Integrated Water Resources Assessment and Management (IWRAM) project was developed to combat pressures on natural water resources in Northern Thailand. "The project developed a Decision Support System (DSS) for the exploration of biophysical and socio-economic impacts of water resource use options. The IWRAM-DSS was comprised of a 'Biophysical Toolbox' that can be implemented alone and an 'Integrated Toolbox' that links socio-economic models with the Biophysical Toolbox to explore economic trade-offs and impacts of various scenarios. The Biophysical Toolbox is comprised of three modules—the CATCHCROP crop model, a hydrologic module based upon the IHACRES rainfall-runoff model, and a Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) approach modified to suit conditions in Northern Thailand". Ultimately, a community-specific model needs to be developed that has been created by the participation of locals in the affected area. This will be more targeted than a mirrored model developed for other areas. It is however vital that any method developed is an integrated water resource management model.

This investigation found that water resource availability in Northeastern Thailand was determined by the seasons. During the rainy season, water was in plentiful supply. However, during the dry season, there was insufficient water. This is due to inefficient storage of available water during the former period. It is vital that the government invests capital to improve the capacity of local Isan communities to store water for use in times of need. It is equally important for the communities to come together and form a network for the dissemination of acceptable water usage and treatment practices. This will help to raise awareness of the steps local people can make to ensuring water becomes a year-round resource for everyone.

5. SUGGESTIONS

As a result of this investigation, the researchers wish to make some suggestions for future investigation. Future research should consider the management of water resources in similar communities across wider Northeastern Thailand. There should also be an investigation into the impact of spiritual beliefs on the treatment of water in Isan. Results may point towards a potential benefit of raising spiritual awareness in order to protect local water supplies. Finally, it is crucial to involve local communities in the management of water resources. Further research should therefore consider community knowledge levels and willingness to