



Benefit sharing, water and cooperation: the Jordanian case

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ater scarcity has become acute in much of the Middle East, yet economically feasible water projects remain undeveloped due to the need for the involvement of multiple jurisdictions and for cooperation in a tense geography. A focus on sharing the benefits derived from the use of water rather than the allocation of water itself provides far greater scope for identifying mutually beneficial cooperative actions, as Jordan's case illustrates

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Water is indispensable for human and environmental health, as well as economic development. Almost every sector of human activity depends on water resources, from agriculture to industrial production and power generation. This makes trans-boundary management not only highly political but also categorizes it as an affair of national security. However, water flows do not respect geo-political delineations, and the involvement of multiple states makes the issue highly political, especially if power relations are not equal.

Trans-boundary water resources are often a cause of conflict among riparian entities. Increasing demand for water resources and deterioration of existing sources underscore the need to resolve conflicts over the allocation of consumption and pollution rights among conflicting uses and users. Because economic growth of the entities that share a water resource depends on the sustainability of the resource, water has great potential as a basis for cooperation among political entities. However, enforcement of cooperation, particularly in international settings, is limited. Thus, parties sharing a water resource will form and remain in a cooperating coalition only

when economic incentives for each can be identified.

Water scarcity has become acute in many regions because of economic and population growth and resource degradation. Most economically feasible but yet undeveloped water projects involve multiple jurisdictions, so cooperation is required. A focus on sharing the benefits derived from the use of water rather than the allocation of water itself provides far greater scope for identifying mutually beneficial cooperative actions.

The second best alternative is an international binding legal instrument that sets the duties and responsibilities of riparian countries and establishes guiding principles for coordinating, managing and allocating shared water resources.

WATER IN JORDAN

Water supply and sanitation in Jordan is characterized by severe water scarcity, exacerbated by population pressure due to forced immigration as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Six-Day War in 1967, the Gulf War of 1990, the Iraq War of 2003 and the Syrian civil war since 2011. Jordan is considered one of the four most water-scarce countries in the world. High population growth, the depletion of groundwater reserves and the impacts of climate change are likely