



RESOURCE

Paradise lost? The difficulties in defining and monitoring Integrated Water Resources Management indicators

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Description / Abstract

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) has been recognized since the early 1990s as a concept offering an international frame of reference for water resources management. Several attempts to standardise this concept have emerged, notably since the creation of the Global Water Partnership, which has progressively established itself as the main institution in charge of the promotion, development, and monitoring of IWRM policies on the international level. Several crucial observers have nevertheless highlighted the vagueness of this concept and the difficulties regarding its operational implementation. That is why IWRM is often considered, in the field of fresh water, as a 'nirvana' concept, defining ambitious objectives, in an ideal world, but which cannot be met in the real world. Despite these criticisms, numerous policies are being developed today on the basis of this IWRM concept, but they are stumbling over the difficulty of measuring the progress towards IWRM achieved by governments or by basins. This article proposes an overview of the existing initiatives to develop IWRM indicators, in order to understand the difficulties experienced by such initiatives.

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