

When compared to other African regions, Central Africa is endowed with abundant surface and ground water resources.

The water system is particularly dense in the Congo basin and the rainforest area, and water availability per inhabitant is very high. The Congo river is the second largest in the world in terms of volume flow rate. Water resources are however unevenly distributed and not very developed. While the Sahelian areas are faced with persistent water stress and long periods of droughts, southern parts have water in abundance.

Central African Economies

Central African economies rely on mining and export of unprocessed goods; its agriculture is mostly rain fed. Though endowed with good agricultural lands, only 3.2% of such lands are cultivated in the Central African Republic for instance. In terms of hydroelectricity, the Democratic Republic of Congo alone has about 13% of the world's hydroelectric potentials. In Sao Tome and Principe, only 10% of the hydroelectric potentials are exploited while in Cameroon there is just 3% exploitation. Climate change and high variability in prices of goods such as ore, coffee, cocoa and cotton increase social and economic insecurity in the region.



Regional water policy

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) promotes water resources management. It recently adopted a regional water policy, which will be implemented through the following 5 strategic principles: creation of an enabling environment for good water governance at national, basin and regional levels; operationalisation of the principles of integrated water resources management; stakeholder participation and gender mainstreaming; implementation of programmes for water resources development, in areas such as water supply, sanitation, water for

agriculture and livestock, hydro-electricity, fisheries, navigation and tourism; capacity building through training, education and research.

GWP Central Africa Instrumental

GWP Central Africa, the youngest of the 13 GWP Regional Water Partnerships, was instrumental in assisting ECCAS develop the regional water policy. As a neutral stakeholders platform for dialogue, GWP Central Africa will contribute to implementing the policy by supporting the establishment of a coordination unit for water resources management within ECCAS, providing strategic and technical support, and helping in mobilising resources.



GWP Central Africa closely works with one of the two major basin organisations in the region, the International Commission for the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha Basin (CICOS). It was instrumental in shifting CICOS' focus from navigation to a fully integrated basin management approach. GWP-CAf is now assisting CICOS in developing its Basin Strategic Action Plan involving all basin stakeholders, at regional and national levels.



Water Financing Mechanism

As the lack of funding of water management structures remain a gap in most donor funding policies, GWP Central Africa is currently developing a water financing mechanism that aims at stimulating more internally generated funds as well as external funds to cover this gap. Ensuring the right policies are adopted, putting in place the right institutional structures, building capacities and applying integrated water resources management tools is the only guarantee to an effective development of the water sector in order to contribute to social and economic growth and improved welfare.