



CASE STUDY

Mali: Capitalizing on the process of elaboration of the Action Plan for IWRM



Summary

Encouraged by regional developments, Mali initiated the process to implement IWRM in three stages: 1) a project team and a Steering Committee were set up to define the management and steering framework of the project, 2) a situation analysis was developed and discussed with broad stakeholder groups 3) a provisional Action Plan was prepared. This case study illustrates the key moments and events of the process of elaboration of IWRM.

Background

At the West Africa Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management in Ouagadougou 1998, the Ministers and Heads of delegations in charge of water resources urge their governments to “implement in their respective countries, an Integrated Water Resources Management process, based on a National Action Plan”.

The need for an Integrated Water Resources Management in Mali was felt following the diagnosis study on the water sector. This study was conducted in October 2001 through a funding from the World Bank then validated by a national workshop held from January 10 to 11, 2002. The conclusions of the study which dealt, inter alia, with IWRM were adopted by the government of Mali. It is worth underlining the important and catalytic role played by the West African Water Partnership (GW-WA) in the launching phase of the process in Mali. In fact, on December 19, 2003, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between GWP and the Minister in charge of water. This Memorandum devolved responsibilities upon the National Director of Hydraulics and the President of the National Water Partnership as focal points for the project implementation.

Between April and June 2004, a study on the definition of the process of elaboration of a Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management carried out by two consultants (a regional and a national) through a CIDA funding allowed to lay down foundations for a road map for Mali in the field of IWRM. The conduct of this study and its validation by various stakeholders at a launching workshop were the more decisive moments in the concretization of the process of elaboration of the Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management (AP-IWRM) in Mali.

The elaboration of the National Action Plan for IWRM started in the year 2004 and came to an end in December 2007. This process was financed by CIDA through the Canadian Initiative for Africa Development and Water Management Program, the World Bank through the National Rural Infrastructures Programme and the Netherland through the Upper Niger IWRM Project.

Actions taken

A project team and a Steering Committee were set up to define, in each participatory approach, the management and steering framework of the project. Political commitment of the country guaranteed the success of the process and this commitment led to the elaboration and adoption of a water policy code document by the Government in February 2006.

A situation analysis was developed and discussed with broad stakeholder groups, which allowed for producing the first part of the Action Plan Document relating to “the status of water resources and the relevant management framework required”. Based on problems identified during the situation analysis, a multi-actors planning workshop was organized during which water resources management strategies were chosen.

Following the strategic planning workshop, the project team, with the assistance of external experts, prepared the provisional Action Plan submitted to the criticisms and amendments of actors in a validation workshop.

Following the strategic planning workshop, with the assistance of resources persons, the project team elaborated the provisional Action Plan submitted to the criticisms and amendments of stakeholders during a validation workshop from May 22 to 24, 2007. The project plan was elaborated following a format taking account of issues of creation of an enabling environment, institutional roles, and management instruments.

It is worth mentioning that in 2007, GWP set up a reference group composed of international experts whose mission is to give advice on the process and content of Action Plans for Integrated Water Resources (AP-IWRM) being elaborated. Advice given and relevant remarks made by this reference group on the occasion of the validation workshop, were a considerable contribution to the finalization of Mali's Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management. The formulation of the AP-IWRM actions took account of the already existing policies and strategies and the results of thematic studies. Projects and programmes in process of implementation were also taken into account.

Outcomes

The Action Plan Document was adopted by the Government in April 2008. A round table for the financing of the Action Plan is planned for 19th of February 2009 in Bamako. Achievements/strengths of the process:

- An institutional anchoring propitious to capitalizing on experiences: The setting up of a multidisciplinary team essentially based on national experts, who are also civil servants, was a factor for building their capacities. Furthermore, this institutional anchoring of the project was propitious to capitalizing on experiences within the state's administration.
- A large mobilization and participation of stakeholders in the process: The elaboration of Mali's Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management (AP-IWRM) was achieved according to a participatory approach which was complied with at all levels of the process. It was conducted in liaison with various stakeholders. Organizing workshops on the IWRM concept was a major factor for mobilizing stakeholders.
- The process favors a better knowledge of the water sec: Through thematic studies and regional consultations, the process of elaboration of the Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources

Management (AP-IWRM) favoured a better knowledge of the current situation of water resources management in Mali.

- The process of elaboration of the AP-IWRM favours a greater awareness-raising with regard to the water issue: The IWRM concept was largely popularized among the local administrative and technical officials as well as those from the civil society. Awareness-raising regarding IWRM was also initiated among direct users of water such as farmers, fishermen, livestock-breeders but also among some representatives of youths from schools and universities.
- The process allows for influencing and catalyzing policy decisions relating to water issues: The elaboration and adoption of a water policy document and a water resources monitoring strategy during the process is evidence.
- The process was a factor for strengthening regional and international cooperation: The West African Water Partnership Network contributed to strengthening south-south cooperation. Furthermore, by giving more visibility to the water issue, the process raised several expressions of interest for this sector.
- The Process allows for strengthening the Partnership Framework between stakeholders: The process favored the decentralization of actions for the preparation of sectorial and cross-cutting policies, at least the one shaving a linkage with the water sector.

Lessons Learned

Identifying the key moments and events of the process of elaboration of the AP/IWRM Plan favours the capitalization on good practices. Identification of the weaknesses of the preparation phase of the Plan increases chances for success for the implementation phase.

The conduct of a study for defining the process and the participatory adoption of the road map of the process were decisive in the success of the initiation phase of the process.

Number and diversity of exchange forums such as regional consultations, together with the conduct of thematic studies for better grasping the development problems and priorities of the water sector, allows reflecting the concerns of many actors in the AP/IWRM.

The process of elaboration of the AP-IWRM did not allow for conducting a sensitization on local water management at the grassroots level. This is a weakness since we know that the

