

Re-examination of Development Study

Part 2: Hard and Soft Type - Search for useful information and flexible use of the scheme

Today, sustainable management of water resources and the alleviation of unstable agricultural production due to the recent decrease in rainfall are important tasks for Morocco. As its main national strategy, the government of Morocco aims to secure water resources by dam construction and expansion of irrigation farming. By 1997, 94 dams and reservoirs were constructed, and agricultural production in irrigated lands has also been expanding. The government plans to expand such projects in the future. Based on such a national strategy, the purpose of the development survey in which AAI took part in 2000 was to prioritize dam development projects and conduct feasibility studies, with the ultimate aim of promoting irrigation by middle-scale dam construction for water resources development. More irrigation projects in 'candidate areas' for development are expected to contribute to more stable agricultural production.

Through this survey it was learned that among the newly targeted project areas, there are quite a few places with already existing irrigation facilities. However, some of them need repair work done on the intake weir and the lower end delivery units of the irrigation system which are timeworn or have been damaged by floods. In general those existing facilities are on a small scale, and the cost of repair work will not be so large. Moreover, since those facilities have a relatively high level of water management capacity due to their usage over many years, many of them can be utilized to increase the efficiency of the new projects. Local people are also hoping to receive technical and financial support to renew or repair such facilities. Therefore, it seems quite meaningful to make use of such information on the existing irrigation facilities for the future surveys and projects, in order to achieve 'visible' development cooperation based on local needs and demands.

Broadly categorized, this survey was of the 'hard' nature (material building/support) rather than 'soft' type (system/mechanism building). The characteristic of the 'hard' type project is that it has a clear objective and output is visible and easy to understand. However, it lacks flexibility and therefore sometimes it cannot adjust to new findings, ideas and options that come to light during the project survey. On the other hand, 'soft' type projects are more flexible than 'hard' type ones, accommodating new factors as they go along. Today, while there is a shift in the trend of development projects from 'hard'-oriented to 'soft', there are some criticisms about the fact that the development survey scheme is still the same, geared for the 'hard' type. From now on, therefore, development surveys should not remain in the conventional framework but new, more flexible survey activities should be introduced to fit the objectives and local conditions stressed in 'soft' projects.

For this particular survey in Morocco, the survey team consisted of experts in various fields, and during a relatively long survey period the team obtained important information through interviews with local organizations, questionnaires and discussions with local communities. Such information should be utilized to solve the problems that the local people are facing directly, and such activity in turn will bring about better development projects. Sometimes survey teams are sent to create or 'dig out' new project potentials. In such cases, however, the survey period is generally short and it is difficult to get truly down-to-earth information. There is a need for a new system to make full use of the useful information obtained during development surveys, to link to future project planning.



Rain-fed farming area (hill region) and irrigation farming area (along the river)



Intake weir in use for several decades



On-farm canal needing repair work