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RESOURCE

# Reconciling IWRM and water delivery in Ghana: The potential and the challenges

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**Description / Abstract**

The key elements of integrated water resources management include a holistic integrated approach and the main principles of public participation, the role of gender and the notion of recognising the economic value of water. This paper investigates how these notions play out in the context of providing water to the rural communities in the Densu basin in Ghana. This investigation is based on a content analysis of the relevant policy documents and interviews with state agencies and local stakeholders. The paper concludes that there is a conflict between the IWRM goal of integrating all water uses and sectors in the management of water resources and focusing on the prioritisation of water delivery services. However, three of the IWRM principles can be used in implementing water delivery. While Ghana has adopted IWRM, it clearly prioritises water delivery. At basin level, the IWRM planning process does not take water delivery into account and water delivery is conducted independent of the IWRM process. Although the participatory and gender approaches are being implemented relatively successfully, if slowly, the 'water as an economic good' principle is given less priority than the notion of the human right to water as local communities pay only 5% of the capital costs of water delivery services. The impact of the rural water delivery services has been positive in the Densu basin in seven different ways; and if this helps the rural community out of the poverty trap, it may lead to economically viable water facilities in the long-term.

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