

Empirical Study on Integrated Management of the Murray-Darling River Basin in Australia

Shushu Guo

Development Research Center of the Ministry of Water Resources of P.R.China

Abstract

Basin integrated management is an effective measure to solve complex water problems and promote sustainable development of basin society and economy. The Murray-Darling River basin is a good example of integrated river basin management. The Murray-Darling River basin is the largest basin in Australia with the highest degree of water resources exploitation and utilization. It once faced serious water resources crisis, and water use conflicts often occurred among the states within the basin, which affected the sustainable development of the river basin. After more than a century of exploration, the river basin continuously improved its management system, and established the integrated development mode, which realized the collaborative governance of the government, the market and the public, achieving remarkable results.

This could be a reference for the river basin management in China. At present, China is implementing the water resources management system that combines river basin management with administrative regional management. However, there are some problems, such as the river basin management system has not been sorted out, the coordination mechanism has not been established, the level of public participation is low, and the water rights trading system is not sound, affecting the effectiveness of basin management. Now water resources development in China has entered a new stage, and puts forward new requirements for river basin management. This paper reviewed the development of integrated management in the Murray-Darling River Basin, and summarized the useful experiences in innovating governance concepts, improving institutions and mechanisms, encouraging public participation, and giving play to the role of the market, etc..

In addition, the paper puts forward some suggestions, including further improving the river basin management system, strengthening the consultation and cooperation among stakeholders, encouraging the public participation, establishing and improving market mechanisms, to solve complex water problems and promote integrated river basin management in China.

Keywords

River basin, integrated management, government, market, the Murray-Darling River