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INCREASING IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL S&T COOPERATION ON WATER POLICY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The EC has responded to the recommendations of the 1979 UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development by setting up a programme for Science and Technology for Development (STD) in 1983. Over the last more than 20 years this international S&T cooperation programme has evolved into a constituent part of the EC's research framework programmes (FPs) becoming 'INCO' since FP4.

International S&T cooperation throughout focused on mobilising scientific capacity in Europe and partner countries and regions foremost around solutions to the following main basic needs: health and public health, rational use of natural resources and environmental protection and food security.

In a sample of 67 International S&T cooperation projects (a European investment of more than 50 MEuro) addressing integrated water resources management (IWRM) over the last 10 years (INCO Programme through Research Framework Programmes 4, 5 and 6), the European Commission has invited 10 renowned experts to review what lessons can be learnt from those projects and how this should influence future cooperation in IWRM.

The International review panel consists of five experts from Europe and five from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean:

- Pragya Dipak Gyawali, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Nepal (Chair);
- Prof. Anthony Allan, King's College London and SOAS, UK (Rapporteur);
- Prof. Paula Antunes, New University of Lisbon, Portugal;
- Dr. Basim Dudeen, Land Research Center, Jerusalem, Palestinian Authority;
- Visiting Prof. Pietro Laureano, University of Florence and Director of IPOGEA, Italy;
- Prof. Cassio Luiselli, Istituto Technológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterry, Mexico;
- Dr. Pedro Monteiro, CSIR and University of Cape Town, South Africa;
- Dr. Hong Khanh Nguyen, Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, Hanoi, Vietnam;
- Prof. Pavel Novácek, Palacky University and Charles University, Czech Republic; and
- Prof. Claudia Pahl-Wostl, University of Osnabrück, Germany.

The policy brief was then validated by a mirror group of another 12 independent experts bringing diverse experiences from government, civil society, private sector and academia.

SOME LESSONS LEARNT

- Perceptions differ widely:
  - Between managers, citizens – women and men – who have their own historically and culturally influenced ideas about "sustainability".
  - and researchers investigating the fundamentals of nature and society
- If the two can not meet through suitable communication and engagement, impact times of scientific research tend to be very long (30 – 150 years, EEA 2001 "Late lessons from early warnings").
- Lack of awareness of the political nature of resource allocation, including on gender issues, is an obstacle to engagement, communication, impact.

WHAT CONDITIONS IMPACT?

In refining what impact is, which factors determine it and which ones can best be acted upon and how, three parameters emerged as particularly important for determining impact at project level (Nauen, 2005):

(i) trust of peers and social actors in scientists,
(ii) the perceived relevance of social actors of the research thrust, and
(iii) communication capability conveying an ability to listen and convey both the process of research and its results in understandable and credible ways.

Larger-scale societal impact depends heavily on an enabling policy environment that recognises the strategic importance of science in international relations and in national policies of each country. This needs to translate into minimum infrastructure for research, organisation of demand for knowledge and its uptake and upstream and downstream linkages to education and innovation.

It also needs to be understood that impact at such scales takes time to materialise and is usually the result of a mosaic of iterative steps taken on several fronts. Evidence shows, however, that such time scales are compressible when suitable policies are in place and acted upon. These need to comprise a combination of investment in people and institutions on a long-term basis carefully avoiding stop and-go situations which are destructive for social and institutional capital.

EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS GEWAMED

The accomplishment of the Project activities and objectives of the GEWAMED project should lead to attain the following impacts:

- High impact through integrating previously disconnected knowledge strands and perspectives along sustainability dimensions.
- High impact through connecting policy objectives (gender) to actionable lessons.
- High impact through constructive engagement with different social actors and their empowerment.
- Increasingly effective use of the internet and a range of other communication modes to this effect.

Social sustainability tended to be relatively poorly integrated in past INCO projects. As a result, gender is only recently being ‘discovered’ on a broader front as a fundamental dimension of [water] research and practice, though it is already more commonly addressed e.g. in agriculture. GEWAMED has potential to create new **opportunities** – though opposition in order to maintain *status quo* should be expected.

- Establish indicators of effectiveness, involve stakeholders in indicator identification and monitoring.
- Review and report regularly to ensure adaptive learning maintain focus.

AWARENESS

One of the major lags of water users, professionals and water sector institutions is that they are under-informed about the underlying ecological and socio economics fundamentals governing water. Creating awareness of some of the processes that lead to undesirable water use situations can be a major contributor to introduce positive changes. This implies the need for implementing effective communication systems.

Effective communication leading to impact is

- Aware of political nature of water allocation and equity – including gender dimensions.
- Aware of cultural preferences and context.
- Engaged with mindsets of stakeholders rather than limited to “broadcasting”, use of indicators.
- Aware of the time factor and therefore builds in trajectories for repeated interaction and dialogue.
- Sensitive to the need for diversity and innovation for robust solutions.
- Looking for connections to education and training for long-term improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FP7

The review of the EU-INCO projects earlier mentioned together with other sources of information provides enough grounds to identify some lessons for the future that are expressed as recommendations for the Framework Programme 7. The recommendations mainly refer to the enhancement of science and its relationships to bottom up development and top down policy.

The recommended strategies are:

- Promote constructively engaged research towards integrated water resources management, including gender awareness
- Align more strongly with regional priorities and specificities
- Require specific international S&T cooperation to adopt engaged approaches that pay explicit attention to communication and shortening of impact times
- Require research to continue to connect to local knowledge, socio-economic development, culture, policy institutions and support capacity for implementation.

At programme and policy levels:

- Dialogue with partner countries and regions.
- Striving for greater coherence between policies and their instruments in Europe and in partner regions.
- Developing a communication on international S&T cooperation for Europe in tune with other external policies: incl. Barcelona Process.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL READINGS

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