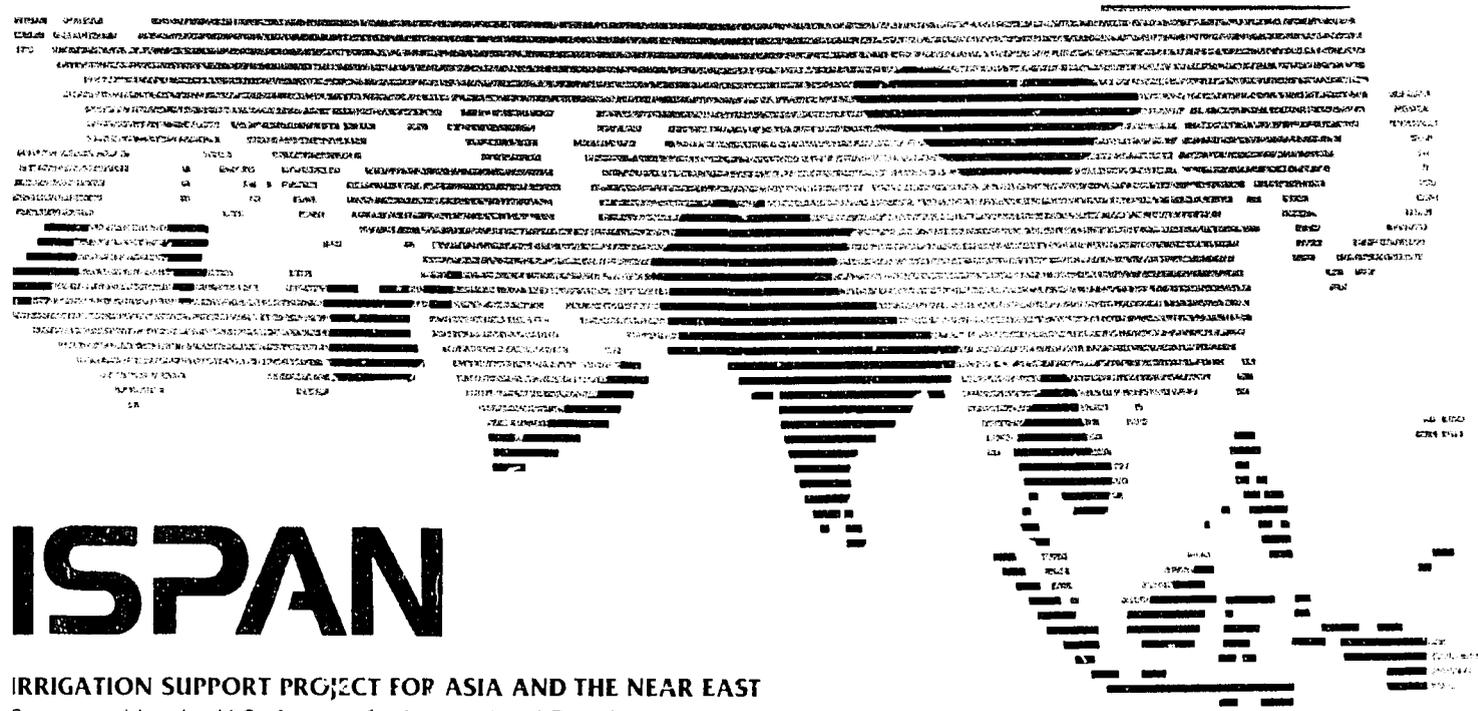


CONTRASTING APPROACHES FOR WATER POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN TUNISIA AND SRI LANKA

Lessons Learned from USAID Mission Experience

ISPAN 855



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USAID Mission Experience

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Information for this study was gathered in Tunisia and Sri Lanka in February and March 1993 through interviews with policy process participants—i.e., national and local government officials, USAID Mission representatives, program staff and consultants, and officers and members of water user associations in Tunisia and farmer organizations in Sri Lanka. Secondary source materials, including project reports, government documents and USAID mission records, were also reviewed.

As a supplement to the field work, team members conducted interviews in the United States with several of the consultants who had participated in one or the other policy implementation efforts; with A.I.D. (Washington-based) officers who had supervised various project activities in the past; and with other experts who could provide useful background information.

During the study, many hours were devoted to in-depth interviews with the participants in many locations. The many respondents who interacted with team members were most helpful, open, and often quite frank in their opinions about the policy processes. The authors are most appreciative of their kind assistance with the study, while in no way holding them responsible for this final product.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper analyzes two policy reform processes assisted by the Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East (ISPAN) to determine what guidance they offer to other USAID Missions and cooperating countries. The paper reviews these two approaches, one in Tunisia and the other in Sri Lanka, to:

- assess their effectiveness in helping cooperating countries formulate and implement policy;
- determine their adaptability to other countries; and
- identify the role USAID Missions can reasonably play in policy reform.

The paper also discusses ways that USAID Missions can effectively use technical assistance for policy formulation and also tailor their own efforts to local conditions, including the style and operational procedures of the cooperating countries. Finally, the authors present lessons learned from both experiences that may guide Asia and Near East USAID Missions in future policy change efforts with these and other cooperating governments.

The National Strategy for Potable Water User Associations (Tunisia)

A USAID-funded project in the early 1980s had improved existing water points and had drilled and motorized bore holes in areas without convenient access to other sources of potable water, but many of these systems were falling into disrepair by mid-decade. Rising costs and declining resources foreshadowed the government's decreasing role in operation and maintenance (O&M) and led to the Rural Potable Water Institutions Project in 1986. This project introduced the concept of organizing potable water users into associations such as those already existing for farmers in irrigation schemes. These new associations were expected to assume a share of the O&M costs and responsibilities for rural potable water systems.

By the end of 1987, water user associations (WUAs) were operating in two governorates, and the concept had spread to another. These WUAs sparked interest at the national level, where changing political and economic realities spurred a move toward decentralization and devolution of responsibilities.

Legislation over the next several years granted potable water WUAs the same legal status accorded existing irrigation user associations. By granting these groups a defined institutional structure, this legislation provided the policy foundation for a national WUA-organizing effort. *Genie Rural*, a department of the Ministry of Agriculture, announced its intention to promote a national strategy and instructed its governorate offices to begin organizing WUAs that would assume maintenance responsibility for rural potable water systems.

The USAID Mission in Tunis supported this decision with an allocation of \$1 million in Rural Potable Water Institutions Project funds to develop and implement an action plan to buttress the national strategy. As developed, the action plan encompassed activities to help define the methodology, processes, and materials needed to begin shifting O&M responsibilities from the central government to water user associations, and to nurture these groups to a point where they could manage complex potable water systems and, in the longer term, serve as institutional bases for locally initiated community development activities.

The Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (Sri Lanka)

During the mid- to late-1970s, the concept of participatory management of irrigation systems began to gain favor in Sri Lanka. From field-based experiments in user maintenance, a national participatory management policy and program gradually evolved. The program rested with the Irrigation Management Division (IMD) created in 1984

within the Ministry of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development (MLIMD) to introduce participatory management in all of the country's major irrigation schemes.

As the years passed, however, it became apparent that no farmer organization had yet assumed full O&M responsibility for any distributory or field canal system. Despite years of field efforts, a new government agency, and even a cabinet paper stating the national policy of participatory management, the process had failed to take hold. In sum, the program needed to move from a broad policy declaration to a genuine implementation stage in which laws were changed, institutions restructured, and responsibilities officially and effectively transferred.

In discussions with USAID, senior MLIMD officials expressed the need for a detailed implementation plan that would lead to genuine participatory management. As a result of these discussions, USAID contracted with a consultant for preliminary design recommendations. Initially, there were three: a policy planning process, specific legislation, and a management information system tailored to the new participatory approach. These recommendations were approved by the MLIMD Secretary. The report also recommended that USAID fund the process, known as the Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (IMPSA).

A secretariat of several local professionals was set up to implement IMPSA, aided by studies and working papers prepared by consultants. The key element in the IMPSA process was consensus building, to be achieved through the efforts of the ad hoc Irrigation Management Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC). This committee was set up specifically to provide policy guidance and help assure the acceptance and implementation of IMPSA recommendations. It was anticipated that, by building broad-based consensus in favor of the proposed policy changes, the government could take the necessary steps to put the new policies into effect.

Policy issues included a vision statement; roles, responsibilities, and needs of institutions that would assume system O&M; institutional changes needed to

effect nationwide participatory management; financing for system O&M; and analysis of the departments and agencies under MLIMD. The final step of the IMPSA process was for the IMPSA Secretariat to help IMPAC prepare an overall set of recommendations on irrigation management policy for Sri Lanka, which would be submitted for government action.

Conclusions

At their core, the two policy processes shared certain characteristics: both helped cooperating governments implement a pre-existing public policy; both envisaged the transfer of O&M responsibilities from government to water user associations; and both emphasized participatory approaches to policy formulation (although the methodologies were different).

There were, however, important differences between the two efforts. The Tunisia process focused on meeting immediate concerns of senior government policymakers, and included them in the entire process. By contrast, the process in Sri Lanka stressed consensus building and depended upon ad hoc groups that lacked official authority to implement policy recommendations. The Sri Lankans also chose to address issues beyond participatory management, thus diffusing their original agenda. Another difference lay in the government levels that became involved in the process: for example, Tunisia's provincial governors and *delegués* believed the policy changes met an important need in the rural areas of the provinces and facilitated work with constituents.

Lessons Learned

The two experiences demonstrate that, even within a given policy area like water management, no generic approach to policy formulation can apply to all situations. However, the two experiences do provide some important lessons that are relevant to most policy-change situations:

- Successful policy change tends to be evolutionary, not revolutionary.

- Successful policy change requires the involvement and support of a cadre of strongly committed senior government policymakers, who see the process as one that will be useful to them.
- More helpful to policy change than charismatic leadership is leadership continuity.
- When attempting to change policy, it is vital to minimize the number of institutions affected.
- Major policy change must be based not on generalities but on solid field data and analysis. The more complicated the policy change, the more important reliable data and high-quality analysis become in the process.
- The distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy formulation is an artificial one. Successful policy change requires support and commitment at both grassroots and senior policy levels.
- A specific policy-change process should never be used as the occasion to address other peripheral or unrelated problems.
- A policy-change process generally needs support from more than one major donor. When USAID is one of these, it is critical that the Agency coordinate closely with all other donors at all stages.
- The process is supported by an appropriate macroeconomic and legal framework.
- Policy changes are based upon field-tested models which are replicable.
- Policy changes are seen as economically and socially desirable by all parties—they create no "losers."
- The process is directed by a core group of well-trained, experienced, and motivated government officials.
- The process has a tightly focused policy agenda.
- The process is iterative, flexible, and consultative.
- The process tailors technical assistance and other inputs to address issues identified and agreed to by senior government officials.
- Process outputs are seen as having direct utility to senior government policy decision-makers.
- The process tailors implementation activities to local financial and personnel capacities.
- The process stresses and facilitates interministerial participation and collaboration at the national and regional levels.
- The process is actively supported by other major donors.

Although these lessons would apply to most change efforts, it is important to remember that project activities often take place within highly specific geographic, social, and sectoral contexts. Not all history is shared; not all experience is equally valued. Thus, USAID Missions should approach each collaborative opportunity as an individual case calling for its own particular design.

While experience has shown that it is rare to find a cooperating country situation which embodies all of these characteristics, careful analysis of a policy reform opportunity earlier in the design stage should allow USAID Mission staff to determine whether or not the reform envisaged has a high probability for success in implementation.

Principal Characteristics of a Successful Policy Reform Process

Derived from the policy approaches in Tunisia and Sri Lanka, the following process characteristics appear to be good indicators of a high potential for success in any policy reform process:

1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the past decade, the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) has stressed policy reform in its work with cooperating governments. A.I.D.-funded technical expertise has played an important role in policy formulation and implementation efforts in many countries, even when the Agency is not the major financial donor. The size of its role is often attributed to A.I.D.'s unique contributions to the "softer" side of development, such as institutional development, user participation, and human resource development. Along with technical assistance and commodity procurement, assistance for policy reform efforts will likely continue as a major focus of most Mission programs.

Increasingly, USAID Missions are supporting policy analysis, formulation, and implementation efforts as opposed to costly infrastructure projects. Such assistance frequently takes the form of support for field-based studies from which policy recommendations are drawn. New policies are often formulated in an iterative process that elicits the active participation of private users and government officers and draws upon their experiences.

Objectives

This paper analyzes two policy reform processes in Tunisia and Sri Lanka, assisted by the Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East (ISPAN), to determine what guidance they offer to other USAID Missions and cooperating countries. The paper:

- assesses the effectiveness of the two approaches in helping cooperating countries formulate and implement policy;
- determines the adaptability of the approaches to other countries; and
- identifies the role USAID Missions can reasonably play in policy reform.

The paper also discusses ways that USAID Missions can effectively leverage technical assistance for policy formulation and tailor their policy-formulation efforts to local conditions, including the style and operational procedures of the cooperating countries. Finally, the authors present lessons learned from both experiences that may guide Asia and Near East USAID Missions in future policy-change efforts with these and other cooperating governments. (The scope of work for this study may be found in Appendix A.)

Program Descriptions

ISPAN has now worked with many USAID Missions and cooperating countries to formulate policies and strategies for water management and use. Two important efforts were the National Strategy to Create and Monitor Water User Associations in Tunisia and the Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (IMPISA) in Sri Lanka. Both shared certain features: they were designed as two-year activities involving expatriate and local technical-assistance experts; they built upon previous USAID-funded project experiences; they were collaboratively implemented by USAID Missions and cooperating country

governments; and they produced a series of policy papers and embodied in their implementation certain strategic approaches to improved resource management. At the same time, however, the two programs differed significantly in their approach. For a detailed analysis of the Tunisian and Sri Lankan policy programs, see Appendices B and C. The essential elements of each program, however, are outlined in the following sections.

National Strategy for Potable Water User Associations (Tunisia)

Precursors of the Action Plan

Although USAID assistance to the national strategy for water user associations (WUAs) began only in 1990, community participation in water-point exploitation was hardly a new idea in rural Tunisia. In areas bordering the desert, farmers had long carried out group management of water resources in the oases. And, during the colonial era, French administrators instituted a program for local associations around water points to recover a tax on water users.

Following independence, the Government of Tunisia (GOT) abolished the existing association system and assumed the full costs of installing and operating all nontraditional rural water systems. This policy continued essentially unchanged for two decades, until rising costs and budgetary shortfalls signalled the infeasibility of full public subsidization of the systems.

To improve rural access to potable water in the Governorate of Kasserine, USAID funded the Rural Potable Water Project in the early 1980s. Implemented by the Central Tunisian Development Authority, this project improved existing water points and drilled and motorized boreholes in areas without convenient access to other potable-water sources.

Costlier and more-complex water delivery systems followed earlier projects that had tried unsuccessfully to install less-sophisticated technologies for drawing water. Deteriorating systems and declining national resources, however, led USAID to support the Rural Potable Water Institutions Project in 1986. This project introduced the concept of potable water user

associations that would operate much like those already in existence for farmers in irrigation schemes. These WUAs were expected to share the responsibilities relating to rural potable water systems and help pay the costs.

By the end of 1987, the development authority had organized WUAs in the Governorates of Kasserine and Gafsa, and the concept had spread to the adjacent Governorate of Kairouan. The successfully functioning WUAs in central Tunisia sparked interest at the national level, where shifting political and economic attitudes were moving government policies toward greater decentralization. These WUAs, however, lacked the legal status and institutional framework to collect funds from their members and spend them as independent entities.

Between mid-1987 and mid-1990, the GOT passed key legislation granting WUAs the same legal status accorded existing user associations within public irrigation perimeters. This legislation gave these newer groups a defined institutional structure and, collectively, provided the policy foundation upon which to build a WUA program under a national action plan.

Acting upon the establishment of this new national policy, *Genie Rural*—the agency responsible for most of the water systems in rural Tunisia—announced its intention to promote a national strategy for WUA creation and instructed its governorate offices to begin organizing committees to take over local operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural water systems. The USAID Mission in Tunis supported this decision and allocated \$1 million in Rural Potable Water Institutions Project funds to develop and implement an action plan to help the GOT develop a national strategy for WUA promotion.

At the same time, another major donor supporting potable water systems in rural Tunisia—the German Development Bank (KfW)—expressed its support for the WUA concept. It then stipulated that WUAs be formed in communities where KfW-funded water systems were planned or already operating.

Plan Formulation

The objective of the action plan was to develop a national strategy for forming and monitoring viable WUAs. As developed, the action plan would help define the methodology, processes, and materials needed to begin shifting responsibilities for Tunisian rural water systems from the central government to local communities. Besides providing a mechanism for the transfer of water-cost recovery, the plan would also help the GOT develop and implement a national policy to nurture the organizational structures communities needed to manage complex potable water systems. Over the longer term, these structures would serve as institutional bases for locally initiated community-development activities.

After President Ben Ali announced his support in January 1989 for a national WUA effort, USAID began a dialogue with national and regional government officials about ways it could aid implementation. In early 1990, USAID, KfW, and the GOT agreed to collaborate on the policy implementation process. The action plan was then formulated, in February 1990, by a team representing three A.I.D. centrally funded projects: ISPAN, the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project, and the Systems Approach to Regional Income and Sustainable Resource Assistance (SARSA) Cooperative Agreement.

Initially the design team met with Genie Rural/Tunis officials to hear their views on actions needed to develop a national strategy and also to achieve a common understanding of Genie Rural's goals. The team then visited water projects in Kasserine and Kairouan, governorates chosen because they had both created WUAs. Staff in Kasserine had used the approach developed in the USAID-funded Rural Potable Water Institutions Project; that approach had been modified for use in Kairouan, essentially without external subsidization.

To identify the types of studies, training activities, workshops, and procurement required to formulate a national strategy, the team discussed differing approaches to WUA formation with Genie Rural staff in both governorates. Discussions also took place with

Commissariat Regional du Developpement Agricole (CRDA) directors, community organization specialists, Genie Rural technicians and, in Kasserine, Ministry of Health representatives. In both governorates, the team visited selected WUAs to gain a general understanding of creation and operation issues through discussions with WUA members and officers.

A major task for the design team was to create an action plan compatible with KfW-financed potable water projects. To ensure collaboration, the team held discussions with KfW representatives, who accompanied the team on its field visits. Following these visits, the team drafted a preliminary plan outline and reviewed it with representatives of USAID, KfW, CRDA/Kasserine, and Genie Rural/Tunis. The views of these representatives were incorporated into the final design of the action plan.

Also incorporated into the plan design were the complementary interests of both USAID and KfW regarding the external assistance they would provide to the GOT in developing WUAs. For example, while USAID would aid the GOT's development of a methodology and processes for creating WUAs on a national scale, KfW would finance approximately 80 potable water projects throughout Tunisia.

Under KfW's agreement with the GOT, no new projects would be started until WUAs were formed on site. Given their complementary activities, USAID and KfW agreed to a number of specific steps to ensure closely coordinated implementation of their parallel activities. Finally, KfW agreed to allocate funds to support collaborative work under the action plan, funds that would be used to promote WUA development in the KfW project areas. This allocation covered such items as computers, training materials, and vehicles for community organization specialists in each governorate.

The policy agenda developed under the action plan identified 11 specific items. As designed, the plan encompassed four categories of activity:

- applied studies and consultancies;
- pilot project monitoring;
- training; and

- finalization and synthesis.

Plan Implementation

The original action plan envisaged 21 separate activities. Of these, all but two were carried out. (At the request of Genie Rural, full development of a management information system was later incorporated into the scope of work for a new KfW-financed project due to start in March 1993. The evaluation of prior training experiences was not carried out because there was an overriding priority to develop a training system that could address all of the WUAs' training needs.)

A training component added to the action plan included two workshops to improve coordination and planning between the CRDAs and the regional offices of the *Direction d'Hygiene du Milieu et de la Protection de l'Environnement* in 20 governorates as a way to better integrate hygiene education in WUA promotional activities. For a complete agenda of action plan activities and their timing, see Table 1 in Appendix B.

During the implementation process, several key outputs aided GOT officials in developing the national WUA program:

- national strategy statement for WUA development;
- procedures manual for WUA creation and promotion;
- policy statement and procedures manual for rural water system maintenance; and
- training guides for WUA presidents, treasurers, members, pump operators, and health educators.

In addition to these outputs, the plan implementors produced a series of program reports, promotional materials, and training guides to support implementation of the national strategy. Also, KfW-supported project activities provided opportunities to learn more about the WUA creation process, which aided the development of a national strategy. USAID financed the development of training materials and institutional approaches for WUA creation that were tested in KfW sites.

In addition to the products just listed, a number of significant outcomes helped to move the national WUA program forward:

- better understanding of the issues the action plan needed to address hygiene education, modifications to the financial management system, definition of training needs, clarification of maintenance responsibilities, and determination of the institutional support needed;
- an increase in trained governorate-level officials able to implement the WUA program;
- new linkages with other concerned ministries;
- a clear direction for the future, including determination of short- and medium-term priorities;
- broad acceptance of the national strategy and demonstrated commitment at all levels to carry it out; and
- a pool of Tunisian consultants to aid the implementation of the national strategy.

Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (Sri Lanka)

Precursors of the Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (IMPSA)

Irrigated agriculture is critically important to the Sri Lankan economy; investments in irrigation, for example, have enabled the country to become self-sufficient in rice. With the right policies, Sri Lanka could become a major agricultural exporter.

Of the approximately 550,000 hectares under irrigation, 350,000 are in capital-intensive "major" schemes managed by the government and 200,000 are in "minor" schemes managed by the farmers, with technical support from government agencies as needed. During pre-colonial times, Sri Lankan farmers had primary responsibility for operating and maintaining their own irrigation systems. Irrigation management

became more centralized during the colonial period, but farmers continued to do some of the operation and maintenance of their systems. This is still the case for minor schemes, but farmers have little O&M responsibility on major schemes. After independence, the government gradually assumed complete responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of these schemes.

By the mid-1970s, it had become clear that the Sri Lankan government could no longer cover all the O&M costs of the country's major irrigation systems. The government then began to charge irrigation fees, a measure that worked for a couple of years. Gradually, however, farmers stopped paying their fees; they did so partly because the fees were more than they could afford but also because the funds collected were not being spent on system maintenance. With most farmers refusing to pay, the policy of charging irrigation fees eventually became unenforceable.

During this period, the concept of participatory management of irrigation systems began to gain favor in Sri Lanka. At first, system-level managers organized farmers to carry out maintenance tasks requiring little technical expertise or few resources. Although each manager adopted a slightly different approach, the common elements of the most successful approaches gradually became clear.

From these field-initiated experiments, a national participatory management policy and program evolved. In 1984, the government created the Irrigation Management Division (IMD) in the Ministry of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development (MLIMD) to introduce participatory management in all of the country's major irrigation schemes. The IMD's major program was the Integrated Management of Major Agricultural Settlements, which covered 44 of the country's 200 major irrigation schemes.

Through a 1989 cabinet paper, the government issued a policy directive for the adoption of participatory management in all of Sri Lanka's irrigation schemes. Despite years of experimentation, however, and the establishment of an MLIMD division charged with introducing participatory management in the major irrigation schemes, no successful systemwide turnover

of full O&M responsibilities had taken place for distributory and field canals. The reason is that the policy formulation process failed to move from the broad policy announcement stage to the detailed implementation stage, in which laws are changed, institutions restructured, and responsibilities officially and effectively transferred.

Designing IMPSA

The IMPSA design process began in mid-1988, as the cabinet paper on participatory management was nearing approval. In discussions with USAID, senior MLIMD officials expressed the need for a detailed implementation plan for the soon-to-be-announced policy. As a result of these discussions, USAID brought out an ISPAN consultant to prepare an initial report. In his report, the consultant identified three sets of actions pivotal to successful implementation of the government's participatory management policy: design of a policy-planning process to operationalize the broad policy framework; preparation of legislation to strengthen the legal basis for participatory management; and establishment of a management information system tailored to the new participatory management approach. The report also recommended that USAID provide IMPSA with funds to help implement these actions. After the MLIMD Secretary approved these recommendations, the ISPAN consultant returned in mid-1989 to design the activity.

The key element in the IMPSA process was consensus building. An IMPSA Secretariat with a full-time staff of several local professionals was set up to implement IMPSA activities. Studies and working papers were to be prepared by local and expatriate consultants, then reviewed and discussed at both government and farmer levels. The mechanism for achieving consensus within the government was the ad hoc Irrigation Management Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC), a committee set up specifically to provide policy guidance and help assure the acceptance and implementation of IMPSA recommendations. Chaired by the MLIMD Secretary, it included senior representatives from all departments and agencies affected by the policy changes.

Under IMPAC was a working group of midlevel government officials who reviewed all consultant

reports, participated in policy workshops and seminars, and approved IMPSA working papers before they were submitted to IMPAC for final approval. By the time a working paper or a policy paper was submitted to IMPAC, it had been fully discussed among midlevel government officials to reach a general consensus on the policy changes advocated.

It was anticipated that, by building broad-based consensus in favor of the proposed policy changes, the government could then take the necessary steps to put the new policies into effect; these would include, as needed, the issuance of a cabinet paper, the restructuring of key institutions, or the passing of new legislation.

Because the participatory management policy had been in effect for many years and considerable field experience had been accumulated, agreement was easily reached on several policy issues to be addressed:

- a broad vision statement relating to the role of irrigated agriculture in Sri Lanka's long-term growth and development;
- a definition of the roles and responsibilities of institutions involved in the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems under a policy of participatory management, and the identification of institutional changes needed to put a national policy of participatory management into effect;
- the identification of the organizational and human resource development needs of the institutions that would have to be restructured to carry out their redefined roles and responsibilities;
- a comprehensive statement defining the purpose, roles, and functions of farmer organizations in the operation and maintenance of irrigation systems;
- an analysis of alternative arrangements for financing the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems; and
- an in-depth analysis and assessment of the operations, organization, and staffing of the departments and agencies under MLIMD,

including the Irrigation Department, the IMD, and the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL).

IMPSA's original scope of work called for a working paper on each topic; these products were to be prepared by the IMPSA Secretariat and approved by IMPAC. As the final step of the IMPSA process, the IMPSA Secretariat would help IMPAC prepare an overall set of recommendations on irrigation management policy for Sri Lanka. These recommendations would then be officially submitted to the government for action.

IMPSA Implementation

The first IMPSA activity to be undertaken was the preparation of a vision paper for irrigated agriculture. Twenty staff working papers were prepared, after which the full IMPAC met several times to craft the final version of the paper. Issued as IMPSA Policy Paper No. 1, it laid out the policy changes needed to create a strong, competitive, and dynamic irrigation sector for the twenty-first century.

The vision paper raised a number of policy issues related to irrigated agriculture, issues that had not been covered in IMPSA's original scope of work. Although only peripherally related to irrigation management, these issues were seen by many IMPSA participants as critical to the future of the irrigation sector. Therefore, the secretariat and the IMPAC working group decided the issues should be included in the IMPSA exercise. Thus, the scope of work was amended to add policy papers for five areas: agricultural research and development; human resource development in the irrigated-agriculture sector; macropolicies for land and water resource management; trade and fiscal policies as they relate to irrigated agriculture; and investment policies for the irrigation sector.

As soon as the vision paper was approved and the scope of work amended, three policy papers dealing with farmer organizations, irrigation-system O&M, and restructuring of government departments and agencies responsible for irrigation management were quickly completed and approved by IMPAC. These three papers provided detailed recommendations for

implementing the government's stated participatory management policy. At that point, IMPSA's secretariat packaged the recommendations into a draft cabinet paper that was circulated through key departments and agencies for approval. Once again, however, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) raised objections and the cabinet paper was never approved. While the remaining policy papers were being prepared, the secretariat continued its efforts to gain approval for the cabinet paper.

The final product in the IMPSA process was Policy Paper No. 10, entitled *Achieving Productivity and Prosperity of Irrigated Agriculture through Participatory Management*. This report summarized the vision paper, proposed an action plan for implementing the government's participatory management policies, and presented a summary of the findings and recommendations concerning the overall policy framework affecting the irrigated agriculture sector.

During this process, IMPSA generated 10 policy papers, 50 staff working papers, and 7 special reports. (These appear in the bibliography of Appendix C.) To reach agreement on the policy papers required 7 IMPAC meetings, 15 IMPAC working group meetings, 5 IMPAC policy workshops, and 22 consultative workshops. Completed in June 1992, the activity fulfilled all of the requirements of IMPSA's scope of work as revised in May 1991.

Process Outcomes

IMPSA's impact can be measured in three areas: policy analysis and policy papers resulting directly from IMPSA activities; changes in the behavior of individual agencies and departments as a result of their participation in IMPSA activities; and changes in irrigation management policy.

Outputs. The outputs directly attributable to the IMPSA process can be summarized as follows:

- IMPSA was able to complete all of its planned activities, consultancies, working papers, workshops, and seminars, culminating in ten policy papers. Taken together, these papers reflect well-informed and widely shared views on the

importance of irrigated agriculture to Sri Lanka's long-term growth and development and on how best to implement the government's participatory management policy.

- IMPSA produced a set of recommendations which, if fully implemented, would finally transfer the operation and maintenance of distributory and field canals to farmer organizations in all of the country's major irrigation schemes. It also moved the policy-formulation process from the general statements contained in the 1989 cabinet paper to a broad action plan for putting the policy into effect. (See Appendix C for a summary of this action plan.)
- A third output was the learning and consensus building that occurred as a result of the workshops, seminars, and IMPAC working group deliberations. Many senior government officials now refer to IMPSA as the model for building consensus, understanding, and support for multifaceted, complex, and controversial policy changes.

Impact on individual departments and agencies. Without question, the IMPSA process has affected the irrigation management practices of some departments and agencies. Perhaps its greatest impact has been on the Irrigation Department. As the organization with overall responsibility for assuring the proper functioning of the major irrigation schemes, this department has an obvious interest in finding ways to increase the role of farmer organizations in the operation and maintenance of these systems. These organizations are now seen as O&M partners rather than as subordinate extensions of the Irrigation Department that exist merely to carry out its instructions.

One organization on which IMPSA has had an unexpected impact is the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka. Although MASL representatives participated in the IMPSA exercise, there seemed to be general agreement that IMPSA recommendations would rarely apply to this highly integrated and autonomous organization, at least not in the short to medium term. However, the former head of IMPSA's secretariat has

been named managing director of the Mahaweli Economic Agency, which has overall responsibility within the MASL for the creation and institutional support of farmer organizations in all of the Mahaweli schemes. With the official approval of the Minister of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development, the agency has now adopted many IMPSA recommendations contained in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10. The MASL could thus become the lead agency in the eventual nationwide adoption of IMPSA recommendations.

Despite other successes, IMPSA's impact on the Agrarian Services Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), which is responsible for all of the minor irrigation schemes as well as for the registration of all farmer organizations, is harder to discern. Although MOA representatives attended all of the workshops, seminars, and IMPAC meetings, they frequently disagreed with IMPSA conclusions and recommendations. In general, they felt their views and concerns were neither adequately considered in IMPSA deliberations nor reflected in IMPSA's working and policy papers. In essence, the MOA never felt itself to be an integral part of the IMPSA process. Consequently, IMPSA has had virtually no impact on irrigation management practices in Sri Lanka's minor irrigation schemes, which cover about 35 percent of the country's irrigated area.

Impact on overall irrigation management policy. As noted, IMPSA produced important recommendations relating to the implementation of the government's

participatory irrigation management policy, generated widespread consensus on participatory management among mid- and low-level government officials, and changed the behavior in certain key irrigation management institutions (notably the Irrigation Department and MASL). Given the very large investment in Sri Lanka's irrigation systems, and the thousands of farmers affected, there is no doubt that these IMPSA benefits greatly exceed their cost to USAID and the Sri Lankan government.

Despite its accomplishments, however, the policy formulation process begun by IMPSA has yet to achieve its original objective: that of bringing about the policy changes necessary to implement the government's participatory management policy at the national level. More specifically, the recommendations contained in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10 have not been accepted officially by the government. Had the government issued a cabinet paper making IMPSA's recommendations official government policy, implementation would have progressed more quickly. Such a paper would have given the departments and agencies concerned with irrigation management a cabinet-level go-ahead. As it now stands, these departments and agencies may still carry out many of the recommendations, but they do so at their own pace and, in many cases, with no great sense of urgency. Past experience indicates that without a high-level policy directive, meaningful change will be sporadic and probably unsustainable.

2

TUNISIAN AND SRI LANKAN POLICY APPROACHES

Critical Features

Tunisia

The specific policy formulation/implementation process under study took place from February 1990 to June 1992, within the broader context of Tunisia's macroeconomic reform and sectoral adjustment. The following strategic factors greatly aided the successful development of the Tunisian national WUA strategy.

The process proceeded within an appropriate macroeconomic and legal framework. Efforts under the action plan and in subsequent implementation under the national strategy for WUAs were highly compatible with and reinforced by the GOT's program of macroeconomic and sectoral reforms begun in the mid-1980s. Through this national effort, strongly supported by the donor community, the GOT demonstrated its commitment to the decentralization of authority and the transfer of real decision-making power to local government units. It also demonstrated its resolve to progressively divest itself of previous commitments to activities that could reasonably be transferred to and managed by nongovernmental agencies. And, finally, the macroeconomic reforms increased pressures on government units at all levels for more budgetary discipline in public expenditure—particularly with respect to recurrent costs—and enforced a cap on civil service hiring.

When coupled with specific legislation between 1987 and 1990 that encouraged and further defined the WUA program, these policy themes created an enabling political environment for WUA establishment throughout the country. In short, the policy agenda

embodied within the action plan fit perfectly within the broader national economic reform program.

Policy changes were based upon replicable field-tested models. The policy changes proposed under the action plan and implemented to date under the national strategy were, in large part, extensions of or derivations of WUA management models previously developed and field-tested in Kasserine, Kairouan, Kef, and Gafsa. The fact that government officials could point to successful examples of WUA participation in the management of rural potable water systems in these governorates inspired national-level confidence in the program's potential. These successes helped officials sell the WUA concept first to their colleagues within the Ministry of Agriculture and then to senior staff in other ministries.

All major parties viewed policy changes as both economically and socially desirable, and the implementation process generated no significant group of "losers." The WUA program's success thus far also relates to the simple fact that key participants at all levels viewed the substantive policy changes as economically and socially justified and desirable. The installation of rural potable water systems was seen as overdue and as one means of redressing urban/rural disparities. Moreover, the WUA program itself was never challenged by any significant groups of stakeholders who felt threatened by the envisaged policy changes. Facing no serious resistance, the WUA program spread very rapidly. Those implementation problems encountered—such as the thorny problem of the most-appropriate financial accounting system for WUAs—appeared to arise more from bureaucratic

inertia than from active resistance to policy changes per se.

The process was directed by a core group of well-trained, experienced, and motivated GOT officials. The active participation of this group of Tunisian officials was critical to the success of the WUA program for several reasons. First, the program leaders were technically competent within their individual disciplines and experienced within the GOT bureaucracy. Second, they were sufficiently senior in the government hierarchy to both access and influence the highest level of decision-makers. Third, they had a well-developed Tunisian agenda for WUA development. Fourth, they were exceptionally receptive to outside ideas about how best to implement their agenda. Finally, their collective experience in the field gave them the confidence to persist when they encountered temporary setbacks in implementation.

The process agenda was sharply focused and tightly defined. Progress was greatly facilitated by the policy agenda developed during the design phase. GOT and USAID officials played a critical role in maintaining the focus on implementation activities they saw as essential to the policy changes needed to firmly establish the nascent WUA program. Although consultants in a few instances advocated extending action plan activities to promote more rapid development of WUAs as multipurpose community-development organizations, in the end they tended to accept GOT direction. Along these same lines, USAID suggested that the action plan exclude irrigation associations until the implementation methodology had been proven.

The process was designed to be iterative, flexible, and consultative. Activities unfolded in a step-wise fashion over a three-year period, interrupted only by the delays occasioned by the Gulf War, and built one upon the other. Carefully phasing their activities, the implementors developed and trained an active constituency for WUA formation in ten target governorates. Then they built upon the accumulating field information to formulate recommendations and implementation schedules for progressively more difficult policy implementation problems. Finally, toward the end of the action plan process, they began

to expand field activities to the remaining governorates. The training sessions, workshops, regional and national seminars, and midterm evaluation exercise provided well-structured opportunities for constructive interactions and feedback from process participants throughout the country.

The process tailored technical assistance and other inputs to address issues identified and agreed to by the senior GOT officials charged with implementing the new national strategy. Technical assistance was delivered through a judicious mix of respected local consultants and experienced expatriates, many of whom had long-term resident assignments in Tunisia. Collectively, they offered both highly appropriate skills and a high degree of continuity over the life of the action plan. Additionally, a USAID project officer remained in place from June 1988 to April 1991. Despite the formal end of USAID participation, several of the Tunisian consultants have been hired through local MOA contracts and will participate on an extended basis in the new KfW project, which began operations in March 1993. This continuity in consultant expertise has been matched by a continuity in leadership within the GOT ministries and governorates. The fact that one can still find influential officials and technicians at all levels of the GOT bureaucracy who participated in the WUA process from its inception is a very important and positive influence on the program's future evolution.

The process had immediate utility to the GOT, and implementation was specifically tailored to participants' financial and staff capacities. The fact that the WUA program has been able to move forward within the government's existing financial and personnel constraints has been a major factor in convincing Tunisian governors and *delegués* to actively support program activities. In turn, their participation and support has proven to be crucial in fostering the development of the nascent WUAs.

The process stressed and facilitated interministerial participation and collaboration with regional officials. One of the action plan's most impressive accomplishments is that it engendered broadly based support for the national WUA program. At both national and regional levels, evidence suggests that

officials and technicians from several key ministries have become real stakeholders in the new program and are actively participating in joint program planning sessions and training opportunities. They are also trying to find creative ways of sharing their resources and thus lowering the recurrent costs of field work with WUA members.

Other major donors actively supported the process. The close collaboration among Genie Rural, USAID, and KfW in formulating and implementing the action plan appears to have been crucial to the success of the policy effort. The fact that USAID and KfW reached a common position on WUA formation as a precursor to the installation of rural water systems they were funding certainly lent impetus to the process and strengthened the position of Genie Rural officials in their negotiations with colleagues in other ministries and at senior levels in the governorates.

Sri Lanka

A number of factors influenced the implementation of Sri Lanka's Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity. The following had a particularly significant impact upon the IMPSA process.

The government had an established participatory management policy dating from the early 1980s. Following the failure of its attempts to collect irrigation fees from farmers, the government adopted a policy of devolving irrigation management responsibilities to farmers. In 1984, the IMD was set up in MLIMD to create farmer organizations that would operate and maintain their irrigation systems. By 1989, when IMPSA was being designed, IMD had developed a reasonably successful model for organizing farmers for irrigation management. This experience provided a solid basis for making the government's broad participatory management policy operational.

A strong core team participated in the IMPSA process. Sri Lankans who had been involved in participatory irrigation management since the late 1970s were in key positions to advance the government's participatory management policies. These individuals held senior

positions in the Ministry of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development, the Irrigation Department, the Irrigation Management Division of the MLIMD, the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the International Irrigation Management Institute. Several were available to work directly for IMPSA either as full-time secretariat staff or as local consultants. Several expatriate consultants with long experience with participatory irrigation management in Sri Lanka were also available to work as consultants.

There was little continuity in high-level government sponsorship for the IMPSA policy formulation process. Although the minister and secretary of MLIMD had been directly involved in IMPSA's design and were strongly committed to its success, by the time the major recommendations were ready for government approval, both officials had been replaced. Their successors understood and supported the government's participatory management policies, but appeared less committed to the success of the IMPSA process. As yet, efforts to convince them of the importance of accepting and implementing IMPSA's recommendations have been unsuccessful.

Policy changes advocated by IMPSA required the agreement of several institutions with different priorities and concerns. In addition to the Irrigation Department and IMD, changes in irrigation management policies involved the MASL, the Agrarian Services Department and Agricultural Research and Training Institute in MOA, and the provincial governments. Such a structure created dilemmas for IMPSA. First, it did not and probably could not have a permanent institutional home. Although IMPAC and its working group could have continued the work begun by IMPSA's secretariat, IMPAC did not report to a senior government official who was committed to carrying out its recommendations. Second, when several institutions are involved in a major policy change, it becomes critical for the process to address each institution's concerns and find common ground on issues of major disagreement. In IMPSA's case, complete agreement was never reached on the details of key IMPSA recommendations. Thus, cabinet-level action proved to be problematic.

There was a lack of active donor involvement in the IMPSA process and a consequent donor unwillingness to insist upon the implementation of IMPSA's recommendations. Several international donor agencies are financing irrigation-rehabilitation projects with participatory management components in Sri Lanka. Although USAID and the MLIMD made determined efforts to keep all donors informed about the IMPSA process, in the end these donors failed to see a connection between these recommendations and the success of their own projects. As a result, few donors made a point of supporting the IMPSA recommendations when dealing with the Sri Lankan government.

Policy Reform Processes and Operational Strategies

Tunisia

According to project implementors, two key operational factors led to the successful implementation of the action plan (Rosensweig, El Amouri, and Jennings, 1992). The first of these was coordination with the KfW, which was supporting the installation of 80 new rural water systems throughout Tunisia. As part of its project, KfW required that each water delivery system it financed be managed by a WUA. To achieve greater coordination, two KfW consultants participated in joint discussions with the USAID team that developed the action plan and contributed to its development. To maintain this coordination, many action plan consultants stopped at KfW offices in Frankfurt on their way to and from Tunisia to brief KfW staff on their activities, and all reports were shared with KfW representatives to keep them fully informed. Finally, one of the most comprehensive activities—monitoring the formation of WUAs in 20 governorates—was directly linked to the KfW project, in that 16 of the 21 sites monitored were KfW-funded.

The second factor was the pre-implementation decision to focus activities in only 10 of the 23 governorates. These included six pilot governorates (Siliana, Beja, Zaghuan, Mahdia, Sidi Bouzid, and Gabes) and the four governorates that had already been establishing WUAs (Kairouan, Kasserine, Le Kef, and Gafsa). The

reason for the focus on 10 governorates was to test new approaches in a limited number of situations to deepen the body of actual field experience and to avoid spreading action plan resources and activities too thinly.

Sri Lanka

In addition to the factors discussed in the previous section, over which IMPSA had no control, three key strategic decisions influenced IMPSA's final outcome.

Designers decided to concentrate IMPSA efforts on building broad-based understanding of and support for participatory management, instead of focusing on the most strongly felt concerns of key policymakers. Determining that lack of agreement upon what constituted effective participatory irrigation management was side-railing implementation of the government's longstanding policy, IMPSA designers concentrated on building a broad-based consensus around what constituted participatory irrigation management, why it was needed, and how it should be implemented. However, this emphasis tended to subordinate key policymakers' concerns (i.e., the details of legislative and institutional changes and the sometimes minor but nonetheless important differences in perspective of the institutions involved). Thus, when it came time for the government to implement what had been agreed upon by hundreds of government officials, the interest and commitment needed at senior policy levels was lacking.

Although the original project design focused entirely on issues related to participatory irrigation management, the decision was made early in the implementation phase to broaden the range of issues to include the overall policy framework related to the irrigated agriculture sector. A key design decision called for the inclusion of a shared vision for the future of irrigated agriculture as an integral part of building a consensus on participatory irrigation management. IMPSA succeeded in creating this shared vision by preparing working papers and conducting workshops on a large number of critical issues affecting irrigated agriculture, including agricultural technology development, crop diversification, trade policy, the role of the private

sector, and investment policy. There is general agreement that this process was successful and valuable. It had two negative effects, however, in terms of IMPSA's impact on irrigation management policy. First, it diverted management attention and IMPSA resources away from specific participatory management issues that could usefully have been addressed more fully. Second, the broader focus complicated the policy agenda and made it more difficult to reach agreement on the set of policy recommendations to be submitted to the government. This turned out to be a major reason why the government has not yet officially accepted IMPSA's irrigation management policy recommendations.

Although the original design emphasized the need for a detailed action plan to implement the government's participatory management policy, the final design stopped short of specifying in detail the policy, institutional, and legislative actions needed to put the new policy agenda fully into effect. This lack of specificity was a direct result of the decision to focus on consensus building instead of policy implementation. By concentrating on the former, IMPSA succeeded in greatly increasing the understanding of and support for effective participatory management. A negative consequence of this focus, however, was that less attention could be given to making IMPSA's final policy recommendations easily implementable. As a result, IMPSA policy and working papers often lacked detail on the institutional reforms, new legislation, farmer organization responsibilities, and financial management systems needed to effectively implement the government's participatory management policy.

When the IMPSA exercise ended, there was no implementing unit within the government that was able and/or willing to continue the policy reform process. Thus, although there is now remarkable agreement among IMPSA participants on the nature of participatory irrigation management and how it should be implemented, few specific actions are ready to be submitted to the Sri Lankan government for its approval and implementation.

Status of Policy Reforms

Tunisia

USAID assistance to WUA program development ended in mid-1992, with the final regional and national seminars on the action plan. This section updates the GOT's program actions during the eight months since USAID assistance ended.

WUA Growth

The WUA program has experienced considerable growth since the decision to extend efforts beyond the field experience in four governorates. By the end of 1992, there were 1,354 legally constituted WUAs in 22 of Tunisia's 23 governorates, although the number of WUAs per governorate varied from a high of 235 in Kairouan to a low of 10 in Ben Arous. (Note: There are no WUAs in the Tunis governorate because the area was already covered by urban water supply systems under the *Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Distribution des Eau* (SONEDE), the Tunisian national water company.)

Table 2 in Appendix B shows the status of all legally constituted WUAs in Tunisia by location and type.

Legislation and Agreement Changes Pertaining to WUAs

Since mid-1992, there have been a number of significant achievements in modifying the status and/or operations of WUAs and in strengthening the overall program. With regard to legislation, two additional decrees were promulgated. Decree No. 92-2160 of 14 December 1992 modified the text of Decree No. 87-1261 of 27 October 1987 relative to WUA organization and financial management. Decree No. 92-2229 of 21 December 1992 completed the process of modifying the regulations governing WUA financial management, in line with recommendations contained in the final action plan report.

In addition to legislative actions, a contractual agreement (*convention-cadre*) was formalized on 24

October 1992 between the Directors General of Genie Rural and the Agency for Agricultural Extension and Training (*Agence de la Vulgarisation et de la Formation Agricoles*, or AVFA), of the Ministry of Agriculture to cooperate in the realization of the training program outlined in the national strategy for WUA promotion. Under the agreement, AVFA personnel and local consultants who previously worked under the action plan will design and implement a series of training-of-trainers workshops for WUA and government personnel in the 13 governorates not covered by action plan activities.

Finally, the project agreement for the next phase of the GOT-KfW collaborative WUA program was finalized, and project operations were to begin in March 1993. Under this agreement, KfW will provide expatriate and local consulting expertise and other resources to continue implementation of the national strategy for WUA creation and support, as first promulgated under the USAID-financed action plan.

Sri Lanka

The IMPSA exercise ended in June 1992. At that time, final recommendations were submitted to the government for approval and implementation, although it has not yet accepted them officially. (Key recommendations appear in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10.) Nevertheless, at least one agency—the MASL—has begun to implement these recommendations on its own. This came about partly

from a career move by the former head of the IMPSA Secretariat, who was named Managing Director of the Mahaweli Economic Agency (MEA). Already the MEA, which has overall responsibility within the MASL for the creation and institutional support of farmer organizations in all of the Mahaweli irrigation schemes, has now adopted (with the official approval of the Minister of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development) many of the recommendations contained in Policy Paper No. 10. The MASL could thus become the lead agency in the eventual nationwide adoption of IMPSA's recommendations.

In the absence of a cabinet paper, an appropriate next step in implementation would be for the Irrigation Department to take the same actions being taken by the Mahaweli Economic Agency. This would involve moving the Irrigation Management Division to the Irrigation Department, and then creating an Institutional Development Unit in the expanded Irrigation Department. This unit would take the lead in two areas: first, restructuring the organization to provide both technical and irrigation management support; and second, retraining the technical staff to apply the participatory management model from the Integrated Management of Major Agricultural Settlements program and other key IMPSA recommendations to all the major irrigation schemes. If this action is taken, both MEA and the Irrigation Department will have begun implementing the recommendations most critical to the proper operation and maintenance of the country's major irrigation schemes.

3

LESSONS LEARNED

A Comparison of the Two Processes

Although taking place on separate continents and under widely differing circumstances, the two policy processes experienced important similarities.

- Both activities helped cooperating governments implement a pre-existing public policy. Targeting local institutional successes, some of which had been funded by the respective USAID Missions, IMPSA and the National Strategy for Water User Associations action plan aimed to modify them appropriately and replicate them at the national level.
- The policy efforts began with a similar approach to water management, that is, they envisaged the transfer of O&M responsibilities from government to water user associations; the use of specially trained "institutional organizers" to create and support these associations; and, after they were well established, the involvement of such associations in broad economic and community development activities.
- Although the methodologies were different, both activities emphasized participatory approaches to policy formulation. The Tunisian experience used repeated field visits by consultants as the primary method of obtaining input both from government officials at all levels and from local participants. The Sri Lankan activity also used a structured consultative approach, but it depended primarily on large workshop/seminars attended by hundreds of middle- and lower-level ministry and provincial officials and, on specified occasions, by farmer organization representatives and members.

There were important differences, as well.

- The policy changes envisaged in Sri Lanka were much more complex, and their successful implementation depended ultimately on the active support and collaboration of several government institutions. In Tunisia, the policy activity dealt with one issue, upon which there was already a general policy consensus. Also, primary implementation responsibility rested with but one central government institution.
- In the Sri Lankan process, the top priority was to build a broad-based consensus for the policy change. The Tunisia process, on the other hand, focused on meeting the immediate concerns of senior government policymakers and providing the practical tools to make a national strategy work.
- In Tunisia, senior policymakers participated in the policy process from its inception and were the direct recipients of all policy analyses and recommendations. Since they had designed the process to meet their perceived needs, they had immediate interest in implementing recommendations as formulated. This was not the case in Sri Lanka, where ad hoc structures—i.e., the IMPSA Secretariat and the IMPAC—were responsible first for formulating policy recommendations and then for recommending these changes to the government. Neither ad hoc committee had official authority to declare a new

government policy or to actually implement policy recommendations.

- Whereas the Tunisia focus stressed rural water system management, the Sri Lanka activity chose to address issues beyond participatory management of water resources in irrigated perimeters. This diffuse agenda diverted attention away from the specific water management policy issues, which were already very complex and difficult to deal with, and raised even more complicated issues. Thus, it became almost impossible to reach general consensus on the final recommendations.
- The Tunisia process generated much more political interest and involvement at the provincial level than did Sri Lanka's. Most provincial governors and delegués believed the policy changes would meet an important need in rural areas of their provinces and would facilitate their own work with constituents. In Sri Lanka, the provinces have traditionally played a lesser role in irrigation system O&M and, therefore, were not a strong constituency for change.

Policy Reform: Lessons Learned

The two experiences reviewed demonstrate that, even within a given policy area like water management, no generic approach to policy formulation can be applied to all situations. Therefore, USAID Missions should approach each collaborative opportunity as an individual case calling for its own particular design. However, the two experiences do provide some important lessons relevant to most policy-change situations.

Successful policy change tends to be evolutionary, not revolutionary. Attempts to bring about too much change over too short a period often sabotage key policy objectives. Ideally, a policy change should build upon an already existing policy framework. This was the case in both Tunisia and Sri Lanka, especially the former. In Sri Lanka, however, the focus was allowed to move away from cost effective and sustainable irrigation management to broader issues related to farmer participation and macropolicies affecting the

irrigated agriculture sector. When the focus remains on one issue, a policy change process generally advances, even if total success is not achieved. But when the process tries to do too much too rapidly, agreement can be reached only by diluting the recommendations to the point that, in most cases, the opportunity for progress is lost.

Successful policy change requires the support of a cadre of strongly committed senior government policymakers. In Tunisia, Genie Rural had a clear government directive to create water user associations to operate and maintain rural potable water systems, and the head of the agency was committed to carrying out this directive. In Sri Lanka, the MLIMD received a clear directive in 1984 to create farmer organizations that would help operate and maintain the major irrigation systems. Although the Irrigation Management Division was created for this purpose, there was never a strong commitment outside of the division to this policy change. This continued to be the case at the time the IMPSA exercise was being designed and implemented.

When the necessary commitment to policy change is lacking, its creation must be made part of the design of the change activity. In the case of Sri Lanka, the focus should have been on how to continue operating and maintaining the country's major irrigation systems in the face of declining government budgets, since this is what provided the initial impetus for the government's participatory management policy. A key part of the IMPSA design should have been to locate where in the government this problem was of primary concern, and then to integrate these elements fully into the IMPSA exercise.

More helpful to policy change than charismatic leadership is leadership continuity. The ideal combination for policy change is strong policy-level support and charismatic leadership. A charismatic individual can generate strong interest and support for a policy change, sometimes providing the key ingredient that makes it possible for policymakers to act. The two experiences reviewed in this report, however, make a strong case for continuity of leadership over charismatic leadership as the critical element for effective policy change. Although the

Tunisian effort lacked charismatic leadership, there was strong high-level support within the government for the duration. In Sri Lanka, a charismatic individual succeeded in generating widespread agreement and support for the policy change but, in the absence of continuous leadership and support within the government, the intended policy change did not occur.

Minimizing the number of institutions affected by a policy change is a critical element of any policy formulation process. One important reason for the success of the Tunisian activity is that only one institution was significantly affected by the policy change. IMPSA, however, involved at least five institutions with differing concerns and priorities. There is no question that greater success would have been achieved if the policy agenda had been narrowed early on to involve fewer institutions. Likewise, when several institutions with differing points of view are involved, the policy formulation process should not be approached as a zero-sum game. Unless all parties can see themselves as stakeholders and net gainers, the degree of agreement needed for effective policy change will not be achieved. In the IMPSA exercise, efforts along these lines received too little priority.

Major policy change must be based not on generalities, but on solid field data and analysis. The more complicated the policy change, the more important reliable data and high-quality analysis become in the process. In the Tunisian experience, the consultants based their recommendations on actual field data and a broad range of experiences. Every consultancy involved field trips that generated primary data. In this way, process implementors were able to document the basis for their recommendations and predict the consequences if the recommendations were not accepted.

The Sri Lankan exercise, which involved much more complicated policy issues, included very little field data collection. IMPSA recommendations were frequently based primarily on social science or organizational development principles and on whatever consensus could be reached in the preparation of the policy papers. As a result, the documented case for IMPSA's recommendations was not as strong as it could have been, and certainly not strong enough to convince

reluctant policy-level officials who had no personal commitment to the IMPSA process. If the exercise had been more implementation-oriented, as originally intended, the need for solid field data would quickly have become evident.

The distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy formulation is an artificial one. Successful policy change requires support and commitment at both grassroots and senior policy levels. This point is especially pertinent to the Sri Lankan experience. When the government's participatory management policy was originally put into effect in 1984, there had been too little bottom-up consensus building; consequently, the policy was not effectively implemented. The IMPSA exercise, on the other hand, succeeded in building broad-based support for the policy change from the bottom up but failed to generate the requisite commitment at senior policy levels.

A specific policy change process should never be used as the occasion to address other peripheral or unrelated problems. The focus of a policy change must remain on the original objective: this was clearly demonstrated in both experiences. In Tunisia, for example, there were pressures to turn water user associations into local organizations responsible for addressing the full range of community development needs. Since the main impetus for the creation of these associations was Genie Rural's need and desire to introduce cost effective and sustainable ways of managing rural water systems, the addition of community-development functions to these organizations could have threatened the success of the entire undertaking.

In Sri Lanka, one of the reasons the process became derailed was the management decision to add macro-irrigation policies to the agenda. This not only greatly increased the complexity of the exercise, but also raised policy issues that could never have been resolved within the IMPSA context. Thus, attention was diverted away from the central issue of irrigation management, and the originally desired policy change did not occur.

When USAID is supporting a policy change process, but not providing the resources necessary to implement the new policy, it is critically important that the agency coordinate closely with the donors who are or will be. These donors should be directly involved in both design and implementation of the activity. This can be particularly effective when there is continuity in USAID Mission staff.

Although these lessons would apply to many change efforts, a successful project requires that planners pay heed to the specific context within which it will unfold. Because each country context is unique, missions should approach every collaboration as an individual case calling for its own particular design. By so doing, they can play an increasingly significant role at the "policy table."

Appendix A

SCOPE OF WORK

Background

Policy reform is one of USAID's major areas of support, along with technical assistance and commodity procurement. USAID is often an important policy player in many countries, even when it is not a large donor. This may be because of USAID's unique contributions to and guidance on the "softer" side of development—in institutional development, user participation, and human resource development.

USAID missions are increasingly providing policy support to cooperating countries rather than costly infrastructure development projects. Frequently, USAID assistance in the policy arena involves field-based studies from which policy recommendations are drawn. Occasionally, policy assistance results from the participation of both users and government officers who play a role in an iterative process based on their experiences. This lessons learned paper examines two long-term policy reform programs carried out in Tunisia and Sri Lanka by the Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East (ISPAN) to determine if they may serve as models for missions and cooperating countries elsewhere.

This study will review two different approaches that were used in the formulation of water policies to:

- assess their effectiveness in assisting cooperating countries in policy formulation;
- identify the role missions can reasonably play in policy reform; and
- determine their suitability and opportunities for adapting them to other countries in the region.

Objectives

To determine how to:

- assist USAID missions in the effective leveraging of technical assistance for policy formulation;
- make policy formulation efforts most appropriate for local conditions, including the style and operations of cooperating countries; and

- to determine a process or a model or models for policy formulation which can be adopted by Asia and Near East missions in their work with cooperating country governments.

Descriptions of the Policy Programs

ISPAN has worked with missions and cooperating countries formulating policies and strategies related to water resources management and use. Its two foremost policy activities were the National Strategy to Create and Monitor Water User Associations in Tunisia and the Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (IMPSA), conducted in Sri Lanka. The activities shared certain superficial features: both were two year activities which involved expatriate and local technical assistance, both were operated in close contact with the missions and the cooperating country governments, and both resulted in a series of policy papers or a strategy.

The differences between the two programs were more substantive. The approaches differed dramatically and reflected perceptions of how policy formulation might be carried out most appropriately in the two countries. The WUA National Strategy in Tunisia was more traditional, with policy directions moving from the top down; IMPSA was both evolutionary and participatory, stressing a bottom-up approach.

WUA National Strategy in Tunisia

Rather than building upon the understanding of government officers, supplemented by that of users, the work in Tunisia relied upon primary data collection during field visits. The effort was managed in the United States by three programs managers representing ISPAN, the Water and Sanitation for Health Project (WASH), and the Systems Approach to Regional Income and Sustainable Resource Assistance project (SARSA).

The strategy was organized around field studies, training, and strategy development. Consultancies were performed by teams of U.S. and Tunisian experts. Topics included: a comparative analysis of various

approaches to organizing and supporting potable water user associations, a cost-benefit study of water user association (WUA) operation, and an assessment of the capacity of WUAs for other community development activities. Training provided direct assistance in developing the capacity of governorate-level staff in carrying out WUA-related tasks. Strategy development included a midterm evaluation, procedures manuals, and a national seminar.

IMPSA in Sri Lanka

Initiated in 1990, IMPSA was a systematic planning process to examine recent experiences and recommend suitable policies and strategy guidelines. Operating through a secretariat, IMPSA drew on the expertise of International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) staff, expatriates supplied by ISPAN, and Sri Lankan consultants.

There were three key elements in the IMPSA process:

- Full-time local experts staffed the IMPSA Secretariat, led by a charismatic, former Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) official.
- A system of staff working papers was based on secondary data and extensive interviews with government officials and others, rather than on primary data collection. Informal groups of government officers worked with consultants to generate specific staff working papers which were then merged into a single policy paper that focused the attention of senior officials on the issues and options.
- A workshop context brought interaction, coordination, and agreement. Workshop participants reviewed staff working papers and policy papers in a manner that was highly participatory and that moved progressively upward through the GSL.

The process was iterative, relying on workshops where ideas were floated early, permitting them to be examined politically and bureaucratically from all sides. As a result, adjustments in various technical and bureaucratic positions were made. The ideas were then

reexamined in succeeding workshops, with further adjustments made at each stage, until the participants reached consensus. When completed, the policy papers were submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Comparing the Two Approaches

The efforts in Tunisia were largely treated as separate pieces which were assembled in the end into a coherent strategy. The work in Sri Lanka was designed to use discrete papers and limited working groups as the building blocks of policy statements. The two approaches make for an important comparison. Fostering user participation (whether in the public or private sector) is an important thrust of most development efforts at present. Interestingly, the work in Tunisia was far less directed to opening up the process to the broadest body of users than was the case in Sri Lanka. The Tunisia strategy has been successful in attaining approval from the highest levels of government. In Sri Lanka, the recommended policies are being reviewed by the Government.

Some Key Questions

1. What are the most important critical features of both policy approaches?
2. How were the two approaches established, and how do they reflect appropriate operational strategies for the two countries?
3. What is the current status of the policy recommendations? Have they been adopted or, if not, is it likely that they will be approved by government at the highest levels?

If the policies might not be adopted for whatever reason, to what extent is it because of the nature of the policy process utilized?

4. Have the policy recommendations been implemented or absorbed by government line agencies? Are there identifiable reasons why they have not or will not be? Can they be resolved?

5. To what extent was the success of the programs because of individuals involved in the activities? How critical are these charismatic individuals, and in their absence, what is the likelihood of success elsewhere?
6. Is the identification of a generic policy process a reasonable objective? How transferable are these programs?
7. Is the conventional expectation that bottom-up policy development works best supported by these two experiences?

Methodology

The team will spend two weeks each in Tunisia and in Sri Lanka or roughly one month outside the United States. During that time, they will meet with participants in the two programs, as identified below.

- Tunisia: GOT officials in Tunis, governorate-level staff, local consultants, USAID staff, and potable water system users
- Sri Lanka: GSL officials, HMI staff, local consultants, and private sector/farmer users, and USAID staff

The team is expected to depend upon both printed documents related to the policy programs and extended, in-depth interviews.

Team Positions

The team will include an institutional development specialist and a policy expert.

The designation of a Team Leader will be made based on the experiences and leadership capabilities of the individuals. The consultants should be familiar with water resources in either or preferably both Tunisia and Sri Lanka. Competence in French is required.

An activity manager will oversee the work, and ISPAN financial and administrative staff will support the team in the United States and during their time overseas.

Schedule

The assignment requires seven weeks:

Week 1	Team planning meeting, initial review of documents, travel time
Weeks 2 and 3	Tunisia
Weeks 4 and 5	Sri Lanka
Weeks 6 and 7	In the ISPAN offices preparing the document.

Product

The final draft report should not exceed 50 pages. The main text should be roughly 25 pages in length with supporting appendices, including: documents produced by the programs, additional references consulted, individuals interviewed, acronyms list, and policy program-specific reports to be identified during the course of the assignment. A three- to five-paged summary and acknowledgments should precede the main text.

Appendix B

THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS IN TUNISIA

Background

Institutional Testing and Legislative Responses

Although USAID assistance to the national strategy for water user associations (WUAs) began only in 1990, community participation in water-point exploitation was hardly a new idea in rural Tunisia. In areas bordering the desert, local farmers had long carried out group management of water resources in the oases. And, during the colonial era, French administrators instituted a program for WUAs around water points to recover a tax on water users.

Following independence, the Government of Tunisia (GOT) abolished the existing WUA system and assumed the full costs of installing and operating all nontraditional rural potable-water systems. This policy continued essentially unchanged for two decades, until rising costs and budgetary shortfalls signaled the infeasibility of full subsidization of these systems.

To improve rural access to potable water in the Governorate of Kasserine, in central Tunisia, USAID funded the Rural Potable Water Project (No. 664-0312.7) in the early 1980s. Implemented by the Central Tunisian Development Authority (CTDA), this project improved existing water points and drilled and motorized boreholes in areas without convenient access to other potable water sources.

Costlier and more complex water delivery systems followed earlier projects that had tried unsuccessfully to install less sophisticated technologies for drawing water. Deteriorating systems and declining national resources, however, led USAID to support the Rural Potable Water Institutions Project (No. 664-0337) in 1986. This project introduced the concept of potable water user associations that would operate much like those already in existence for farmers in irrigation schemes. These WUAs were expected to share the responsibilities relating to rural potable water systems and help pay some of the costs.

By the end of 1987, the CTDA had organized WUAs in the Governorates of Kasserine and Gafsa, and the concept had spread to the adjacent Governorate of Kairouan. The successfully functioning WUAs in central Tunisia sparked interest at the national level,

where shifting political and economic attitudes were moving government policies toward greater decentralization. These WUAs, however, lacked the legal status and institutional framework to collect funds from their members and spend them as independent entities.

Between mid-1987 and mid-1990, the GOT passed key legislation granting potable water WUAs the same legal status accorded groups in public irrigation perimeters (thus giving these groups institutional structure). In rapid succession, Law No. 87-35 of 6 July 1987, Decree, No. 87-1261 and No. 87-1262 of 27 October 1987, Decree No. 88-150 of 12 January 1988 (the *Statut-type d'une association d'interet collectif*), and Decree No. 90-1069 of 18 June 1990 were passed by the National Assembly and signed by the president of Tunisia. Collectively, these legislative acts provided the policy foundation upon which to build a WUA program under the national action plan formulated and implemented since 1990.

Action Plan Design and Implementation

GOT and Donor Support for the Policy Changes

Acting upon the formulation of the new national policies, Genie Rural—the agency responsible for most of the rural water systems in Tunisia—announced its intention to promote a national strategy for WUA creation and instructed its governorate offices to begin organizing committees to take over local operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural water systems. The USAID Mission in Tunis supported this decision and allocated \$1 million in Rural Potable Water Institutions project funds to develop and implement an action plan that would help the GOT develop a national strategy for WUA promotion.

At the same time, another major donor supporting potable water systems in rural Tunisia—*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW)—expressed its support for the WUA concept. It then stipulated that such associations would have to be formed in communities where KfW-funded water systems were planned or already operating.

The Preliminary Process in Policy Formulation

The objective of the action plan was to develop a national strategy for forming and monitoring viable WUAs. As developed, the action plan would help define the methodology, processes, and materials needed to begin shifting responsibilities for Tunisian rural water systems from the central government to local communities. Besides providing a mechanism for the transfer of water-cost recovery, the plan would also help the GOT develop and implement a national policy to nurture the organizational structures communities needed to manage complex potable water systems. Over the longer term, these structures would serve as institutional bases for locally initiated community-development activities.

The action plan was formulated during a two-week period in February 1990, by a three-person team representing three A.I.D. centrally funded projects: Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project, the Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East (ISPAN), and the Systems Approach to Regional Income and Sustainable Resource Assistance (SARSA) Cooperative Agreement. The team's methodology involved a literature review and discussions with concerned staff in Genie Rural, followed by field visits to sites in the Kasserine and Kairouan Governorates.

The design team members first met with Genie Rural/Tunis officials to hear their views on actions needed to develop a national strategy and also to achieve a common understanding of Genie Rural's goals. The team then visited water projects in Kasserine and Kairouan, governorates chosen because they had both created WUAs. Staff in Kasserine had used the approach developed in the USAID-funded Rural Potable Water Institutions Project; that approach had been modified for use in Kairouan, essentially without external subsidization.

To identify the types of studies, training activities, workshops, and procurement required to formulate a national strategy, the team discussed differing approaches to WUA formation with Genie Rural staff in both governorates. Discussions also took place with the *Commissariat Regional du Developpement Agricole* (CRDA) directors, community organization specialists,

Genie Rural technicians, and in Kasserine, Ministry of Health representatives. In both governorates, the team visited selected WUAs to gain a general understanding of creation and operation issues through discussions with WUA members and officers.

A major task for the design team was to create an action plan compatible with KfW-financed potable water projects. To ensure collaboration, the team held discussions with KfW representatives, who accompanied the team on its field visits. Following these visits, the team drafted a preliminary plan outline and reviewed it with representatives of USAID, KfW, CRDA/Kasserine, and Genie Rural/Tunis. The views of these representatives were incorporated into the final design of the action plan.

Also incorporated into the plan design were the complementary interests of both USAID and KfW regarding the external assistance they would provide to the GOT in developing WUAs. For example, while USAID would aid the GOT's development of a methodology and processes for creating WUAs on a national scale, KfW would finance approximately 80 potable water projects throughout Tunisia.

Under KfW's agreement with the GOT, no new projects would be started until WUAs were formed on site. Given their complementary activities, USAID and KfW agreed to a number of specific steps to ensure closely coordinated implementation of their parallel activities. Finally, KfW agreed to allocate funds to support collaborative work under the action plan, funds that would be used to promote WUA development in the KfW project areas. This allocation covered such items as computers, training materials, and vehicles for community organization specialists in each governorate.

During the evolution of the action plan, KfW-supported project activities provided opportunities to learn more about the process of WUAs creation, which aided the development of a national strategy. Conversely, USAID financed the development of training materials and institutional approaches for creating WUAs that were tested in KfW sites.

Policy Agenda Addressed by the Action Plan

The original 21 elements in the Action Plan were intended to address certain key issues in formulating a national WUA strategy. The policy agenda identified (Rosensweig, Stanbury, and Grimm, 1990) revolved around the following specific items:

Clear definition of the division of O&M responsibilities between the WUAs and the CRDAs. In 1990, the division of O&M responsibilities for water points had not been clearly defined between the WUAs and Genie Rural's governorate offices. Anticipated responsibilities ranged from the WUAs being charged with only preventive maintenance to being responsible for all repairs costing under 100 Tunisian Dinars. Some Genie Rural staff had stated that eventually the WUAs should take complete responsibility for all maintenance.

At the time, the WUAs also had differing understandings of their maintenance responsibilities, with some thinking they were responsible only for changing the oil and filter in their pumps. To achieve a national O&M policy for the pumps, it was deemed important to determine the level of responsibility WUAs could and would take, the approach needed to ensure assumption of that level, and the timing for transfer of responsibility to the WUAs.

Determination of the real costs of creating, developing, and monitoring WUAs. It was commonly believed that the approach used in the Kasserine pilot area was more costly than that used in the adjoining Kairouan area. Detailed evaluation of the comparative costs was seen as essential to development of the national strategy.

Examination of the effectiveness of the financial management system used to track WUA funds. The financial management system devised by the Ministry of Finance and Genie Rural was seen as possibly diminishing community incentives to contribute regularly to the operation and maintenance of the pumping systems. Although the current system required that WUA funds be controlled by an official in the local office of the Ministry of Finance, the option of granting the WUAs complete control over their funds and allowing them to open their own bank accounts had been proposed. Therefore, the policy

question of the comparative benefits of the alternative financial-management systems needed to be evaluated.

Development of a workable approach for incorporating hygiene education into WUA promotion activities. An approach using community health workers had been developed in Kasserine; the Kairouan program, however, relied solely on regional personnel from the Ministry of Health. Given the importance of hygiene education in gaining full benefits from the water development program, the action plan needed to include a system for coordination with the Ministry of Health.

Development of standardized training materials for pump operators; WUA presidents, treasurers, and members; and hygiene educators. In Kairouan, a staff of the Commissariat Regional au Developpement Agricole (CRDA) had developed some excellent self-instructional materials for WUA treasurers. In Kasserine, CRDA staff had developed some training materials for WUA presidents, treasurers, and community health workers; however, these materials had never been updated nor did they exist in a form other governorates could easily use. Thus, to all intents and purposes, standardized materials for training the WUA participants did not exist in 1990.

CRDA staff training in how to train key individuals critical to WUA operations. Existing CRDA staff responsible for creating WUAs appeared to lack the necessary skills to train various community groups vital to WUA success. Training programs were needed that were practically oriented and involved more than lectures to the communities about their responsibilities.

CRDA staff retraining in community organization. WUA creation demands skills and background in community organization and community development. Genie Rural staff did not have this expertise, and no promotional track existed for individuals with social science backgrounds. Thus, an evaluation was needed of benefits and problems associated with three alternatives: to create a career track for such personnel within Genie Rural, to retrain existing staff to be community organization specialists, or to second necessary staff from other ministries.

Determination of the most effective approach for WUA formation. Although the GOT had made a clear policy decision to pass O&M responsibilities to the WUAs, there was as yet no agreement on the most effective approach. Some believed passionately that the approach used in Kasserine, which was highly subsidized and based on community development principles, was the most desirable approach. Others believed just as strongly that the more straightforward cost-recovery approach practiced in Kairouan was more practical, less costly to the government, and just as effective.

Determination of the institutional support Genie Rural needed at both the CRDA and central levels. To implement a national strategy, it was assumed that Genie Rural would need more staff in both Tunis and the governorates. These staff were likely to be selected from existing personnel who would need to be retrained. As the sheer number of WUAs to be created would increase current workloads significantly at both levels, the policy issue was to determine exactly what organizational structures in Genie Rural/Tunis and the CRDAs would best accommodate the additional responsibilities and workloads.

Assessment of WUA capacity to undertake other community-development activities. Some considered the community organizational structures introduced with the WUAs to be vehicles for undertaking more community-development activities than were currently underway. Many of those involved with the WUAs focused almost exclusively on the tasks necessary to legalize them. Attention also needs to be given to whether the WUAs can be sustainable, multipurpose organizations.

Sensitization of government officials to the issues involved in WUA creation, and development of techniques for marketing the WUA concept. To implement a national strategy, Genie Rural staff needed to be sensitized to the issues involved in WUA creation, and the techniques for marketing the concept needed to be developed.

In addition to the specific issues listed, one other policy problem was discussed: mixed systems. Because many of the existing WUA pumping systems provided

water for both potable water and irrigation enterprises, some feared that these systems could create different incentives for beneficiary participation from those systems providing only potable water. Water use for irrigation was seen as potentially leading to illegal connections, inequities in what users pay, and greater demands for water than were originally anticipated.

While the need to evaluate the full effects of irrigation use on WUAs with mixed systems was recognized as a potential problem, it was decided that full consideration of this issue would not be included as an element in developing an overall national strategy.

Implementation of the Action Plan (1990-1992)

Execution of Planned Activities

As designed, the action plan was divided into four categories of activities: applied studies and consultancies; pilot project monitoring; training; and development and finalization of the national strategy. During the implementation of the action plan, 19 of the 21 activities called for were carried out under the four categories.

At the request of Genie Rural, full development of a management information system (MIS) was incorporated into the scope of work for the new KfW project to start in March 1993. However, some preliminary work was done on the design of an overall monitoring and evaluation system to include information to be collected at the CRDA and central government levels. This monitoring and evaluation outline will be used as an input into the development of a full MIS in 1993.

The evaluation of prior training experiences was not done due to an overriding priority to develop a training system that could address all of the WUAs' training needs, as identified in the midterm evaluation of the policy process. Thus, the resources set aside to evaluate prior training activities were reallocated to the development of a training system. Project implementors added another training activity to the action plan agenda in the form of two workshops to

improve coordination and planning between the CRDAs and the regional offices of the *Direction d'Hygiene du Milieu et de la Protection de l'Environnement* in 20 governorates, as a way to better integrate hygiene education in WUA promotional activities. (For a complete agenda of Action Plan activities and their timing, see Table 1.)

Key Implementation Factors

According to project implementors, two key factors led to the successful implementation of the action plan (Rosensweig, El Amouri, and Jennings, 1992). The first was coordination with the KfW, which was supporting the installation of 80 new rural water systems throughout Tunisia. As part of its project, KfW required that each KfW-financed water delivery system be managed by a WUA. To achieve greater coordination, two KfW consultants participated in joint discussions with the USAID team developing the action plan and contributed to its development. To maintain this coordination, many action plan consultants stopped at KfW offices in Frankfurt on their way to and from Tunisia to brief KfW staff on their upcoming activities. All reports were shared with KfW staff to keep them fully informed. Finally, one of the most comprehensive activities—the monitoring of WUA formation in 20 governorates—was linked directly to the KfW project, as 16 of the 21 sites monitored were KfW-funded.

The second factor was the decision made prior to action plan implementation to focus activities on only 10 of the 23 governorates. These includes six pilot governorates—Siliana, Beja, Zaghuan, Mahdia, Sidi Bouzid, and Gabes—and four governorates that had already been establishing WUAs—Kairouan, Kasserine, Kef, and Gafsa. The decision to focus on 10 governorates allowed for limited testing of certain approaches to build up a body of actual field experience and to avoid spreading action plan resources and activities too thinly.

Major Products Generated by the Action Plan Process

According to the project implementors, the action plan process generated some important tangible outputs that

assisted GOT officials in developing a national WUA program:

Key Written Documents

National Strategy Statement

Procedures Manual for WUA Promotion and Creation

Policy Statement and Procedures Manual for Maintenance

Five training guides for WUA presidents, treasurers, members, and for pump operators and health educators.

Activity Reports

Action Plan for the Development of the National Strategy to Create and Monitor Water User Associations in Tunisia

Midterm Evaluation of the Action Plan for the Development of the National Strategy for the Creation and Monitoring of WUAs

National Communications Plan for the Promotion of WUAs in Tunisia

Institutional Analysis

Comparative Analysis of Approaches to Creating Water User Associations for Potable Water in Rural Tunisia

Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Creation and Promotion of WUAs in Rural Tunisia

Assessment of Water User Associations' Capacity for Community Development in Tunisia

Pilot Project to Monitor the Formation and Functioning of Tunisian Rural Water User Associations.

Promotional Materials

There is a 20-minute Arabic videotape describing a WUA. There are brochures in French and Arabic for government officials describing the WUA program and a brochure in Arabic for beneficiaries.

Wall charts on routine maintenance tasks for posting in the WUA pump station.

Training Designs

Introductory two-week training-of-trainers workshop for WUA agents

Introductory two-week training-of-trainers workshop for engineers and technicians

Two-week training-of-trainers workshop for hygiene educators

One-week refresher training-of-trainers workshop for WUA agents

One-week refresher workshop for engineers and technicians on strengthening maintenance skills.

Major Outcomes of the Action Plan Process

In addition to the products listed, a number of significant outcomes helped move the WUA program forward:

- a better understanding of issues the action plan was intended to address, including hygiene education, modifications to the financial management system, definition of training needs, clarification of responsibilities for maintenance, and determination of the institutional support needed;
- an increase in the number of trained governorate-level officials capable of implementing the WUA program;
- linkages with other concerned ministries;
- better understanding of the elements of the program and of its complexity;
- a clear direction for the future, including short- and medium-term priorities;
- an acceptance of the national strategy and commitment to carry it out; and
- a pool of Tunisian consultants available to aid implementation of the national strategy.

Post-Action-Plan Progress

USAID assistance to the WUA program effectively ended in mid-1992, with the final regional and national seminars on the action plan. This section updates GOT program actions during the eight months since USAID assistance ended.

WUA Growth

The WUA program has grown considerably since the decision to expand efforts beyond the field experience in four governorates and into a national program. By the end of 1992, there were 1,354 WUAs in 22 of the 23 governorates, although the number of WUAs per governorate varied from a high of 235 in Kairouan to a low of 10 in Ben Arous. Table 2 shows the status of all recognized WUAs by location and type.

Legislation and Agreement Changes Pertaining to WUAs

Since mid-1992, there have been a number of significant achievements in modifying WUA status and/or operations and in strengthening the overall program. With regard to legislation, two additional decrees were promulgated. Decree No. 92-2160 of 14 December 1992 modified the text of Decree No. 87-1261 of 27 October 1987 relative to WUA organization and financial management. Decree No. 92-2229 of 21 December 1992 completed the process of modifying the regulations governing WUA financial management, in line with recommendations contained in the final action plan report (Rosensweig, F., T. El Amouri, and L. Jennings, 1992).

In addition to legislative actions, a contractual agreement (*convention-cadre*) was formalized on 24 October 1992 between the Directors General of Genie Rural and the *Agence de la Vulgarisation et de la Formation Agricoles (AVFA)* of the Ministry of Agriculture to cooperate in the realization of the training program outlined in the national strategy for WUA promotion. Under the agreement, AVFA personnel and local consultants who previously worked under the action plan will design and implement a

Table 1

Agenda and Timing of Action Plan Activities

Action Plan Activity	Timing of Activity
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Applied Studies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Comparative Analysis of Approaches ■ Cost-Benefit Study ■ Policies and Procedures for Maintenance ■ Institutional Analysis ■ Assessment of WUA Capacity for Other Community Activities 	<p>September 1990 September 1991 January 1991/April 1992 September 1991 January 1992</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pilot Projects Monitoring</i></p>	<p>June 1990/April 1992</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asian Study Tour ■ Development of Training Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pump Operators Presidents Treasurers WUA Members Health Educators ■ Training of Trainers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineers and Technicians WUA Agents in Genie Rural Health Educators ■ Refresher Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineers and Technicians WUA Agents ■ Development of a Training System ■ Workshops for Integration of Hygiene Education into WUA Promotion ■ Development of a Social Marketing Plan 	<p>August 1990 September 1990/April 1992 December 1990/January 1992 December 1990/January 1992 April 1990/January 1992 April 1990/April 1992 May 1991 January 1991 February 1992 January 1992 January 1992 January 1992 February 1992 June 1991</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Finalization and Synthesis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Midterm Evaluation of the Action Plan ■ Procedures Manual for the WUA Program ■ Development of the National Strategy Statement ■ National and Regional Seminars 	<p>September 1991 January/May 1991 January/April 1992 June 1992</p>

Source: Rosensweig, F., T. El Amouri and L. Jennings. (June 1992). WASH Field Report No. 368.

Table 2
Status of Water User Associations at the End of 1992

Governorate	Potable Water Associations	Irrigation Associations	Dual Purpose Associations	Total Associations
Tunis	0	0	0	0
Ben Arous	10	0	0	10
Ariana	22	0	0	22
Zaghouan	28	8	0	36
Nabeul	22	0	0	22
Bizerte	68	6	0	74
Beja	55	0	0	55
Jendouba	61	2	0	63
Siliana	62	5	0	67
Kef	48	7	0	55
Kairouan	203	32	0	235
Kasserine	72	33	0	105
Sidi Bouzid	91	24	3	118
Gafsa	64	24	0	88
Sousse	35	10	0	45
Mahdia	23	3	0	26
Monastir	8	13	0	21
Sfax	69	0	0	69
Gabes	20	39	0	59
Medenine	61	7	4	72
Tataouine	30	8	0	38
Kebili	0	47	0	47
Tozeur	17	10	0	27
Total	1,069	278	7	1,354

Source: Genie Rural 1993. Ministry of Agriculture, Tunis, Tunisia.

Note: Water user associations listed above have obtained formal legal status under GOT regulations.

series of training-of-trainers workshops for WUA and government personnel in the 13 governorates not covered by action plan activities. In February 1993, the evaluation team members visited a workshop in Siliana and were impressed by the careful preparation of training materials and the quality of classroom and practical presentations being implemented under this cooperative agreement.

Finally, the project agreement for the next phase of the GOT-KfW WUA collaborative program was finalized, and project operations were to start in March 1993. Under this agreement, KfW will provide expatriate and local consulting expertise and other resources to continue implementation of the national strategy, as first promulgated under the USAID-financed action plan.

Implementation Status of Recommendations from Action Plan Final Report

The final report under the action plan contained a number of recommendations as to essential actions that each concerned ministry or department must carry out in order for the national strategy to be effectively implemented. The recommendations incorporate the changes suggested and agreed upon by participants who attended the interregional and national seminars. This section presents the recommendations by ministry and department, with their implementation status as of February 1993.

Ministry of Agriculture/Genie Rural

1. Strengthen the WUA Promotion Service in Genie Rural by increasing the number of staff with the necessary skills.

Status: The service has been strengthened by the addition of one female engineer. The recruitment of a sociologist by transfer or contract has been requested, and the Minister of Agriculture has approved the appointment.

2. Implement the communication and social marketing program designed during the action plan in collaboration with the AVFA and the CRDAs.

Status: Officials have made a start on the program design, and a small budget has already been allocated for this purpose.

3. Assist in creating an interministerial coordinating committee to promote WUAs.

Status: There has been no progress to date on organization of a formal committee, but informal contacts have been established.

4. Implement at the national level the monitoring and evaluation system proposed in the National Strategy.

Status: Officials are using the evaluation form devised under the action plan. A more formal system will be in place by the end of 1993.

5. Organize training-of-trainer workshops for the technicians of the *Arrondissement de la Maintenance des Equipments* (AME) and the WUA Promotion Unit in the 13 governorates that have not yet benefitted from action plan training activities.

Status: Two workshops have been conducted to date; a third will be held in April 1993. Refresher training sessions will start by the end of the year.

6. Assure the use and follow-up of the five training guides and the procedures manuals.

Status: The evaluation team members saw evidence at the Siliana workshop that the training guides developed under the action plan were being used. Officials have also made an instructional videotape based on the maintenance training guide.

Ministry of Agriculture/CRDAs

- 7. Strengthen the WUA Promotion Units of each CRDA with adequate staff, budget, and means of transport.**

Status: CRDAs have received modest operational budgets. In addition, CRDAs now have eight new vehicles for WUA-promotion activities. CRDA personnel are being upgraded, but no new staff have been added to date.

- 8. Assign responsibility for all backup maintenance to the maintenance unit or division of each CRDA.**

Status: Experience varies among CRDAs. Responsibilities have been fully transferred in Kasserine.

- 9. Improve coordination between the offices of rural engineering (Genie Rural), maintenance, and water resources of each CRDA in order to better promote WUAs.**

Status: Officials at both national and CRDA levels agree that coordination has been improved.

- 10. Organize periodic consciousness-raising and coordination meetings for representatives of concerned ministries.**

Status: Officials say this has been done on a case-by-case basis.

- 11. Plan and implement an extension and training program for WUA presidents, treasurers, technicians, and members.**

Status: Experiences vary by governorate.

- 12. Implement the WUA monitoring and evaluation system at the regional level.**

Status: Actions are starting but require more leadership at the national level.

Ministry of Public Health/Department of Hygiene and Environmental Protection (DHMPE)

- 13. Strengthen DHMPE regional offices with adequate staff, budget, and transport to carry out their roles.**

Status: Officials have resolved problems for participation of ministry personnel and have conducted joint seminars.

- 14. Organize workshops in each governorate to reinforce the skills of staff responsible for hygiene education programs.**

Status: Officials have conducted a series of workshops for regional hygiene educators.

- 15. In collaboration with the CRDAs, develop annual plans in each governorate to coordinate hygiene education activities with WUA promotion.**

Status: Collaboration has increased with joint training programs and seminars. Transportation remains the main problem, but officials are now sharing available vehicles for joint visits to WUAs.

- 16. Involve the DHMPE in the choice of sites and design of potable water and sanitation systems.**

Status: Officials are said to be generally knowledgeable, but they do not formally intervene in the choice of sites. Some informal discussion of this issue has taken place at the governorate level.

Ministry of the Interior

- 17. Strengthen the role of the regional *Groupement d'Interet Hydraulique* (GIH) and assure administrative and political support for WUA promotion.**

Status: GIHs continue to function in all governorates, but participation of individual governors and delegates

in WUA promotion varies considerably. Officials at all levels state that, where the governor and delegates actively participate in the WUA-promotion program, WUAs appear to operate more efficiently.

18. Encourage self-financing and promote WUA financial autonomy, while at the same time maintaining the possibility of some exceptional assistance for WUAs in trouble.

Status: Most WUAs are not—and from all appearances will not be—fully self-financing in the near future. With legislation passed in late-1992, however, progress has been made in simplifying the financial management system under which WUAs operate. Significant work remains to be done in establishing each WUA's exact financial position and in formulating an overall policy on the degree of WUA coverage of recurrent costs and on the timing schedules to be used in having WUAs assume increased responsibilities.

19. Strengthen the potable water program in the context of integrated rural development projects.

Status: Officials reported that actions to strengthen the potable water program are considered in the context of general program planning at all levels.

Ministry of Finance

20. In collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture and Interior, agree upon and implement a new, simplified system for conducting WUA financial audits.

Status: Legislation to simplify the financial management system for WUAs was passed in December 1992, with the active participation of the Ministry of Finance.

Ministry of Social Affairs

21. Participate in WUA-promotion activities by providing information and by training female rural-extension workers as a way to develop social service activities, especially for rural women.

Status: There has been no change in this area.

Partial List of Persons Contacted for the Tunisia Experience

Government of Tunisia

Abdelbaker Hamdane	Director General, Rural Engineering Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture
Youssef Sardouk	Director, Water User Association Promotion Unit, Rural Engineering Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture
Salaheddinne Chenitti	Director, Protection de l'Hygiene du Milieu et de la Protection de l'Environnement, Ministry of Public Health
Mekacher Abdelwaheb	Training Specialist, Agricultural Extension and Training Agency, Ministry of Agriculture
Commissioner for Agriculture	Regional Office for Agricultural Development, Governorate of Kasserine
M'Garrach Mounir	Head, Rural Engineering Bureau, Governorate of Kasserine
Gharsalli Taoufik	Water User Association Promotion Unit, Governorate of Kasserine
Roabidi Laghar	Water User Association Promotion Unit, Governorate of Kasserine
Aoubi Mokhar	Water User Association Promotion Unit, Governorate of Kasserine
Presidents, Members, and Pumping Station Managers	Two Water User Associations, Governorate of Kasserine
Younes Garreb	Commissioner for Agriculture, Regional Office for Agricultural Development, Governorate of Kairouan
Saleh Znazen	Head, Division of Hydraulic and Rural Engineering, Governorate of Kairouan
Ali Abdelharid	Head, Rural Engineering Bureau, Governorate of Kairouan
Moncef El Hajji	Head, Water User Association Promotion Unit, Governorate of Kairouan
President/Pumping Station Manager	Water User Association, Governorate of Kairouan
Director	Agricultural Training Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Siliana

USAID Mission/Tunis

James A. Graham	Director
Barry Hill	Program Officer
Abdelhafidh Lakhdhar	Project Officer

A.I.D./Washington

Diana B. Putman Project Development Officer and ex-project Officer for the Rural Potable Water Institutions Project and the Action Plan

Curt Grimm Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Consultants

Belgacem Khessaissia Sociologist, Agence Tunisienne de Cooperation Technique

Lee Jennings Training Resources Group

Moncef Maalel Chief Engineer/Manager, Societe d'Applications Hydrauliques

Fred Rosensweig Associate Director for Institutional and Human Resources Development, WASH Project, Rosslyn, Virginia

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Appendix C

THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS IN SRI LANKA

Background

Operation and Maintenance of Irrigation Systems

Irrigated agriculture is critically important to the Sri Lankan economy; its investments in irrigation, for example, have enabled the country to become self-sufficient in rice and, with the right policies, Sri Lanka could become a major agricultural exporter.

Of the approximately 550,000 hectares of irrigated area, 350,000 are under capital-intensive "major" schemes managed by the government and 200,000 are under "minor" schemes managed by the farmers with technical support from government agencies as needed. During pre-colonial times, Sri Lankan farmers had primary responsibility for operating and maintaining their own irrigation systems. Although this is still the case in the minor schemes, many of which cover less than 20 hectares, farmers have come to play a relatively minor role in the management of the major schemes. During the colonial period, irrigation management became more centralized, but farmers continued to contribute to the operation and maintenance of their systems. After independence, however, the government gradually assumed complete responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of all major schemes. In time, farmers came to look to the government for all of the maintenance work on irrigation systems beyond their own field channels.

By the mid-1970s, most of the major irrigation systems had begun to show signs of disrepair, as the government experienced chronic funding shortages and the farmers felt no responsibility to fill the void. Since then, the government has been keenly aware that if a substantial part of the responsibility for operating and maintaining the country's irrigation systems is not effectively passed on to farmers, much of their productive potential will be lost.

The government's initial response, beginning in 1978, was to charge irrigation fees. This policy was implemented in earnest, with nonpayers taken to court and fined or jailed. For a couple of years, the system worked. Gradually, however, farmers stopped paying their fees, partly because the fees were more than they

could afford but also because the funds collected were not being spent on system maintenance. In the face of widespread farmer resistance, the policy of charging irrigation fees became unenforceable. As a result, the budgetary problems associated with operating and maintaining the country's irrigation systems were not effectively addressed, and the irrigation systems continued to deteriorate.

The Participatory Approach to Irrigation Management

During this period, the concept of participatory management in irrigation systems began to gain favor in Sri Lanka. At first, system-level managers organized farmers to carry out maintenance tasks that required little technical expertise or few resources.¹ Although managers adopted slightly different approaches, the common elements of the most successful gradually became clear.

The basic problem faced by the system managers was how to motivate farmers to carry out tasks that were formerly the government's responsibility. They found that the key lay in a dialogue between government field agents and farmers, with the agents making an effort to understand farmers' needs and concerns and then organizing farmers for the purpose of meeting them. It was not enough for irrigation engineers merely to tell farmers that the government was no longer going to maintain their canals and then instruct the farmers on how to do what the government had previously done.

From these field-initiated experiments, a national participatory management policy and program evolved. In 1984, the government created the Irrigation Management Division (IMD) in the Ministry of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development (MLIMD) to apply participatory management to all of the country's major irrigation schemes. The IMD's major program was the Integrated Management of Major Agricultural Settlements (INMAS), which covered 44 of the country's 200 major irrigation schemes. Under the INMAS model, each irrigation system had an IMD Project Manager who was responsible for farmer organizations. The project manager supervised institutional organizers, who in turn organized farmers

at the distributory canal and field channel levels for the purpose of operating and maintaining their irrigation systems.

In addition to INMAS, the IMD implemented two large irrigation rehabilitation projects: the Major Irrigation Project (MIRP), started in 1985 with World Bank funding, and the Irrigation Systems Management Project (ISMP), started in 1986 with USAID funding. These projects included important farmer-organization components intended to identify and refine the most effective ways of organizing farmers to operate and maintain their irrigation systems.

In 1986, the country's experience with participatory irrigation management was reviewed in a national workshop. This workshop eventually led to a cabinet paper, issued in early 1989 as a policy directive for the adoption of participatory management in all of Sri Lanka's irrigation schemes. The cabinet paper² stated the government's policy as follows:

- The basic government policy is to establish management systems for major irrigation schemes with effective farmer participation.
- The institutional arrangements to effect this policy should promote the sharing of rights, duties, and responsibilities between government and farmer organizations.
- These arrangements will consist primarily of *farmer organizations* for water management at the field channel level and the distributory level, and *coordinating committees* at the subproject and project (system) levels, consisting of government officers and farmer representatives from the field channel and distributory canal organizations. The coordinating committees at the subproject level will be chaired by farmer representatives, and the committees at the project level will be chaired by the project manager (an IMD employee).
- The responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the tertiary system (the distributory and field channels) is to be transferred to farmer organizations.
- The responsibility for main system maintenance will remain with the government, with provision

for consultations with farmer organizations through the coordinating committees.

- Legal provision is to be made for recognition of farmer organizations for water management and also to accommodate the system of coordinating committees.
- Legal provision is to be made to transfer ownership of irrigation canals and reservations to farmer organizations, provided certain conditions are fulfilled. This procedure is to be implemented over time and pursued as a long-term government goal.

By 1989, however, despite 10 years of field experimentation, the creation five years earlier of an MLIMD division charged with introducing participatory management in the major irrigation schemes, and the issuance of the cabinet paper just described, no successful systemwide turnover to farmer organizations of full O&M responsibilities for distributory and field canals had taken place. The most success had occurred in the two rehabilitation projects implemented by the IMD: the Major Irrigation Project and the Irrigation Systems Management Project. In these two projects, the IMD staff had successfully organized farmers to assume varying degrees of O&M responsibilities. Although none of these farmer organizations had assumed full financial responsibility for distributory canal maintenance as of 1989, the impact of their efforts on canal condition was obvious, as were the cost savings to the government.

Observing these successes, senior irrigation officials recognized that, unless they were replicated at the national level, the country's irrigation O&M problems would never be solved. In discussions with USAID, these officials expressed the need to study how effective participatory management could be introduced in all of the country's major irrigation schemes. USAID agreed to assist in this study, which led to the Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity (IMPSA). IMPSA's main objective was "to assist the Government to develop specific policy statements and policy implementation plans to expand on and fill the gaps in the broad policy framework on participatory management described in the cabinet paper that had

been approved earlier in the year, and prepare action recommendations to be submitted to the government."³ It was expected that, as a result of this objective being achieved, the government's participatory management policy would finally be fully implemented.

IMPSA Design and Implementation

The IMPSA Approach to Policy Change

The points of departure for the IMPSA policy-change process were the 10 years of field-level experimentation in participatory approaches to irrigation management and a cabinet paper stating that participatory management was official government policy. IMPSA was to take the next step in the policy formulation process, which was to obtain broad-based agreement on the specific elements of the participatory management policy and to determine how it was to be implemented.

The key element in the IMPSA process was consensus building. A secretariat with a full-time staff of several local professionals was set up to implement IMPSA activities. Studies and working papers were to be prepared by local and expatriate consultants, then reviewed and discussed at all levels of government, as well as at the farmer level. The USAID Mission in Sri Lanka contracted with the Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East (ISPAN) and the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) to staff the IMPSA Secretariat and provide consultants for the studies and workshops. The mechanism for achieving consensus within the government was the interministerial Irrigation Management Policy Advisory Committee (IMPAC), a committee set up specifically to provide policy guidance and help assure the acceptance and implementation of IMPSA recommendations. Chaired by the MLIMD Secretary, it included senior representatives from all the departments and agencies affected by the policy changes.

Under IMPAC was a working group of mid-level government officials, who reviewed all consultant reports, participated in policy workshops and seminars, and approved IMPSA's working papers before they were submitted to IMPAC for final approval. By the time a working paper or policy paper was submitted to the committee, it had been fully discussed among mid-level government officials to reach a general consensus on the policy changes advocated. Policymakers, officials implementing the policies, and farmers all contributed to the review process.

It was anticipated that, by building broad-based consensus in favor of the proposed policy changes, the government could then put the new policies fully into effect; these would include, as needed, the issuance of a cabinet paper, the restructuring of key institutions, and the passing of new legislation.

The Policy Agenda

Because the participatory management policy had been in effect for many years and considerable field experience had been accumulated, agreement was easily reached on several policy issues to be addressed:

- a broad vision statement relating to the role of irrigated agriculture in Sri Lanka's long-term growth and development;
- a definition of the roles and responsibilities of the institutions involved in the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems under a policy of participatory management, and the identification of institutional changes needed to put a national policy of participatory management into effect;
- the identification of the organizational and human resource development needs of the institutions that would have to be restructured to carry out their redefined roles and responsibilities;
- a comprehensive statement defining the purpose, roles, and functions of farmer organizations in the operation and maintenance of irrigation systems;

- an analysis of alternative arrangements for financing the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, recognizing that several formulas would be needed to reflect the technical, as well as economic, differences among the country's irrigation schemes;
- an analysis of alternative mechanisms for coordinating the activities of all the institutions responsible for operating and maintaining irrigation systems and providing services to farmers in irrigated areas; and
- an in-depth analysis and assessment of the operations, organization, and staffing of departments and agencies under MLIMD, including the Irrigation Department, the IMD, and the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL).

The original IMPSA scope of work called for a working paper on each of the above subjects to be prepared by the IMPSA Secretariat and approved by IMPAC.⁴ The final step of the IMPSA process was for the secretariat to help IMPAC prepare an overall set of recommendations on irrigation management policy for Sri Lanka. These recommendations would then be officially submitted to the government for action.

IMPSA Implementation

The first IMPSA activity was the preparation of the vision paper for irrigated agriculture, which turned out to be a greater effort than expected. Twenty working papers were prepared, after which the full IMPAC met several times before the final paper was issued. The main reason for the delay was that the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) representatives on IMPAC raised a number of issues that could not be resolved to their satisfaction. In the end, a policy paper was approved, but the MOA representatives continued to have major reservations.

The final version of the vision paper, issued as IMPSA Policy Paper No. 1, laid out the policy changes needed to create a strong, competitive, and dynamic irrigation sector in the twenty-first century. The paper called for

four far-reaching transformations that extended well beyond participatory irrigation management:

- a policy transformation away from government planning and control toward privatization, market-based agricultural diversification, and participatory management of irrigation systems;
- an institutional transformation away from direct management and control to a supportive services and regulatory function;
- a transformation of agricultural research and development away from technology development based on production possibilities to technology development based on market demand; and
- a rural development transformation to provide the economic infrastructure required by modern agriculture and social infrastructure to improve the quality of life in the rural areas.

The vision paper raised a number of policy issues related to irrigated agriculture that had not been covered in (IMPSA's) original scope of work. Although only peripherally related to irrigation management, these issues were seen by many IMPSA participants as critical to the future of the irrigation sector. Therefore, the IMPSA Secretariat and the IMPAC working group decided the issues should be included in the IMPSA exercise. Thus, policy papers on the following subjects were added: agricultural research and development; human resource development in the irrigated agriculture sector; macropolicies for land and water resource management; trade and fiscal policies as they relate to irrigated agriculture; and investment policies for the irrigation sector.

As soon as the vision paper was approved and the scope of work amended, three policy papers dealing with farmer organizations, irrigation system O&M, and restructuring of government departments and agencies responsible for irrigation management were quickly completed and approved by IMPAC. These three papers provided detailed recommendations for implementing the government's stated participatory management policy. At that point, the secretariat packaged the recommendations into a draft cabinet

paper that was circulated through key departments and agencies for approval. Once again, however, the MOA raised objections and the cabinet paper was never approved. While the remaining policy papers were being prepared, the IMPSA Secretariat continued its efforts to have this cabinet paper approved.

The final product was IMPSA Policy Paper No. 10, entitled *Achieving Productivity and Prosperity of Irrigated Agriculture through Participatory Management*. This report summarized the vision paper; the main recommendations for implementing the government's participatory management policies from Policy Papers 2, 3, and 4; and the findings and recommendations of Policy Papers 5 through 9. As provided for in the scope of work, the report was approved by IMPAC and presented to the government for implementation.

It was anticipated that the participatory management recommendations (i.e., chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10) would form the basis for a cabinet paper and would then be implemented by the appropriate ministries and departments. Although this has not yet occurred, IMPSA has nonetheless had a significant impact on Sri Lankan irrigation management.

IMPSA's Impact on Irrigation Management

IMPSA's impact can be measured in three areas: policy analysis and policy papers resulting directly from IMPSA activities; changes in the behavior of individual agencies and departments as a result of their participation in IMPSA activities; and changes in irrigation management policy.

IMPSA Outputs

IMPSA was able to complete all of its planned activities, (consultancies, working papers, workshops and seminars), culminating in the ten policy papers. These papers represent the contributions of many highly qualified local and expatriate consultants, as well as the lengthy and exhaustive deliberations of hundreds of government officials and farmers. Taken together, the papers reflect well informed and widely

shared views on the importance of irrigated agriculture to Sri Lanka's long-term growth and development and on how the government's participatory management policy should be implemented.

IMPSA also produced a set of recommendations that if fully implemented would finally transfer the operation and maintenance of distributory and field canals to farmer organizations in all of the country's major irrigation schemes. It also moved the policy-formulation process from the general statements contained in the 1989 cabinet paper to a broad action plan for putting the policy into effect. This action plan, as presented in Policy Paper No. 10,⁵ can be summarized as follows:

- The government should adopt the INMAS model of creating and supporting farmer organizations for the purpose of irrigation operation and management. The result would be that all irrigation schemes would have a system-level project committee, chaired by the project manager, with representatives from government agencies and farmer organizations. This committee would make all of the decisions regarding main canal operation and maintenance. Farmer organizations would have complete responsibility for the operation and maintenance of distributory and field canals, based on a legally enforceable agreement between each farmer organization and the MLIMD.
- The IMD, which has the most experience and expertise in creating effective farmer organizations for irrigation management, should be merged with the Irrigation Department, which has overall responsibility for the operation and maintenance of all major irrigation schemes and whose staff consists mostly of irrigation engineers and their technical assistants.
- The distinction between "minor" schemes (smaller than 80 hectares) and "major" schemes (larger than 80 hectares) should be replaced by the designation "self-managed" (smaller than 400 hectares) and "jointly managed" (larger than 400 hectares). Self-managed schemes would have no direct government involvement other than the

provision of technical services as requested by farmer organizations. In jointly managed schemes, the main canals would be managed by the project committee and the distributor and field canals by farmer organizations as described above.

- With the devolution of government responsibilities from the national to the provincial level, each province should set up an Irrigation Department to provide technical services to those irrigation schemes that fall entirely within its boundaries.
- All irrigation rehabilitation projects should be designed with local farmer involvement to assure that the rehabilitation meets their needs and that they will be committed to the ongoing maintenance of the rehabilitated schemes.
- Legislation dealing with farmer organizations should be revised to provide for the rights and responsibilities of these organizations in the operation and maintenance of irrigation systems.

A third IMPSA output was the learning and consensus building that occurred as a result of the workshops, seminars, and IMPAC working group deliberations. The wide range and depth of subjects discussed resulted in a significantly broader understanding not only of irrigation management issues, but also of the role that irrigated agriculture can and should play in the country's long-term growth and development. Many senior government officials now refer to IMPSA as the model for building consensus, understanding, and support for multifaceted, complex, and controversial policy changes.

Finally, the IMPSA exercise helped identify the need for participatory approaches to soil and water management, which led to a new USAID project, Shared Control of Resources (SCORE). Using the participatory management concepts that emanated from the IMPSA exercise, this project will organize farmers for the purpose of conserving and increasing the agricultural productivity of Sri Lanka's soil and water resources.

Impact on Individual Departments and Agencies

Without question, the IMPSA process has affected the irrigation management practices of some departments and agencies. Perhaps the greatest impact has been on the Irrigation Department. As the organization with overall responsibility for assuring the proper functioning of the major irrigation schemes, this department has an obvious interest in finding ways to increase the role of farmer organizations in the operation and maintenance of these systems. There is general agreement that, as a result of their participation in the IMPSA workshops and seminars, the Irrigation Department staff has a much better understanding of how to use farmer organizations for irrigation O&M. These organizations are now seen as partners in O&M responsibilities, rather than as extensions of the Irrigation Department carrying out its instructions. This result is widely appreciated by the Irrigation Department, from the director down to the irrigation engineers in the field.

By contrast, IMPSA has had very little impact on the IMD, whose director and staff correctly perceive IMPSA as an attempt by the government to replicate at the national level participatory management approaches that IMD developed under the INMAS program. Since the start of the IMPSA exercise, two major IMD rehabilitation projects (MIRP and ISMP) with important farmer organization components have come to an end; a third project, the World Bank-financed National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (NIRP), which also has an important farmer organization component, has been assigned to the Irrigation Department for implementation. Thus, IMD is continuing to work with farmer organizations along the lines recommended by IMPSA, but with steadily declining resources. An important measure of IMPSA success will be at what point the IMD becomes fully integrated into the Irrigation Department.

One organization on which IMPSA has had an unexpected impact is the MASL. Although MASL

representatives participated in the IMPSA exercise, there seemed to be general agreement that IMPSA recommendations would rarely apply to this highly integrated and autonomous organization, at least not in the short to medium term. However, the IMPSA Secretariat's former head has been named managing director of the Mahaweli Economic Agency (MEA), which has overall responsibility within the MASL for the creation and institutional support of farmer organizations. With the official approval of the Minister of Lands, Irrigation, and Mahaweli Development, the MEA has now adopted many of the recommendations contained in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10.⁶ The MASL could thus become the lead agency in the eventual nationwide adoption of the IMPSA recommendations.

Despite its other successes, IMPSA's impact upon the Agrarian Services Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, which is responsible for all of the minor irrigation schemes as well as for the registration of all farmer organizations, is harder to discern. Although MOA representatives attended all of the workshops, seminars, and IMPAC meetings, they frequently disagreed with IMPSA conclusions and recommendations. In general, they felt that their views and concerns were neither adequately considered in IMPSA deliberations nor reflected in IMPSA's working and policy papers. In essence, the MOA never felt itself to be an integral part of the IMPSA process. Consequently, IMPSA has had virtually no impact on irrigation-management practices in Sri Lanka's minor irrigation schemes, which cover about 35 percent of the country's irrigated area.

Impact on Overall Irrigation-Management Policy

Despite its accomplishments, the policy formulation process begun by IMPSA has yet to achieve its original objective: that of bringing about the changes

necessary to implement the government's participatory management policy at the national level. More specifically, the recommendations contained in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10 have not been accepted officially by the government. If these recommendations are not carried out, the major irrigation schemes, especially the distributory and field canals, will continue to be inadequately maintained and will gradually deteriorate to their pre-rehabilitated conditions.

A government action that would have greatly facilitated the implementation of IMPSA's recommendations would have been the issuance of a cabinet paper making those recommendations official government policy. Such a paper would have given the departments and agencies concerned with irrigation management a cabinet-level go-ahead. As it stands, however, these departments and agencies can still carry out many of the recommendations, but they do so at their own pace and, in many cases, with no great sense of urgency. Past experience indicates that without a high-level policy directive, meaningful change will be sporadic and probably unsustainable.

In the absence of this cabinet paper, an appropriate next step would be for the Irrigation Department to take the same actions now being taken by the Mahaweli Economic Agency. This would involve integrating the IMD into the Irrigation Department, then creating an Institutional Development Unit in the expanded Irrigation Department. This unit would take the lead in, first, restructuring the organization to provide both technical and irrigation management support, and second, retraining the technical staff to apply the INMAS participatory management model and other key IMPSA recommendations of the major irrigation schemes. If this action is taken, both MEA and the Irrigation Department will have begun implementing those IMPSA recommendations most critical to the proper operation and maintenance of the country's major irrigation schemes.

Overall Assessment and Lessons Learned

As noted, IMPSA produced important recommendations, generated widespread consensus on participatory management among mid- and low-level government officials, changed the behavior in certain key irrigation management institutions (notably, the Irrigation Department and MASL), and led to a major new USAID project introducing participatory approaches to soil and water management in Sri Lanka. Given the very large investment in Sri Lanka's irrigation systems, and the thousands of farmers affected, there is no doubt that these IMPSA benefits greatly exceed their cost to USAID and the government of Sri Lanka.

Even from the standpoint of policy change, many senior government officials consider IMPSA a notable success. For example, many important issues concerning not only participatory management, but also irrigated agriculture in general, were discussed in depth in large forums, and an unprecedented level of understanding and consensus was reached. These officials believe that IMPSA started a policy-formulation process that will, finally, after years of effort, result in the introduction of effective participatory management in all of Sri Lanka's irrigation schemes. Although full implementation may take several years, these officials maintain that this is only natural for such complex policy changes, which involve so many institutions.

The fact remains, however, that after an entire year none of the key recommendations in Policy Paper No. 10 have been implemented. This, despite the issuance of a cabinet paper three years earlier stating that participatory management of the country's irrigation systems is official government policy, despite the existence of over ten years of experience from which to draw lessons and identify effective participatory management models, and despite widespread agreement among senior government officials serving on IMPAC that the IMPSA recommendations were the right participatory management policy for Sri Lanka at this time.

An analysis of why such agreement did not lead to the desired cabinet-level policy directive provides several important lessons on how to bring about policy change when the issues are complicated and potentially controversial, and many institutions with differing priorities and concerns are involved.

- **When a desired policy change involves numerous issues and requires the agreement of many institutions, the change should be simple and easy to implement.**

IMPSA's original focus was irrigation management, but during the preparation of the first Policy Paper, entitled *Irrigated Agriculture and Irrigation Management in Sri Lanka: Vision for the Next Decade and Beyond*, the policy agenda became much broader. In fact, in Policy Paper No. 1, which was supposed to set the direction for the entire IMPSA exercise, irrigation management is buried among a large number of other issues such as agricultural diversification, agricultural research and development, and macroeconomic trade and investment policies. From the beginning, the focus should have stayed entirely on putting the government's stated participatory management policy fully into effect; that should have remained the sole concern of the IMPSA Secretariat. With declining Irrigation Department and MASL budgets, proper operation and maintenance of the country's irrigation schemes can be achieved only with the effective and sustained participation of farmer organizations.

Instead of working on Policy Papers 5 through 9, the IMPSA Secretariat and consultants should have concentrated on generating high-level support for its participatory management recommendations and done the detail work necessary to bring the broad action plan presented in Policy Paper No. 10 to the point where it could be implemented without additional analysis and interagency deliberations. With this sharp focus, there is a good chance that the \$ 1 million spent over the two-year period would have yielded the desired cabinet-level directive necessary to assure implementation.

- **When dealing with complex and controversial policy issues, it is important that all concerned parties become full participants in the policy-formulation process and concentrate on finding a common ground that will address all of their most strongly felt concerns.**

The most active government participants in the IMPSA process were the Irrigation Department and IMD. IMD had a direct interest because IMPSA offered the prospect of applying the IMD participatory model in all of Sri Lanka's irrigation schemes. The Irrigation Department was interested because, as the organization with primary responsibility for most of the country's major irrigation schemes, it stood to benefit from the increased role of farmer organizations in the operation and maintenance of distributory and field canals. Also, it was clear that one of the eventual outcomes of the IMPSA process would be the integration of the IMD into the Irrigation Department.

Neither the MASL nor the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agrarian Services, however, had this level of interest. Not feeling an integral part of the process, neither felt committed to implementing its recommendations. IMPSA did not concentrate on identifying the most strongly felt concerns of these two organizations or addressing those concerns to their satisfaction. Nor did IMPSA adequately court other possible sources of support. As the ministry mainly responsible for government downsizing, the Ministry of Finance could have been an interested and effective advocate for participatory management if IMPSA had provided it with the right type of budgetary and financial information. The IMPSA Secretariat should also have put more effort into mobilizing political support for its recommendations. Politicians known to be interested in and supportive of measures to improve irrigation system O&M should have been identified, and IMPSA should have given them information that would have helped them advocate for the IMPSA

recommendations. There was no organized political opposition to IMPSA's recommendations, but neither was there any organized support. In retrospect, such support would have proven valuable.

- **Complex policy change involving several different institutions requires strong high-level sponsorship for the duration of the effort.**

When the IMPSA process began in mid-1990, the MLIMD Minister and Secretary were both highly supportive and personally committed to the successful achievement of its main objective: filling the gaps in the government's irrigation management policies and transforming the institutions responsible for implementing those policies. However, by the time the IMPSA recommendations were ready for submission to the government for approval, the minister and secretary had both been replaced. Although their replacements both understand and actively support the government's participatory management policies, neither of them has a personal stake in the success of the IMPSA process. They see IMPSA as a useful, in fact exemplary, exercise in consensus building that will contribute to the eventual successful implementation of the government's policies.

What was lacking at the time the recommendations were submitted for government approval was the feeling at a high policy level that they were the answer to a pressing political and economic problem, i.e., the inefficient operation and inadequate maintenance of the country's irrigation systems and the consequent gradual deterioration of those systems. The original impetus for the government's participatory management policies stemmed from its budgetary problems and the need to disengage from activities that could be performed by nongovernment entities. This issue needs to be brought to the fore in order to recreate the sense of urgency that is a prerequisite for any difficult policy change.

Endnotes

- ¹ The most important of these initiatives, all implemented in the late 1970s and early 1980s, took place in the Kimbul 11 wane, Minipe, and Gal Oya schemes.
- ² This summary of the Cabinet Paper was taken from the original IMPSA Scope of Work, issued by USAID/Sri Lanka in 1989.
- ³ IMPSA Scope of Work, Attachment 1 to PIO/T No. 383-0085-3-79067, page 3.
- ⁴ The above policy agenda was taken from the original IMPSA Scope of Work, pages 4 to 9, dated June 1990.
- ⁵ The final IMPSA recommendations concerning the participatory management of irrigation systems are contained in chapters 2 and 3 of Policy Paper No. 10. These two chapters constitute a broad action plan for the policy, institutional, and legislative changes necessary to put participatory management fully into effect in all of Sri Lanka's irrigation schemes. Policy Papers 2, 3, and 4 and the supporting staff working papers provide justifications for these policy recommendations and additional details on how they should be implemented.
- ⁶ The new MASL policy on participatory management is presented in the MASL document, *Development of Farmers' Organizations and the Introduction of Participatory Management of the Irrigation Systems under the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka*, dated September 1992.

Partial List of Persons Contacted for the Sri Lankan Experience

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Norman Uphoff	Director, CIIFAD, Cornell University

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Appendix D

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

AIC	<i>Association d'Interet Collectif</i> (Water User Association)
AID	Agency for International Development in Washington, D.C.
AME	<i>Arrondissement de la Maintenance des Equipments</i>
ARTI	Agricultural Research and Training Institute in Sri Lanka
ASD	Agrarian Services Department
AVFA	<i>Agence de la Vulgarisation et de la Formation Agricoles</i> (Agency for Agricultural Extension and Training of the Ministry of Agriculture)
<i>Convention-cadre</i>	Cooperative contractual agreement within or between GOT ministries
CRDA	<i>Commissariat Regional au Developpement Agricole</i> (Regional Agricultural Development Commission)
CTDA	Central Tunisia Development Agency (<i>Office de Developpement de la Tunisie Centrale</i>)
<i>Delegué</i>	Local GOT representative within a governorate
DHMPE	<i>Direction d'Hygiene du Milieu et de la Protection de l'Environnement</i> (Office for Sanitation and Protection of the Environment of the Ministry of Public Health)
<i>Genie Rural</i>	Rural Engineering Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture
GIH	<i>Groupement d'Interet Hydraulique</i> (Interministerial Committee on Water Issues at the governorate-level)
GOT	Government of Tunisia
Governorate	Regional GOT administration roughly equivalent to a state in the United States
GSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ID	Irrigation Department
IIMI	International Irrigation Management Institute
IMD	Irrigation Management Division
IMPAC	Irrigation Management Policy Advisory Committee
IMPASA	Irrigation Management Policy Support Activity
INMAS	Integrated Management of Major Agricultural Settlements program

ISMP	Irrigation Systems Management Project, financed by USAID
ISPAN	Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the Near East, a centrally funded A.I.D. project
KfW	<i>Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau</i> (German Development Bank)
MASL	Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka
MEA	Mahaweli Economic Agency
MIRP	Major Irrigation Rehabilitation Project, financed by the World Bank
MLIMD	Ministry of Lands, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MIS	Management Information System
NIRP	National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project financed by The World Bank
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
SARSA	Systems Approach to Regional Income and Sustainable Resource Assistance, a centrally funded A.I.D. cooperative agreement
SONEDE	<i>Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Distribution des Eau</i> (National Water Company)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development Missions in Tunis, Tunisia or Colombo, Sri Lanka
WASH	Water and Sanitation for Health Project, a centrally funded A.I.D. project
WUA	Water User Association (<i>Association d'Interet Collectif</i>)