

Contributing Paper

Response to Planning Survey

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Prepared for Thematic Review V.1:
Planning approaches

For further information see <http://www.dams.org/>

This is one of 126 contributing papers to the **World Commission on Dams**. It reflects solely the views of its authors. The views, conclusions, and recommendations are not intended to represent the views of the Commission. The views of the Commission are laid out in the Commission's final report "Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making".

Completed Survey from Prayas

Planning Approaches Survey

Part A : Key Principles for Good Planning in Today's Context

- Transparency and participation, not because of their benefits but because they are inalienable rights of people in democratic governance system
- Perspectives of all those whose livelihood security is involved, should be given the central place [For example, perceptions of the poor about the urgency—which can be expressed in terms of discount rates—are far different from the mainstream perceptions of urgency—or discount rates—underlying the national planning exercises.]
- Integration of the precautionary principle or the principle of error-friendliness
- Distribution of costs and benefits across various sections of society and across regions should be clearly articulated before and during the planning process.
- Participation of non-mainstream individuals and non-formal institutions even in the so-called bureaucratic or technical tasks such as articulation of planning objectives, identification of candidate options, and allocation of monetary values to ecological and social costs.
- The underlying implicit assumptions and conditions necessary for realizing the claimed advantages and disadvantages for each option should be clearly articulated and presented to public.
- Accountability of decision making and executive agencies directly to public, which is ensured through mandatory procedures and competent mechanisms that are completely open for intervention by public.

Part B: Issues Identification : At different levels of Planning

National Level Planning:

- Implications of shift in the mainstream perspective towards governance (exemplified in the shift from the 'state-centered' model to 'utility-regulator' model, as well as shift from treating water and energy as development inputs to treating them as commodities / economic services)
- Changes in strengths and weaknesses of the state vis-à-vis the corporate sector and international institutions in moral, political, and economic spheres.
- Implications of the structural changes in other sectors that are directly or indirectly connected with the water and energy sectors

- Lag / inconsistencies between the changed paradigm on governance, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the institutions, functioning-styles, and mindsets from the previous paradigm.

Sector Level Planning:

- Realistic assessment of availability and access to financial, technical, as well as natural resources.
- Realistic assessment of possibility of enhancement in resources and all the costs involved.
- Selection of projects that give maximum assured benefits using the resources that are realistically accessible and available

Project Level Planning:

- Treating comprehensive and detailed project plans that integrate all types of costs (social, environmental, and economic) and benefits and their distribution as a pre-condition for initiating actual project work
- Onus on the executive agency of convincing the stake-holders and regulatory authorities on the 'inevitability' of the project (especially of the costs of the project) and the least cost of the project.
- Well-articulated responsibility and penalty schemes applicable to agencies and individuals involved in the case of failure to deliver the promised R & R benefits.

Part C: Issues Identification: Planning Interfaces and Influences

External World and the Country

- Mismatch between, on the one hand, the theory, rhetoric, and action-plans coming from the industrialized world and, on the other hand, the ground reality in the South.
- Mal-adaptation of the mismatched theory and action-plans by the vested interests controlling the national mainstreams in the developing world.
- Modifications in national plans to suit the priorities and agenda of donors.

Government Level: Between the Political and Administrative/ Planning / System Structure

- Connivance of political and administrative structures leading to short-term, soft options / decisions, at the cost of long-term benefits to a wide cross section of society
- Lack of clarity between political or administrative character of decisions involved and the resultant mix-up between policy-making and regulatory functions

- Opening of the decision-making process on governance-related (political) issues for direct participation / intervention by public in the wake of the ongoing 'rolling – back' of the state.

Community Level and the Government System:

No Additional Comments

Part D: Identification of good practices

Examples of Tools, Methods and Good Practices

- Efforts by 'Tarun Bharat Sangh' of Rajasthan, India, to mobilize local people to use traditional water harvesting techniques in more than 700 villages leading to increased security of livelihoods. (Contact: Rajendra Singh)
- Study by local villagers of energy balance and potential of local sources leading to identification of concrete measures to achieve energy self reliance for their village by reducing wastage increasing efficiency, and, using decentralized generation. (Village Sulgaon, District Khargaon, M.P., India, Contact : Narmada Bachao Andolan)
- Development-Focused-End Use–Oriented-Service Directed (DEFENDUS) approach to energy planning. (Contact: International Energy Initiative)
- Integrated Approach to land, water, energy, and biomass planning aimed at securing sustainable livelihood (Contact: K.R. Datye)
- The state-wide process conducted by the State Government of Kerala with meaningful participation of people in every village to chart out detailed, technically and administratively sound plans for their own village. (Contact: Dr. Issac).

References:

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