Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

CIHEAM IAM BARI

AgWA Partnership for agricultural water for Africa

Emerging practices from Agricultural Water Management in Africa and the Near East

Thematic Workshop

Discussion Theme 6

Water Accounting

29 August 2017

Discussion theme 6

Water Accounting

Group discussion guiding questions

1. Does the proposed Water Accounting approach respond to the need for better understanding of the status and trends in water supply and demand for all water users in a given domain?

2. Water accounting requires a large amount of data and measurements: how can accounting be effective in realities where there is little overall understanding of dominant biophysical characteristics and scarce data available for calibration and validation of the assessments?

3. Are there adequate solutions to bridge the quantitative information gap in areas where data is not available or sufficient? Remote sensing proves to be adequate in monitoring consumptive water uses but what solutions exist for non consumptive uses?

4. How can water accounting and auditing approaches be applied to foster evidence- and data-based policy making in agricultural water management? Is water accounting useful for decision making only in water scarce areas?

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OUTCOME OF THE PLENARY DISCUSSION

Conclusion

- It’s very often that there is no common understanding of what water accounting means. An extra effort is needed to understand the different fluxes of this term.
- There should be a distinction between water accounting and water audit that extends to institutional, legislative and political dimensions.
- Program-focus approach tailored to context specific issues and concerns is what FAO is promoting and not step by step unique guidance.
- Cumulative gains from the project could also be seen from its third dimension, water accounting, emphasizing basin approach. Some views see water accounting primarily important/.

Conclusion

- It’s apparent that no sufficient capacity to deal with water accounting at national level, thus more efforts need to be put in this area.
- The perception of little data existence may not be always valid, it is the excess to data what is more to be the issue.
- There should also be a clear distinction between the global water balance existence in countries and the detailed water balance needed for better planning. Water accounting tools are appropriate means to help reach these objectives at basin and sub-basin levels.
- Water Accounting could play a critical role in arbitration solving in cases where different resources are conflicted (Morocco).
- Measurement, database establishment, training are the three main dimension what are involve accurate water accounting.

Conclusion

- In order to foster evidence- and data based policy making, one needs well established water balance. Water accounting is the means to achieve this goal
- Institutional, administrative framework at country level is needed to enable data accessibility to bridge the quantitative information gap thus reach accurate accounting. It is the responsibility of government to do so.
- It is necessary to apply lessons learned at national level to sub-basin to improve accuracy of estimation of water use including remote sensing application that the scale makes a difference with it’s accuracy.
- The rationale for using water accounting is that it provides a solid framework for systematically acquiring quality controlling and analysing water related information and evidence.