India - Gujarat : Integrated management of the Sabarmati river basin 1995 - 2001

- IOWater - Our projects : news and update -

Date de mise en ligne : 2008

OIEau

Since the beginning of the 1990s, France and the Indian Union have been involved in a multiannual programme for institutional co-operation in the water sector, dealing with, in a first phase, the training of high-level federal and state civil servants and which led to **the organisation in Delhi, in December 1994, of a French-Indian seminar on Integrated Water Resource Management,** which was hailed as a great success.

In fact, in many Indian regions, it has become more and more difficult to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to meet all needs and to efficiently control pollution and, therefore, there is a risk that in the near future, access to water will be a significant factor limiting economic and social development.

The main problems encountered are not technological but mainly institutional and financial.

From the beginning of 1995, the Indian partners, together with the French Embassy and experts from the International Office for Water and the Rhone-Mediterranean-Corsica Water Agency, have :

- **set up a French-Indian Steering Committee**, gathering all the Indian central ministries concerned by water management,

- **selected a "pilot basin"** to test a new process for integrated water resource management, aiming then to use the findings in other Indian basins :

in a first phase, the Indian partners chose six priority basins. It involved the SABARMATI, TAPI, UPPER YAMUNA, GODAVARI, SONE, SUBARNAREKHA rivers,

in a second phase, the SABARMATI River basin was selected by the local and federal Indian Authorities in 1995, for a first pilot experiment in the GUJARAT State.

The security of water supply to the Gujarat towns was requiring significant investments.

Ahmedabad, the main town in the State, and **four average-sized towns, Kheda, Gandhinagar**, (the capital of Gujarat State), **Himatnagar and Mehsana** have the task of organising settlements for a section of the population who is going to leave rural areas over the next few years. They will fulfil this role provided that they can control the development of urban utilities and, above all, water supply to industry and the population.

The drinking water supply project which has started in Ahmedabad amounts to 140 million US$ alone (1996 price), of which 30 million $ were mobilised by the issuing of municipal bonds in 1998.

The Gujarati Authorities have prepared the launching of the pilot project, with :

- **the appointment of a co-ordinator** within the GUJARAT water administration, who is also in charge of the World Bank’s "Hydrology Project",
- **the setting-up of an inter-administrative co-ordination Committee**, gathering all the water-related sectoral utilities in GUJARAT and associating the town of AHMEDABAD,
- **the drafting of a "position paper**", presenting an assessment of the situation in the basin and its prospects in the short and medium terms,
- **the drawing-up of the "memorandum of understanding"** that the Government of GUJARAT signed on 9 February 1998 with the International Office for Water, to clarify the areas where they wish for the co-operation of

French experts.

To meet this request of the Indian Authorities, with all the required competence, a project group was set up, gathering BCEOM, BRL Engineering, SEURECA and IOWater.

The French Ministry of Economy (FASEP) has supported this project with a grant of 610,000 € for the carrying out of preliminary studies amounting to 762,000 €.

The pilot French-Indian co-operation project : "Integrated Management of the Sabarmati River Basin" was implemented from November 1999 to October 2001 with the following main goals :

1. **Organisation of an information system for the Sabarmati river basin**, based on existing databases (all water data : data on resources and uses, administrative and socio-economic data, etc.)
This obviously implies a close collaboration between the different existing projects ("Hydrology Project/ HIS, Remote Sensing Centre and GIS…)

2. **Preparation of a long-term development scheme for the Sabarmati river basin** including an assessment of the situation and problems and the definition of regional objectives, taking into account the State's socio-economic development plan. This plan is based on the Integrated Sabarmati River Basin Plan (provisional version, 1996, Group for Water Resources Planning, Gujarat State, NWR&WSD).

3. **Definition of a priority action programme, based on the interaction and choices of the new "Sabarmati River Basin Committee"**. Owing to semi-arid conditions and water shortage, measures should be taken to manage water demands.

In this framework, the technical assistance provided by IOWater consisted in :

* the development of an information system (structuring of the river basin information system, organisation of data collection, identification of the existing data sources and databases, modalities for data exchange, assessment of the situation, identification of the main problems and existing projects).

* the organisation and validation of a River Basin Committee, the definition of its tasks and participants (Government, Boards, local authorities, representatives of users) and the organisation of the committee meetings.

* the preparation of a Masterplan for the river basin : study of the various scenarios for the long-term development plan and detailed analysis of the Priority Action Plan.

The project activities were validated by the "Sabarmati River Basin Committee", gathering the various administrations involved in water management.

The experience acquired in the Sabarmati River pilot basin was a valuable step to speed up the process elsewhere in India at a time when the Indian government and the World Bank have formulated an action plan which aims to reorganise the water sector in 24 river basins, covering 436 million hectares.