

# Oman Water Governance Workshop and Rating Session Preliminary Results

A workshop and rating session to assess national water governance capacity and performance was held on 20 December 2009, in Muscat, Egypt, as part of the Regional Water Governance Benchmarking (ReWaB) project. Approximately 24 people participated and provided responses to the exercise throughout the workshop and rating session, although two others participated at various points in the day (Annex 1). One international ReWaB project member (Jonathan Lautze) and three local facilitators (Drs. Slim Zekri, Said Habsi and Nasser El Hosani) were present.

## Approach

The number of participants providing responses is shown below.

Strata	Workshop & Rating Session Participants
Water resources	10
Irrigation	5
Other water using sectors	3
National policy makers	0
Advisors	1
Unknown*	5

\*Participants were asked to write their strata on their completed forms. 5 people refused.

The workshop and rating session followed the agenda provided below. The role of Arabic-speaking colleagues who were familiar with the concepts and approaches of the project (Drs. Slim Zekri, Said Habsi and Nasser El Hosani) were very helpful. The translation of workshop and rating session materials into Arabic helped to improve comprehension of the rating exercise.

### ***Workshop-Rating Session Agenda***

8:00 -8:30	Reception and Informal Discussion
8:40 -9:20	IWMI Presentation: ReWaB Project Components and explanation of basic concepts (Jonathan Lautze - IWMI)
9:20-10:00	Q&A and Discussion
10:00 -11:00	Participants Exercise: Organizations & Functions Matrix
11:00-11:15	Coffee break
11:15-12:45	Instruction and Completion of the Governance Ratings
12:45-14:00	Prayer and Lunch break

14:00-14:30	Feedback from groups
14:30-15:15	Functional Effectiveness instructions and scoring
15:15-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-16:30	Discussion & Final Thoughts

The workshop and rating session consisted of five six parts: (1) an introduction to the project and the concepts of water governance, and explanation of project components, (2) completion of an exercise that describes the extent to which organizations influence core water resources functions and (3) rating of key features of water governance decision-making, (4) discussion, (5) rating of the effectiveness with which key water resources functions are carried out, and (6) the collection of feedback from the participants on the project and the approach.

### ***Preliminary Results***

The following text and tables show very preliminary results of exercises from the workshop and rating session. More detailed analysis of the results and a comparative assessment across countries will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

### **Organizations and Functions Matrix**

The organizations and functions matrix examines the extent to which major organizations in Oman influence water resources functions. The major functions are organizing and building capacity in the water sector (Organizing), planning strategically (Planning), allocating water (Allocating), developing and managing water resources (Developing), regulating water resources and services (Regulating). In each of these five functions, participants assigned a score assessing the degree to which an organization influences decisions on a particular function. The scale ranged from 1 through 5, with 1 being the lowest level of influence and 5 being the highest. 5 groups completed this exercise. Shown below are the averages for all 5 groups.

	Organizing	Planning	Allocating	Developing	Regulating
Min Regional Municipalities and Water Resources	4.00	4.40	3.75	4.40	4.40
Min of Agr	3.80	3.40	2.75	3.20	3.20
Min of Env and Climate	2.60	2.20	1.25	1.80	2.80
Water Authority	3.80	3.80	3.75	3.60	2.40
Min National Economy	2.25	2.60	1.25	1.80	1.40
Universities	3.25	1.75	1.00	2.25	1.00
NGOs	2.00	1.50	2.33	1.33	1.33

Private Sector	1.60	1.00	1.00	1.60	1.20
WUAs	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.50
Majlis	2.00	2.00	1.25	1.75	2.00
Courts	1.33	1.00	1.75	1.20	1.40
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	

## Water Governance Decision-making Challenges

The first rating exercise focused on assessment of selected features of decision-making in Oman in the context of five generic water sector challenges: (1) increasing demand for drinking water, (2) declining groundwater levels, (3) strategic planning for a national water policy, (4) regulating water quality in rivers, aquifers and waterways, and (5) matching supply and demand in agriculture (see Annex 2).

The decision-making features that were assessed were

- Participation
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Rule of law
- Responsiveness

A set of between 2 and 5 questions were used to elicit a characterization of each feature for a particular challenge. Shown below are the aggregate scores for each feature in each challenge. Also shown are the averages by challenge and by feature. The scale ranged from 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest level of the feature and 4 being the highest level. Participants completed this exercise individually.

	Participation	Transparency	Integrity	Rule of Law	Responsiveness	Average
<b>Challenge1: Drinking Water</b>	2.40	2.41	2.04	3.08	3.21	2.63
<b>Challenge2: Ground Water</b>	2.25	2.14	2.06	2.85	3.00	2.46
<b>Challenge3: Planning</b>	2.02	2.00	1.95	3.02	2.76	2.35
<b>Challenge4: Water Quality</b>	2.20	2.28	2.13	2.95	2.95	2.50
<b>Challenge5: Matching supply- demand</b>	2.50	2.41	2.10	3.00	2.91	2.58
<b>Average</b>	2.27	2.25	2.06	2.98	2.97	

## Functional Effectiveness

Functional effectiveness questions were used to assess how effectively key water resources functions were carried out in practice (see Annex 3). Participants were asked to assign a score for the present (today) as well as one point in the past (year 2000). The results, shown below averaged for all participants, indicate that overall effectiveness improved substantially from the year 2000 the present. The usefulness of effectiveness ratings will only be evident in comparison with values for other countries or over time. A four-point scale (1 through 4) was used, where 4 indicates high effectiveness and 1 indicates low effectiveness.

Question	Year 2000	Today
Roles and responsibilities of each department or agency are clearly defined	2.86	3.17
Policy goals for the water sector are clearly defined	2.52	3.09
The water sector is provided with sufficient funds to function properly	2.64	2.48
National governmental agencies consult each other when <u>taking decisions</u> that impact multiple sectors	2.32	2.82
National governmental agencies cooperate <u>in the implementation</u> of their policies where appropriate	2.36	2.91
Regional governmental agencies are consulted when decisions that affect their region are taken	2.35	2.53
Governmental agencies are staffed with sufficient and trained personnel to perform the assigned tasks	2.64	2.43
Future water supply and demand forecasts are based on good quality data	2.70	3.09
Water resources data are collected regularly, continuously throughout the country	2.86	3.00
Current strategies for long-term matching of supply and demand have been effective at <u>matching supply and demand</u>	2.48	2.91
Rules and procedures for assigning and recording water rights are clearly defined and <u>functioning</u>	2.61	3.09
Rules and procedures for transferring water rights are clearly defined and functioning	2.77	3.00
Disputes among water users are resolved effectively	2.57	2.91
Government agencies are effective at forecasting seasonal supply and demand and <u>matching the two</u>	2.30	2.70
Government agencies effectively operate public water infrastructure	2.59	3.23
Government agencies effectively maintain public water infrastructure	2.45	3.05
Current incentives and sanctions (including water pricing) are effective at achieving <u>long and short term supply/demand matching</u>	2.39	2.70
Government agencies are effective at enforcing withdrawal limits that are established	2.52	2.78
Official water quality standards in waterways are met	2.58	3.00
Aquatic ecosystems are protected to the level specified by the government	2.52	3.09
Average	2.86	3.17

# Annex 1 Participants

## Oman Rating Session Participants

	Name	Organization	Department
1	Younis Said Al-Hajri	Choura Council	Water Committee
2	Ahmed Al-Ghafri	Consultant	Private company
3	Eisa Rashid Al-Gharibi	Ministry of Agriculture	Agricultural Research Center
4	Ali Al-Hamdi	MRMWR	Regional Dept
5	Khamis Aldaghaishi	Falaj Manager	Birkat Al-Mooz Falaj
6	Salah Al-Shoukeri	MECA	Water Protection
7	Ahmed Al-Busaidi	Sultan Qaboos University	Soil and Water
8	Ahmed Salem Saidi	MRMWR	Water Assessment
9	Khalifa Al-Higgi	MRMWR	Water Development Department
10	Ishaq Al-Jabri	Ministry of Agriculture	Irrigation
11	Mohamed Hilal Chikhan	Falaj Manager	Falaj Al-Malki
12	Aisha Al-Khatri	MRMWR	Monitoring
13	Ahmed Talib Al-Shaqsi	Public Authority for Electricity & Water	Water Department
14	Ahmed Khalef	MECA	Planning
15	Fahad Al-farsi	MRMWR	Dams
16	Abdullah Al rajibi	MRMWR	Regional Dept
17	Salem Al Jabri	Sultan Qaboos University	Soil and Water
18	Abdullah Al-Naimi	Public Authority for Electricity & Water	Water Department
19	Yahya Imem	MRMWR	Monitoring
20	Rashid Al-Kindi	MRMWR	Regional Dept
21	Addullah Al rawahi	MRMWR	Water Development Department
22	Saif Al-Amri	MRMWR	Aflaj Department
23	Mariam Al-Azri	Ministry of Agriculture	Irrigation
24	Hamed AIDhehili	Ministry of Agriculture	Agricultural Research Center
25	Khalid, S. N. Al-Houti	MRMWR	Regional Dept
26	Abdulbaqui Khabouri	Expert	Private Consultant Bureau

## Annex 2

### Key Challenge 1: Increasing demand for drinking water

To satisfy increased drinking water demand, there are options to increase overall use of surface water, groundwater and desalinated water and to re-allocate water from existing uses. There are also options to increase efficiency of water use. Key decisions must be made in selecting the appropriate mix of these and other options.

### Key Challenge 2: Declining groundwater levels

To reduce groundwater water table decline, there are several options. For example, you can recharge the aquifer by adding surface water, you can reduce withdrawal per hectare, and you can reduce withdrawal per hectare and cease irrigation extension. Selecting the appropriate balance of these and other measures requires that key decisions be made.

### Key Challenge 3: Strategic planning for a national water policy

Generally, governments define and develop their national water-related priorities in national water policy documents and mid- to long-term water resources plans. Different approaches can nonetheless be utilized to in the process of identifying and ordering the priorities, goals and objectives contained in national water policies and long-term water resource plans. Please consider the process of developing water policies and plans.

### Key Challenge 4: Regulating water quality in rivers, aquifers and waterways

Ensuring water quality is important to minimize adverse health effects, to ensure the quality of agricultural production and to sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems. Decision-making related to regulation of water quality includes the definition of quality standards, the formulation and application of rules to meet those standards (e.g. the establishment of pollutants emission permits), the implementation of projects to reduce pollution and the enforcement of the laws to limit pollution.

### Key Challenge 5: Matching Supply and Demand in Agriculture

The agricultural sector withdraws and consumes the vast majority of water in most countries. At the beginning of the irrigation season decisions need to be made about how to share the available water among existing agricultural water users (private small and large farms, irrigation districts or government irrigation projects). These decisions are a major challenge since demand often exceeds supply. Please consider the process of allocating water to the different agricultural water users within the constraints of the annual availability of water resources.

## Annex 3

### **Functional Effectiveness Assessment**

Thinking broadly about the ministries and departments involved in managing water resources in your country, please consider how well the following list of key water resources functions are performed. Please consider also how well the functions were performed currently as well as how well they were performed at one point in the past (year 2000).

Please use the following rating scale and place a number in each of the boxes in the matrix shown below. As you can see, a higher score reflects a higher level of performance.

4 Yes, in all or almost all cases

3 Generally yes, but not in all cases

2 Only in some cases

1 No, in all or almost all cases

NA No answer/I do not know