

Integrated Watershed Management: Managing Water, Soil and Energy Resources for the Future

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Over the last decade, integrated watershed management has become an important concept in international development co-operation. It is a tool for managing the natural resources in a watershed sustainably, to the benefit for the people living in the area. Today, it is implemented in many countries as a key measure for sustainable development, i.e. to reduce poverty and enhance food security.

The integrated watershed management concept incorporates various disciplines, including natural resources management and geography, water resources management and environmental economics, as well as socio-economics and business administration. The efficient and sustainable utilisation of natural resources as a basis for improving livelihoods is only possible as a bottom-up approach, thus, it is a typical focus as well as a concept of classical development co-operation.

The development of the concept through research, as well as its implementation, requires close cooperation among the stakeholders: researchers, planners, teachers, development workers, local governments and beneficiaries.

The paper highlights problems of soil, water and energy resources management and appropriate solutions in Ethiopia, with a special focus on watersheds in the Southern Rift Valley. It further stresses the needs for holistic thinking and education. It draws from experiences gained during joint research in the region and presents a vision for future networking in research and education.

