

## Minutes STEER Stakeholder Meeting

Thursday, 03 September 2020

### 1. STEER project results: cross-case comparisons and governance tool

- See presentations attached
- Q: What are best practices for coordination? What does that imply?
  - o We do not so much look at best practices for coordination. It is more about understanding which factors contribute to coordination success or failure. The idea is more to be precise on what exactly it is in the case study that makes coordination work well between the water sector and the respective other sector that the case study focuses on
- Q: Can the coordination issues that we have seen be limited to a specific scale or are they always interconnected and systemic?
  - o They are usually interlinked. Often, problems occur with implementation but that does not mean that the issue is always at the local scale. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on implementation problems in general
  - o With the tool: we're trying to break it down more and ask, for example, how capacity can be built at the local level to tackle implementation challenges that occur at that scale
  - o It is dangerous to look only at one scale, might make insights myopic and produce conflicts with provisions at other scales. At the same time, it is impossible to change the entire system at once...
- Q: For the tool: how do we take into account that users might have different kinds of needs, i.e. need explanations at different levels of detail or have different amounts of information available to them regarding governance frameworks?
  - o There are different tracks on the tool: a fast-track mode for users who have less information available. This leads to less precise results but still provides food for thought and maybe an indication on where to look next. The advanced mode is for users with more detailed information at hand
  - o The tool was created in a Design thinking approach, so users were part of the ideation and testing process, making sure that the needs of different users were integrated into the design of the tool

### 2. Breakout Room discussions

- See pdf files for a picture of the note board / a summary of respective breakout rooms
- Different rankings between the three groups regarding perception of what constitutes the main problem in the case studies (lack of coordination, of implementation or of resources availability), even though all case studies were equally represented in breakout groups
- Three challenges (coordination, implementation, resources) are interrelated
- Lack of coordination and implementation was a core issue across all discussions
- personal and group leadership are important, especially when it comes to overcoming problems in a context of multi-level governance and incoherence
- political will is needed to implement policy and to build a framework, especially in situations where actors do not necessarily see the benefit of coordinating. Top-down incentives might be needed
- sharing knowledge is a key prerequisite, as it gives users a better idea of their own impact on the water system (often lack of understanding by water users)

- monitoring and enforcement are frequent problems across case studies. Different approaches: in Germany, the strategy was to provide economic incentives so that actors would comply because it's in their best interest, in Mongolia and S.A., NGOs/civil society are involved to bolster local monitoring capacities
- there is need for government involvement of some sort, even if it is only tacit support, for cooperative initiatives to thrive (and also to ensure that new monitoring entities such as NGOs/citizens are accountable)
- example of NGO-led process that occurs with the approval of the state: "virtual state" in South Africa → train communities on democratic structures, then establish a sort of virtual state where community members themselves fulfill functions, such as monitoring → large interest among the group → Claudia: perhaps it would be good to open the workshop that was planned on this topic in South Africa for other interested parties and turn it into a webinar
- in cooperative initiatives, it is important to have powerful actors on board, so that they're part of the discussion rather than blocking developments later on
- importance of societal trust in general; example of Chile, where this is not given and prevents actors from cooperating, also since actors perceive themselves as having no agency to change the rules of the game
- Many similarities between the case studies, despite different level of development
- Level of democratization and size of country important

### 3. Panel on key take-aways of the comparative analysis for case studies

- Weser-Ems, Germany:
  - o economics (ensuring livelihoods) are the main driver of water use. This must not be forgotten when searching for solutions for integrated water management; important role of the European Union
  - o there is a need for a coherent legal framework, which includes provisions for monitoring progress and enforcement. Coherence between the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the Water Framework Directive needed
  - o Having data available is an essential prerequisite.
- Iran:
  - o the problem is not primarily water shortage but missing implementation infrastructure in general – administrative disorganisation in water management is a consequence of overall lack of coordination.
  - o Intransparency and a lack of data exacerbate that.
  - o Stakeholder involvement is not a panacea – it needs to be facilitated / enabled in light of specific local situation.
  - o Smart technology could be useful to overcome capacity gaps.
- South Africa:
  - o Main issues tends to be to unlock investments – need to look at this from the perspective of blended governance (public-private partnerships)
  - o Important to take into account the central role of traditional authorities.
    - Researcher, South Africa: These tend to be very authoritarian and patriarchal, so democratization in general is very important
- Mongolia:
  - o Knowledge sharing among stakeholders is a key aspect, including the private sector
  - o Missing trust is a problem that prevents coordination

- Spain:
  - Implementation gaps may occur despite high level of coordination (which is only a necessary condition)
  - After workshop and in light of exchange with other case studies (e.g. Chile) perhaps irrigation communities in Spain do not work well because of a lack of trust
  - There is a lack of vision among all stakeholders, no-one seems to have a clear idea on how the problem could be solved
  - Economics also play a role in Spain, but more specifically, the issue is one of distribution
  - Technological potentials also seen in Spain
  - Interestingly, the size of the river basin has also been mentioned as a factor that makes management (esp. monitoring) problematic, even though compared with the basins in Mongolia or Southern Africa, the case study area is not that large → maybe the issue is more one of perceived size
- Emscher:
  - Points to special model of the “Genossenschaftsmodell” in the Emscher case, which brings all water users together in a management board
  - Has been running for many decades and over time, has managed to establish a high level of mutual trust

#### **Group discussion:**

- Researcher, validation study Chile:
  - Many parallels between Chile and the Spanish case in particular
  - The potential of self-organisation needs to be assessed in light of overall power relations. Both authoritarian governance structures and powerful economic actors may silent local mobilisation
- STEER researcher:
  - This raises questions regarding the role of the state: it is supposed to be a regulator and enforcer, but also a cooperation partner → how to navigate such multiple roles?
    - An independent controlling level of the administration itself is needed, outside of the sector
    - This controlling agency needs sufficient resources and capacity
    - This also implies access to data: digital/technological progress could be helpful here
      - Yes, data is needed and automated monitoring can be helpful, however, the question then becomes also what kind of data is collected in that manner and by whom it is used
- Researcher, South Africa:
  - We have heard across all cases that implementation is challenging, even in countries where water management is generally considered to work well. This begs the question what “ideal implementation” would look like. Maybe there is a need to do some backwards reflection and see what has already been achieved and how this was possible
- Stakeholder, South Africa:
  - There is a need to build capacity with the local communities. They are the ones who can drive implementation but only if they are enabled to participate in a productive manner

#### 4. Issues raised and discussed in the chat

- Regarding the link between implementation of coordination and sustainable water management: “We cannot assume that implementation of structures and coordination in the system automatically leads to better governance and a better state of water resources. Earlier, there was the term of ‘effective implementation’, that is more useful. We need to look at practices, what tools are used to plan the sector, land development, and water allocations as well as water distribution. We need to anchor the knowledge through practices, tools, and models”
- On monitoring/implementation: building up a big bureaucratic control apparatus cannot be a practical solution, even in a country like Germany. Citizen science that uses simple monitoring devices such as smart phones could possibly provide a way to improve implementation. University Osnabrück has a research project on this
  - o South Africa also has a big drive towards citizen science and linking this to the virtual state could be very useful. However, even with this, capacity is needed, i.e. warm bodies on the ground, some finances, and with that some acknowledgement of what people are doing voluntarily
  - o Mongolia also involves NGOs in monitoring in a very similar way. They walk along river banks and take pictures with a smartphone if they see degradation / suspected illegal mining activity. The problem there is that even with such measures, basins are still too vast to cover and important water quality parameters (esp. in relation to degradation from mining) cannot be monitored as water samples would need to be taken and analysed for that. Also, in case of illegal mining: by the time NGOs have alerted the authorities and the authorities arrive, people are long gone
- On monitoring/implementation: in South Africa, size is often mentioned as an issue for why effective monitoring and enforcement are challenging. Is this the same in other case studies?
  - o In Mongolia, it was also an issue that was frequently raised, especially in relation to insufficient financial and human capacity of lower-level authorities
  - o In Spain this was also raised, even though the area overall is much smaller than that of the basin in S.A. or Mongolia → maybe the issue is more perceived size, esp. in comparison with other basins/aquifers in the same country/same region, rather than pure physical size

#### Next steps

- Policy Briefs are being finalized on the six in-depth case studies until 18 September. They will be translated into English and the country language where applicable (Spain, Mongolia, Iran) and shared again with everyone
- The STEER team will check its publications and reports to see what might be useful for stakeholders from the case study areas
- The final conference of the funding initiative of which STEER was part will take place in Berlin on 20-21 October 2020. It can be attended virtually but pre-registration is needed under this link: <https://bmbf-grow.de/en/events/grow-final-conference>