrated manner. None of the states in the zones seem to have realized that treating the catchments and holding back maximum possible water in catchments is the best solution to the problem.

Unsupportive Policy and Institutional Environment:

Many states don't have water policies. Newer policies are meant more to promote the market interests than the interest of common people. Water related departments are fragmented across ministries. Even states having water resource development ministries operate within an engineering framework. There is strong resistance from the state apparatus to incorporate social science perspectives. Water management in all zones seems to be becoming increasingly market-centric with the role of the government as well as the community progressively shrinking. For another, there is hardly any serious engagement with the government by civil society in any of the states. The implications of government

policies and programmes for the people are seldom analyzed critically. There is hardly any critical appreciation of states' water or related policies and programmes. Sectoral thinking is the order of the day in water resources management, and there is a marked lack of integrated approach to manage water resources. World Bank and other donors are influencing the policies in a big way.

Guiding principles for Zonal Water Partnerships:

The zone as a geographical unit: The partnership is to be seen as a logical need for the geographical unit - the eastern zone. In other words, all the activities should be taken up in such a manner that it has relevance for the four states involved. The partnership should not be seen as yet another network involving four states without any geographical linkages.

Value addition to the partnering stakeholders: The partnership should add value to the partnering organizations, so that they can see themselves as important players, own it and benefit from it. The benefits could be programmatic addition to the work of the partnering organizations and individuals, building new linkages, getting solidarity support, advantages of being part of a bigger entity, capacity building or even enhanced knowledge.

Knowledge based networking as the common denominator: The partnership will primarily focus on knowledge based networking as that can be sustained without much of external support and will play an important role in holding the constituents together.

IWRM as a guiding principle: The partnership should primarily carry forward the IWRM mandate of GWP. But, while contextualizing IWRM in this region, it will work towards rearticulating IWRM keeping the basics intact in case of any need. The partnership has the flexibility to work beyond the IWRM mandate if needed.

An inclusive process: The partnership is to be an inclusive process so as to involve newer organizations, individuals, government departments, user-groups etc. And also newer knowledge and voice of dissent.

Partnering and networking with Existing Regulatory Authorities and state institutions: There is a need to grapple with the newly created regulatory authorities in the states. Water-related apex institutions at the city, district, state and central government institutions should be included in the scope of this networking.

Envisaged Changes:

- *Involving People through Community based Institutions:*

People's actual participation in policy making and implementation will need to be ensured, and not merely as implementers for the tasks that are difficult for the State to undertake. There is a strong presence of the CSO in shaping the water resources management of the states in the various zones, and they should also be in a position to influence policies. States should come out with pro-people water policies and enactments that puts the poor at the centre-stage and their social, cultural and economic needs for water gets pre-eminence and they have a say in shaping the water management in the state.

- *Enhancing research, communication, education and public awareness:*

In order to ensure meaningful participation of the people, community capacity building is extremely necessary through a systematic and sustained communication, education and awareness generation activities. The partnerships should be strengthened by establishment of actual, authentic and the latest data.

- *Promotion of cross sectoral management:*

There is strong need for co-ordination at different level of management so that marginalized section of society and eco system does not suffer as a reason of conflicts in management.

- *Equitable allocation of water for human and ecological purposes:*

Water needs of different communities for domestic use, agriculture (irrigation) and other livelihood options, ecosystem need, power production, navigation and industrial purposes are met. Water quality related problems like, Arsenic, Fluoride, Nitrate, Mica etc. mitigated, and minimum water supply as guaranteed by the constitutional right

- *Conserving Water Bodies and Enhancing Water harvesting facilities:*

This would involve ensuring that there is enough water to flow in the river throughout the year. Wetlands must get due importance and be managed on the basin basis. Stakeholders of the marginalized sections are capacitated to bargain, and promotion of strong stakeholder's network. Activities such as construction of gravity flow structures, spring protection, roof top water harvesting structures and digging of ponds in foot hill areas need to be taken up towards this end.

- *Livelihood Improvement programmes for Local community:*

Horticultural and agricultural developmental activities, promotion of animal husbandry activities, Promotion of fruit promotion programme and Promotion of pisciculture were the activities given priority

- *Establishing Natural Disaster Management Systems:*
Research work and Capacity building were identified as the two major components of developing disaster management systems
- *Development of Inland Waterways:*
Promotion of waterway connectivity and Promotion of economic and transport facilities through development of inland waterways is another priority area.
- *Database Development*
Making tool box for all the states' information was also perceived to be of importance for the zonal water management efforts to yield fruit.
- *Gender and Water:*
Ensure participation of women in advocacy & decision making

Vision:

- A strong network of NGOs, Academicians, Institutions, Government Authorities and People's Organizations working on water related issues at the zonal level are established that plays an effective role in shaping water management options for this region.
- Governments of the states in the zones, and, if needed, the Central Government is engaged effectively in policy dialogue for integrated sustainable management of water that leads to wellbeing and economic growth of the citizens.
- The ZWPs, in cooperation with other CSOs, plays a watchdog role in implementation of different programs and projects by the government.
- The ZWPs plays an effective role in addressing different interstate and intrastate water conflicts.
- In the context of MDGs, the network initiates meaningful work on ensuring drinking water for all. Access to qualitative drinking water and sustainability is the prime concern.
- The networks at the zonal level are able to initiate serious discussion on various water management options

- The ZWPs will adopt a policy of ‘constructive-engagement’ with the regulatory authorities in the water sector, and will get involved with the process of ‘participatory’ planning for river basins in Maharashtra, where five River Basin Agencies have been statutorily formed.
- The partnerships will create a systematic Knowledge Base (KB) on River Basins and River Basin Organisations/Agencies in the various zones.
- The KB for the ZWPs will concentrate on information related to river basins/RBO’s strategies-mapping of activities, programmes, projects being taken up by various organisations irrespective of whether they are partners of ZWPs or not, through an Integrated River Basin Management Perspective. The KB will strictly avoid duplicating/replicating the data already available or being gathered by other organisations of Government Institutions.
- That a simple normative framework containing basic positions/definitions/ working descriptions on important terms such as ‘equitable distribution of water,’ ‘water entitlements,’ ‘water rights,’ ‘minimum reserves for survival,’ ‘environmental flows,’ ‘water service privatization’ and other such terms will be prepared so that partners have a broad ideological framework on which the activities can be based. These terms and norms will be fine-tuned and discussed continuously so that the process becomes participatory and iterative.
- In order to increase synergies, all documents and experiences will be shared with all partners. All partners will be equally responsible for keeping the activities, interactions and the general spirit and action going.

Proposed Strategies:

Organizational

- Strengthening EZWP by broad basing it. This can be done by bringing in more organizations and stakeholders on Board to discuss and debate on various issues on water and develop a road map for change. Knowledge sharing as a means to capacitate the organizations also benefits to hold them together.
- Capacity building of the members of EZWP on IWRM, on partnerships etc. water quality, conflict resolution and other issues of relevance
- Balance the dissemination with feedback and lobbying mechanisms.
- Create and sustain the institutional framework and continuity required to take up these tasks in continuity for the next generation of change.

Information Base

- Collection and collation of data, information and knowledge on water related issues in the state.
- Comprehensive information collected on the hydrological unit level
- Information dissemination to the members of the partnership as well as the stakeholders who need the same to bring in changes in the water management.
- Monitoring
- Monitor MDG related indicators (water) and other programmes on a regular basis and disseminate through the media to sensitize the public.

To create and maintain the database and the technical data from various sources will need to be integrated. These include, the government and national level institutions such as the Central Water Commission, other institutions having experience of studying river basins, other sources such as NGOs and fieldworkers, and use group organizations.

6 Conclusion

The formation of zonal water partnerships in India recognizing the wide diversity of the country is an attempt to address the specificities involved in the issues regarding water resources management while at the same time maintaining a broader network to identify and address common issues of concern. The zonal water partnerships are envisaged as common platforms for multiple stakeholders from various organizational backgrounds at the North, West, South, East and North-East zones so as to better capture the diversity in the availability, use and management of water that exists in the various zones. The process for the formation of Zonal Water Partnerships was initialized at a National Workshop held at NIAS, Bangalore after which zonal level meetings were held to start off the process at each zone. Core groups constituted at each of the zonal level meetings then came up with independent vision documents for each of the zones identifying and prioritizing issues of zonal concern in integrated water resources management. These vision documents were presented and put through intense discussions and debates at the second national workshop held at NIAS, Bangalore to collectively prioritize the areas of interest for a long term action plan involving the next 5 years.

7 Appendix

List of East India Zonal Water Partnership Organizations

<p>1. Dr. H. K. Singh DOLPHEN (Near Van Vibhag Office), Nehru Nagar, Patliputra Colony, Patna-13 Ph. 9431019480 E-mail: harendraksingh2005@rediffmail.com</p>	<p>7. Dipankar Chakrobarati School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-700032 033-24146233 E-mail: dcoesju@vsnl.com</p>
<p>2. Rajesh Ranjan Agrarian Assistance Association Bamdaroori Dumka-814101 9431156062, 9835812035 aaadumka@rediffmail.com</p>	<p>8. Bimal Pandia Water Initiatives Orissa, C/o. MASS, Dhanupali Sambalpur-768005 91-663-2520962 91-9937888466, massorissa@gmail.com</p>
<p>3. Indranath Chakravarti Centre for Built Environment, Kolkata 114/7, Becharam Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700061 R-29065074, M-9836173757 E-mail: ickal@rediffmail.com</p>	<p>9. Krupasindu Tarai Antodaya At/Po. Kaniguma, Via-Th. Rampur Dist. Kalahandi Pin-766037 95670234012</p>
<p>4. Bikash Ch. Dash Antodaya At-Bahadurbagichapada P.O. Bhabanipatra Dist. Kalahandi 9438090086, 06670232038</p>	<p>10. Hareshwar Dayal IHD, Ranchi H1-111, Sahjanand Chowk, Housing Colony, Kadru, Ranchi-834012 09835540564 E-mail: hdayal1@rediffmail.com ranchi.ihd@gmail.com</p>
<p>5. B. Narayan Ranchi University & IHD Ranchi Damside Hesal Devi Mandap Road Ranchi 9334478051 E-mail: bsocioru@rediffmail.com</p>	<p>11. Antaryami Rath AIRA, Dhenkanal At-Ashwakhola P.O. Mahimagadi Dist. Dhenkanal-759014 06762-289089 E-mail: rathashis53@rediffmail.com</p>
<p>6. Anupama Kumari Samajik Gram Vikas Sansthan Qr.No. B/2582/2 Dhurwa, Ranchi-4 Jharkhand 9431173279 E-mail: anupama_media@yahoo.com</p>	<p>12. Dr. Nitai Kundu IESWM B-4, LA Block, Sector-III, Salt Lake, Kolkata-91 9831202363, 2335501960 E-mail: npk1967@yahoo.co.in</p>
	<p>20. Bipin Bihari Barik</p>

<p>13. Prof. Pradyumna Banerjee CEMP DD 32, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-91 23585832 9433871238</p>	<p>Aragamee Kashipur, Rayagada E-mail: bipinbarik@yahoo.co.in bipinbarik@gmail.com</p>
<p>14. Dr. Ashok Ghosh Deptt. of Environment & Water Management, A.N. College, Patna Professors Colony, Sheopuri, P.O.- Shastri Nagar, Patna-800023 09334205809 E-mail: ghosh51@hotmail.com ashok.ghosh51@gmail.com</p>	<p>21. Bismaya Harsha Trust 217/B, Bayababa Lane, Unit-9, Bhubaneswar-22 09437020683</p>
<p>15. Inhesar Rahi Bharatiya Gram Vikas Evam Chetna Parishad Sanjay Jha North Thakurbari Road Near Gaitri Mandir, PO/Dist: Kishanganj - 855107 (Bihar) 09430683149, 09931426353, 06456-21802 R</p>	<p>22. Divjyot Kaur Arun Institute of Rural Affairs (AIRA) At Aswakhola, P.O. Karamul, Dist. Dhenkanal 06762-289809 E-mail: aira_dkl@yahoo.co.in</p>
<p>16. Lutfa Khatun Shatmonisha Santi Sangha (Mahila Samiti) Shatmonisha P.O. Basuldanga P.S: D/ Harbaur Dist. South 24 Parganas West Bengal-743368 031- 9434085383 (M) E-mail: shatmonisha@rediffmail.com □</p>	<p>23. Binapani Mishra SWAD At-Nuagaon P.O. Bisulnathpur Via. Sakhigopal Dist. Puri 727478 09437280605</p>
<p>17. Manas Satpathy PRADAN MB 36 Badagada Brit Colony, Bhubaneswar-18 9437622893 E-mail: manassatpathy@pradan.net □</p>	<p>24. Namita Das PRAVA, Policeline Square Balasore- 756001 Phone: 06782-266137 E-mail: prava_bls@rediffmail.com</p>
<p>18. Sandip Ku. Gupta Society for Rural Industrialisation (SRI), Ranchi Bariahi, Ranchi-834009 0651-2540668</p>	<p>25. A. K. Pattanaik Saheed Yubak Sangha At-Bolgarh Dist: Khurda-752066</p>
<p>19. Sukanta Kumar Mohanty Sankalpa Nuagaon Nayagarh, Orissa 09437039502, 09437517592 E-mail: sukantamohanty@gmail.com □</p>	<p>26. Satish Kr. Karna Lok Prerna Court Road B. Deoghar-814112 094311-32730 E-mail: lokprerna_skk@yahoo.co.uk □</p>
<p>27. Umesh Ch. Mahapatra NUSWA</p>	<p>31. Samarjit Barik Shristi</p>

Bolgarh Dt. Khurda 09437827981	N-3 / 312 IRCVillage, Bhubaneswar 09338554721 E-mail: samar_barik@yahoo.co.in □
28. Bijay Kumar Panda ICFAI School of Public Policy, 38, Nagarjuna Hills, Punjgutta Hyderabad-82 09394059202 E-mail: bijaypanda.icfai@gmail.com	32. Dr. Akshyaya Ku. Dash RCDC 424, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-7 0674-2547585, 2547897 E-mail: rcdcbsr@bsnl.in □
29. Nilachala Acharya CYSO E-1, Institutional Area P.O. RRL Bhubaneswar-13 0674-2300774/ 2300239 E-mail: nilachal@cysd.org □	33. K. B. Pani PRADAN MB-36, Badagada Brit Colony Bhubaneswar 0674-2314140 E-mail: bhubaneswar@pradan.net
30. Golak B. Patra VIRD Titigaon PO: AIDA, Athamallick Dist. Angul, Orissa E-mail: virdangul2005@yahoo.co.in	34 Tapan K. Padhi E-mail: tapankpadhi@gmail.com

List of West India Zonal Water Partnership Organizations

1. Dr. Himanshu Kulkarni, Plot 4, Lenyadri Society, Sus road, Pashan, Pune-411021, India. 91-20-25871539	8. Ms. Kalpanatai Salunke Pani Panchayat,111, Saint Patriks Town, Hadapsar 26870285, 9373306320, accurate@vsnl.com
2. Yogesh Shastri Sahajeevan , Rao Colony , Near to Jail, Shahdol- 484 001 (M.P.) 07652 - 248270 (R), 094247 76552 Sahjeevan Samiti" <sah5parivar@gmail.com>	9. Ghogare Pune 9371235625, vijayghogare@ yahoo.co.in
3. Shripad Dharmadhikary Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, Dashera Maidan Road, Badwani 451 551, Madhya Pradesh 91 7290 224 867, + 91 7290 222857, 09425981403, shripad@narmada.org, manthan_b@sancharnet.in	10. Mr Vinod Bodhenkar Jaldindi Pratisthan, Pune. 9850230064, pavatara@gmail.com paradox@vsnl.com
4. Srinivas Mudrakartha VIKSAT Nehru Foundation for Development Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad 380 054 Gujarat 91 79 2685 6220,+91 79 2685 3849,+91 79 2685 6220, srinivasm@viksat.org , mudrakarthas@yahoo.com	11. Prof Arvind Untawale National Institute of Oceanology, Goa 9423883046 arvinduntawale@ rediff.com
5. Subodh Wagle PRAYAS- Resources and Livelihoods Group, Mangeshpushp, Swami Vivekanand Society, Near BAIF, Warje, Pune 411 052 020-25232836, 65615594/65704453 subodh@prayaspune.org , swagle@me.iitb.ac.in	12. Sanjay Joshie Aravali Initiatives, Rajasthan 9425809101 aravaceli.fes@ecologicalsecurity.org
6. K.J JOY / Suhas Paranjape Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem Management (SOPPECOM), 16, Kale Park, Someshwarwadi Road, Pashan, Pune 411 008 020-25880786, 25886542, Fax: 020-25886542 soppecom@vsnl.com	13. Aneeta Beningner Center for Development Studies and Application, Pune aneetabeninger@gmail.com
7. Shri. Mukundrao Ghare AFARM, Raisonni Park, Building no. 2/23 AB, Market Yard, Pune – 37 24264641, 9822068655/ 9822068656 afarm@ giaspn01.vsnl.net.in	14. Anandrao Patil Council for Equitable Water Rights, Chikotra Village, Kolhapur 9822053677 4475366 apatil1110@yahoo.com

List of North East India Zonal Water Partnership Organizations

1. Shri L. Damu Singh Rural Development Society (RDS), Wangjing, Manipur 03848-222315	9. Birendra Nath Bora, Samaj Unnayan Sangstha Putann Mohar Chuk Village, P.O. Gomu Thagaon, PS. Sadar Nagaon - Assam 9854638388
2. H. Kapthliama Lungli Charitable Welfare Society, 3 rd Floor, Ngaena Building, Bawnglawn Lunglei Road, Aizwal-Mizoram 0389-2343973, 2343287 9862359101	10. Nillim Kolita, Socio Ecological & Health Welfare Association (SHEWA) Bahana Tinali, P.O. Bahana, Jorhat - 785101 9435353097
3. Yumnam Vijay Singh Nani Sala Foundation Arunachal Pradesh Forst Building Naharlagun - 791110, Arunachal Pradesh 9436410001	11. Shri M. Debajit Singh, Centre for Rural Development & Educational organization (CERDEO) Sugunu Bazar, Eriema Road Ward No. 03848-267152
4. Nilar J. Gohain Oju Welfare Association (OWA) B-Sector, Naharlagun - 79110 District Papumpare - Arunachal Pradesh 9863349794, 9864410434	12. Shri A. Bharjit Singh Youth Volunteers Union (YVU) Waiview Bhavan, Thoubal Wangmataba, P.O. Thoubal - 795 138, Manipur
5. Ashima Deb Barma Tripura Adibachi Mahila Samity 9/4 Krishnanagar Road, Advisor Chowmuhani, Agartala Tripura (W) 0381232-4218 Fax. : 0381-2352016	13. Ricky Renthlei Bethany Society, Lady Veronica Lane St. Edmund's Campus, Laitumkrah, Shillong - 793003 09436109249 Ricky_renthlei@yahoo.com
6. Surjya Kumar Bordoloi Rural Women Upliftment Association of Assam, Japorigog High School Lane, Sunderpur, BJB Road, Guwahati - 781005 09864092680	14. R. Lalramengzami Central Young Mizo Association, Central YMA Road, Tui Khuatng Aizwal - 796 001, Mizoram 0389-2322869 (o) 9436140767 (m) mazanita@yahoo.co.in
7. Laiang Si Numai John Care- Centre for Community Environment and Rural Poor (CCERP), A. Mao Colony, United North Block Sector B, Khatkhati Road, Dimapur, Nagaland 03862-233397 9436424167	15. B.C. Patwary National Institute of Hydrology, Guwahati 09435343627 bcpnih@yahoo.co.uk
8. John Social Development Organisation (SDO) C/O 168, Duncan Basti, P.O. Dimapur - 795112, Nagaland 9436014103 athia_06@yahoo.com	16. Dr. M. Nara Singh Indian Doctors for Peace and Dev. 09436021845 drnarasingh@yahoo.co.in

<p>17. Daneil Darlong St. Vincent's Welfare Society, Kathalchira, P.O. Nepaltilla Dhali Tripura - 799288 03824263357 09862523500</p>	<p>25. Bharat Saikia Majuli Island Protection and Dev. Council (MIPADC) 9864505052</p>
<p>18. Amajit Bhattacharjee Pothikrit, Joykumar Road, Malugram Silchar - 788002 9435370174</p>	<p>26. Diganto Gogoi JSS, Jorhat 9435047990 diganta1282@gmail.com</p>
<p>19. L. Suva Kumar, General Secretary WWAGS (Rural Development Services), Wangjing, Manipur - India 03848-222605 (o) 09436023359 (m) imp_wwags@sancharnet.in</p>	<p>27. A. Barjeet Singh Youth Volunteers Union (YVU) Waiview Bhavan, Thoubal Wangmatoba, P.O. Thoubal - 795 138, Manipur 9863424088 imp_tikendra@sancharnet.in</p>
<p>20. Ng. Sanajaoba Singh Loktak Development Authority, Manipur 9436274209 ngsm_water@yahoo.com</p>	<p>28. Joyce Community Transformation Society , Tamenglong, Manipur joyce_sd@rediffmail.com</p>
<p>21. I.K. Nath Rural Women Upliftment Association of Assam 9864220357 (m) in2007du@rediffmail.com</p>	<p>29. Romeo Yuhlung United Tribal Dev. Project, Chadolpokpi, Chandel 9436085824</p>
<p>22. Bidan Singh Manipur Wetland Society (MAWET) 9436273376 chanambidan@gmail.com</p>	<p>30. SK. Anglun Socio Rural Dev. Org., Pallel</p>
<p>23. Albertzm ZICORD, Manipur 9436444684</p>	<p>31. Gontam Rj Pothikrit, Silchar 09435370174</p>
<p>24. L.S. Salony PDST 9436086095</p>	<p>32. Kh. Romita Devi JSS, Thoubal District 9856143297 romi_wwags@yahoo.com</p>

List of Jammu and Kashmir - North India Zonal Water Partnership Organizations

<p>1. Mudasir Hamid , BUMS, AMU Doctor, Researcher on water born diseases . Address : Lal Bazaar Srinagar - 190011 Email : m_baqal@yahoo.com Contact No : 9469019043</p>	<p>7. G. Q. Mir (Govt. official) S.E, Irrigation / Flood Control Deptt Kashmir Flood Control Div Rajbagh Srinagar Contact No : 9419032435</p>
<p>2. Sovais Shafi, Secretary , Edulite Address : Batamaloo Srinagar. Email : onlysovais@gmail.com Contact No : 9906543277</p>	<p>8. Nissar Bhat, Journalist Manager Media SAVAE Address : Bemina Srinagar Email : enbhat@gmail.com</p>
<p>3. Younis Khan, Representative, Khakashan Address : Mandir Bagh Srinagar Email : youniskhan106@gmail.com Contact No : 9906798004</p>	<p>9. Bilal A Pandow Chairperson, SAVAE Address : Qamerwari Srinagar 190017 Email : bilal4u2@gmail.com Contact No : 9419017366</p>
<p>4. Manzoor Qadir, Programmer DES dept (Govt. official) Address : Chadoora Budgam Email : Qadir.manzoor@gmail.com Contact No : 9419843023</p>	<p>10. Mohammad Hussain Representative, Kashir Wathe. Address : P.C.Depot Srinagar Email : mhussain@yahoo.co.in</p>
<p>5. Abdul Rouf Khan , MBA Researcher Address : Makhdompura Nowshera Email : Roufkhani2345@yahoo.com Contact No : 9469076847</p>	<p>11. Feroze Ahmad Wani , VAN Kashmir (Mehjoor Mouth Welfare Society) Address : Sopore Kashmir Email : Ferozkashmir@gmail.com Contact No: 9419017680</p>
<p>6. Tahir Massud, Head, HWVO Kashmir Address : Set no 191 Bemina Sgr Email : rahill.rahill@gmail.com</p>	