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cooperation for the water decade

COOPERATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DRINKING WATER AND
SANITATION DECADE

and

THE CASE OF THE SLOW SAND FILTRATION PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The progress in the field of community water supply and sanitation in developing countries has been disappointingly slow. The most recent survey of water supply and excreta and waste disposal services carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1975, found that some 1.230 million or c. 62 per cent of the Third World's population, excluding China, were without a safe water supply and that c. 1.350 million were without adequate sanitation (1).

The need is most urgent in rural areas, where approximately 70 per cent of population live. Of these people only 22 per cent had access to good water in 1975 compared with 78 per cent of the city population, of whom 57 per cent had access through house connections and 21 per cent through public standposts.

For sanitation the figures are 15 per cent for the rural areas (sanitary latrines) and 75 per cent for the cities (25 per cent through house connections to sewerage systems and 50 per cent by household systems). Within the cities the urban poor and squatter communities are much worse off than the other urban dwellers. In fact the need to provide excreta disposal systems in poor urban areas is more urgent than it is in sparsely populated rural areas.

In recent years there has been an increasing call for higher priority to the improvement of this alarming situation. At the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements "Habitat" held in Vancouver in 1976, it was recommended that clean water and adequate sanitation should be provided for all by 1990, if possible (2).

In March 1977, the UN Water Conference held in Mar del Plata, adopted this target and proposed to designate the period 1981 - 1990 the "International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade". This period then should be used by developing countries to accelerate

their programmes, and by international agencies and official development aid agencies (ODA's) to expand and intensify their cooperation (3).

In the meantime, the "Decade" has been endorsed by the UN General Assembly and measures will be taken to interlink the Mar del Plata Action Plan for Community Water Supply and Sanitation with the Third Development Decade of the United Nations.

In conjunction with and partly stemming from this unprecedented appeal to countries, the International Community and donors to give a higher priority to community water supply and sanitation development, there are a number of significant policy changes which will have a direct bearing on the Decade.

A first and major shift in direction which should be mentioned here is the increased commitment to water and sanitation for the poor, at present unserved, groups in developing countries and particularly for the population in the rural and urban fringe areas. This, of course, firstly concerns an increased activity in investment programmes. It also relates, however, to information and technology support, in casu to back-up programmes in the field of information exchange, research and development, training and promotion and demonstration.

The changes referred to, however, are not merely a matter of higher priority for the rural areas. They also particularly concern the new approaches and implementation strategies for rural water supply and sanitation programmes. These are evident for example, in the increased emphasis put on the involvement of communities in basic sanitary programmes and in the importance attached to an improved coordination between the various agencies and disciplines involved in community water supply and sanitation development. They also appear in concepts like Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and in a stepped-up cooperation between international agencies concerned with the sector. Although these trends relate to various levels and different disciplines, they have one thing in common: an element of increased cooperation. It has therefore been a very opportune and appropriate idea to devote the 5th WEDC Conference to the topic of collaboration in this sector.

This paper presents the Slow Sand Filtration Project as an illustration of elements of cooperation for the Decade, particularly in the field of Information and Technology Support. It should, however, be borne in mind that it is a relatively small Research and Demonstration project and that the overall cooperative action for the Decade is much broader in scope. That the paper discusses these general aspects of cooperation for the Decade at some length, is merely meant to provide a broader basis for discussion during this Conference.

INCREASED COMMITMENT TO RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

The total investment required to reach the target of clean water and adequate sanitation for all by 1990 has been estimated at c. 140.000 million US \$. Approximately 66 per cent of this amount will be required for water supplies, the remainder for sanitation. This investment calculation assumes the extension of water supply and sanitation to the entire population of developing countries, with the same levels of service as are currently provided in urban and rural situations respectively. Even so, the target of the Decade implies that the present level of annual investment has to be increased by the following factors: (4)

	Water Supply	Sewage/ Excreta Disposal
Urban	1.2 times	2.1 times
Rural	3.9 times	4.0 times

From these figures it will be clear that it is not only the amount of money that is important, but that it is also a matter of priorities; what is required is a shift in emphasis towards the rural areas.

A major part of the investment will have to come from the developing countries themselves. Hence the success of the Decade activities will turn on the country's initiative and political will to act. A recent background paper on the cooperative action for the Decade (4) says the following about the plan of action at country level: "To most of the developing countries the Decade targets will pose a challenge. The major strategy to meet it will rest on a policy decision to proceed and the creation of an environment that will generate informed and active participation by the community. Of equal importance is coordination at the national and community levels, and the strengthening of overall managerial capacity. Governments will also need to intensify action to improve their absorptive capacity, and to expand their programme capabilities.

In accordance with the Resolutions of the UN Water Conference international agencies are also increasing their commitment to rural water supply and sanitation, both in their programmes and in financial support to projects. A major activity in this context is the Cooperative Action for the Decade in which international agencies concerned with rural water supply and sanitation are collaborating.

Although increased investment is a major prerequisite for reaching the target of the Decade, it is clear from past performance in rural water supply and sanitation projects that money alone will not do the job. The problem of community water supply and sanitation in developing countries is not merely of a technological nature. A much wider set of structural constraints hamper progress. Apart from the lack of internal and external financial resources, the countries themselves listed as their major obstacles the lack of a proper administrative structure, the lack of trained personnel, and the lack of community involvement in planning, implementation and maintenance of systems (5). These are frequently identified as causing the failure of projects.

One of the elements of crucial importance for the Decade is the need for Information and Technology Support regarding the "technology" of management and administration, as well as the technology of physical systems used in water supply and sanitation.

Information and Technology Support programmes may comprise:

- The provision of information and reference services in the field of potable water and sanitation as basic back-up facilities to overcome one of the crucial obstacles in the development of the water supply and sanitation sector: the lack of effective information.

- Research and Development including the identification, adaptation, development and demonstration of suitable technologies and the promotion and application of demonstrated technologies.
- Special studies to evaluate, formulate and promote methods and procedures for the organization, administration, operation, maintenance and financing of water supply and sanitation systems in rural and urban fringe areas, such as studies on: design criteria, levels of service and demand projections, operation and maintenance systems, tariff policies, study of institutional aspects, health education, social and cultural aspects and user acceptance and behaviour, and manpower development methods.
- Training programmes aiming at: promotion of national programmes for training human resources at different levels, and organization of special training courses and other training activities such as workshops and seminars.

At the regional and global level an increased cooperation can help in ensuring a reliable flow of information both published and unpublished by information systems development. It may encourage and provide coordination of such Research and Demonstration projects and special studies on subjects of wide interest and provide liaison with resource institutions in industrialized countries. Regional and global support can also include organizing regional and international meetings and special training courses, supporting national training back-up activities.

INCREASED CALL FOR COOPERATION

As mentioned before there is a call for improved communication and cooperation. This not only relates to the water supply and sanitation sector but in fact reflects the present transition of development, where "cooperation" takes the place of "assistance" and the "do for" approach is shifting towards a "do with" approach. The increased emphasis on cooperation relates to all levels involved from the grassroots level to the United Nations, and to all disciplines concerned. In fact, as much emphasis is put on improved "vertical" lines of cooperation (e.g. between communities and operating agencies, or between member states and the UN system) as on "horizontal" lines of cooperation (such as intersectorial cooperation within countries, Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries or cooperation between various UN agencies).

Without trying to be exhaustive, the following circuits of cooperation that have a direct bearing on the degree of success of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade may be mentioned:

- The UN Cooperative Action for the Decade, in which the United Nations, UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank participate. The Cooperative Action firstly envisages an increased cooperation and coordination among the participating agencies, and secondly an expanded cooperation between these agencies and the member states. The Cooperative Action also tries to improve the cooperation between the agencies and official development assistance agencies (ODA's).
- Cooperation at National Level. This aims at an increased cooperation between operating agencies and organizations directly concerned with the sector, whether in water supply or sanitation, in urban or in rural areas. It also aims at intersectorial cooperation, in particular between water supply and sanitation agencies and health

service agencies, but it can also involve community development agencies and other organizations as appropriate.

- Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries primarily concerns cooperation between governments, whether it be bilateral or multilateral. It can also involve the participation of public organizations, within the framework of the policies laid down by governments, of private organizations and of individuals.
- Community Participation, involving an increased dialogue and cooperation between communities and operating agencies, as well as support to the communities.

THE COOPERATIVE ACTION FOR THE DECADE

As a direct follow-up of the Mar del Plata Action Plan for community water supply and sanitation, which calls for an improved coordination at the country level and regular consultations among governments, international organizations and Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) concerned, a Cooperative Action Plan has been jointly prepared by UNDP and WHO. The Action Plan first of all aims at improved liaison between organizations within the UN system concerned with community water supply and sanitation development. These organizations have set up a Steering Committee composed of their representatives to initiate the necessary action. At the country level the UNDP Resident Representative is expected to play a central part as focal point for Cooperative Action. He will coordinate the technical and financial cooperation projects of the agencies concerned.

Without any doubt this acceptance of the coordinating role of UNDP at country level by the other agencies can be seen as a major step forward. Together with the Steering Committee it provides a new formula for an improved coordination between the agencies.

The first activity undertaken in the context of the Cooperative Action, was a series of so-called "Rapid Assessment Studies" of the sector in a majority of developing countries. The studies, which were launched jointly by WHO and the World Bank, were meant to help national governments to assess:

- the country's preparedness to accelerate rural water supply and sanitation projects,
- the likely constraints on such an accelerated programme,
- the actions necessary before national plans can be prepared for the 1981 - 1990 Decade,
- the need for external assistance to prepare the national plans.

The rapid assessments clearly showed that in many cases there were serious constraints to community water supply and sanitation development, so that the 1990 target was unlikely to be achieved. In a second phase activities will be generated at the country level in preparation of the National Decade plans, particularly focussing on the provision of support to sector planning.

In close relation with the above activities a few other collaborative projects within the UN system are carried out such as:

- A UNDP - World Bank - project on "Low cost Water and Sanitation Techniques", including the design of demonstration projects which should result in community participation, lower costs, the use of appropriate technology and the creation of employment.

- the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee Health Policy study on "Rural Water Supply and Sanitation as Components of Primary Health Care", and
- the UNDP/ILO project on "Labour - intensive Public Works".

INCREASED COOPERATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

In general, a number of agencies and institutes will be actively involved in DWSS development at country level. Some of them deal with implementation programmes, others develop activities in direct or indirect support of the operational work, like information exchange, research and development, education and training. At present, close collaboration between the various operating agencies and the specialised support institutes at national level is very much stressed.

On the operational side this increased cooperation first of all concerns collaboration between the various agencies in charge of the sector within a country, for example, water agencies, public works department, rural water supply and sanitation divisions within the Ministry of Health or (semi-) autonomous water boards or corporations. When various ministries share the responsibility for water, such a coordination, however, often creates serious problems. Moreover, there is sometimes no clear mandate for rural sanitation at all. Therefore, some countries have set up separate administrative systems for rural water supply and sanitation. Even so, cooperation with the Health service agencies is required to integrate water supply, sanitation and health education, since health benefits from basic sanitary services in general will not materialise without improved personal and domestic hygiene practices. Such coordination, moreover, is important when water supply and sanitation are seen as components of primary Health Care. In some Latin American countries, for example in Colombia, the National Institute for Basic Sanitation comprises a special promotion division which takes care of the educational component of rural programmes in communities below 2500 inhabitants.

Since basic sanitary services are increasingly seen as a springboard for further community development a link with Community Development Agencies and possibly other sectorial agencies, for example in the context of Integrated Rural Development projects, is more and more emphasized.

As an element of this intersectorial cooperation between operating agencies, special attention is given in several countries to the development of national collaborative mechanisms for information and technology support. Through these mechanisms a number of institutes will perform support activities of information, research and development, education, training and promotion. This work should be directed as much as possible towards the needs of the operational agencies which are in charge of the planning and implementation of CWSS programmes and projects. Therefore, close collaboration is required between the various operational agencies and the specialised support institutes at national level.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC)

The great emphasis placed on the concept of TCDC should be viewed against the background of the transition of world affairs from a situation of dependence of the developing countries to one of interdependence of all nations. The acquisition of technology to accelerate social and economic development is an essential issue in the developing countries programme for a New International Economic Order. This concerns the elimination of constraints which hinder their

full access to an effective use of modern technology, and the reduction of their dependence on imported technology. Technology is still mainly transferred by purchase or lease from trans-national corporations. The problems of such a technology transfer are many, including foreign exchange costs, limitations of the use of technology, restriction on exports and excessive reliance on foreign skills.

Against this background, TCDC is a basic tool for national and collective self-reliance of the developing countries. It involves the sharing of technical resources, skills and capacities among developing countries for their mutual development. Hence, it may be used to strengthen existing technological capacities and to improve communication. It can improve the absorptive and adaptive capacity for technology of developing countries and give them a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and cooperation.

Although the main flow of technical cooperation visualised by TCDC would be between two or more developing countries, the support of the UN development system, of industrialized countries and of regional and inter-regional institutions may be necessary. From the report of the United Nations Conference on TCDC, held in Buenos Aires from 30 August to 12 September 1978, (6) we quote : "TCDC is neither an end in itself nor a substitute for technical cooperation with developed countries. Increased technical cooperation of the developed countries is required for the transfer of appropriate technologies and also for the transfer of advanced technologies and other expertise in which they have manifest advantages. Further contributions from the developed countries are required for the enhancement of technological capabilities of developing countries through support to relevant institutions in those countries. TCDC can serve the purpose of increasing the capacity of developing countries to adapt and absorb appropriate inputs from developed countries".

Among the 36 recommendations composing the Plan of Action endorsed by the conference, there are many which have a direct bearing on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. At national level, inter alia :

The strengthening of national information systems for technical cooperation among developed countries

In order to make the knowledge and experience of one developing country available to other countries, a much easier flow of information is essential, not only on government level, but also among regional bodies and specialist organizations.

The INRES of the UNDP can play an important role here. The information should be transferred through specially designed channels, and pooled, so that all countries are guaranteed easy access to it.

The improvement of existing institutions

A strong institutional organization is indispensable for a successful TCDC. National Institutions should work together on common problems, exchange views and undertake joint development projects.

Promotion of national research and training centres with multinational scope

Research and training facilities should be used to their full capacities. Wherever possible, new centres should be set up. Exchange of students and scientists is strongly recommended.

The formulation, orientation and sharing of policy experience with respect to science and technology

The experience of certain developing countries in the application of science and technology to their respective levels of development can be of great assistance to other countries. Governments should compare notes in order to arrive at the most appropriate policies on science and technology for each country.

The encouragement of technical cooperation among developing countries through professional and technical organizations

The cooperation should also extend to non-government specialist organizations.

Next to a series of recommendations for action at the subregional and regional level, the following recommendations were made, inter alia, for action at the global level :

The exchange of development experience

The UN should assist developing countries with information on the experience gained in other countries, to help them with further programmes.

The fostering of global technical collaboration

Networks of information exchange in various specialist fields are to be set up, so that each developing country can make use of the entire technical literature available on a certain subject.

The improvement of information flows

The activities of INRES and similar organizations should expand and be adjusted so as to ensure the most effective communications with international, national and regional information services and libraries.

Maximization of the use of developing countries' capacities

Developing countries should use their local capabilities and expertise to the fullest extent. If the required expertise should not be available it should preferably be procured from another developing country. Only as a last resort should help be sought in the developed world.

Support by developed countries for technical cooperation among developing countries

Developed countries can assist by voluntary contributions to UN development systems, and to TCDC programmes or national institutions taking part in such programmes. They should give priority to TCDC orientated projects over other ones.

The harmonization of development assistance with technical cooperation among developing countries

Developed countries should exchange their old 'Dutch Uncle' type of aid for a new approach aimed at achieving greater self-reliance of developing countries.

Although these recommendations are of a fairly general nature, very significant changes may be expected in development cooperation once they are implemented. At present, it should be said TCDC is still a

philosophy rather than a plan of action and much is unknown about 'how to do it' in practice. This stresses the need for concrete projects developed and implemented on the basis of TCDC, particularly also in the field of community water supply and sanitation.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The emphasis put on increased cooperation is also extended to the grassroots level, where it manifests itself in the call for community participation. Although this is probably one of the most fashionable terms at present, it cannot be denied that local involvement and dialogue between communities and development agencies are crucial to the eventual success of programmes. As with TCDC, the problem with community participation is that, in spite of the extensive discussions about it at rather "philosophical" level, very little systematic knowledge and experience is available on how to go about it in practice.

Often community participation is simply interpreted as participation in the construction of the supply through contributions in cash, labour, local materials, services and organizational activities. However important this may be, it does not take into account that the programmes should be based on the communities' perceived needs, and that their continued interest and support after the construction must be ensured. Participation of all members or at least all sections of a community in the planning and decision making phase as well as in the phases of operation, maintenance and use of the water supply and sanitation facilities is therefore of even greater importance. This also implies that appropriate local management systems are chosen, allowing the community to develop institutions, and to control the resources, both their own and those planned at their disposal.

The impact of improved environmental sanitation facilities on community health will not be optimal, however, when the adoption and continued functioning of the new technologies are not accompanied by a change in general sanitation practices concerning public, personal and household hygiene. Accompanying sanitary education programmes, in which the villagers are actively participating, will be conditional to success.

Finally, community education and participation will be important when water and sanitation programmes are seen as a catalyst to further village development. Rural water supply and sanitation programmes therefore should not be viewed in isolation, but in their connection with the possibilities and constraints of further village development, including the negative impacts which the water and sanitation programme itself may have on this development.

Community participation does not mean the reduction or withdrawal of higher level support to the communities. On the contrary, it may require that this support is intensified and becomes more complex. In view of the close inter-relation between the technical, organizational, social and cultural component of rural water supply and sanitation projects, this external support necessarily will be of a multi-disciplinary nature. It will involve, next to the technical water supply agencies, health service agencies (including health education), community development agencies and possibly also other sectorial development agencies. A close cooperation between these agencies at all levels and a constant dialogue with the communities is required. It will be clear that from the organizational and institutional point of view such an intersectorial cooperation aiming at community participation in all phases is not easy at all, posing one of the main challenges of the coming Decade.

As has been said, our present "knowledge" of community participation is too academic and not detailed enough to determine its potential feasibility in the planning and implementation of programmes. What is required therefore is a sober assessment of the potential role of community participation under different conditions without ignoring the problems and constraints associated with it. This primarily should be done by action research and pilot projects in developing countries themselves. Support to these activities, however, should be given at international level (7).

THE INTEGRATED RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ON SLOW SAND FILTRATION

In order to promote the large scale application of slow sand filtration for community water supply in developing countries, a number of countries have developed an integrated research and demonstration project on slow sand filtration, in close collaboration with the IRC.

The project comprises applied research programmes, demonstration programmes, the exchange of information, and the transfer of knowledge and experience as a preparation of large scale implementation programmes. All these activities are carried out by the developing countries themselves.

The project consists of the following phases:

1. Development of applied research programmes by a core group of project participating institutions on the basis of international collaboration.
2. Development of demonstration programmes by the participating countries on the basis of international collaboration.
3. Provision of information and demonstration activities to other developing countries, by the countries that participated in the preceding phases.
4. Preparation of large scale slow sand filtration implementation programmes by several other developing countries on the basis of the results of the preceding phases.

The applied research programme for phase 1 of the project has been implemented during 1976 and 1977 by Research and Development institutes, in close collaboration with executing agencies in six countries: Ghana, India, Kenya, Sudan, Pakistan and Thailand. Apart from gaining experience with the slow sand filtration process, the specific objective of these programmes was to develop appropriate criteria for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of slow sand filtration schemes under the local conditions of these countries. The results of these research programmes were compiled in country reports.

At present the emphasis of the project is placed on the implementation of the demonstration programmes (second phase), for which Columbia and Jamaica have also joined the core group.

The objective of these programmes is to test and demonstrate alternative implementation strategies in practice, for large scale programmes under different conditions.

The main objective has the following main elements:

1. The development, testing and evaluation of various implementation strategies for slow sand filtration projects at local level, by the implementation of a number of local demonstration projects (two to four per country).

2. The development, testing and evaluation of models for the organizational and institutional infrastructure at national and local level, required for the repetition of these projects within the scope of large scale implementation programmes.

Country	Programme Coordinating Institution
Colombia	Instituto Nacional de Salud
Ghana	Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation
India	National Environmental Engineering Research Institute
Jamaica	National Water Authority
Kenya	Public Health Department, Ministry of Health
Sudan	Rural Water Corporation
Thailand	Rural Water Supply Division, Ministry of Public Health

Participating countries in the Slow Sand Filtration Project

The Local Demonstration Projects

The local demonstration projects are implemented in selected rural communities ranging from approximately 1,000 - 10,000 inhabitants. Apart from the technical engineering aspects, focusing on the further adaptation of this low cost treatment technology which makes optimal use of local resources, the major components of the projects are:

- the creation of community participation;
- implementation of health education activities;
- special attention for operation and maintenance, including the training and supervision of caretakers and preventive maintenance organization;
- development of local management systems, including a clean division of responsibilities between the agencies and communities;
- detailed monitoring and evaluation.

The follow-up and continued support of the projects, also after the construction phase, is thus safeguarded.

The Organizational Structure at National and Local Level

The planning, implementation and evaluation of the programme are carried out in and by the participating countries themselves. The general responsibility for the programme in each country lies with a Programme Managing Committee in which the various disciplines and agencies involved in the programme are represented. This specifically concerns:

- water supply agencies at national and regional level

- health service agencies at national and regional level (including health education)
- community development agencies at national and regional level
- national research and development institutes in the field of public health and environmental engineering.

The direct responsibility for each of the demonstration projects lies with local coordination committees including representatives of the communities as well as representatives of the executing agencies at local level.

Because of the broad composition of the committees, the various components of the demonstration projects and the organizational requirements can be taken care of in an integrated way.

A major function of the committees is the establishment and/or strengthening of multi-disciplinary collaboration at national and local level, in such a way that liaison is maintained with other sectors like primary health care and integrated rural development. The development of this collaboration and the related organizational institutional infrastructure is a prerequisite for large scale follow-up of the present demonstration programmes.

That is why the country programmes comprise training activities for the stimulation and support of collaboration and coordination between the various executing agencies on the one hand, and between research and development agencies on the other hand.

Aspects relevant to the Decade

Although the demonstration programmes in the participating countries are at present in the implementation phase, it can already be concluded that projects such as the Slow Sand Filtration Project can play a useful, supportive role in the preparation of the coming Decade.

Against the background of the newly emerging policies, the project provides a useful model and test-case for Information and Technology Support Programmes developed and implemented on the basis of the TCDC concept. At the local level the project has created an opportunity to develop, test and evaluate new strategies for the implementation of water supply projects in combination with health education and on the basis of community participation. A rather weak link in the local projects so far has been that sanitation has not always been explicitly included. Some of the participating countries, however, are now planning both excreta and waste disposal systems in conjunction with the new water supplies. In India studies will also be carried out in some of the demonstration villages regarding the use of waste water for fish ponds and agricultural use.

As mentioned before, the broad composition of both the National Programme Managing Committees and the Local Coordination Committees makes an integrated programme planning and implementation possible, while effective links between the agencies and institutes involved at all levels can also be identified and developed. This concerns multisectorial cooperation between the water supply agencies and health service agencies involved in the project, but particularly also the close collaboration between these operating agencies on the one hand and the R & D field on the other. The classical "gap" between research and implementation may be reduced by projects like the slow sand filtration one and the development of a national mechanism for Information and Technology Support be promoted.

A crucial aspect of the project methodology is that the responsibility for programmes lies with the countries and that also the planning and implementation of all research and demonstration activities are carried out in and by the countries themselves. The programmes are not implemented in isolation but they are part and parcel of the national plans for water supply. This is also reflected in the external financial support for the country programmes for the slow sand filtration project, which is no more than 20 to 25 per cent of the overall costs of these programmes. The main function of the IRC is to promote the cooperation and the exchange of information among the participants, as well as between participants and other interested agencies and institutes. In this respect the project has a clear demonstration function. The Programme Managing Committees have already proved to be very useful in focal points for such international cooperation. Given the set-up and methodology, the progress of the slow sand filtration programmes primarily depends on the country action. Apart from financial support mentioned above, support is only given in the field of international coordination and information exchange. This concerns for example the organization of international meetings or bilateral working visits of participants. It also concerns the dissemination of relevant information and the preparation of general project documents and their publication if required.

As a result the progress of the country programmes is different in different countries. This may sometimes hamper an optimal internal collaboration, since TCDC as a process of interaction in fact first presupposes action at the national level. Secondly it requires that this action is at least partly similar and so much in line that a meaningful information exchange and cooperation can be developed.

However, the case of the Slow Sand Filtration Project shows that TCDC is not a simple matter. The development of cooperation both at the international and the national level is a process that takes time and effort, rather than a once-and-for-all recipe.

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