

Polycentrism and pitfalls: the formation of water users forums in the Kikuletwa catchment, Tanzania

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Abstract

Catchment forums have to address the reality that river catchments typically cover several administrative districts and have overlapping arrangements of state-led and locally created institutions. Institutional nesting has been proposed to integrate local arrangements. However, the creation of a polycentric or nested governance system raises questions of coordination. This paper describes and analyzes the process of creating a catchment forum in the Kikuletwa catchment in Tanzania. Resolving the problem of administrative boundaries and institutional fit while integrating customary arrangements with the state-led governance structure requires careful analysis of local structures.

Keywords: catchment forum, polycentric governance, water users association, water conflict, participation, river committees