Methodology of Learning Within and Across Lake Basins:
The Lake Basin Management Initiative Approach

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Integrated Basin Management for
Lake Environment Project

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Data and Information Collection
3. Synthesis of Lessons Learned
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1. Introduction: Need for Lesson Learning

- Lakes around the world are facing many problems that threaten their sustainable use.

- Lake management experiences around the world show both success and non-success "stories" in addressing problems facing the lakes.

- These "stories" provide useful lessons for managing lakes globally.

- There is therefore need to encourage and support lesson learning among lakes globally.

1. Introduction: Objective of this Paper

- To review the methodology applied in the Lake Basin Management Initiative (LBMI) and draw lessons on how to learn from lake experiences within and across lake basins.

2. Data and Information Collection

- Methods
  - Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers
  - Regional Review Workshops
  - Field Visits
  - Electronic Forum

2. Data and Information Collection: Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers

- Selection of Resource Persons
  - Engaging local people as lead resource persons was essential for local capacity building and continuation of the lesson learning process.
  - Teams of experts were preferable to individual experts because of multi-perspectives views that teams offer.
  - Former and current lake project staff provided useful information including undocumented one. Their involvement in information provision and review of draft outputs was essential.

2. Data and Information Collection: Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers

- Access to Data and Information
  - Access to relevant data and information is a prerequisite to lesson learning.
  - In developed countries, data and information are readily available in various forms.
  - However, in developing countries data and information are not readily accessible.
  - Facilitation of access by individual lake projects or government agencies is essential.
  - Lakes in developing countries should be encouraged and facilitated to share data and information.

2. Data and Information Collection: Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers

- Structure of Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers (1/3)
  - A suggested outline of the report provided a useful guide to authors.
  - The suggested outline should not be too detailed to avoid constraining authors to specifics of the outline.
  - Report development should focus on first identifying major "impact stories" and then developing the structure of the report around the "impact stories".
  - "Impact stories" are successful and non-successful human interventions undertaken to deal with specific issues in the lake basin.

2. Data and Information Collection: Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers

- Structure of Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers (2/3)
  - Examples of "impact stories"
    - Lake Bhopal (India): Awareness raising and public education activities led to the abandonment of centuries old religious practice of idol immersion, a major source of pollution to the lake.
    - Lake Biwa (Japan): A Soap Movement led to the banning of the use of phosphorus containing detergents and enactment of a eutrophication control ordinance.
    - North American Great Lakes (Canada and USA): The International Joint Commission (IJC) established in 1909 is one of the oldest international lake institutions that overseas the management of the Great Lakes.

2. Data and Information Collection: Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers

- Structure of Lake Briefs and Thematic Papers (3/3)
  - Examples of "impact stories" (cont.)
    - Laguna de Bay (Philippines): The introduction of an Environmental User Fee provides incentives for pollution load reduction by polluters and also generates revenue for managing the lake.
    - Lake Naivasha (Kenya): Long-term monitoring and simple modeling of water levels predicted extraction of water for horticulture as the cause of observed water level decline in the lake.

2. Data and Information Collection: Regional Review Workshops

- Multi-stakeholder regional review workshops provided opportunities for stakeholders to review and comments on draft reports.

- Interaction with people on the ground provided useful firsthand insights to those tasked with drawing lessons.

- Though workshops were the most expensive component of the LBMI, they proved to be worth their cost because of the many useful inputs they provided.

2. Data and Information Collection: Field Visits

- Field visits to project sites, facilities and other establishments in lake basins are real eye openers to the issues on the ground.

- Lesson learning is not a purely academic exercise to be undertaken in a hotel conference room. Trying to understand issues about a lake or lake basin that one has never seen is different from understanding issues about a lake or lake basin that one has seen.

- There is probably no better method to learn about "lake stories" than to go out in the field and listen to or see the stories by yourself.

2. Data and Information Collection: Electronic Forum

- It today's digital age, the e-forum is a useful tool for interaction.

- In particular, it facilitates contribution by a wider audience who would otherwise have no opportunity to participate.

- A challenge of the e-forum was how to get more people interested in the online discussion.

- The e-forum was a useful complementary tool to traditional learning methods. However, the e-forum would probably not substitute these traditional methods such as such as opinion exchange workshops.

3. Synthesis

- Methods
  - Expert Group Meetings
  - Analytical Framework

3. Synthesis: Expert Group Meetings

- Synthesis of the various LBMI resource materials (including 28 lake briefs and 17 thematic papers) required focused group of experts.

- Global experience on lake management and diverse backgrounds (e.g. economics, engineering, environmental management, and natural and social science) were key assets of the experts.

- Manual review of the many volumes of documents involved was a daunting task.

- A data and information management system developed by the LBMI for was a useful tool for handling large volumes of data and information.

3. Synthesis: Analytical Framework (1/2)

- Lessons had to be drawn from "lake stories" in a format that best informed management of individual lakes and also other lakes globally.

- For this purpose a structured framework that enables learning lessons around common themes was essential.

- The Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM) framework provided a useful tool for drawing lessons around the six major elements of lake management, namely:
  - Institutions, Policies, Participation, Technologies, Information, and Finance

- The ILMB is essentially a planning procedure that helps lake basin managers and stakeholders to make sustainable use of lake basin resources.

- Continuous development and elaboration of the ILBM framework is required, particularly regarding the specifics of each of the six components to make it more user friendly for lesson learning. The current framework is too broad in scope and all encompasing.

- For example, the framework should provide more guidance on simple questions like "where does one begin in a situation where all the six components of ILBM are lacking?"

4. Lessons Learned (1/2)

- Engagement of local people as lead resource persons is essential.

- Involvement of past and current lake basin project staff in the most effective way is essential.

- Access to relevant data and information is inevitable for lesson learning.

- Identification of major "impact stories" is an essential first step in the preparation of reports for drawing lessons.

- Multi-stakeholder opinion exchange meetings are a vital component of the lesson learning process.

4. Lessons Learned (2/2)

- Field visits are an inevitable component of lesson learning.

- The electronic forum is a useful learning tool that complements traditional learning methods.

- Focused Expert Group Meetings were essential for the synthesis of lessons learned.

- Data and information management systems are vital tools for lesson learning.

- The ILBM framework is an essential tool for learning within and across lake basins.

5. Conclusion

- Lesson learning is a process, not a one-time event.

- Individual and institutional networks established through the lesson learning process are important for keeping the process going.

- Lesson learning needs to be supported globally.