Capturing Best Practices and Lessons Learned: The IWRM Best Practice Database System

http://www.eco-insight.org

Foreword

The IWRM Best Practices database system is a platform that facilitates sharing information and knowledge gained through experience related to Integrated Water Resource Management and protection. In addition to serving as a water project information resource, by linking to a detailed collection of extended internet-based environmental resources (www.environment-directory.org), this platform provides a general framework for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge transfer. An award system offers recognition to valuable contributions and to those who demonstrate commitment to sharing their experiences and lessons learned.

The IWRM BP Db is an Internet-mediated tool for capturing institutional memory of lessons learned and sharing experiential knowledge regarding the full spectrum of water issues, such as land-based sources of coastal pollution, loss of habitat, integrated coastal zone management, etc.. It relies on a collaborative global network for the review and ranking of all information contributed.

How To Get Started

In order to submit or modify a case study or lesson learned, the first step is to register. Once registered, you will gain access to the data entry system, and be emailed a password so that you may return to complete or modify your submission(s).

Overview of the Database

Generally, projects undertake some sort of analysis to identify and better understand the symptoms, causes and parameters that contribute to or are characteristic of a problem. The methodology applied is key to prioritising issues that should be addressed and, to formulate an action plan to solve the problem.

Fig. 1 Issue/sub-issue hierarchy

Figure 1 is a hierarchical portrayal of how "high level" issues and solutions are linked to specific "lower level" issues or sub-issues. In other words, the database system links general issues to related sub-issues, to which are linked case studies with associated lessons learned. This structure makes it possible for different levels of experiences, relating to a single project activity, (and associated issues and solutions) to be contributed.
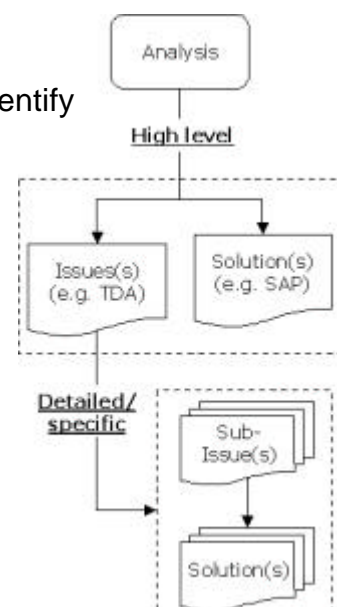
For example, a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) may identify "water scarcity" as an issue and through the formulation of a Strategic Action Plan

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(SAP), the solution to the problem may be implemented. To address the water scarcity problem, "water monitoring" and "water sampling" may need to be done. These form the more specific field actions or sub-issues related to the high level issues identified through this method of analysis.

A well-documented project can serve as the basis for sharing lessons learned during and following the implementation phases. By creating an inventory of data such as project outputs, evaluation reports, analysis data, maps, name and address of consultants involved with the project, evaluators, project coordinators, etc. the IWRM Best Practices database offers a means for you to contribute to and benefit from collective experience around the world.

Practitioners who are or have been involved in a water project are encouraged to contribute their own "experiences", lessons learned and opinion on an issue-by-issue basis.

If the database does not already contain information about your project, provision of background documentation or links to supporting materials will enable others using this database to further research your project.
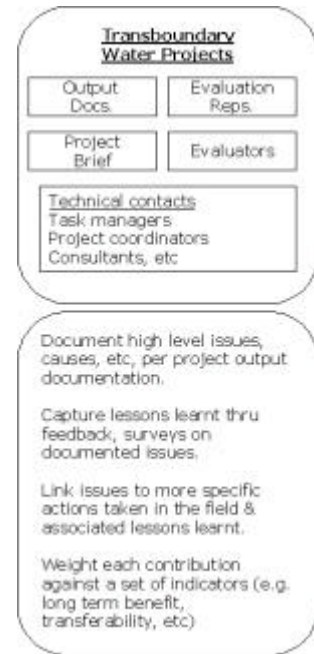

Fig. 2 Inventory-to-experience

Once your contribution is submitted, it may be peer reviewed by practitioners in the field who may provide feedback and share opinions on the specific issue your experience relates to. This will be linked to your submission as part of the formal review process when your experience is considered for the GEF-UNEP/IW:LEARN award scheme. All new submissions are weighed and ranked based on the elements being addressed by the experience contributed (indicators) and the feedback from other practitioners in the field. Award recipients are selected periodically from all experiences submitted; projects contributing multiple experiences are not limited to a single award.

Contribution Form

The Contribution Form corresponds to a set of data entry fields which will enable people to access your experience as it may relate to a variety of criteria, for example, your geographic location, type of activity, specific issue or issues addressed, etc. as explained below. Please note that each category is designated as "required", "essential", or "optional" (any or all fields may also be updated at a later date).

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***Required**	
****Essential (at least one field must be completed)**	
*Optional	
1. ****Title of the Issue:**	Title that clearly describes the primary issue your experience relates to.
2. *Geographic Information:	Enter the geographic region(s), type of ecosystem, type of water resource, country(s) or other geographic location that this issue occurred in.
3. * Keywords for this issue:	Click add/edit keywords to select the phrases or words that relate to your type of experience.

4. **Select one or more Cross Cutting Indicators of your issue:**	Select at least one indicator that can be used to describe the issue your experience relates to. Indicators are a measure of elements and characteristics of the problem, and the way it is/was being addressed.
	☐ Long Term Benefit
	☐ Culturally Respectful
	☐ Sustainability
	☐ Institutional Strengthening
	☐ Transferability
	☐ Effective Communication
	☐ Documentation
	☐ Participatory Process
	☐ Consensus Building
	☐ Strengthening Local Identities
	☐ Gender Sensitive
	☐ Adherence to Legal Policy
	☐ Regional Dimension
	☐ Human Rights
5. **Thematic Indicators:**	Detail any Indicators or characteristics specific to the issue being described.

6. **Describe the Issue (Background, symptoms and causes).

Briefly describe the situation and the objectives that were to be fulfilled in addressing the issue this contribution relates to.

*7. ** Impact or significance of your experience*

Describe the effects of a changed environment. This represents social, economic, ecological and institutional impacts as a result of human and or natural disturbance. What are the consequences on society of the changes in the environmental state? This includes both direct and indirect impacts.

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8. **How is this issue is being addressed?	

Describe the reaction of the (stakeholders) - government, institutions, groups of people and individuals to undesired impacts on the environment in order to prevent, mitigate, ameliorate or adapt to changes in the environment.

9. **** What are the lessons learned/problems experienced in addressing this issue?**	

Briefly and clearly describe each lesson learned, and your ideas as to how this experience could have been improved. Describe the insight gained from this experience that could be useful to others addressing similar issues, or who may be interested in replicating or adapting their approach based on your experience.

Were any unforeseen problems encountered that might serve as a learning point for other practitioners? Include problems relating to capacity development, field activities, institutional, project management issues, etc.)

10. **** What are the elements for replicating this experience/solution?**	

Describe what conditions need to be in place for this issue or aspects of it to be replicated.

11. ***What project is this issue drawn from??	The project that this issue was drawn from is selected. The project will have been entered into the Environment Directory and will therefore be available. If the project is not in the Environment Directory, complete the "project information" section below
12. ***Project Information	Title of Project: Country(s) involved: Lead agency: Contact Person(s): Description of Project: URL (for additional project /agency info):
13. *Attachment(s)	Click add/edit link to upload any supporting documentation for the issue
14. ***Link to other Issues	Select from the pull down list, other issues that are related to the one you are describing.

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