



CASE STUDY

Ghana: Integrating water security into the national development planning process

GWP-WA/CWP-Ghana, through Water Climate and Development Programme in Africa (WACDEP), an initiative responding to the Sharm El Sheik Declaration by Heads and Governments of African States, facilitated capacity development on water security and climate resilience for government agencies and Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly planners in the 2014-2017 National Medium Term Development Planning process. This effort contributed to mainstreaming of water security in the planning landscape in Ghana.

Background

Since 1994, Ghana has made strides in its development efforts through integrated social and economic policies and programmes that have been developed under comprehensive planning cycle frameworks to boost growth and sustainable development. These policies and programmes have been targeted at reducing poverty, increasing access to basic needs including water supply and sanitation services, enhancing the quality of life, improving socio-cultural assets, minimizing environmental degradation and promoting good governance. The achievement of these goals has largely hinged on the development and management of water resources that is defined within the context of several water strategies, such as National Water Vision, the West African Water Vision, the African Water Vision, the New Partnership for African Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) prepares Guidelines for Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to develop Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) for a period of 4 years. In the past, water resources management received little attention in the national development planning space, probably due to a 'myth' of abundance of freshwater in the country, but which in reality remains vulnerable and critical to the socio-economic development. Furthermore, MMDAs at the local level focused on water supply services delivery with little/no consideration for water resources management and water security in their development plans for funding. Yet, the National water vision (2007) emphasized that advancing water resources management by all for all provided an avenue for contributing to the country's economic development. The MMDAs provide the setting for projects admission and implementation. As a result, the MTDP should be coherent and mutually reinforcing with national water resources frameworks for the promotion and implementation in their jurisdiction.

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) and Strategy provides the blueprint for Ghana's response to the adverse effects of climate change. It is acknowledged that water is a key medium through which climate change manifests and impacts lives. At the same time,

water offers pathways by which climate change impacts could be minimized and improve human wellbeing. Ghana is a State Party to the Paris Agreement and therefore enjoined to prepare Ghana Nationally Determined Contributions (Gh-NDC). The Gh-NDC, which is under the auspices of Ministry of Environment, Science Technology and Innovation (MESTI), defines mitigation and adaptation measures to greenhouse-gas-emissions in order to combat climate variability and change.

Actions taken

The process of mainstreaming water security started at WACDEP project preparation stage in 2013 through 2014. Firstly, the CWP-Ghana Steering Committee (SC) was expanded to include NDPC, and the Ministries of Sanitation and Water Resources (then MWRWH) and Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). The expanded SC was referred to as WACDEP Technical Working Group (TWG) to oversee WACDEP implementation. This step provided a platform for institutional engagement, building bridges for common understanding, and enabled definition of the entry points for water security mainstreaming into national development planning framework.

Next, the WACDEP TWG undertook a study, “Review of National Policies, Strategies and Programmes in the context of Water Security and Climate Resilience” to provide the project partners insight into strategic frameworks for water security implementation in the water, food, energy and environment sectors.

Following the study, the NDPC, WRC and CWP-Ghana jointly harnessed information in the report, among others to produce the document, «Screening for water security in national development planning». This document sought to enrich engagement with MMDAs, providing pathways to mainstream water security into the MTDP, and to screen interventions for implementation.

The next stage was to engage planning and budgeting officers at Regional and District Coordinating and Planning Units at the regional level across the country on the “Screening for water security in national development planning” document. The then ten (10) regions were grouped into two (2) zones, A and B. Zone A comprised of Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions. Zone B encompassed of Eastern, Volta, Central, Western and Greater Accra Regions. This arrangement with concurrent implementation required two sets of facilitators, necessitating WRC and CWP-Ghana to collaborate to make up for the teams. CWP-Ghana, WRC Basin Officers (Ankobra and White Volta basins) and NDPC jointly carried out a nation-wide technical backstopping campaign 216 MMDAs and 10 Regional Coordinating Councils mainstream water security into the MTDP of the DAs while ensuring their resilience to climate variability and change.

GWP/CWP engagement with NDPC resulted in inclusion of water security as a cross-cutting theme in the Guidelines to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and MMDAs during the 2014-2017 planning cycle. Accordingly, CWP used a blend of planning tools to respond to the water security issues relating to the different water uses and economic sectors. For instance, a water security issue is dealing with industrial and agro practices that are damaging water resources and ecosystems and creating ecological processes that are not easily reversible. An example is the hitherto unregulated activities of small-scale miners, which is largely concentrated in the southwestern river system. Water quality analysis carried out in 2016 revealed that 61% of the main rivers were of poor ambient water quality of which 15% were in critical condition.

This has been largely responsible for the deterioration in the quality of some rivers and water bodies, thereby affecting the provision of clean and safe water for the population and for agriculture production; and loss of habitat for aquatic life, among others. However, the institution of targeted planning regulation and enforcement tools contributed to improve the condition of water bodies. By the end of 2018, the poor ambient quality status of rivers had dropped by 14%, suggesting that 53% of rivers had good ambient water quality. The “fight” against illegal mining in rivers and streams is critical and remains a key measure that has contributed to the gains made.

Outcomes

The initiative resulted in mainstreaming of water security into national development planning processes. As a result, WACDEP laid the foundation for engagement with the relevant stakeholders and enabled mainstreaming of related measures into District MTDP at the local government level. The mainstreaming process achieved the following:

- strengthening capacity of a key NDPC staff dedicated to water security related issues;
- NDPC endowed with the screening tool (Guidelines) to adequately analyse water security issues and mainstream for development planning;
- the “Screening for water security” document, adopted for water security and climate resilient mainstreaming at the lowest appropriate level;
- water secure and climate resilient measures promoted towards protecting water resources and limiting the potentially negative impacts on the resource;
- the process adopted by WACDEP to identify gaps for integrating water security in Ghana’s development planning landscape at the lowest appropriate level while contributing to tools proposed for same, gained high acceptability and support from NDPC and WRC.

The 2014-2017 project period witnessed collaboration between the relevant stakeholders including WRC and NDPC, whose effort contributed significantly to the development of Guidelines for water security mainstreaming into development plans. The Guidelines contain guiding principles, measures and screening tool for identification of risks related to project implementation. Development Planning and Budget Officers at the lowest appropriate level were engaged to take into account water security. Great results have been achieved which, at the same time, need to be sustained.

Lessons Learned

Continuous capacity building and campaigns to provide technical backstopping to highlight the threats to water systems and inform decision making remains important to achieve water security.

The water security cross-cutting theme in the guidelines has undergone two cycles of implementation and the 3rd medium term development planning cycle (2022-2025) begins soon. This presents opportunity to engage the different stakeholders towards strengthening the capacity for mainstreaming water security.

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Organisation

Global Water Partnership West Africa - GWP WAF Country Water Partnership Ghana - CWP Ghana

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Supporting Materials

Partnership action for water security and climate resilience of populations and ecosystems in West Africa

Related IWRM Tools

Policies with Relation to Water Resources
Water Allocation Regimes
Local Authorities

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