



THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

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Excerpts from slides prepared for Water, Peace and Security tailor-made capacity development activities in Iraq. Please attribute authors when using materials.

Institutions (organizations)

- Institutions are
 - Formal and information rules and principles to which a group of actors has agreed in order to organize a specific issue between them
 - Have purpose of regulating behavior of different actors in society to ensure a certain goal (e.g. peace and stability, economic development)
- Different definitions of institutions
 - As networks of informal and formal rules and behavior that guide human behavior to ensure a certain order (very broad definition)
 - Organizations that are set up by a group of actors, often with a specific mandate, activities, an office, etc. (narrow definition)
- Institutions ensure certain regularity in behavior and thus manage expectations of all actors involved – avoids or mitigates conflict

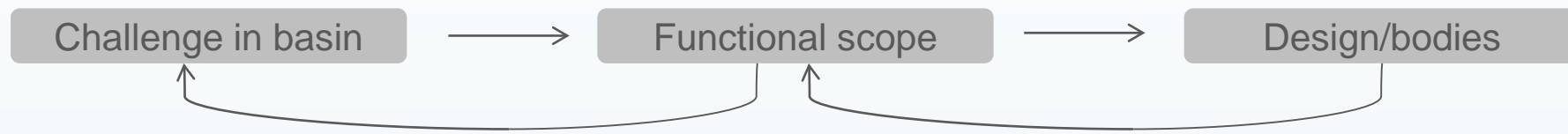
The need for institutions

- Managing water resources is complex and is influenced by interests of users, socioeconomic developments, political situation, etc.
- The differences in actors and their interests requires careful consideration of priorities, management decisions, etc.
- Only then can water resources be management effectively and conflict avoided or mitigated
- Institutions (legal framework and organizations) therefore play a key role as they
 - Ensure regularity of meetings
 - Prepare and manage decision-making
 - Raise newly emerging issues that need attention
 - Ensure data and information sharing
 - Include various stakeholders and interests



The set-up of institutions

- Institutions can be set up in different ways – „form follows function“ (should address challenges in the basin); they can
 - Have different topical focus
 - Cover different governance levels
 - Be broad or narrow in mandate
 - Can have different degrees of power towards other actors



Example: Institutions for water management in Germany

- In Germany, institutions for water management exist at different governance levels
 - Transboundary level
 - International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine
 - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
 - National
 - Federal Ministry for the Environment
 - Federal Agency for the Environment
 - State level
 - State Ministries for the Environment
 - Regional councils
 - Local level
 - Communities
 - Districts and cities



Conclusions

- Water resources management requires people, communities and countries to come together and coordinate their activities and agree to certain principles and rules
- Only then can conflict be avoided or mitigated and long term benefits of cooperation can be achieved
- Institutions provide mechanisms to do exactly this – they bring together water users and other relevant actors and
 - Ensure regular discussions of key problems
 - Take decisions on water management
 - Ensure data and information sharing among all users and stakeholders
 - Solve or mitigate conflicts
 - Involve relevant stakeholders