

Freshwater Resources Management Project

Mission and Background

The Asia-Pacific region, a region experiencing rapid population and economic growth, has witnessed significant degradation of freshwater resources. The future of the precious resources depends on how it will be managed and therefore formulating better policy options for water resource management is a timely requirement. The Freshwater Resources Management Project carries out research, aiming to propose better policy options for sustainable freshwater resources management in the Asia-Pacific region, and to support relevant activities of the various stakeholders such as policy-makers, in close collaboration with relevant organisations, especially in this region.



Research Outline

The Project comprises two main research components:

- Sustainable Water Management Policy (SWMP)
- Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA)

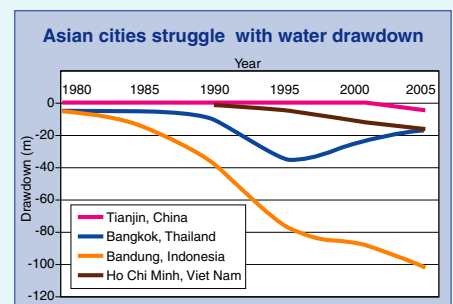
The project will actively disseminate the results of the research, including proposals for better water management policy to the international and regional arena, such as the 4th World Water Forum (WWF4) to be held in Mexico in March 2006.



Research Activities

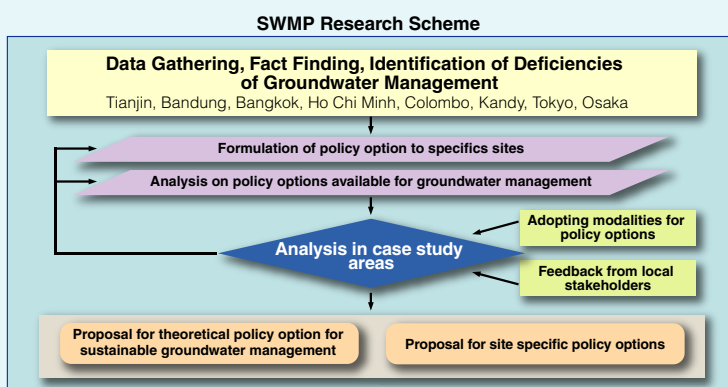
SWMP: Sustainable Water Management Policy

The aim of SWMP is to propose policy options for sustainable water management in the Asia-Pacific region based on empirical studies. In its first stage, SWMP focusses on groundwater resource management, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas of Asia. Because of easy accessibility and stable water quality, Asian countries have relied heavily on groundwater resources for sustaining human lives and economic activities. However, many Asian countries are now facing various problems, such as groundwater pollution, groundwater depletion due to over-exploitation and consequential land subsidence.



SWMP conducts case studies in Bangkok (Thailand), Ho Chi Minh (Viet Nam), Bandung (Indonesia), Tianjin (China), Colombo and Kandy (Sri Lanka), and Tokyo and Osaka (Japan), by investigating how groundwater resources have been managed in each case study city with the ultimate goal of developing better policy options for groundwater management.

From 2005 onwards, SWMP extended its scope to other water resources, such as surface water, and will develop integrated policy options for sustainable water management in the Asia-Pacific region.



Land subsidence in Bangkok
Photo: Courtesy of AIT

To ensure policy relevance of the research and to receive feedback from various stakeholders, stakeholder meetings have been organised in the respective case-study cities, inviting policy-makers, academia and NGOs.

Selected Activities

- Participation in the WWF4 – Mexico/ March 2006 (scheduled)
- Stakeholder meetings in Bangkok, Thailand/ July 2005; Tianjin, China/ September 2005; Bandung, Indonesia/ February and September 2005; and Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam/ September 2005
- SWMP research meetings in Hayama, Japan/ June 2004; Bandung, Indonesia/ February 2005; and Tianjin, China/ October 2005.
- Presentations at the 2nd International Symposium on Southeast Asian Water Environment – Hanoi, Viet Nam/ December 2004 and the 2nd Southeast Asia Water Forum – Bali, Indonesia/ August 2005



Stakeholder meeting in Bangkok

WEPA: Water Environment Partnership in Asia

The aim of WEPA is to strengthen governance and capacity-building in water environmental management in Asia by providing an information platform “WEPA Database” on water environment conservation. The Ministry of the Environment of Japan, which proposed the WEPA on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum (WW3) in 2003, is taking a leading role in its implementation. IGES has also contributed to WEPA as its secretariat, with close collaboration with eleven partner countries in the region. The WEPA is registered for the Portfolio of Water Actions (PWA)*.

* The Portfolio of Water Actions (PWA) is one of the outcomes of the WWF3, which is a collection of contributions by various countries and international bodies towards solving water problems.



The prototype of the WEPA Database will be presented at the WWF4 in Mexico (March 2006). The WEPA will continue for five years until March 2009.

The structure of the WEPA Database

The WEPA Database consists of four parts which are inter-linked with each other.

- 1. The Policy-related Information Database** provides information relating to the state of water environmental issues and the content of the water environmental policies and regulations in WEPA member countries.
- 2. The Technologies for Water Environment Conservation Database** provides information on wastewater treatment technologies and systems currently in good operation, which may be useful for decision-makers to consider water environment conservation measures.
- 3. The Activities by NGOs and CBOs Database** provides information on cases of civil activities related to water environmental problems and cases of governmental activities on education and awareness raising.
- 4. The Information Sources Database** provides links to websites which contain information related to water environment, including UN agencies, governments, NGOs and other relevant institutions.



URL: www.wepa-db.net

Selected Activities

- Session "Development of Information Platforms on the Water Environment" at the WWF4 – Mexico/ March 2006 (scheduled)
- The 2nd International Workshop for WEPA – Tokyo/ January 2006 (scheduled)
- Presentation at the 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD13) – New York/ April 2005
- The First International Workshop for WEPA – Tokyo/ January 2005



Presentation at CSD13

Publications

- International Review for Environmental Strategies (IRES): Volume 6 No.2 / 2006 (scheduled)
Featured issue is on freshwater resources with Prof. Shinichiro Ohgaki, Project Leader of IGES Freshwater Resources Management Project, as the special editor.
- Study Group on Freshwater Resource Management in Asia: Interim Report/ March 2003

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