

Bangladesh: Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO)

1. Introduction

The Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO), an institution under the Ministry of Water Resources, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is the key organization dealing with nation - wide macro level water resources planning and management. The organization came into being through a transformation from Master Planning Organization (MPO) in 1992. Its role and responsibilities has further been strengthened through the adoption of National Water Policy in 1999. During the period 1998 through 2000, WARPO under took the preparation of National Water Resources Management Plan (NWMP), a framework Plan to translate the National Water Policy into 84 programs within the framework of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

2. Mandates of WARPO according to Act No 12 of 1992

According to the WARPO Act 1992, WARPO will have the following responsibilities:

- i. To prepare a Water Resources Master Plan for the development of the water resources of the country having full regard to environmental compatibility.
- ii. To determine national policies and strategies for the scientific utilization and conservation of the water resources.
- iii. To provide consultancy services to other organization involved in the development, utilization and conservation of water resources.
- iv. To assist other organization and conservation of water resources and also to conduct in this connection special surveys if necessary.
- v. To review and evaluate the impact of actions taken by any organization involved in the development, utilization and conservation of water resources and also to offer counsel in those matters.
- vi. To improve the level of education, training and professional standards related to the utilization of water resources.
- vii. To collect and review information related to the utilization of the water resources and to arrange for its dissemination.
- viii. To arrange and conduct national and international seminars, conferences and workshops related to water resources with prior approval of the government for international events.
- (ix) To perform any other duties assigned by the government in connection with the water resources.

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3. National Water Policy

The National water policy, promulgated in 1999 provides policy direction for water sector. The objectives of NWPo are:

- i. To address issues related to the development of all forms of surface water and ground water in the efficient and equitable manner.
- ii. To ensure the availability of water to all elements of the society.
- iii. To accelerate the development of both public and private water delivery systems.
- iv. To decentralize the management of water resources and enhance the role of women.
- v. To develop a legal and regulatory environment for decentralization, sound environmental management, and improve conditions for private sector investment in the water sector.
- vi. To develop a state of knowledge and capability for sustainable planning.

4. National Water Sector Apex Bodies (NWSABs)

The National Water Policy has identified the following institutional arrangements responsible for bringing about reforms in the water sector.

4.1 National Water Resources Council (NWRC)

National Water Resources Council (NWRC) is the highest national body relating to water sector. The NWRC is chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and consist of 47 members. NWRC will coordinate all water resources management activities in the country and particularly.

- i. Formulate policy on different aspects of water resources management.
- ii. Provide directions for optimal development and utilization of Water Resources.
- iii. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the NWMP.
- iv. Provide directions on the development of institutions in the water sector.
- v. Provide policy directives for appropriate coordination among different agencies
- vi. Look after any other matter that may require its attention in the water sector.

4.2 Executive Committee of National Water Resources Council (ECNWRC)

To support the NWRC, there is an Executive Committee of the NWRC (ECNWRC), chaired by the Minister of Water Resources and has 15 members. The ECNWRC will have the following responsibilities:

- i. It will provide directives on all matters relating to the planning, management, and coordination across all sectors, as may be required by the NWRC.
- ii. It will guide water management institutions at the national, regional, and local levels in the formulation and implementation of policies and plans for improved water management and investment.

- iii. It will apprise and advise the NWRC periodically on matters of water resource management.
- iv. It will undertake any other function, as may be required from time to time, by the NWRC.

4.3 *Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO)*

The main responsibility of WARPO is to act as the Executive Secretariat of ECNWRC. WARPO will be the exclusive government institution for macro-level water resource planning.

4.4 *Ministry of Water Resources*

Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) is the executive agency responsible to the Government for all aspects of the water sector. In addition to the Minister and State Minister, the MoWR consists of the Secretary, an administrative group of sixteen Class I officers and a small Planning Cell.

5.0 **Management and Organizational setup of WARPO**

WARPO is a multi-disciplinary organization having seven technical and one administrative section covering Agriculture, Economics, Environment, Forest & Fisheries, Water Resources, Computer & IT, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Engineering. Director General (DG) of WARPO, assisted by two Directors is responsible for carrying out the day to day activities through assigning responsibilities to seven sections under principal Scientific Officer (PSO). Detail Organogram is attached in Appendix-A. Staff composition consists of both permanent and deputed from other agencies. Total position in WARPO is 87, of which 44 are professional and rests are supporting staff.

WARPO office is located in Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh. WARPO maintain a web-site (www.warpo.org) since 1999 for keeping its activities updated for information to all.

A Governing body chaired by the Minister, Ministry of Water Resources, is conducting the management of WARPO. The body consists of 10 members. There is an Executive committee, which is composed of Director General and two directors of WARPO. The committee will advise & assist the Governing Body and is responsible for the implementation of the decision of Governing Body. A Technical Committee, which was formed in June 1994, comprises of 5 members to advise WARPO on technical coordination among water-related agencies.

6.0 **Tasks of WARPO**

The tasks of WARPO can be grouped as Core Task and Routine tasks:

6.1 *Core Tasks*

- i. Preparation of National Water Management Plan (NWMP) and its updating
- ii. Monitoring implementation of the NWMP and its impacts.
- iii. Upkeep water resources assessments.
- iv. Maintaining, updating and dissemination of the NWRD and the MIS.
- v. Monitoring application of the Guidelines of Participatory Management and update it.

- vi. Stimulate, coordinate and help in providing specialized, multi-disciplinary and cross sectoral training in IWRM.
- vii. Functioning as a "Clearing House".
- viii. Monitoring of the follow up of implementation of the decisions of NWRC and ENCWRC meetings, and act as their secretariat.

6.2. *Periodic Tasks*

- i. Advising the NWRC and ECNWRC.
- ii. Executing studies and R & D activities.
- iii. Preparation of and advice on policy, strategy, institutional and legal issues.
- iv. Assisting other agencies in planing, monitoring, studies and investigations.

7.0 WARPO's accomplishment in Reform of Water Sector

Major achievements of WARPO in the reform of water sector are described below:

- i. As the Executive Secretariat of ECNWRC, WARPO provided assistance in the preparation of the National Water Policy and other sectoral strategies and policies.
- ii. WARPO participated in the preparation of National Arsenic Policy, protocols for Deep tubewell installation for Arsenic mitigation program and in the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).
- iii. WARPO has prepared the National Water Management Plan (NWMP) to implement the Government's recently published National Water Policy. The Plan is a framework plan to be implemented in 25 years having 84 crosscutting programs in 8 clusters to be implemented by 24 line agencies under seven Ministries. The Plan was approved by NWRC on 31st March 2004.
- iv. A National Water Resources Database (NWRD) has been created at WARPO in 2000. It contains more then 300 data layers, both temporal and spatial. NWRD is accessible to various users.
- v. Implementation of NWMP requires building a strong linkage among the 35 line agencies. WARPO has signed several MOU with different organizations especially in connection with data sharing, collection and dissemination. The relation will be further enhanced in connection with "clearing house" function and implementation monitoring of NWMP,
- vi. WARPO has undertaken a task to review all existing legislation related to water, and to recommend a consolidated and comprehensive Water Act incorporating the existing laws and any additional legislation that may be needed to implement the National Water Policy and the NWMP.
- vii. A draft guideline for Environmental Assessment of Flood Control Drainage and irrigation project has been prepared by WARPO in 2000.
- viii. Apart from the above WARPO is executing a number of projects *called Environmental Monitoring Information Network (EMIN), Southwest Integrated Water Resources Management and Integrated Coastal zone Management Plan (ICZMP)*. Published around 40 documents under ICZMP.

8.0 On going Reforms in the Country

A number of important principles in the NWPo have direct impact on the reform, relevance to key players namely BWDB, LGED and WARPO.

8.1 *Under the principle of reassignment, the NWPo issues the following directives:*

- i. WARPO will be the exclusive government organisation for macro-level water resources planning.
- ii. The BWDB will implement all major surface water development projects and other FCDI projects with a command area of more than 1000 hectares in a single project.
- iii. Local government will implement FCDI projects with a command area of 1000 hectares or less.
- iv. Ownership of FCD and FCDI projects with a command area of 1000 ha or less will gradually be transferred to the local governments, beginning with the ones that are being satisfactorily managed and operated by the beneficiary/community organisations.

8.2 *Under the principle of relinquishment, the NWPo issues the following directives:*

- i. The management of public water schemes, barring municipal schemes, with a command area up to 5000 ha will be gradually transferred to local and community organisations and their O&M will be financed through local resources.
- ii. Public water schemes, barring municipal schemes, with a command area of over 5000 ha will be gradually placed under private management, through leasing, concession or management contract under open competitive bidding procedures or jointly managed by the project implementing agency along with local government and community organisations.

8.3 *Participatory Management of Water Resources:* To ensure beneficiary participation, NWPo specifies that the participation of all project affected persons, individually and collectively, is to be ensured in the planning, design, implementation and operation and maintenance of publicly funded surface water resources development plans and projects. In the planning process, consultation with the stakeholders has been made mandatory.

8.4 *Decentralisation of BWDB management and operational responsibilities* are important area of reform. There is a need to delegate more authority at scheme level to enable the local officials to dispose off routine matters expeditiously.

8.5 *Integrated Water Resources Management:* This requires an adapted skill-mix, and consequently calls for a broadening of perspective and strengthening the organisation by recruiting professionals of different disciplines in BWDB.

8.6 The Reorganization Plan of the BWDB, finalized in 1999, carried out a major restructuring of the Board to restore the dynamism of the organization. The new BWDB Act of 2000 sought to give legal cover to many of the policy directives of the NWPo.

- 8.6 *A Guideline for Participatory Water Management* was formulated to facilitate the process of participatory water management at all levels of water management in the country.
- 8.7 *The proposed Water Management Improvement Project (WMIP)* has been conceived as an instrument for carrying forward the momentum already generated in the BWDB. The project seeks to strengthening the capacity of WARPO and carry forward reform programmes of BWDB and strengthening operation and maintenance of BWDB projects.

9.0 Lesson Learned /Conclusion

Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO) an “exclusive government institution for macro-level water resources planning” has demonstrated its capacity in the preparation of National Water Policy ad National Water Management Plan. It is also a house of National Water sector database increasingly being utilized by different agencies for planning, research and monitoring purposes.

Proper functioning of WARPO also may require legal covers in many aspects to take care the function like “Clearing house” so that all relevant water sector projects are carefully screened in conformity to the policy and NWMP.

Strong linkage of WARPO with all 24 agencies having stake in the water sector will be required to fulfill its mandate of monitoring, evaluation of the implementation of NWMP. To avoid duplicacy and conflicts, different organizations in water sector should work according to their mandate.

It is very much crucial that role of WARPO as envisaged in NWMP and outlined by NWMP is understood by relevant stakeholders. WARPO is to be strengthened to play effectively its role as apex body of water sector.

