



CASE STUDY

Cameroon: Partnerships for Africa's Water Development: Planning for IWRM and Development

Cameroon actively works with a project to implement IWRM at national level. Action has been taken in a four stage process including the preparation of a national IWRM Action Plan. The foundation for IWRM Strategy and Action Plan has been laid and strategic options identified. The key lesson learnt is that it is crucial to present key facts and results in a concise manner for effective participation in the future.

Background

Cameroon's development challenges hinge on the "Cameroon Vision 2035" document which draws inspiration from the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. "Cameroon Vision 2035" served as a basis for the elaboration of the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) in which the government of Cameroon reaffirmed its commitment towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The GESP is a second generation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in which the notion of IWRM is clearly stated. In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and implement the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002, the government of Cameroon, together with five (05) other African countries (Eritrea, Mozambique, Swaziland, Benin and Cape Verde) requested the Global Water Partnership Organisation (GWPO) to submit proposals for better water governance in their respective countries through the Dutch Initiative. The positive response to these proposals led to the creation of phase two of the Partnership for Africa's Water Development (PAWD-II) which seeks to provide financial assistance to six African countries in preparing their National Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plans (PANGIRE). Cameroon committed itself to the elaboration of its National Integrated Water Resources Management Action Plan by its engagement in the Partnership for Africa's Water Development (PAWD-II) programme in 2005. The process of preparing Cameroon's IWRM plan started with the setting up of the Global Water Partnership Cameroon (GWP-Cmr) in June 2005, designed to facilitate the planning process by creating a neutral platform for all water sector stakeholders in Cameroon.

Actions taken

The national IWRM planning process had thirteen steps which can be summarised into four major phases, namely:

1. Mobilising political will;

2. Conducting the Situation Analysis of the water sector;
3. Developing strategic options from the problem analysis;
4. Preparing the national IWRM action plan.

The inventory of the water sector, which is part of the second phase of the IWRM planning process, was divided into four thematic areas.

1. Knowledge and use of water resources;
2. Water and environment;
3. Economic, financial and social framework of the water sector;
4. Legislative, institutional and human resources framework of the water sector.

The activities identified for the continuation of the plan are as follows:

1. Organising regional participation workshops in order to enrich the situation analysis thematic studies of the water sector and a national workshop for its validation;
2. Drawing up the national IWRM action plan;
3. Holding regional participation workshops to enrich the plan and a national workshop to validate it;
4. Adopting the plan by the Government and organising a round table with donors on the national IWRM action plan;
5. Implementing the national IWRM action plan.

During the implementation of the program, much emphasis was given to capitalizing and aligning with existing and ongoing initiatives. GWP-Cmr further ensured that water sector stakeholders were trained on the concept of IWRM so that they could effectively participate in the national IWRM planning process. Special attention was given to the participation of women and youths. Overall, it is estimated that over 311 people from about 126 partner institutions were trained within the context of the PAWD-II programme.

Outcomes

As regards the outcomes of the work done in terms of elaborating a national IWRM plan, three main facts can be mentioned, as follows:

1. Inclusion of a budget line for the elaboration of an IWRM plan in the Public Investment Budget of the Ministry in charge of water for the 2007 – 2009 period, which was followed by the creation of management organs responsible for the IWRM planning process in Cameroon in March 2007 by the Ministry in charge of water.
2. Incorporating the national IWRM planning process as a strategic activity in the Economic, Financial, Social and Cultural Program of Cameroon for the year 2010 presented by the Prime Minister, Head of Government to Parliament in November 2009.
3. Fitting the water sector in the three-year Economic and Financial Programme (EFP) of Cameroon for the 2010 – 2012 period based on the IWRM approach.

Cameroon is lagging behind in its national IWRM work plan with regard to the timeline defined in the IWRM orientation report adopted by all stakeholders in October 2005. This notwithstanding, efforts are being made to quickly build on the results of the second phase of the planning process (situation analysis) and complete the IWRM Action Plan. The institutional setup and the human capacity to finalise the elaboration of a business plan are

available. Thus, it is crucial that the government mobilise the financial resources required to finalise the IWRM Action Plan.

As a result of its capacity building activities and demonstrated technical competence, GWP Cameroon obtained a small grant from UNESCO Cameroon to elaborate the State of the Environment on Fresh Water report for Cameroon. Furthermore, the foundation for the elaboration of an IWRM Strategy and Action Plan has been laid with the strategic options identified. These strategic options still need to be adopted by stakeholders before the IWRM Action plan can be elaborated.

The PAWD-II programme came to an end when the final major phase was still in its infancy due to difficulties which plagued the process like a lack of harmonization on some specifics such as voluntary service within the Project Team, allocation of financial resources by the government, absence of and poor storage of data and information in the country.

Lessons Learned

The preparation of appropriate or summary documents that present the key facts and results in a simplified and concise manner is crucial for effective participation in the future.

The members of the national IWRM Project Team should be completely detached from the administration and assigned to work full-time on the national IWRM planning process. This would ensure the project is completed on time.

Adopting the principle of “voluntarism” in operational functioning constituted a major handicap to the progress of the PAWD program activities. The voluntary approach to work is realistic when a program is being elaborated, and not during implementation.

Flexibility with time must be considered. Ownership of the national IWRM planning process by the government may require a long time especially where there are frequent changes at the helm of the institution supervising the elaboration of the plan.

Four years are not enough to create a functioning CWP and strengthen its base, facilitate the national IWRM planning process and mobilise resources to guarantee the sustainability of the CWP.

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