

Central Africa:

Water, Climate and Development Programme for Africa

Water security for development



Water resources are particularly abundant in Central Africa and per capita water availability is very high. The Congo River is the second largest in the world in terms of discharge, and there are abundant inland wetland resources and lakes that provide many socio-economic benefits to communities in the region. However, these water resources are unevenly distributed and not very well developed.

The region's economies are mostly based on the mining and export of unprocessed products. Agriculture is mainly rainfed. The Central African Republic, for example, has very fertile agricultural land, but only 2.82 percent of the land is arable.¹ In terms of hydroelectricity, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone has about 13 percent of the world's hydroelectric potential, of which less than 3 percent is currently exploited.² In 2011, only 48 percent of the population in Cameroon and 34 percent in São Tomé and Príncipe had access to improved sanitation facilities.³

Despite the relative abundance of water resources in most Central African countries, rapid population growth and climate variability – with an increasing incidence of floods and droughts since the mid-1980s – have put enormous pressure on natural resources. Appropriate long-term governance of water resources is essential to ensure its sustainable use, and improved regional cooperation is enhancing opportunities for better resource management. In November 2009, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) adopted a regional water policy that promotes the integrated management of land, water, and related resources. The International Commission for the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha River Basin Strategic Action Plan has also been elaborated.

The Water, Climate and Development Programme

In November 2010 the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) adopted a decision recommending that the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and partners operationalise the Water, Climate and Development Programme (WACDEP).

1 Central Intelligence Agency (2013) *The World Factbook: Central African Republic*. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ct.html

2 United Nations Environment Programme (2011) *The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment – Synthesis for Policy Makers*. UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya.

3 World Health Organization (2013) *Global Health Observatory Data Repository*. www.who.int/research/en/

WACDEP aims to integrate water security and climate resilience into development planning processes, build climate resilience, and help countries adapt to a new climate regime through increased investments in water security. The 5-year programme, which is implemented in eight countries, four transboundary river basins and one shared aquifer, runs from May 2011 to April 2016.

Overall, WACDEP in Central Africa is targeting the ECCAS, the Lake Chad and Congo-Oubangui river basin institutions and the Cameroon government. The programme aims to support:

- ECCAS in developing strategic tools to implement the regional water policy and regional water sector financing strategy.
- The Lake Chad Basin Commission and the International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin in the development of tools to implement the Lake Chad Basin Strategic Action Programme, and in the mainstreaming of
- water security and climate resilience into the activities of the Congo Basin Commission.
- The government of Cameroon in moving forward the national integrated water resources management (IWRM) planning process that began in 2005; WACDEP will help mainstream water security and climate resilience into the national growth and employment strategy document, and help with the development of an investment portfolio for the national IWRM plan.

Expected outcomes

- Ongoing initiatives and programmes in the field of water resources and climate change adaptation strengthened at the regional, transboundary and national levels.
- Existing information and knowledge on regional and national initiatives related to water security and climate resilience capitalised, and the importance of harmonising issues for regional and transboundary cooperation emphasised.
- Enhanced understanding of the impacts and risks associated with climate change and variability, and the importance of IWRM in improving climate resilience.
- Stakeholders in the water sector and other water-related sectors engaged to ensure involvement in decision-making processes and increased capacity in developing and managing water resources to achieve social equity, environmental integrity and economic efficiency.
- Increased investments in water-resources management and development to improve climate resilience.

Activities undertaken and progress

- Participated in and supported the 3-day ECCAS high-level capacity-building and sensitisation workshop on IWRM in Kinshasa, DRC.



- 2-day regional meeting held with key stakeholders to discuss the implementation of regional and country work plans.
- Contributed to the national climate change vulnerability and risk analysis report for Cameroon.
- Development of the National Water Vision supported and IWRM strategic axes identified for Cameroon.
- Supported integration of water and climate change resilience in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Cameroon.
- Supported the process of elaborating a national strategy for integrating climate change into the educational system in Cameroon.
- Implemented pilot project on sustainable management of the Congo Basin Forest within the context of the Congo Basin Forest Fund project.
- Organised 4-day awareness workshop for media professionals in Cameroon.
- WACDEP awareness-raising materials developed, produced and translated into English and French.

Financing management

Initial funding is provided through GWP's financing partners. AMCOW and GWP are committed to building the funding base by engaging additional partners. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida) are the main financial partners of the programme.

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