Title:

Boosting Engagement in Adaptive Water Governance: A Participatory Stakeholder Analysis

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Abstract:

Due to high mobility of water and over-segmentation of its sector, effective engagement of multiple stakeholders is crucial for adaptive water governance, particularly in countries facing water scarcity. The main objective of this paper is to enhance the potential contribution of stakeholder analysis to an effective stakeholder engagement by considering novel factors like stakeholders capacity for change, distinct formal and informal relationships, and perception of stakeholders. Our findings are based on a case study of the Zayandeh-Rud river basin (in central Iran) where suffers from growing socio-economic and environmental consequences of water scarcity. In this study we used a qualitative research design by conducting series of interviews, focus group discussions, workshops, and a questionnaire survey (N=156). Relying on common understanding on stakeholder engagement in water governance, the research design has been formed jointly, stakeholders have been identified and categorized based on their level of power, interest and capacity for change, and finally mapped by considering the type and degree of inter-relations using Social Network Analysis tool. An elaborated stakeholder map and social network proved to provide valuable findings for decision makers to understand: how roles and responsibilities are shared, how they interact, and how they can get engaged effectively? As an outcome, an adaptive process of Participatory Stakeholder Analysis with respective tasks has been introduced for formulation of engagement strategies. Our analysis extends the literatures on institutional change, and informs the debate over effective engagement process toward adaptive governance of resources.

Key Words:

Institutional Change, Water Governance, Engagement Process, Participatory Stakeholder Analysis