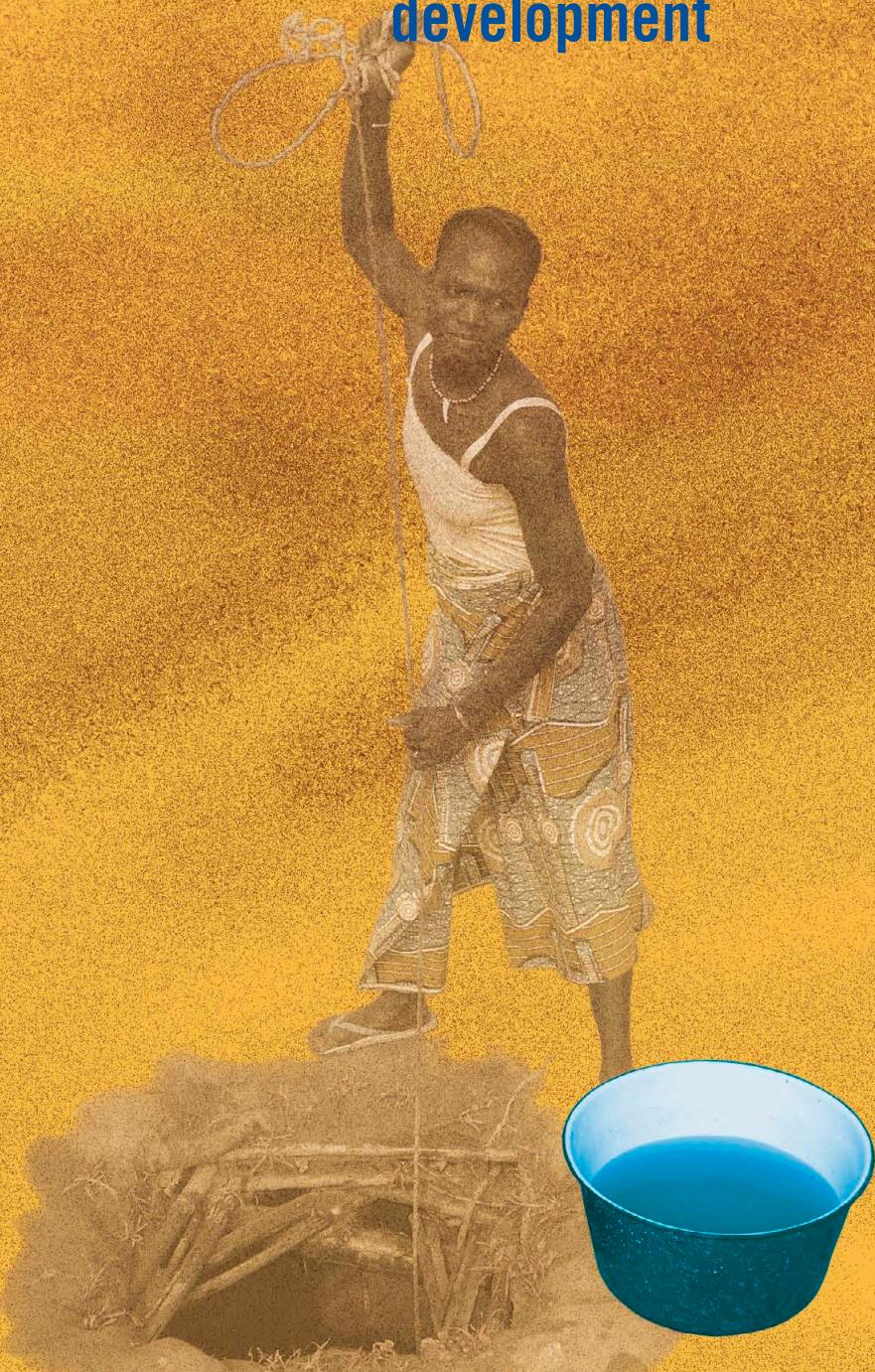
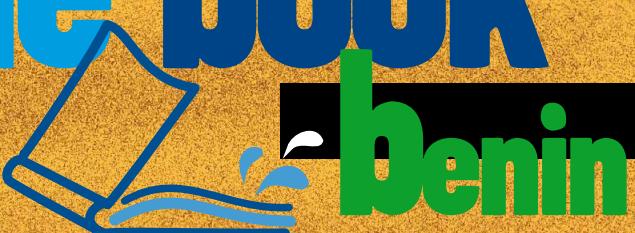


blue book

water, life
and human
development



Situation analysis

The policy framework of the water and sanitation sector

Greater responsibility to communes

A characteristic of the Beninese policy context is the level of responsibility which is given to the communes. Communes are, among other responsibilities, in charge of providing water and sanitation services, both in the rural and urban areas. The level of responsibility given to the communes is very substantial and the regulations put the communes at the centre of the institutional framework, even though in practice they face difficulties in implementing their mandates due to: the poor level of available resources, difficulties in finding competent and motivated staff, conflict of responsibilities with some of the national institutions (in particular with SONEB (the National Water Utility in Benin) for the centres which are within its perimeter). The transfer of responsibility to the communes is on-going in the water and sanitation sector and the Government is committed to achieving this by 2010. The National Association of Communes of Benin plays a relatively small role in the water and sanitation sector.

Public institutions

SONEB, which replaced SBEE in 2003, is responsible for the water supply and for the evacuation and treatment of waste water in the urban areas. SONEB is a public company which thus has limited autonomy towards the Government, as there is no independent regulator. SONEB is thus dependent on the Government for its financial sustainability.

In rural areas – in other words in the villages and towns which are not served by SONEB – the Water Directorate (DG-Eau) continues to play a primary role in the coordination of the sector, in the planning and in implementing projects which have been designed at regional or national level. DG-Eau is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress in the sector. The DG-Eau has decentralized services which are in a position to provide backup support to the communes.

The situation is less clear with respect to sanitation. Hygiene and sanitation in rural areas fall under the responsibility of the Directorate for Hygiene and Basic Sanitation (DHAB), a structure which is part of the Ministry of Health. However, a number of other Directorates, as well as SONEB, play a role in sanitation, especially in urban areas. There is yet no satisfying coordination framework for the sector.

Benin and its inhabitants

Benin is a coastal country located between the equator and the tropic of Cancer. It gets abundant rainfall overall, but with a lot of regional variation between the North and the South of the country. Over the past few years, the overall water cycle has been distorted, with a reduction in the annual mean rainfall and an intensification of periods of drought. It is still too early to say whether this change will be permanent. The hydrographical network is quite dense, and consists of various streams and rivers which are of a seasonal nature. Ground water is abundant but poorly distributed over the country. It is generally estimated that in the bedrocks in the Centre and North of the country the ground water resources are not sufficient to cover the long term water supply needs.

Extrapolating from the latest census (2002), it is estimated that Benin had around 7.8 million inhabitants in 2007. Between 1992 and 2002, the growth rate of the population was 3.25%, and it is expected that the rate will continue to grow, as the population is expected to reach 10.7 million inhabitants in 2015. The coming years will be characterized by accelerated urbanization: it is estimated that by 2015 two out of every three Beninese will be living in urban areas, against just under half in 2009. In addition to the three big historical cities (Cotonou, Porto Novo and Parakou), where urban development is already very rapid, the coming decade will see the rise of new urban centres (Godomey, Sèmè Kpodji), as well as the progressive emergence of a network of secondary towns.

The current strategies and main regulations

Benin has a number of policy and strategy documents which have been recently drawn up. A national strategy for water and rural environment was developed in 2005 and another strategy for the urban sector was launched in 2006. Both strategies go up to 2015. With respect to sanitation, Benin has a strategy for the Promotion of Hygiene and Basic Sanitation (PHAB) as well as a strategic plan for urban sanitation. Besides, water and sanitation are part of the national development guidelines for the country and are thus part of the strategic framework for the reduction of poverty (2007-2009).

Nonetheless, the evolution of the sector has made it necessary to develop other aspects of the institutional and legal frameworks, this includes: a unified National Water Policy document which is in the process of being adopted; a law concerning water management and the decrees for its application (the 1987 Water Act has never really been applied); a strategy for the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), which should soon result in the definition of

a National IWRM Action Plan (PANGIRE in French). All these, are works in progress which should logically be finished by 2010, in this manner contributing to a complete institutional and regulatory framework for the management of water resources and services in Benin.

Civil Society

At local level, users' associations play an important role, but they are mostly involved in the daily management of the facilities (hand pumps, small piped networks) and much less in the representation of users at national level. There are very few networks of users associations which are really active. At national level, civil society is represented by NGOs, the private sector (there is an association of engineering offices of the sector, the ABE-SEA, which was created two years ago) and a consumer association which is not yet really operational. There are a number of fora for sector coordination, which allow civil society to voice its concerns, including at district level (for example in the Collines district).

The private sector

The promotion of private operators is included in the national policies and strategies. The formal private sector is relatively active in the construction of works and more recently in the management of water services in small towns. A characteristic of Benin has been the rapid emergence of private operators who manage the small piped networks in the urban and rural areas. They largely belong to the informal sector and have taken root where the public water service is not available. According to certain estimates, there are over half a thousand of such operators who are not currently included in the official statistics.



¹ Société Béninoise d'Eau et d'Electricité.

² SONEB was established in 2003 after the separation of the two areas covered by the former SBEE (water and energy). In principle it is responsible for the 77 district capitals as well as for the urban agglomerations. SBEE currently intervenes in 69 district capitals.

Who has access to the water and sanitation services?

Benin has made considerable efforts to mobilize public funding (both at national and international levels) in order to put in place numerous water supply projects and to improve the access to sanitation services.

As far as water is concerned, the effort is mainly focussed on rural areas (which are on a net basis significantly under-equipped since the early 1990s) and has more recently moved to urban areas (since the establishment of SONEB). The number of functional facilities in urban areas since the last estimate (2008) of DG-Eau testifies to this: 5,800 boreholes equipped with hand pumps; almost 2,000 stand pipes connected to piped networks; 2,350 modern large diameter wells and 130 micro piped networks (PEA – Postes d'Eau Autonomes in French).

This vigorous effort of providing facilities suffers, however, from strong disparities at local level: some villages are today over-equipped to the detriment of localities where no facilities are present. This situation appears to be the result of a “demand driven” approach, which has strongly reduced planning at the level of the commune. Today, localities which formulate a request and provide the required financial contribution can obtain a water supply facility, even though the commune may not always play its role as a “maître d’ouvrage” (contracting authority) and therefore planner at local level. Localities which have weak capacity overall are therefore also those which are under-equipped.

In urban areas, it is only recently that SONEB has regained the capacity to develop its piped network, because the physical infrastructure of SONEB was old and had suffered from a chronic lack of investment by SBEE. SONEB will, however, have to increase its investment capacity to meet the strong demand in urban areas in general. As far as access to services is concerned, all actors agree that priority needs to be given to the neglected peri-urban areas where the large majority of urban users who do not yet benefit from satisfactory access to public water and sanitation services live.

There is today a gap, especially in rural areas, between the access rate (as measured by large national level household surveys) and the coverage rate, which continues to be estimated exclusively on the basis of the number of people who are theoretically served by a working water supply facility. The latest national level

household surveys (2007), shows that 70.6% of the population has access to a safe water source (82.2% in urban areas and 62.8% in rural areas). In addition, 9% of the households continue to rely on unsafe sources (river, stream or pond) for drinking water. This percentage contrasts with the 48% national level access estimated by DG-Eau in 2007 – a much lower average which hides the strong disparities at local level (between communes) and at national level (between districts). A similar gap exists between the water access rate and the unit consumption at the level of users. In the rainy season, the unit consumption in certain piped networks does not reach over 1.5 litres per capita per day (lcd).

The deficit in access to sanitation in Benin is very worrying. At national level, it is estimated that only one in three households benefits from adequate sanitation. In urban areas, only sixty two households per one thousand dispose of their waste water adequately. In Cotonou, over 90% of the inhabitants continue to dispose of domestic waste water and refuse in the street or in their back yard. During the rainy season, Cotonou – the economic capital of the country – is flooded for over two thirds of its surface area, with severe implications for vulnerable groups of the population. In addition, solid and liquid waste from the Beninese industries is mostly dumped in the sea, in the lagoons and in the nature.



**Evolution of the coverage rate between 1990 and 2007 and estimate of the financial resources required to reach the MDGs
(amounts in US \$)**

	1990			2007			2015 (MDG)			Gap to fill		
	population millions	coverage		population millions	coverage		population millions	coverage		population millions	Investment	
		millions	%		millions	%		millions	%		per year	total
Rural	3,4	1,9	57	4,9	2,3	46	6,7	4,9	73	2,6	16,2	129,3
Urbain	1,8	1,3	73	3,1	1,6	52	4,1	3,1	76	1,5	14,0	111,7
Total	5,2	3,2	62	8,0	3,9	48	10,7	8,0	74	4,1	30,1	240,9
Rural	3,4	0,1	2	4,9	0,8	17	6,7	3,9	58	3,1	5,7	45,8
Urbain	1,8	0,6	32	3,1	1,9	61	4,1	3,3	81	1,4	6,1	48,7
Total	5,2	0,6	12	8,0	2,7	34	10,7	7,2	67	4,4	11,8	94,5

water
sanitation

Sources: Joint Monitoring Program (UNICEF/WHO) for the 1990 data. The JMP data is exclusively based on statistical analysis of household surveys: the method of calculation is very different from the one used by the Government. The estimate of the JMP for 2006 (the last available year) is substantially different from the estimate of the Government of Benin: we have decided to reflect here the figures of the Government for 2007.

The other documents used for this table are: 2008, Annual report of the 2007 Sector Budget; 2006, CS01 WSP/AMCOW; and 2007, Estimates by Ale and Degbevi. In accordance with the definition, MDGs are calculated so that the population without access to water or sanitation in 1990 should be halved before 2015. The population to reach therefore corresponds to the difference between the MDG target for 2015 and the situation observed in 2007.



In rural areas, the access to basic sanitation (traditional or improved latrines) remains very poor, even if it is also very variable from one district to another – with very low access rates in the Northern districts. The persons who were interviewed in the context of the Blue Book preparatory surveys, irrespective of their socio-professional standings and their locality of origin, were unanimous in affirming that no improvement has been made over the past few years in terms of access to (public or family) latrines. In spite of the fact that the PHAB has been put in place, considerable progress still needs to be made in promoting hygienic behaviour.

Financing the sector

In order to achieve the MDGs, it is estimated that Benin will need around 60 million US \$ per year for water and around 24 million US \$ per year for sanitation (for rural and urban areas taken together). Over the period 1993-2004, it is estimated that 132 million US \$ have been invested in the sector – that is an average of 12 million US \$ per year – essentially for rural water supply. The financing available for urban water and for sanitation has increased since 2004 and has contributed to re-establishing a balance in the numbers.

For every three US \$ invested by donors, the Government of Benin spends one US \$ through the national budget, but the bulk of this spending corresponds to the running costs of the administration of the sector and very little is actually spent on physical investments. The national budgetary effort could be much more substantial – for example between 2002 and 2007, only 0.44% of the national budget was spent on rural water. The proportion of money spent on sanitation and hygiene is still negligible – less than 2% of the public expenditure in the health sector.

Sanitation continues to lag behind in terms of volumes of financing. It is estimated that only 10% of public financing of the sector is dedicated to sanitation, against 90% for water supply. The users themselves thus finance the bulk of the investment in sanitation. The budget of the DHAB has increased from less than 2 million US \$ to over 3.2 million US \$ in 2005, but this still falls substantially short of the needs, estimated at 10 million US \$. It will take a while before the commitments made by the representatives of Benin to the AfricanSan conference at the beginning of 2008 (to spend 0.5% of the GNP on hygiene and sanitation) have an impact.

On the qualitative side, Benin has put in place an innovative framework to manage the rural water sector: the BPO (Budget Programming by Objectives). This is a framework for programming and budgetary execution which has a rolling time frame of three years and which is jointly monitored by the Government and the development partners. The BPOs have brought about a substantial increase in financing for rural water. BPOs have recently been put in place for urban water and for sanitation but are not yet fully operational.

Since 2005, there has been an important decrease in the rate of budgetary consumption (the ratio between the funds formally

allocated and the funds actually spent) for rural water. For external financing, the consumption rate has gone from 147% in 2004 to 56% in 2005 and only 30% in 2007. Over the same period, the consumption rate for the national budget has gone from 90% to 68%. Over the period of 2002-2007, the overall level of implementation has remained approximately the same, varying between 13 and 16 million US \$. The budget allocations (the money which has been made available by financial partners of Benin) which have increased from 14 million US \$ in 2002 to 44 million in 2007 – should theoretically allow Benin to reach the MDGs for rural water supply. This indicates that there is a limit in the absorption capacity of the sector which is linked to a weak public expenditure management and to the implementation capacity of operators. In addition, communes do not have direct access to these funds. All these limitations must be overcome if the MDGs are to be attained.

³ In the broad sense this includes: companies which provide boreholes for rural water supply, companies which construct piped networks in urban areas and small towns, engineering offices, NGOs for social mediation and promotion of hygiene, etc.



Challenges

1. Make access to basic services even more equitable

Benin makes numerous efforts to increase the coverage rate of water supply, initially in rural areas and more recently in urban environments (this includes projects which are in the process of being identified and implemented by SONEB). In order to provide equitable access to basic services, it is now necessary to find a better balance between the quantitative aspects (the number of water points constructed, the amount of money spent in the sector) and the qualitative dimensions (where are the water points located? who has access? what is the level of service?). With respect to sanitation the challenges are: increasing access to sanitary facilities (in rural areas) and improving the safe collection and disposal of faecal sludge (in the cities).

Indicators • Equity must be measured. The household surveys which are regularly conducted in Benin must make it possible to design equity indicators at commune and country levels.

2. Promote a culture of “good governance” at all levels

Today, efforts to bring about a true culture of “good governance” face a divide between the central level and the local level, and between the Government and the non-governmental actors as a whole. The first of these relates to the fact that communes have been given an important role without a true transfer of these responsibilities. The communal level is not yet sufficiently recognized by the State which comes from a strong centralist tradition. The second challenge relates to the need to improve the involvement of representatives of civil society in the coordination and monitoring efforts which have been promoted over the past years.

Indicators • The effectiveness of the good governance can be measured (among others) by the volume of financing managed directly by the communes. The quality of coordination can be assessed through a regular opinion survey of a representative sample of civil society actors.

3. Continue to strengthen local authorities in their role of planners and managers of basic public services

Communes are now part of the local political landscape and no-one challenges the responsibility which they have been given by law with respect to water and sanitation. Today it is the effectiveness of this transfer of responsibility which is the biggest problem, because communes do not have access to the finances (projects continue to be managed at central level) and because their capacities are limited. The strengthening of local authorities in their role as maîtres d’ouvrage (in the broad sense: the “maître d’ouvrage” concept encompasses the functions of planning and organizing the delivery of basic public services) is the biggest challenge to the sector for the 10 coming years. This strengthening is supposed to simultaneously address three major challenges: redefining the role of the State and of decentralized departments; designing new spheres of intervention which are between the commune (too small) and the national level (no longer relevant); and solving a certain number of specific issues related to conflicts of responsibility (for example with respect to urban sanitation).

Indicators • The proportion of funding which is implemented by communes. The number of communes which are responsible for planning and implementing investment programmes. Existence of a national road map which organizes the transfer of responsibilities from the State to the communes.



4. Make hygiene and sanitation a true “national cause”

In spite of the progress which has already taken place (PHAB, National Sanitation Day) and the commitments made by Benin at an international level (AfricaSan conference, 2008), there is still a lot that remains to be done if hygiene and sanitation are to leave their marginalized position and to become national priorities. In this battle, it is clear that communes will have to take a primary role, in part because they are close to the users and to the decentralized structures of the Ministry of Health. Civil society should also be an integral part of this mobilisation effort. It is not just a question of increasing the available financing – rather hygiene and sanitation must be made a “national cause” to be adhered to. It is similarly important to critically examine the methods which are currently used in promoting hygienic behaviour and the level of appropriation of these issues at local level.

Indicators • Proportion of the national budget which is allocated to hygiene and sanitation. Number of households which are reached by behaviour change campaigns. Ratio between the budget for water and the budget for sanitation. Sanitation access rate. Evidence of concrete Government commitment for basic sanitation in the forthcoming economic development and poverty reduction strategies.

5. Increase the capacity of the sector to absorb additional financing

The water and sanitation sector in Benin does not suffer from lack of financing. Development partners are very committed; the State's participation is still weak, but there is an apparent willingness to do more. It appears, however, that the capacity of the sector to turn money into facilities and better access has reached a limit. This situation can only be overcome if several bottlenecks are addressed simultaneously: the slow processing of the requests at local level, the slow processing of public bids, the excessive centralization of procedures, the implementation capacity of the public and private operators, and the absence of rigorous monitoring of contracts. In the long term, increasing absorption capacity is not just a challenge which is relevant to the national level, but also to the communes. NGOs must also have access to sources of financing.



Indicators • The level of execution of budgetary allocations. Increase in the number of works carried out (particularly with respect to water) and the capacity to manage the service. Average delay in the public procurement.

6. Define and implement an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) policy

Demographic growth in Benin will continue to make access and sharing of water resources difficult, in particular for supplying urban areas and in rural areas where the resources are limited and threatened by human activities. It is therefore important to define and to implement a policy for IWRM which should intervene at various levels. The institutional level (adapting the Water Act and the other current regulations) is important, as is the intermediary level (quantitative and qualitative knowledge and monitoring of the resource). But it is similarly important to take action at local level, to develop joint capacity to share and protect water resources in a sustainable manner, at local or micro-local level, at the level of the commune, or even at the level of a rural territory.

Indicators • Progress in passing laws and regulations. Number of projects implemented in the sector which include an IWRM dimension or component.

The Millennium Endeavour

The “equity” package

Channel investments to the under-equipped localities

A demand driven approach is only valid when communities are able to access the circuit in which demand is formulated, which is not the case for small and isolated localities. It is therefore indispensable that everything to be done to give priority to those localities which are most isolated, which have low levels of income, and in the first instance to those that do not have water points, identifying in detail what the demand is through a programmatic approach conducted by the local level.

Promote universal access to house connections

Access to water for all also requires the development of a higher level of service – through the promotion of house connections. This area of focus concerns both urban areas within the territory of SONEB and the small towns equipped with piped networks which need to rapidly increase in numbers in order to keep pace with the strong demographic growth. This growth in house connections should go hand in hand with promoting the use of clean water at national level, in order to increase the regular use of clean water by the inhabitants.

Develop access to water in peri-urban areas and secondary cities

SONEB should accelerate the extension of its distribution network in the peri-urban areas which are currently not covered, including in informal and/or illegal settlements. SONEB should also improve its coverage of the secondary cities. This vast programme can be implemented if SONEB, the local private sector, the users' associations and the concerned communes undertake a joint effort. The PEAs (micro piped networks) which have been installed and are managed by private operators must be regulated, and those that meet the quality standards must be used as a means to rapidly increase the coverage in these areas.

Give priority to hygiene and sanitation

The access to adequate sanitation for all must be declared a national priority for the coming years. This priority should be reflected in the national budget allocated to hygiene and sanitation. The approach must be re-thought to put the local level at the centre of promoting sanitation and behaviour change.



The “governance” package

Strengthen communes in their role of “maîtres d’ouvrage”

A clear process and calendar for the transfer of responsibilities from the State to communes must be drawn up. The sector policy must be anchored at local level and communes must receive all the required tools for playing their role as owners of water facilities and managers of water and sanitation services. Communes must be responsible for the integration of complementary dimensions such as water, hygiene, the management of the water resources, and the promotion of universal access to services. Economies of scale must be sought at inter-communal level.

Better understanding and managing of water resources

Three focus areas must be explored in parallel: (a) experimenting with mechanisms for sharing and protecting water resources at local level; (b) improving scientific knowledge of the water resources and their monitoring; (c) progressive adaptation of the legal and regulatory framework to the principles of integrated water resources management.

Organize civil society in view of a better involvement

Civil society must play a much greater role in the decisions which are taken in the sector. In order to do this, civil society organizations must be strengthened, and above all, organized to be better represented at consultation fora which exist at departmental and national levels.

Fight against all forms of corruption

The water and sanitation sector is not free from corruption, whether in the public procurement process, in daily service delivery issues, and in the relation between service providers and their clients. Public opinion must be sensitized and a change in practices needs to be encouraged in all institutions, public and private, governmental and non-governmental. It is equally important to promote transparency in the awarding of publicly funded contracts and in the obligation for water providers to account on how funds were spent on an annual basis.

The “performance” package

Increase public financing

The increased financial contribution of external partners should go hand in hand with a growing and stronger national public financing and a better distribution between water and sanitation, but also between investment and operational budgets. This increase needs to take place both at the level of the Government and the communes.

Improve budget execution even further

The circuit of public expenditure can be further improved. There is substantial room for improvement in the handling of cases, in the awarding of publicly funded contracts, in the monitoring of their implementation and in a more rapid payment of companies and suppliers. This effort concerns the State, NGOs and the communes.

Make the water and sanitation operators more professional

The water and sanitation sector has an urgent need for operators who are better trained and able to address the various challenges which the sector faces. New professions need to be defined and supported as they are developed. The management of the water services in small towns must become more professional. The public sector (civil servants, SONEB staff) must also be covered by this professionalization effort, and the capacity building of agents which are working at decentralized levels must be a priority.

Develop a coherent sector monitoring and evaluation system

A coherent monitoring and evaluation system still needs to be established. In rural areas, the Integrated Data Bank (of water points) must be improved so that it will highlight local inequalities and become a true tool for planning at commune level. In addition, it is important that all sub-sectors are integrated in the same tool.





The Blue Book

Background and purpose

The publication of the Blue Book: water – life – people is the result of a commitment made in Kyoto (March 2003) by the World Assembly of Water Wisdom (Assemblée Mondiale des Sages de l'Eau). The Blue Book aims at reporting on the progress made in the water and sanitation sector towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Blue Book offers a critical vision of the water and sanitation sector which takes into account the opinions of users, citizens, and of local decision makers. The Blue Book tries to measure – in an independent manner – the progress which has taken place, qualitatively and quantitatively, and at regular intervals (in general three years) in a given territory or country. Three Blue Books (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) were published simultaneously in March 2005. Various Blue Books are under development in 2009: Benin, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The present edition is the first Blue Book published in Benin.

Its added value

What is the added value of the Blue Book compared to the vast number of on-going initiatives?

- It is a participatory process that started on the basis of the reality found in the field, and is based on a critical analysis of observed situations with regard to access to water supply and sanitation.
- It is a tool that promotes exchange, dialogue and mobilization of all actors involved in managing water resources and services, in order to promote large scale project portfolios from civil society.
- At country level, and in the framework of making a choice between priorities for sustainable development, the Blue Book strengthens local initiatives, the right to water and poverty reduction.
- At regional level, the Blue Book contributes building a vision, and engages the international community in promoting more innovative and effective means of cooperation.

The contributors

The Blue Book is a joint initiative of a group of Beninese actors in the water and sanitation sector who were brought together under the Blue Book National Steering Committee for Benin (in French: Comité de Pilotage du Livre Bleu-Bénin, CPLB-Bénin). At international level the Blue Book initiative is carried by the International Secretariat for Water (ISW) and a number of partners who come together under the umbrella of the Blue Book International Steering Committee. The drafting of the Blue Book in Benin has been entirely

supervised by the CPLB-Bénin with the support of the National Water Partnership (PNE), the NGO PROTOS, the Partnership for Municipal Development (PDM) and the International Secretariat for Water. This synthesis has been prepared by Bruno Valfrey-Visser (International Steering Committee) on the basis of the work carried out by Cyriaque Adjinacou Gnabou and Jean Malomon Yadouleton, both consultants. The synthesis has been edited and revised by the Blue Book National Steering Committee for Benin, and translated from French by Muriel Visser.

Blue Book National Steering Committee for Benin

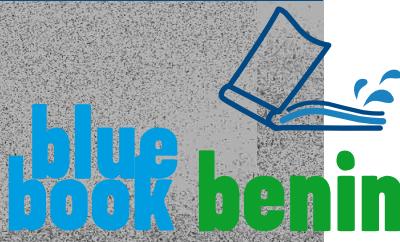
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The Method

The Benin Blue Book has been developed in a participatory manner. The full range of development actors and partners in Benin were consulted and involved in a process which took place over a period of 18 months. Consultations were organized at district level, discussion groups were held with the users in rural and urban areas. The objective was to get a direct input from citizens and from civil society actors, and to have an open debate on the problems of the sector. The country report (available on the web or at request from the CNLB Benin) and this synthesis document have been discussed and validated in a national workshop which took place in Cotonou on the 30th of January 2009.



l'eau, la vie, le développement humain



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Partners •



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