IWRM Action Hub

CASE STUDY

West Africa: Roadmaps of Water Management in West Africa

Summary

Although the West African Sub-region is well advanced in IWRM, some countries still need more support. A strategy was developed to help countries that had formally requested IWRM planning assistance. The lesson learnt is that participatory processes take much longer than non-participatory ones, nonetheless, they are still favourable since they provide a platform for discussion and a place to exchange ideas.

Background

The West African Sub-region is well advanced in IWRM through a process that was initiated in 1998 (West African Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Ouagadougou) although some countries are lagging behind and thus are in need for support.

Building on outcomes of “UNEP-2005 IWRM Target”, key international and regional partners agreed on a project that will bring West African countries to the implementation of better water resources management. The seven West African countries were: Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

The specific focus areas identified under the project included National IWRM Roadmap in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, IWRM Plans for Côte d’Ivoire. While in Liberia and Togo, regional guidelines on development of IWRM Roadmaps and Plans as well as documentation of best practices and case studies identified.

Example: Sierra Leone

After ten years of civil unrest in the country, Sierra Leone is now facing a major challenge in reconstructing the country and the sustainable management of the nation's water resources constitutes a key factor in the efforts to improve the socio-economic condition of the citizens. Sierra Leone plans to undertake water resources development programs which are concerned mainly with facilitating single purpose water uses; water supply (rural, peri-urban, urban, industrial, etc.); hydro power (Dodo /Goma Dam, Bumbuna Dam, etc); irrigation (in-land valley swamps, purpose Rhombe and Rolako swamps, etc); with much less emphasis placed on the institutional issues of controlling and co-ordinating water uses and users with out-dated legislation in the sector. These isolated water resource development programs considered to be supply-oriented have resulted in several problems.

Some of these are manifested in several ways such as:

- Lack of a Central Institutional Framework for IWRM
- Inadequate and poorly maintained infrastructure
- Other technical constraints
- Inadequate enforcement of legislation
- Human resource capacity

In summary, the main constraint in the sector has been recognized by many as a weak policy framework and regulatory structure, which has resulted in fragmentation of responsibilities and attendant operational deficiencies nationwide.

Actions taken

The strategy was aimed to help specifically countries that had formally requested IWRM planning assistance and to use the experiences as a way of demonstrating possible IWRM development in neighboring states.

Example: Sierra Leone

Based on status of the IWRM processes in Sierra Leone, the following activities need to be undertaken:

1. Awareness raising on IWRM

- Development of an advocacy strategy
- Meetings with various stakeholders – politicians, civil society, donors, etc.
- Establishment of a national water partnership to support the IWRM process in the country
- Workshops and seminars for members of the national water partnership
- Public awareness campaigns

2. Creation of a platform for inter-sectoral co-ordination

- Draft platform for coordination;
- Working meetings and round tables;
- Formal platform for network operation (status, regulations, communication procedures

3. Capacity building

- Development of information system (database, modeling); • Identification of the IWRM planning stages;

- Assessment of training requirements;
- Training of trainers in IWRM aspects; • Development of the relevant initiatives system for creation of necessary “climate” for the IWRM;
- Managerial capacity building (equipment, communication means, water metering devices, etc.).
- Training courses for various stakeholders

4. Development of IWRM plan and strategy

- Development of an IWRM policy which would be the basis of a new water legislation Sierra Leone
- Creation of the relevant managerial structure with the well-defined tasks and responsibilities; possibly a national water resources board
- Development of the necessary management tools;
- Identification of groups subjected to the positive and negative impacts as a result of reforms and selection of the most acceptable mechanisms for their adaptation;
- Estimation of the necessary budget for realization of the IWRM plans;
- Approval of the IWRM plan and strategy for the transition period;
- Establishment of national supervisory (coordination) group.

Outcomes

Currently, draft IWRM roadmaps have been finalised, presented, and validated by the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau as documented in the full report.

The IWRM roadmap for Guinea Conakry has been delayed due to political unrest but work to develop an IWRM roadmap has been resumed since mid-November 2010. Liberia has presented its consolidated National IWRM Policy and implementation plan. Ivory Coast is in the final stage in preparing a draft plan for Water Resources Management but has still some way to go before being able to start an IWRM. Togo is currently aiming and developing a draft IWRM plan which is expected to happen with the assistance of national consultants who have been involved in the previous project.

The most important outcome of the project was that it assisted the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone in setting up a stage to develop IWRM roadmap. It further supported the development of IWRM plans in Côte d’Ivoire, Togo and Liberia which had already reached the roadmap stage.

This played a crucial role for the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone to successfully develop and validate their IWRM roadmap.

Example: Sierra Leone

The following results have been achieved so far:

- Increased awareness on importance of environmental approach and considerations in IWRM, and stakeholders empowered and committed to participate in IWRM processes
- Situation analysis on water resources in Sierra Leone
- Elaboration and validation of the IWRM roadmap
- Consultative stakeholder meeting on establishment of a National Country Water partnership conducted
- Capacity building of key water managers and decision makers on IWRM planning.
- Empowered institution to spearhead the implementation of IWRM plans

- Capacity built towards roadmap development for the Sierra Leone

Lessons Learned

Participatory processes take much longer. This must be considered during the roadmap process design. This kind of participatory process provides a place for all other stakeholders to contribute their concerns and ideas about water planning which may otherwise be ignored.

The developed IWRM questionnaires proved to be very instrumental in assessing the National progress on IWRM, identifying elements for specific program support, capacity needs assessment and identification of foreseen actions needed for the project implementation.

The water sector reform was seen as a pre-requisite in the IWRM roadmap elaboration process. It is thus important to have flexibility to take into account the needs and request from the country while drafting the roadmap.

By seeking synergy with ongoing process (the elaboration of the Master Plan for water and sanitation in Guinea Bissau) an opportunity to implement identified actions is very high.

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GWP West Africa

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Preparation of a National Water Resources Policy, International Water Law, National IWRM Plans, Regulatory Bodies and Enforcement Agencies , The Rights of Rivers

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