

## Implementing Water Sector Reform in The Gambia

### Attributable impact

- €2 million from the African Water Facility of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and €100,000 in-kind contribution from the Gambian government to support the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in The Gambia through a National Water Sector Reform project<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

There is a significant investment deficit across water resources management (WRM) and drinking water and sanitation – the UN estimates that the investment required to deliver water security would be \$198 billion annually to 2030<sup>2</sup>. Delivering the institutional frameworks required to promote water security is necessary to unlock investment.

GWP supported the development and implementation of a National Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Roadmap in The Gambia, to guide the country towards increased water security with an IWRM approach. Validated in 2009, the ongoing implementation of the Roadmap has received approximately €2 million in funding from the African Development Bank and has led to the establishment of a Gambia Country Water Partnership.

### Background

Despite the presence of substantial surface and groundwater resources, by the early 2000s water security in The Gambia was coming under threat. Increased abstraction in concentrated areas was leading to water scarcity and a lack of wastewater treatment was polluting resources. Reduced flows in the Gambia River was also advancing saline intrusion to surface and groundwater sources. The country was poorly equipped to deal with these mounting problems due to fragmented and sector-based management structures, as well weakly defined institutional roles and responsibilities for the management of water resources. These were based largely upon outdated legislation from 1979.

In recognition of this, the 2006 National Water Resources Policy (NWRP) was developed with the aim of strengthening governance frameworks. There was a need to better apply basic principles for resource conservation, environmental protection and equitable distribution. IWRM was identified as the best way to achieve this. This led to the development of an IWRM Roadmap to act as a blueprint for putting the policy into action.

The need for a Roadmap was also in-line with regional policy and planning frameworks – particularly the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Water Policy and the Regional Action Plan on IWRM in West Africa – and was seen as a key requirement for addressing the governance reform objectives and water supply and sanitation targets included in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) II (2007-2011).

The process to develop a Roadmap started at the end of 2007 under the responsibility of the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources & National Assembly Matters (MoFWRNAM). It was managed under

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<sup>1</sup> Support for National Water Sector Reform Appraisal Report, Africa Water Facility, Mar 2010, Pg 17

<sup>2</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002257/225741E.pdf>

the framework of the UNEP project “*Improving Water Management and Governance in African Countries through Support in Development and Implementation of IWRM Plans*”. The finalised Roadmap was validated in May 2009.

### **GWP contribution**

The project *Improving Water Management and Governance in African Countries through Support in Development and Implementation of IWRM Plans*, through which the Roadmap was developed, was implemented through a partnership of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), GWP West Africa, the Water Resources Coordination Center (WRCC) of ECOWAS and UNEP-DHI Centre for Water and Environment (UDC). As part of the team, GWP had the crucial role of mobilising stakeholders in the IWRM process and building their capacity to contribute to the Roadmap. Stakeholders from government departments and ministries, the private sector and civil society were brought together to form an ad hoc committee through which input to the process could be structured. Three workshops and a national dialogue were organised during the stock-taking, preparatory and planning phases of the project with the aim of eliciting input, gaining political and non-governmental buy-in, and establishing previously absent communication channels.

Additionally, GWP had a key role in the implementation of the IWRM Roadmap, namely enabling the development and accreditation of a Gambia Country Water Partnership, as a platform for multi-stakeholder involvement in water resources planning and governance reform.

### **Results**

The finished Roadmap contains a set of 13 priority actions – covering areas such as water governance reforms, capacity building initiatives and project development. These are deemed necessary for moving towards effective and sustainable management of the nation’s water resources in accordance with IWRM principles. Implementation of the actions is scheduled within the timeframe of 2009-2015, after which progress will be reviewed and a new roadmap developed.

The Roadmap development process succeeded in generating considerable political buy-in from the MoFWRNAM which has the overall mandate for water resources. This commitment has led to an ongoing reform process to provide institutions and entities responsible for water management, with renewed legal authority and administrative tools to manage the resource in an equitable way – a key component of the IWRM Roadmap. The Roadmap is therefore providing a framework for The Gambia’s development partners to target technical and financial support aimed at achieving water security across the country.

To this end, in 2010 funding of almost €2 million was secured from the African Water Facility of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to implement a project on water sector reform, with the Gambian government contributing a further €100,000 through in-kind support. The objective is to support the *implementation of IWRM in The Gambia in line with the National Water Policy and the IWRM Roadmap* through institutional capacity building, stakeholder engagement and improved information management. This project closely mirrors the priority actions identified in the Roadmap and is currently the main means of Roadmap implementation.

In addition, in 2012 a Gambia Country Water Partnership (CWP) was set up to coordinate national water resources management work through the facilitation of participatory planning processes, provision of technical assistance and mobilisation of funds for IWRM implementation. The establishment of the CWP followed a request from the Government of Gambia and fulfils a key implementation milestone outlined in the IWRM Roadmap.

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