



## Co-operation IMPETUS and GLOWA-Volta

# Institutional and political context of water management in Ghana and Benin: Knowledge transfer in basins with decentralised governance and complex resource regimes

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### Inter-project co-operation on the options and levels of knowledge transfer in West Africa

The GLOWA-projects aim at the generation of scientific knowledge about the effects of climate change on the global hydrological cycle and the environmental as well socio-economic systems of various research regions. The competence and capacities of various natural and social sciences are combined to provide user oriented services such as the development of innovative technologies and locally adapted institutional frameworks for the sustainable, far-sighted management of water resources. Apart from sound disciplinary research, contributions to the collection and analysis of socio-economic data bases, the definition of realistic use cases or scenarios for computer modelling and the evaluation modelling results, the analysis of natural resource regimes and governance structures allows the social sciences to develop ideas for innovative water management frameworks and to propose locally adapted strategies for the transfer of scientific knowledge in GLOWA's West African partner countries. To pool the knowledge about West African resource regimes and governance structures and to come up with ideas for appropriate knowledge transfer strategies, social scientist from the two West African GLOWA-projects have entered into cooperation. In the following the institutional and political context of water management in the partner countries will be shortly introduced and the lessons for the transfer of knowledge will be drawn. While with regard to Ghana, the lessons and perspectives of the ongoing water reform process will be discussed, for Benin the potentials and risks of the process of political decentralization for rural water supply are analyzed, as here the major challenge is the worrying undersupply of the rural population with safe drinking water.

### Reasons for water sector reforms and IWRM in Ghana:

- Insufficient rural and urban water supplies
- **Rising domestic, agricultural and industrial water demand**
- Decreasing water availability
- Weak institutional framework
- Economic problems of water providers

	Domestic	Industrial	Livestock	Irrigation	Total
Volta basin	139.26	25.90	565.07	730.25	
South-Western basin	140.85	3.00	40.11	183.96	
Coastal basin	183.42	3.00	12.27	198.69	
<b>Total</b>	<b>463.53</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>617.45</b>	<b>1112.90</b>	
Water consumption (1995)					
Volta basin	271.62	63.40	3605.29	3940.31	
South-Western basin	295.55	5.40	440.85	762.00	
Coastal basin	369.87	5.80	48.28	423.95	
<b>Total</b>	<b>937.04</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>4114.42</b>	<b>5126.36</b>	

(Estimation Ministry of Works and Housing, 1998)

### Institutional and political framework for rural water supply in Benin:

The formal installation of all the municipal councils in 2003 affected the way responsibilities were assigned in the water supply sector. Then, local development has become the responsibility of the mayors and councillors. The districts (*communes*) have legal status and budgetary autonomy. The law confers on them most water supply responsibilities but in practice districts are still nearly completely cut off from decision making processes in the water sector. Often they are not even involved in identifying of future zones of intervention within their territory but on the other hand districts do not have the necessary capacity needed to effectively play their role. The current implementation of decentralisation will probably lead to conflicts between the new decentralised structures and the General Directorate of Water Resources (DGH) and its Regional Services (SDH) which fit in theory - lose important competences.

### Water Sector Reforms:

- Since the early 1990s the water sector in Ghana is undergoing massive restructuring. Largely instigated and funded by international donor agencies like the World Bank the reforms have largely followed international prescriptions towards Private Sector Participation (PSP) and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). While some headway has been made with respect to the restructuring of the drinking water sector and the establishment of an regulatory body, the Water Resources Commission (WRC), reform efforts have been thwarted by the socio-economic and political conditions prevailing in the country.
- Separation of rural and urban water supplies (Community Water and Sanitation Act 564, 1998)
  - Privatisation of urban water supply management (PSP-process underway)
  - Integrated management of water resources (Water Resources Commission Act 522, 1996)

### Research results on the context of reform/ policy implementation:

#### Legal pluralism:

- Multiple official laws and regulations
- Contested versions of customary law
- Competing Normative Frameworks
- Behavioral Indeterminacy Traditional norms, values and regulations
- Forum Shopping/Shopping Forums

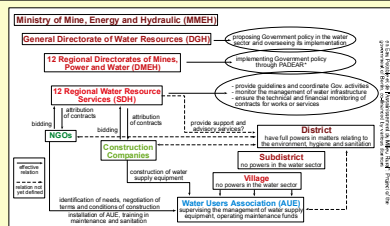
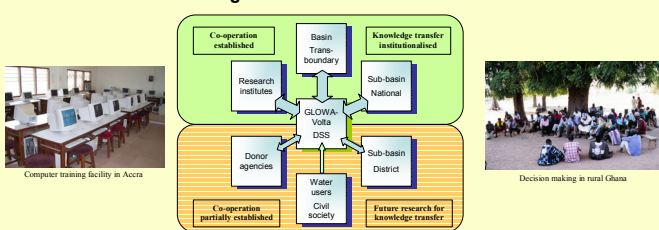
#### Complex governance system:

- Government
- Decentralised governance (regional/district)
- Traditional authorities
- Local pig mené
- Weak legal enforcement
- Political patronage
- Local triangles of accommodation
- Low levels of legitimacy

#### Lack of official resources:

- Low budgetary allocations
- Minimal staff levels
- Lack of capacities (especially local level)
- Low motivation of staff
- Missing technical equipment
- Effective monitoring impossible

### Transfer of knowledge at different levels and to different actors:



Institutions and actors in the rural water supply in Benin

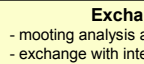
### Some core findings:

- Reasons for insufficient rural water supply: legal vacuum, haggling over responsibilities, power struggles between the involved actors, confusion about the legal framework
- Delays in the completion of water supply infrastructure due to bureaucratic obstruction
- Little transparency of public procurement procedures and cumbersome bidding procedures with sometimes opaque division of responsibilities
- Lacking capacities for rural water supply on district level
- Little motivation of district authorities to take on responsibilities for rural water supply due to a lack of information about their rights



### -Suggestions for the ongoing reform process:

- Creation of new committees of water users at sub-district and district level to have legal public forums for agreements on water supply policies and strategies
- establishment of functional relations between the decentralised national structures and the districts
- continued decentralisation of the decision-making process
- stronger involvement of water users in financing, management and replacement of equipment
- privatisation of construction, operation, monitoring, and social intermediation with special emphasis on supporting professionalism among the local sector operators



### Exchange with stakeholders, decision makers and planners

- meeting analysis and scenarios within the IMPETUS stakeholder committee
- exchange with international development agencies in the water sector on a regular basis (mainly PADEAR)
- capacity building targeted at local NGOs and district authorities
- discussions with district staff and national water authorities in regular intervals
- cooperation between IMPETUS and districts in the preparation process of development plans

### Results of the inter-project co-operation on strategies of knowledge transfer in West Africa:

Both West African GLOWA-Projects have established productive partnerships with regulatory bodies and research institutions in the partner countries. Of prime importance, transfer of knowledge for centralized decision making on the transboundary and the national level is therefore in place and has already started to be functioning. But as the examples from above have shown, the power of central government organizations to implement and monitor policies and programs is fairly limited. While we do not dispute the need for strong central co-ordination and monitoring, it becomes apparent that many water management decision are taken on the sub-basin, district and local level, therefore project policies that allow sub-national transfer of scientific knowledge have to be strengthened. As official organizations are not always living up to standards and may suffer from a lack of capacities as well political interference and corruption, the projects should try to establish interfaces that allow qualified water user representatives and other actors of the civil society access to research results, scenarios and decision support. Last but not least, co-operation with international donor organizations needs to be broadened to create important synergies. While donors can profit from scientific decision support to design adapted water sector programs, donors could help to establish sustainable interfaces for the transfer of knowledge and decision support that cater for transboundary, national, sub-national administrative -, as well as civil-society demand for scientific information services. If combined, partnerships and knowledge transfer on different societal levels and to different societal actors will help to enhance the projects capability to support far-sighted, participatory water management practices that take the basic principles of efficiency, sustainability and equity serious, which underlie national as well as international water sector policies and broader development frameworks such as the Local Agenda 21, the German Aktionsprogramm 2015 and the Millennium Development Goal process.

→ cater for demand on sub-basin and local level

→ establish links with civil society actors

→ strengthen partnerships with donors



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