National platform formation in the Nile Basin: A window of opportunity

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Session: Basin story

Source: Seifu Ayele, Alemanyu Belay and Tilahun Amede

NILE BDC ACTOR LANDSCAPE BY END 2010 GIVING A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED IN LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE BLUE NILE BASIN IN ETHIOPIA, ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO THEIR KEY COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL ROLE IN THE PLATFORM.
Summary

In April 2011, the NBDC established a national platform on land and water management in Ethiopia along with key national players to facilitate innovation and link research with action. We brought on board more than 80 people from at least 50 organizations/institutes, representing politics, government, research, NGO/CBOs, private sectors, donors, etc. The establishment of a national platform was widely supported, not the least by the Ministry of Agriculture. In recent years governance in Ethiopia, for decades characterized by top down planning and implementation, has been embracing reform and decentralization. This provides a ‘window of opportunity’ for a national platform, shared by a wide diversity of players and sectors. As sectoral integration and evidence based planning are still in its infancy, the national platform can become a mechanism to enhance communication between actors and across sectors for improved land and water management in the Nile basin or even beyond. To avoid the situation where the national platform becomes the latest ‘talk shop’, the platform formation is based on a careful process which includes actor-landscaping to identify key actors, identification of key issues and driving factors of stakeholder interaction, as well as preliminary analysis of the success and failures in establishing and sustaining task forces, alliances and platforms initiated at different times. At the same time, processes and outcomes of the platform will be documented. Lessons learned will be relevant to any basin where a diversity of stakeholders traditionally has been excluded from planning and decision making.

Key Message

The widespread support for a national platform on land and water management in Ethiopia provides a ‘window of opportunity’. But at the same time we need to ensure that it has an actual impact on the innovation capacity in the system, while avoiding it becoming like the latest ‘talk-shop’.