

DSE/IIMI Foundation Stone for New ASEAN Water Resources Council



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The DSE/IIMI Program on Dialogue and Training for Irrigation Managers came to an end with a final workshop, at Feldafing, Germany during 2-6 May 1994. During the week, senior participants from Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, took the initiative to convene an extra session to discuss building a follow-up to the DSE/IIMI Program. The outcome was a proposal to establish an ASEAN Water Resources Council. This was entirely a regional initiative that was inspired and facilitated, but not promoted, by the DSE/IIMI Program. A request was also made for a BMZ grant of DM 150,000, to facilitate the start-up phase. The BMZ response is not yet known.

Within the framework of the DSE/IIMI Program, a total of 25 workshops, seminars, study tours, consultancy missions and training courses were held from 1990 to 1994. Participants at these events were primarily from Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. The program was funded by the German

Foundation for International Development (DSE). IIMI provided program support and coordination by selecting topics, locations and formats as well as choosing participants and external resource persons.

The program was targeted at: operational and administrative decision makers; managers, mid- and high-level staff of irrigation and line agencies, irrigated-agriculture teachers and trainers. The overall aim of the program was to contribute to a greater understanding of the factors that influence irrigation performance. The program wanted to go beyond the technical aspect of irrigation performance and promote a goal-oriented, open, socio-technical approach to irrigation management.

There were three workshops and two courses conducted in 1993. In Thailand, in November 1993, a workshop on developing an "Institutional Framework for Irrigation" was attended by academics, agency officials, irrigation experts and

specialists from the four participating countries. Representatives from IIMI were in attendance to guide the proceedings and provide support to the development of a framework. Also attending, for the first time in the program, was a team of observers from Laos. The workshop successfully developed objectives and recommended changes with regard to governance, legal, organizational, financial and farmer operations.

Other events included an Indonesian national workshop on "Diagnosing Training Needs, and Designing Training and Teaching Programs for Irrigation Management" in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and a regional workshop on "Management of Rehabilitation and Modernization of Irrigation Systems" held in Manila, the Philippines. There was also a regional course conducted in Baguio, the Philippines on "Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Irrigation Systems," and a regional course in Chiang Mai, Thailand on "Management of Rehabilitation and Modernization of Irrigation Systems."

1994 was devoted principally to the evaluation of the entire series of events and to the completion of publications. Although it is too early to judge the extent of the program's accomplishments, it is clear that the program proponents and the participants were satisfied with the overall experience. The proposal to establish a Water Resources Council for the ASEAN region, is the most significant indicator of the DSE/IIMI Program's impact.

The participants' own evaluations of the DSE/IIMI series of events and their impacts have been very positive. The scale and duration of the program and the nature of the participants were such, that it is likely that a significant proportion of the ideas generated in these discussions will be given due consideration.

As a consequence of this program, Irrigation Management has already been integrated into the training and teaching curricula for irrigation engineers in Thailand, Indonesia, and

the Philippines. Twelve fellowships have been awarded to young professionals to provide them with opportunities to study specific problems in irrigation management. Relationships developed have led to an exchange of students on a regional basis.

Links forged amongst program participants have also facilitated the exchange of experiences and ideas. Productive links have not only been forged intraregionally but also intranationally. As a participant from the Philippines put it:

There is no forum (in the Philippines) by which working people in the different agencies get together and talk about irrigation and irrigation problems. The DSE/IIMI Program on Dialogue and Training has given us an opportunity to get a national view of the state of the irrigation sector. Furthermore, we were surprised to find that the problems we face were shared by our colleagues in the region. Since we share similar problems we can also share the solutions. This shared experience can reduce the time we take to realize and tackle an issue by ten to twenty years.

PROPOSAL

Establishment of an ASEAN Water Resources Council

Background/Rationale

Starting in 1990, series of workshops, conferences and seminars discussing water resources-related issues have taken place under the initiative of the German Foundation for International Development. Participants are professionals in the field of water resources from the ASEAN region, particularly the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

A high level of awareness on the critical issues confronting the scarce water resources was generated among

the participants. The present situation of rapid population growth is creating an increasing degree of competition among the different sectors of water users as well as increasing the rate of water quality deterioration caused by improper waste disposal. Public apathy in the conservation and quality preservation of water resources and lack of sensitivity on the part of the governments on what is happening in handling of water resources issues led to a consensus among representatives of the concerned countries to form an institution that could take the lead role in properly addressing the issues in a more concerted manner. A gloomy scenario will surely happen if nothing positive is done to counteract the present trend as soon as possible.

The above premises considered, the establishment of an ASEAN Regional Water Resources Council is hereby proposed.

The regional dimension is justified through the following:

- sharing of knowledge
- exchange of research results and developing a database on regional water resources
- exchange of policies
- resolutions of an ASEAN Water Resources Council have more weight toward policy and the public
- less expenses/costs on addressing common problems; only one council/center and not four need to be supported to address common problems
- pooling of resources and reduction of duplication
- to act as channel for coordinating international inputs.

Objectives

In general the Council will be tasked to take the lead role in addressing water resources related problems of

development, conservation, utilization and quality preservation in the region.

Specifically the Council will be mandated to:

- a) provide collective effort in the solution of water resources problems confronting the region
- b) facilitate sharing of experiences and enhancing mutual support and cooperation among member countries
- c) formulate mechanisms/strategies towards increasing public awareness and cause changes in the attitude of concerned government agencies in the handling of the country's water resources
- d) develop tools for the maximization/optimization of utilization of water resources.

Organizational Setup

The Council will be composed of countries within the ASEAN region willing to cooperate in addressing water resources issues in the region. The possibility of having the Council within the ASEAN structure will be looked into.

Funding

To be sustainable and effective the council must be supported financially by the member countries, but only to a certain extent in order not to be totally dependent on external support. However, to obtain attention and support of the officials of individual countries it is very important that something tangible has been done by the Council. In this regard it is necessary that start-up funds be solicited from external agencies.

Initial Plan of Action

1. A pro tem secretariat will be set up in Bangkok/Thailand to coordinate initial activities of the Council.

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PROJECT ON SHARED CONTROL OF NATURAL RESOURCES

In recent years, resource degradation has reached critical proportions in Sri Lanka. Although there are several reasons for the intensification of resource degradation, it is essentially an institutional and socioeconomic problem. The lack of an appropriate resource management strategy has contributed to a rapid escalation of the problem.

The Shared Control of Natural Resources (SCOR) Project was conceived to specifically tackle problems associated with resource degradation. Inaugurated in September 1993 at IIMI Headquarters in Sri Lanka, SCOR seeks to develop innovative means of arresting the land degradation process while providing protection incentives to users. SCOR is primarily concerned with the management of natural resources including water conservation, and the arrest of land degradation. SCOR will study soil erosion and other land degradation problems and make observations that will facilitate proper

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2. In each member country a sectoral Council will also be set up not later than August 1994.
3. The pro tem secretariat composed of representatives of the member countries will meet in Bangkok in early November 1994 to discuss the plans and programs of the Council as well as budgetary matters.

Note: This proposal is subject to ratification by the relevant authorities. This proposal is entirely the initiative of program participants from the four ASEAN countries and is not sponsored, guided or implemented by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) or by the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI).

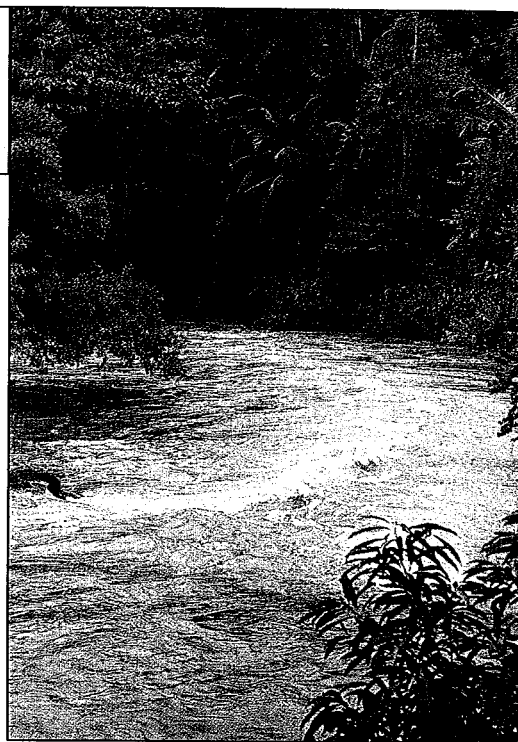
management of land resources. SCOR will also contribute to the data available on the extent and nature of land degradation.

The SCOR Project is being implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka with the active participation of the Ministry of Forestry, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development and the Ministry of Lands together with other agencies within the purview of the Ministries concerned with Agriculture, Environment, Planning and Provincial Councils. Private sector agencies such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and user organizations are also playing a significant role in its implementation.

The main objectives of the SCOR Project are:

- ❑ To improve the incentives and institutional arrangements for intensifying land- and water-related activities in two pilot watersheds;
- ❑ To urge resource user groups and officials to consider environmental implications of land and water management and to internalize them in decision making;
- ❑ To improve available information and increase awareness of the capacity of the land and water base for production and protection; and
- ❑ To strengthen the capacity of government and nongovernment agencies in planning for land and water resources management in an integrated manner, gradually transforming the strategy of development from a "project" to "program" mode.

Phase I of the SCOR Project was launched in October 1993 and would



SCOR is primarily concerned with the management of natural resources.

continue until the middle of 1995. The first phase of this two-phase, six-year project, is sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The process of project implementation is facilitated by IIMI. SCOR is being implemented in two pilot watersheds of the Nilwala Ganga Watershed in the Southern Province and the Huruluwewa Watershed in the North Central Province covering about 30,000 hectares (ha). Since implementation began, land and water management activities in the two pilot watersheds have been initiated. These activities include mobilization for establishment of stream gardens; restoration of tank ecosystems; adoption of conservation bunds and alley planting; awareness and training.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the SCOR Project, Mr. Terrance Liercke, the Director of USAID-Sri Lanka, said that SCOR will provide an "excellent opportunity to put into practice ideals and principles" that formed the core of USAID. He added that similar programs where control of natural resources was shared with user groups were extremely successful in Peru, Costa Rica, Russia, and several other countries.