

## Integrated approach increased funding for water in Malawi

### Attributable impact

- 64 percent budget increase to the Malawi water sector

### Summary

In Malawi, GWP has provided long-term backing to the adoption of an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach to water management. This included the development and implementation of a national IWRM and Water Efficiency plan to guide and direct the country towards increased water security. Validated in 2008, the process contributed to governmental commitment to IWRM within Malawi's national planning and investment frameworks, most notably the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and the National Water Development Programme II (NWDP II). As a result of the plan initiative, political will and awareness were mobilised among key actors, including the Office of the President, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Economic Planning. The outcome was a 64 percent budget increase to the water sector in 2005/06.

### Background

With one of the lowest per capita water availability in Africa, Malawi faces a continuous threat from water scarcity. As with other countries in the region, a rapidly growing population is intensifying the problem due to increased pressure on resources. Poor agricultural practices, inadequate waste management and forest degradation adds to the the deteriorating quality of available supplies. Climate change, which is expected to increase the rainfall variability in the region, further increases the risk of water shortages.

The Government of Malawi is aware of the negative impact that water stress has on the achievement of national development goals, and in the early 2000s it sought to mainstream a more sustainable water management into the national development agenda. The commitment to IWRM planning was formally reflected in the revised National Water Policy of 2005, which in turn informed the preparation of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006-2011 (MGDS) – the medium-term national planning framework that forms the basis for national budget allocation.

Parallel to – and in coordination with – the national planning processes, in 2004 the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development (MIWD) initiated an IWRM/Water Efficiency (IWRM/WE) plan as a roadmap to guide the country through its key water related development challenges. Completed in 2008, the IWRM/WE plan provides a long-term

strategic framework for a cross-sectoral approach to water resources management, as well as the identification of priority focus areas to be targeted during a five-year period.

### **GWP contribution**

In the context of the 2002 international target to prepare national IWRM plans<sup>1</sup>, GWP launched the Partnership for Africa's Water Development (PAWD) programme, with the aim to initiate preparation of national IWRM plans in Africa. In 2004 the Government of Malawi formally requested support from GWP to facilitate the development of the national IWRM/WE plan under the ownership of the MIWD.

The overall facilitation of the IWRM/WE plan development process was led by the Malawi Water Partnership (MWP) which was already active in providing a multi-stakeholder platform for consolidating input to national water resources and development planning.

Early in the process, the MWP played an important role in raising awareness and reinforcing political support for the IWRM/WE plan development. This included the organisation of awareness raising workshops for senior civil servants, who represented the secretaries in charge of water related sector ministries. One-to-one meetings were also held with key policy-makers, including quarterly briefings between the MWP and the Minister for Irrigation and Water Development, and regular meetings with heads of government institutions such as the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Resources, the Department of Land Resource Conservation, and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

The MWP provided the neutrality that helped to ensure that plan development was anchored in a fully inclusive participatory approach. Through this platform a comprehensive stakeholder consultation initiative was organised, in order to provide input to the various steps of the IWRM planning cycle, such as the gap analysis, identification of strategic components and prioritisation of focal areas. Key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from a range of sectors were engaged in the North, South and Centre regions of Malawi to determine the root causes of the main challenges faced and gain collective commitment for selecting and implementing the right projects to overcome these.

In addition to the MWP, the GWP Southern Africa Regional Secretariat provided technical assistance and guidance throughout the plan development process.

Following plan completion, the government assigned the MWP the lead role of institutional coordination in the implementation of the IWRM/WE plan. In addition, since finalisation the MWP has also been involved in capacity building for communities and has supported local authorities in the drafting of IWRM By-Laws.

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<sup>1</sup> As agreed by Heads of State at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa

## Results

The commitment by the Government of Malawi to IWRM has manifested itself in the establishment of more progressive water governance systems, which in turn have led to increased investment in water resources management. In addition to the revised National Water Policy, this includes the MDGS 2006-2011, in which an IWRM approach was explicitly prioritised and budgeted<sup>2</sup> for as a means of achieving water resources management goals, and the National Water Development Programme II<sup>3</sup> (NWDP II, 2005 and subsequent updates) which largely adopts an integrated approach.

A direct result of the whole process was a 64 percent budget increase to the water sector in 2005/06. In addition, the plan was prepared in close synergy with the MDGS 2006-2011 through which projects in the priority focal areas were implemented. In the case of the NWDP II, the component on water resources management seeks to address the need for a robust enabling environment by establishing a National Water Authority (and possible catchment management units) along with strengthening institutional capacity and enabling legislation for the National Water Policy of 2005.

On the whole, capital investments by the country's five parastatal water boards increased from US\$4 million in 2006 to US\$10 million in 2010, with expenditure specifically targeting the water supply and sanitation sub-sector, also doubling in the same time period<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Including 65 million allocated between 2006/07 and 2010/11 to empower the national authority to manage water resources using an IWRM approach and 54 million to build capacity for IWRM

<sup>3</sup> Co-financed by the World Bank (USD 50 million) and the Africa Catalytic Growth Fund (USD 25 million) among others, the NWDP II is the main platform for donor coordination within the water supply and sanitation sector in Malawi

<sup>4</sup> Malawi Water Sector Investment Plan vol. 2, MIWD 2012