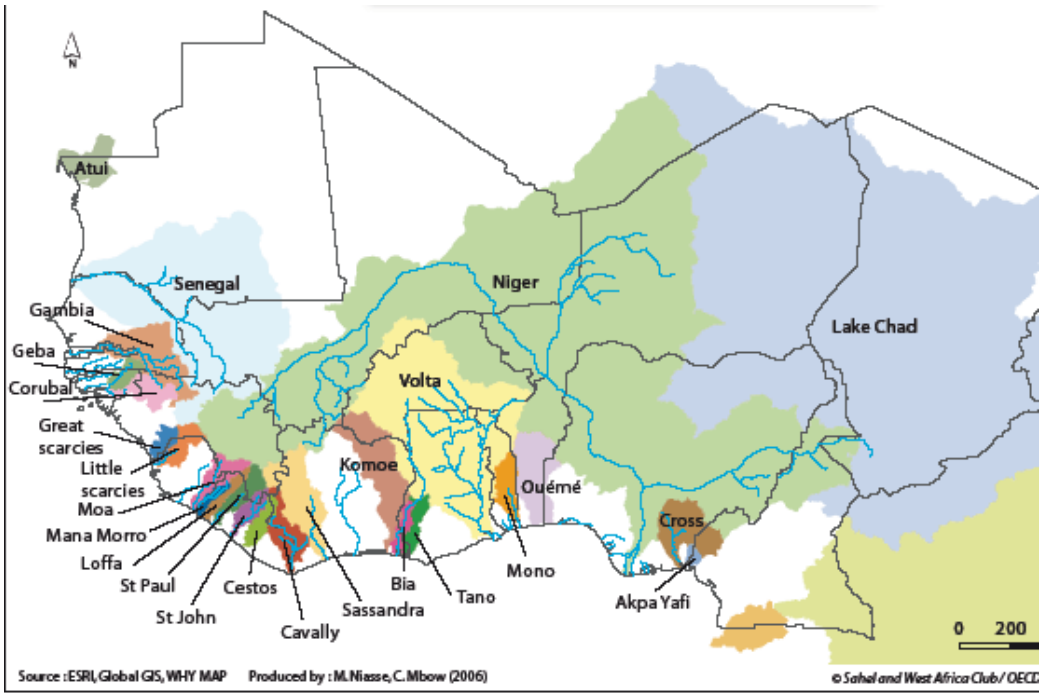
# Howard G. Buffett Foundation
# Global Water Initiative




## West Africa Cluster Regional Strategy

**September 2007**

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## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AAH | Action Against Hunger |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services, |
| FCFA | Francs Communauté Financière Africain |
| GDP | Gross Development product |
| GWI | Global Water Initiative |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| HGBF | Howard B. Buffett Foundation |
| IIED | International Institute for Environment and Development |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resource Management |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PAGIRE | Plan d'Action de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau |
| RS | Regional Secretariat |
| RSC | Regional Strategic Committee |
| UNDP | United national Development Programme |

# 1. Introduction

Water gives us life and the prospect of development. It supports and purifies ecosystems, provides livelihoods, and enables governments to meet national development targets. There is no shortage of policy commitments requiring that water and wider ecosystems be shared out and used fairly and carefully. Yet the majority of people on our planet continue to live on the edge of water scarcity, none more so than in the West African drylands. Finding ways to put more equitable and sustainable water use into practice is a massive challenge that the Global Water Initiative seeks to tackle.

The Global Water Initiative (GWI) funded by the Howard G Buffet Foundation was established in September 2006 following a meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, USA.[1] The GWI aims to support the sustainable and equitable delivery of potable water to vulnerable communities in dry and semi-arid areas in 13 countries in Central America, East Africa and West Africa. It will implement a programme linking water and sanitation delivery with longer-term processes of policy change, building political constituencies, thus leveraging larger scale change in the water sector. A key characteristic of the GWI is its desire to support innovative work that builds on and adds-value to other on-going water initiatives at local, national and regional levels.

In West Africa, the GWI is working in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal with a small group of organisations that constitute the core-partners of the initiative: Action Against Hunger-USA, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, IUCN, IIED, Oxfam-USA and SOS Sahel-UK. These organisations came together at two regional meetings (Dakar, February 2007 and Bamako, June 2007) to develop this strategy.[2] This process stimulated many ideas and brought clarity on the strategic direction and priorities of the GWI in West Africa, including proposals for its management. A smaller two-day meeting (25-26th June), attended by one representative from each of the direct partners, decided on the strategic focus and priorities of the Initiative, the roles and responsibilities of the partners and cluster leader, and a work plan for the first year of activity.

This strategy document summarises our current thinking. While providing a strategic framework to guide our decision-making and work in West Africa over the next 10 years, it is a working document. It will be reviewed on a regular basis in the light of progress and lessons learnt to ensure it continues to meet the Initiatives' overall goal to improve delivery of water supply and sanitation with an integrated water resource management approach in West Africa.

[1] Representatives from Action Against Hunger (AAH), A Glimmer of Hope (AGOH), CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), World Conservation Union (IUCN), Oromo Self Reliance Association (OSRA), and World Vision attended the meeting.
[2] AAH and Oxfam-USA did not attend these meetings.

## 2. Regional Context

*Poverty and variable access to water and sanitation*

West Africa is one of the poorest regions in the world where a significant proportion of the population does not have access to safe water and sanitation and live below the poverty line – see Table 1.

**Table 1:**

| HDI rank (out of 177) | Country | Sustainable access to improved sanitation % of population | | Sustainable access to an improved water source % of population | | GDP per capita | Less than a US$1 a day % of population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1990 | 2004 | 1990 | 2004 | 1990-2004 | 1990-2004 |
| 136 | **Ghana** | 15 | 18 | 55 | 75 | 2,240 | 44.8 |
| 156 | **Senegal** | 33 | 57 | 65 | 76 | 1,713 | 22.3 |
| 174 | **Burkina Faso** | 7 | 13 | 38 | 61 | 1,169 | 27.2 |
| 175 | **Mali** | 36 | 46 | 34 | 50 | 998 | 72.3 |
| 177 | **Niger** | 7 | 13 | 39 | 46 | 779 | 60.6 |
| | | | | | | | |

**Source**: Human Development Report 2006 (http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics)

Although at regional level, West Africa has significant surface water and considerable, if unquantified, reserves of fresh water in very deep acquifers, water resource availability varies greatly between and within countries, between seasons and from one year to the next.[3] While the wet zones receive in excess of 2,000mm of rainfall per year spread throughout the year with peak periods of rainfall in May and June, extremely dry and erratic rainfall conditions are found further north in the Sahel. The high level of water transfers that take place through the region's major river systems does helps to reduce water insecurity in certain areas, although it raises other issues around transboundary management of the quantity and quality of downstream water flow.

*Transboundary resources*

West African countries are highly water-interdependent, with 17 countries sharing 25 transboundary river basins. The main ones are the Niger River Basin, the Senegal River Basin, the Volta River Basin, the Lake Chad Basin, the Comoe River Basin and the Gambia River Basin. In addition to rivers, various aquifers also cross borders. These considerable reserves of fresh water could in theory meet the current and future water needs in West Africa, but are not yet subject to any agreements between countries exploiting them. This is partly because there is insufficient knowledge their geographical extent, the quantity and quality of the water they store and their hydro-geological and hydro-dynamic characteristics.

*Governance frameworks*

There is no shortage of policies, laws and institutions seeking to regulate water resources in West Africa. All the countries covered by the GWI have adopted the concept of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as the basis on which they will manage their water resources. Burkina Faso finalised its national IWRM plan (PAGIRE[4]) in 2003 and is implementing it. Niger through its sustainable water development programme financed by UNDP has been experimenting with IWRM in seven water management units since 1998. Mali has also adopted

[3] Many of the regions' aquifers are of difficult access containing non-renewable water reserves.
[4] Plan d'Action de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau.

its IWRM Action Plan in 2007, while the other countries in the region are in the processes of preparing theirs. These plans offer opportunities for countries in West Africa to take a holistic view of their water resource management issues, particularly those related to transboundary resources such as rivers. At basin level, there are a number of promising initiatives. These include: the development of charters for the good management of shared water and other resources,[5] links between the provisions of these charters and national laws (e.g. 2005 Mauritanian Water Code), and multi-stakeholder dialogue over the future of river basin management (e.g. the Shared vision process on the River Niger).

At national level, there is an absence of synergy and coordination between the laws and institutions regulating the water and related sectors (land, forests, etc.). Many of the existing consultative bodies such as water councils created to facilitate a more rational coordination are barely functioning or are dominated by central government officials with little of no representation of local people.

Decentralisation and the transfer of authority from the central state to local government for the management of key resources and provision of services, including water, is on-going in West Africa. This brings both opportunities and challenges. A key issue is that of scale and at what level should water resource governance take place. Reconciling the need for participation and accountability that comes from more decentralised and localised management structures needs to be balanced with the need for a broader ecosystem approach to ensure management that is more integrated. There are also issues of efficiency and balancing the costs of governance with its benefits. To resolve these tensions governance institutions need to be established at multiple levels each with specific responsibilities.

*Inadequate financial sustainability*

In general, there are inadequate funds for water and sanitation provision and a high reliance on donor funds to finance infrastructure projects. Few West African states have the means and/or credit-worthiness to individually mobilise the financial resources necessary for major water development initiatives. At national and river basin level, governments are highly dependent on donors and other financial institutions - for example World Bank support of US$ 500 million for development of Niger River Basin, announced on 3rd July 2007.

Local government too does not have the capacity to raise the level of tax necessary to fund the provision of these services and users willingness/ability to pay for water and sanitation is weak. Provision of safe water and sanitation is thus highly dependant on donor support. In Mali for example, external public development aid is the largest source of funding for the water sector, contributing an average of 5.0176 billion FCFA per year in the five years to 2003. In the same period the proportion of the total national budget spent on the water sector, fell from just over 2% in 2000 to < 1% in 2003. In Niger, the donor community still meets 98% of investments in the water and sanitation sector.

*Water allocation and conflict management*

The combined effects of increased water demand for a rapidly growing population and of climate change and variability will put a high and probably unprecedented level of pressure on the region's resources. Competition and conflict over freshwater resources within and between countries could therefore increase (e.g. the Volta Basin is a potential source of conflict between Ghana and Burkina Faso). Given the

**Box 1: Increasing risk of conflict: The case of the Lower Niger Basin**

Nigeria has invested heavily in irrigation schemes and hydropower along the river Niger, but projects to construct dams upstream in Niger (Kandadji) and Mali (Taoussa) may reduce river flow in Nigeria. Nigeria has voiced its concerns and, for the moment, all major water infrastructure investments in the middle and lower Niger basin are on hold. But how long can the current deadlock last?

[5] For example: the 2007 Hadejia-Jama'are-Komadugu-Yobe Basin charter, the 2002 Senegal river charter, the Code of Conduct between Burkina and Ghana for the management of the Volta Basin Water Resources.

importance of transboundary water resources in the region, cooperation and negotiation at the national level is imperative.

Most water sectors reforms in West Africa have not given sufficient attention to customary laws for water management despite the key role they play in managing water allocation and resolving disputes at the local level. Customary systems though not perfect respect community norms and values and often take a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach to water management. There is a need for greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of customary laws and how to build on the former to address such issues as gender inequality.

*Loss of wetlands*

West African wetlands, and in particular Sahelian floodplains, have severely suffered from the combined effects of climate change, climate variability and human activity (expansion of inhabited zones, of cultivated areas, of pasture lands, and deforestation for fuel wood, charcoal production, etc.) Today, most of West Africa's wetlands are in peril and have dramatically shrunk over the years. The maximum flooded area of the Inner Delta of the Niger River (the second largest wetland in Africa after the Okavango floodplain) decreased from 37,000 $km^2$ in the early 1950s to about 15,000 $km^2$ or less since the 1990s. The area covered by lake Chad, estimated at more than 20,000 $km^2$ in the early 1950s, has shrunk tenfold and has today a surface area of about 2,000 $km^2$. The loss of these wetlands not only has important implications for the people who rely on them for their livelihoods but also means a loss of biodiversity and changes to the broader ecosystem.

## 3. Regional priorities

The regional cluster meeting in June 2007 identified five priority areas on which we want to focus our work. These priorities respond to country and regional level issues in West Africa within the broader context of climate change while contributing to the realisation of the three GWI strategic outcomes (see below).

**1. Knowledge management on the quantity and quality of water resources**. Inadequate knowledge on the nature, status and dynamics of the quantity and quality of different water resources at different levels in West Africa is contributing to poor planning, inappropriate abstraction and use, environmental degradation and conflict. Existing information collection systems and data sets are fragmented. Information collected at one level or by one type of organisation is unavailable at another level or to another organisation. Many statistical sets are patchy and inconsistent over time or of dubious quality. In some areas, good systems exist but are not implemented for lack of resources, qualified personnel or motivation. In other areas, good data is collected, but then not properly disseminated.

Relatively little, reliable, pertinent, up-to-date and easily accessible information is available to all relevant actors. There is a particular shortage of information on trends in the quality of surface waters (e.g. the river Niger), or how shallow and deep water tables are responding to abstraction rainfall recharge and climate change. In many areas, particularly at local level, there is an absence of even the simplest of inventories with which to establish and track the distribution and status of water points.

Improving our and others' knowledge of the quantity and quality of water resources in West Africa at local, national and regional levels and how these are evolving over time, particularly in a context of climate change, is critical.

**2. Good water governance**. There are three core governance issues. First, poor water governance is exacerbating inequitable water use and access, resulting in the exclusion of poorer and more vulnerable members of society while also contributing to social unrest and

conflict (e.g. exclusive use wells for commercial livestock production in eastern Niger is leading to exclusion of pastoral communities). Second, in certain areas poor governance is contributing to significant water wastage in a context of increasing potential scarcity because of climate change (e.g. poorly managed irrigation schemes or inappropriate water pricing policies). Third, water pollution, particularly of ground water, rivers and ponds, is a result of inadequate or poorly regulated governance mechanisms by different actors at different levels (e.g. urban and semi-industrial waste from Bamako, Mali is impacting on down-stream fishing communities). Existing laws are either poorly disseminated, or ignored, particularly by actors that are more powerful and who are able to pollute the environment with seeming impunity. Local government officials now responsible for water management within their jurisdictions often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to apply existing laws.

Existing national and regional institutional frameworks (policies, laws and institutions) are inadequate and inappropriate. Existing treaties, conventions, and protocols at regional level and sectoral laws at national level are highly confusing, often contradictory, rarely integrated with each other, and implemented by different institutions without sufficient coordination or adequate regulation. At all levels this is creating a "policy void" in which the more powerful do what they want often with impunity using as necessary either customary or modern laws to justify their actions. Water insecurity is increasingly an issue for the poorer and weaker members of society due to their limited involvement in policy making and management processes.

Local communities, particularly women and other groups with limited voice, are unaware of the policy and legislative environment regulating their access to and use of water resources. Throughout the region women have primary responsibility for ensuring that the water and sanitation needs of their families are met. They have at best a very limited understanding of their rights and even less capacity to partake in and influence decision-making processes that impact on their livelihoods. Existing mechanisms set up to reconcile the often divergent interests of different actors over access to water at different levels are inadequate. They rarely represent the interests of the poor and marginalized, and there is relatively little investment to rectify this situation through the design of approaches and practical tools to genuinely enable weaker segments of society to participate in decision-making for good water governance.

Building the capacity of these actors to design, implement and monitor policy and practice for the good governance of water use according to a set of minimum environmental and social standards, is critical to ensure healthy ecosystems for equitable and sustainable livelihoods and national and regional development, and potable water and sanitation for the poor and vulnerable.

The efforts deployed by all countries in the region to design their national IWRM action plans are a major step towards improving water governance in the region. However, without sufficient awareness-raising, capacity building and the availability of needed resources, realising IWRM will be difficult, particularly at the local level.

**3. Improved access to potable water and sanitation**. Inadequate and/or polluted drinking water and insufficient access to adequate sanitation, particularly in the rural areas of West Africa, are major contributory factors of child mortality, poor health, loss of livelihoods and lack of well being among the poorer and more vulnerable members of the community. Official statistics showing steady improvements, particularly in access to modern water points, seriously under-represent the scale of the problem that exists in meeting minimum needs for potable water particularly in certain "hard-to-reach" areas or among certain categories of the population (e.g. poor communities, women, mobile pastoral groups).

Insufficient and unequal access to potable water in many parts of rural West Africa is a result of poor planning due to unreliable data (including data on existing infrastructure, hydro-geological data, technology options, etc) and a lack of political will on the part of governments to invest in distant areas with relatively low population densities. It can also be due to the lack of funds to invest in the necessary technology to extract "hard-to-reach" water sources (e.g. deep aquifers). Lack of parallel investment in appropriate infrastructure and inadequate attention to addressing social and cultural attitudes and practices of water use and sanitation, explain why the vast majority of rural people in West Africa still do not have access to sustainable and clean sanitation facilities (see Table 1). Addressing this widening gap and paying greater attention to improving basic hygiene and access to appropriate and affordable sanitation, particularly through participatory, community-led approaches, is critical.

**4. Equitable and sustainable multiple water use**. Increasing competition and conflict over water use by different actors at different levels is a major issue in West Africa. Most research has focused on international water conflicts, failing to appreciate the extent and growing severity of more local conflicts which are caused as much by scarcity as how access to water is governed. Potential conflict is increasingly likely in the absence of adequate governance structures to manage rising demands for water due to growing demand (population growth, economic development, increasing abstraction) in a context of mounting scarcity due to cyclical droughts and climate change. Poorer and weaker groups and countries are likely to suffer disproportionately unless competing demands can be reconciled in a just and sustainable manner. Competition for water is experienced between different actors and uses at different levels (vertical competition), as well as between different actors and uses at the same level (horizontal competition).

Vertical competition requires governance structures and mechanisms that can reconcile the livelihood needs of several communities in one locality for water (domestic, productive, cultural and spiritual needs) with national development objectives (energy, food security, water for burgeoning cities) and, given the transboundary nature of West Africa's surface water resources, regional objectives of economic integration. In practice, national and, to a lesser extent, regional imperatives prevail to the detriment of local livelihoods and the ecosystem (e.g. sudden water discharges from dams destroy downstream livelihoods, large-scale irrigation schemes in former pastoral areas). Current development policies promoting a modernisation agenda as the pathway out of poverty (e.g. *Loi d'orientation agricole* in Mali, *Loi agro-sylvo-pastorale* in Senegal) will exacerbate tensions over water use and potentially undermine local livelihoods and thus poverty levels unless mechanisms are established to reconcile these divergent interests.

Competition for water is also experienced horizontally, either between countries over the use of a shared river basin for example, or between local actors such as farmers and pastoralists for access to a seasonal pond or dry season water point. The ability of actors at the same level to reconcile their differences is shaped by the appropriateness of the broader institutional environment regulating the water sector (e.g. land tenure laws) as well as their relative balance of power and capacity of the different user groups to make the laws and policies work for them. At the local level, it may also be shaped by customary law and institutions. Power dynamics are critical as is a sound understanding of one's rights and responsibilities. At national level, there are often competing demands made on water by different sectors such as agriculture versus energy versus urban water supply versus conservation. In practice, government policy and the allocation of resources are biased towards national development objectives at the expense of maintaining viable ecosystem services essential to local livelihoods and sustainable development. Poor understanding of the dynamics and financial value of ecosystem services in maintaining a productive base for development is a major handicap.

If West Africa is to reduce poverty, ensure functioning ecosystems and maintain peaceful co-existence among its rising populations, there is a need to design mechanisms to reconcile the

competing demands on water (economic, social, environmental) by different actors at different levels. These mechanisms need to: be environmentally sustainable, equitable, and respond to the needs of poor and marginal communities.

**5. Sustainable local management of existing water and sanitation infrastructure**. Rural West Africa is littered with broken or poorly functioning water points, and abandoned wastewater and sanitation infrastructure.[6] This contributes significantly to the continuing low levels of coverage in safe drinking water and sanitation systems with a disproportionate impact on women's labour and the subsequent health and well being of the family, especially children.

The failure to fully involve all members of the local community, especially women, in the choice of culturally appropriate technical options and realistic maintenance and capital depreciation management systems are at the heart of the problem. All too often water and sanitation systems have failed to understand traditional water management arrangements and have been installed without adequate consultation and dialogue with key members of local communities.

Technological options need to consider the people's understanding/ability to sustain the new water point. Particular issues are the type of technology, the cost, and the skill implications for its management, maintenance and depreciation. It is important to engage in discussion with communities on how best they might manage new technology to facilitate more informed decision-making. This discussion needs to recognize local differentiation and diversity within communities along gender, class and economic lines. It is also important to establish whether the community have the means and desire to cover maintenance, management and depreciation costs and have access to the necessary technological support for more complex systems (such as a deep borehole with abstraction by diesel / solar pump, storage tanks etc.) over the design period, including access to spare parts and skilled artisans. In many cases, training has focused just on the water management committee failing to create a broader sense of responsibility and accountability in the various user constituencies, and has failed to deal with issues such as ensuring social equity while building financial sustainability. This has led to poor management and inevitably infrastructure failure. In the seventies, because of the drought, many programmes were implemented in an emergency context and most of the thousands of wells built that period did not last.

Building on this experience to design programmes which reinforce the sustainable management of water and sanitation infrastructure by local people over the long-term is critical to ensuring the reliable access to clean water and sanitation for poor and vulnerable communities in West Africa. Future technologies will also need to consider the implications of climate change and greater variability on water availability.

## 4. Goal, purpose and strategic outcomes

The overall purpose of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation with respect to water is to "*ensure that vulnerable populations world-wide have reliable access to clean water in such a way that their dignity, rights, culture and natural environment are not negatively impacted. This includes pastoralist, nomadic, agricultural and displaced people"*.[7]

Realization of this purpose will contribute to a higher level goal of sustainable livelihoods, improved well being, more balanced resource use and greater resistance to external shocks.

[6] For example: broken hand pumps, non-functioning deep borehole pumps, dry wells, silted or breached dams, broken rainwater harvesting systems, clogged-up soak away drainage ditches, etc.
[7] Report on meeting to identify priorities in addressing water issues September 25-26, 2006: Omaha, Nebraska.

## Strategic outcomes

To achieve its purpose, the GWI has identified three strategic outcomes it aims to deliver:

**Outcome 1: Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)** programmes that link multiple water use delivery, environmental sustainability, healthy and functioning ecosystem services, and strong and equitable governance and equity structures that emphasize involvement of the most vulnerable, marginalized groups have been designed, implemented and evaluated.

That water is a finite resource essential for life on earth is well accepted. Reconciling its use among different actors for social, economic and environmental goals require systems to ensure equitable and sustainable solutions are found on a continuous basis. **IWRM** is a conceptual framework that seeks to do this – see Box 2. It is an approach that moves away from the conventional methods of water delivery along sectoral lines to a more holistic way of managing water for broader livelihood, development and conservation objectives. It is guided by four principles established at the Dublin Conference in 1992:

**Box 2: Integrated Water Resource Management**

A process that promotes the co-ordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. *(Global Water Partnership, 2000).*

- Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment.
- Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels.
- Women play a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water.
- Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good.[8]

IWRM is the basis on which all the countries in the GWI cluster will manage their water resources in the future. Burkina Faso has developed a national IWRM plan and this process is well advanced in the other countries. Once all these plans are in place, the key challenge is then how in practice to implement them in a coordinated fashion at local, national and regional levels. There is no prior experience to emulate or pre-determined modules to follow in West Africa. IWRM has to be built on experimentation and tailored to respond to the context of each locality. Experimentation is required not only in the type of over-arching institutional framework necessary to promote synergy between existing sectoral policies on water, land, forests, etc. but also to address often competing uses of water between different sectors and actors. There is also the need for experimentation on how to address power issues inherent to the challenge of reconciling divergent positions or addressing instances of bad governance (e.g. water pollution, over-extraction and wastage) as well how best to support the active and informed involvement of all actors (local government, civil society, private sector but also women, the poor) in the process.

Partners in the GWI in West Africa will contribute to this process by designing a range of projects at local, national and regional level to implement the key principles underpinning IWRM, which directly address the regional priorities presented above while meeting the core objectives of GWI – see Box 3. Projects will focus not only on piloting IWRM at the local level (e.g. within the

[8] The failure of the Dublin principles to also recognise water as a social good was strongly criticised during the Johannesburg summit and many actors now include it as part of their understanding and objectives of IWRM.

context of a particular local government authority and/or sub-basin), but also at national and regional levels. For example, by using a relatively small transboundary sub-basin as the framework within which to address a range of issues common to all countries as well as the challenge of managing a transboundary resource such as a river.

The following specific challenges were identified during the meeting as needing to be addressed through the experimentation process in the initial years:

- How do you implement IWRM in the context of decentralisation reconciling local jurisdictions and needs with higher-level jurisdictions and needs, including the management of cross-border resources?
- How do you prevent contamination of rivers and aquifers including basin-wide water quality management?
- How do you ensure that water and sanitation infrastructures are appropriate and are managed over the long term and in a satisfactorily manner?
- How do you ensure that water is kept potable from the source to the moment it is drunk?
- How do you maximise the available water (recharge, recycle, reduce waste)?
- How do you ensure potable water and sanitation access of vulnerable and marginalised or otherwise "hard to reach" populations (equity + technology)?
- How do you reconcile multiples water uses at different levels and by different actors? What mechanisms are needed to ensure equitable and efficient water allocation?
- How do you ensure that reliable information about water resources (quality and quantity) is available at local levels (more generally: at the lowest appropriate level for the decisions which need to be taken i.e. respecting principles of subsidiary)?
- How can one encourage coordinated action between different institutions for inter-policy coordination and multi-stakeholder inputs at different levels?
- How do you build the capacities of women, migrants, pastoral communities and other marginalized groups in decision-making processes?

**Box 3: Objectives of the Global Water Initiative Core Programme**

- Empowerment of local communities to govern and manage their water resources
- Establish appropriate and sustainable water delivery and sanitation systems
- Strengthen understanding and sustainable management of water resources through environmental protection and conservation of water resources
- Address transboundary issues in water basin management
- Strengthen integrated water resource management policy and legislation with respect to tenure of land and water resources
- Build capacity and understanding among relevant authorities (government and other) to strengthen inclusive, participatory and accountable decision making.
- Improve the dissemination of information on the success and failures of different water interventions

**Source : Proceedings of GWI meeting, March 2007.**

**Outcome 2: A vibrant, cohesive and well-informed water constituency at country and regional levels** actively involved in fostering analysis and learning, and strengthening collaborative partnerships to improve delivery on integrated water management projects exists in West Africa.

Building a critical mass of like-minded organisations with the same understanding and vision for the implementation of the IWRM approach is essential to the success of the GWI. But it will not be easy, and has to be approached in an iterative manner. First, we need to build our own shared understanding of the concept and its practical implications at different levels within the countries in

**Box 4: Water constituency**

A coalition of different types of actors which share the same vision and who collectively work together to realise the objectives of IWRM, established at local, national and international levels.

which we operate, and how it links up to wider regional water governance issues. We need to do this not only amongst the direct GWI partnership, but also with our own partner organisations.

This needs to be followed by the implementation of jointly monitored projects experimenting with new ways of managing water for sustainable development using the IWRM approach. We need to learn together from our shared experience on the ground and be prepared to share this with the other actors we want to bring into the coalition. We need to encourage strong evidence-based learning processes at all levels based not only on our own work but that of other organisations, giving the experience of others equal prominence with our own GWI initiative. We need to be prepared to accept peer-group processes of evaluation and critical investigation to tease out learning and identify practical ways forward. This will contribute not only to convincing people of the value of the IWRM approach but also of the benefits of working together. We must involve as wide a constituency as possible using the media, particularly local and national radio, in a creative manner building their capacities too to rally behind the concept.

The meeting in June identified the following questions for which we need answers over the next few years if we are successfully to promote a strong and vibrant water constituency in West Africa:

- How do you get everyone to push for IWRM within the context of decentralisation?
- How do you develop a constituency at the different levels (community, national, international)?
- How do you reconcile the interests of different actors?

**Outcome 3: Changes in the awareness of and support for integrated water management programmes** among donors, investors and governments through the dissemination of sound analysis of effective water delivery through IWRM and with an emphasis on scaling-up, will have taken place in West Africa.

Policy influence requires a combination of sound evidence tailored to governments', donors' and investors' priorities, framed in win-win scenarios for all concerned and backed by a strong and vocal constituency with powerful allies. It also requires a sophisticated understanding of how policies are made in practice, and an ability to seize opportunities as they arise in a flexible and opportunistic manner. Fundamentally, policy design and implementation is a political process that tends to favour dominant groups. Influencing particularly government policy to support an IWRM approach, which applies key principles of equity, particularly for poor and marginal groups, and which seeks to reconcile national development interests over local interests, will be a challenge. Hence, the importance of developing a strong constituency with the skills to practice IWRM and to advocate for change.

In West Africa, our strategy will focus on strengthening not only our own understanding and skills in policy analysis and influence, but that of the wider water constituency to ensure collectively we have a sound understanding of key policy entry points to use as well as systems to track policy opportunities as they arise. This will require developing good working relationships with government, donor and other key water institutions at national and regional levels.

Two key questions were identified on which we will focus our initial attention:

- How do you reinforce the capacity of citizens to disseminate experiences and influence policy and practice?
- How do you successfully influence governments and donors in the water sector?

## 5. Geographic and social focus

To be completed.

## 6. GWI partnerships

Overall, the GWI partnership in West Africa is well placed to deliver the three strategic outcomes of the Initiative in West Africa. In terms of coverage, three of the partners (CARE, CRS and IUCN) collectively have offices in all of the countries, while IIED and SOS Sahel-UK through their in-country partnerships have activities in all five countries too. Besides the Cluster members, other actors in the sector will be involved in the various projects including relevant government ministries, NGOs, civil society organisations, the private sector and any other technical relevant partners in the field.

Our collective skills complement each other in the manner in which we work as well as what we work on. CARE, CRS and, to a lesser extent, SOS Sahel-UK have a very long and solid field-based experience centred on the supply of water and sanitation infrastructure combined with community capacity building for its maintenance and wider health education, and the provision of water for local livelihoods (market gardening). We are also relatively strong on water resource management implementing activities at different levels and scales and in slightly different ways. While CRS focuses on local livelihoods and resource conservation activities (e.g. market gardening, soil and water conservation), IUCN's experience is in building institutional capacity for implementing IWRM at all levels including shared river basin management for equitable and environmentally sustainable use of resources. SOS Sahel UK's experience is through improved land use planning and forest management in the context of decentralisation, while CARE has core competencies in community mobilization and capacity building for community management and ownership of resources. Good governance is a topic central to all of our work either through capacity building of community water committees and local government bodies, or by conducting action-research to improve the broader institutional framework at national and regional levels, or by facilitating multi-stakeholder learning and advocacy processes at different levels.

Water economics and financing is an area, however, on which we do not have a lot of experience. IIED has a global project on developing markets for watershed protection and although none of the countries involved are in West Africa there is potential for us to learn from this experience. IUCN's Water and Nature Initiative programme has produced a toolkit based on its global work in which water financing is a key feature.

## 7. M & E, learning and advocacy strategy

To be done following the Madrid meeting and the subsequent meeting of the RSC in October 2007.

**Box 5: Working principles of the RSC in West Africa**

- Collective responsibility for decision-making, successes and failures, but with tasks clearly delegated and defined.
- Strive to take decisions that are in the best interest of improved water resource management in West Africa.
- Evidence based discussions not rhetoric (ongoing learning and analysis).
- Be frank and honest with each other when organisational constraints or priorities exist and need to be reconciled.

## 8. Cluster management

A light, flexible but responsive structure will manage the GWI cluster – see Figure 1. The institutional arrangements are designed to respond to the anticipated levels of work required in the early years while allowing room for expansion in capacity within key posts as GWI activities develop in West Africa. They are also designed to bring together a broad range of skills that are required to coordinate and manage the cluster effectively, while allowing for maximum flexibility to seek other skills should the need arise.

A **Regional Strategic Committee** (RSC) of the GWI will be established composed of five members; one each to be nominated by CARE, CRS, IIED, IUCN and SOS Sahel UK.[9] AAH-USA will be offered observer (non voting) status and a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between them and IIED as the Chair of the Regional Strategic Committee to clarify respective roles and responsibilities with respect to the management of the Core Program and the Refugee/IDP program in West Africa.[10] IIED will chair the RSC and Sahel-Eco, a national NGO in Mali, will provide the Secretariat.

The RSC will meet twice a year; once in Mali and once in one of the other countries of the cluster. The agenda for one of the two meetings will focus on learning, particularly those issues relevant to the country and project areas in which the meeting is being held and will include a field visit to discuss the evidence based aspects of a physical IWRM project.

The RSC is ultimately responsible for the strategic direction of the GWI in West Africa contributing the design and revision of the regional strategy, project selection, ensuring quality control, and monitoring partnership dynamics and contributing the development of other relevant strategies (M & E, learning, advocacy, etc.). Appendix 1 gives a more detailed list of specific roles and responsibilities.

IIED will establish a **Regional Secretariat** (RS) under its overall management to support the Regional Strategic Committee and ensure program and financial management. This includes the overall coordination of GWI activities in West Africa; the facilitation of linkages between partners in West Africa and the other clusters; the facilitation of M & E for accountability, learning and advocacy including documentation and dissemination; and the consolidation of narrative and financial reporting.

The RS is composed of the following staff:

- **Regional Manager** with overall responsibility for representing the GWI in West Africa to the other clusters and to other partners and stakeholders, for managing the Regional Secretariat and driving the process (not directing outcomes) for the design, implementation and review of the GWI in West Africa. This includes providing leadership, ensuring coherence and ensuring everyone is on board, as well as monitoring the performance of the RS. The post holder will also have specific responsibility for managing the programme's policy influence work, particularly at regional and global levels, building on the lessons to emerge from the country and regional activities and ensuring close liaison with key regional institutions; and for reporting to the HGBF, the West Africa GWI partners and the other clusters. In the initial years, an IIED Principal Researcher on Water Governance based in the UK but with frequent visits to West Africa will dedicate 50% of their time to the post of GWI Regional Manager.

- **Regional Learning Coordinator** with responsibility for ensuring in-country and cross-country learning including M & E, capturing and documenting lessons subsequently to be used by GWI partners and the wider water constituency in their work, but also the GWI Regional Manager in their policy-oriented work. IIED will sub-contract Sahel-Eco to provide a part-time person (50%) based in Mali to assume these tasks.

- **Regional Projects Officer** with responsibility for coordinating and monitoring partners' project reporting (narrative, financial) and maintaining a projects database. The post-holder will also be responsible for administering the program's knowledge management systems (e.g. resources database, website, publications, etc.) and regional logistics (e.g.

[9] Oxfam-USA have been contacted to see if they wish to nominate a representative on the RSC.
[10] AAH have a separate funding agreement with the HGBF and as such will not be submitting proposals under the Core Program.

6-monthly RSC meetings). IIED will sub-contract Sahel-Eco to provide a full-time person based in Mali for this post.

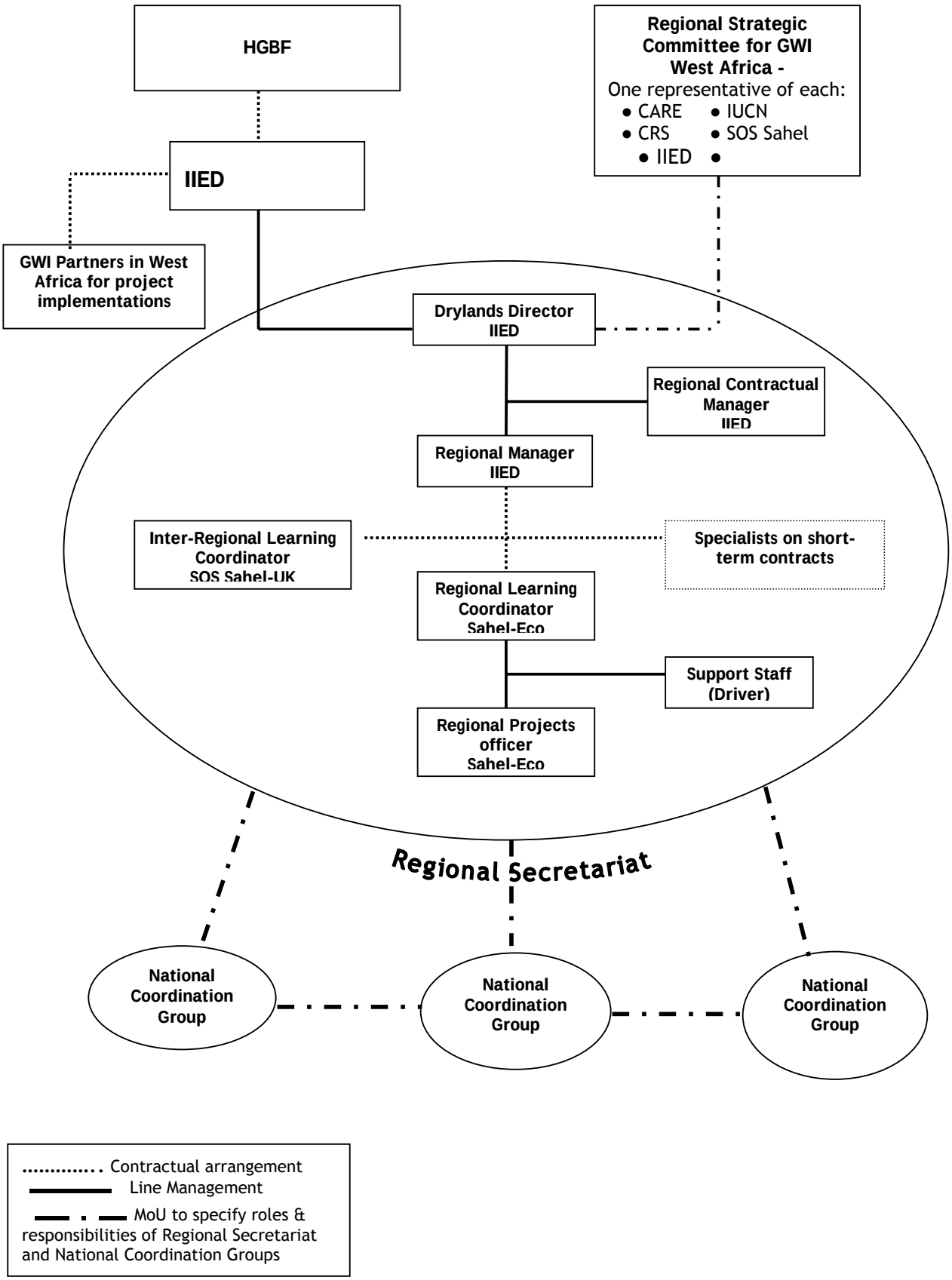
- **Inter-Regional Learning Coordinator** with responsibility for ensuring cross-fertilisation of ideas between the West Africa and other two clusters. This will involve attending all three regional cluster meetings as well as participating in in-country field visits in each of the regions as necessary. IIED will sub-contract SOS Sahel-UK to provide a part-time person (15%) based in the UK to assume this role.

- **Regional Contractual Manager** with responsibility for managing the contractual procedures with GWI partners in West Africa, consolidating financial reports and for reporting to the HGBF. IIED will allocate these tasks to one of its existing financial administrators based in the UK. In the initial years, it is anticipated this will take about 10% of this person's time.

Additional skills will be contracted in on the basis of need (e.g. M & E specialist to design in consultation with partners an appropriate system) under the management of the Regional Manager who will also be responsible adjusting the staffing arrangements as necessary.

At **national level,** GWI partners will establish a coordination group to develop a national programme consistent with GWI global priorities and the West Africa strategy and facilitate dialogue, exchange and learning between GWI partners and other key actors. The national coordination group will be composed of GWI direct members and other key stakeholders including relevant government ministries, civil society, the private sector, and NGOs involved in water and sanitation projects. The exact composition will vary from country to another. In year 1, each country group will in collaboration with the Regional Secretariat define its coordination needs, structure, communications, priorities, internal management and links to the RS and the other country groups. It is anticipated that one key role of the country groups is to contribute to the building of a national water constituency seeking to inform and influence national policy on the basis of GWI partners' and other experience in experimenting in the delivery of IWRM approaches.

**Figure 1: Institutional arrangements**



## 9. Timeframe

Annexe 3 shows the key dates in the GWI year for the West Africa cluster as identified and agreed during the meeting in June 2007. It assumes a HGBF financial year starting 1 September with project activities and budgets approved by the RSC by the 31st July. It also assumes an annual cycle of project approval for the majority of the budget; although subject to available funds a second round of project approval for smaller grants is planned.

Key dates of the GWI year include:

- 30th April: deadline for submission of annual reports, revised project budget (for on-going projects) and new project proposals
- May/June: meeting of RSC to review past year, draw lessons for overall annual report, review/select new projects and agree annual work plan
- 31st July deadline for the submission of revised annual work plan and budgets to HGBF
- 1st September start of new funding year
- 31st October deadline for 6-month narrative/financial reports
- November/December: 2nd meeting of RSC to focus on learning and project visits with some time to review progress, agree interim projects subject to funds, adjust budgets as necessary
- October to July: period for partner visits by regional Manager and Learning Coordinator and other secretariat staff.

## 10. Budget (1 year)

To be done following the October meeting.

## Annex 1: Roles and responsibilities of the West Africa Regional Strategy Committee

| ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES of the RSC | |
|---|---|
| *Strategy* | • Define strategic direction and priorities (water sector in West Africa) |
| | • Monitor policy and revise as required |
| *M+E Principals and Standards* | • Set principles for M+E of projects (e.g. peer group) |
| | • Ensure quality control including: technical issues; community participation; sustainability; cost effectiveness; links to local government; links to policy. |
| *Cluster group dynamics* | • Seek to make the best use of comparative advantages of all the partners across the region. |
| | • Break barriers between partner organisations and build strong links between practitioners. |
| | • Ensure each country has coordination of actions and learning between partners + links with government+ with other actors |
| *Project and Budget Approval* | • Proposals: Receive, review, comment/advise, accept/reject, report back on why not funded |
| | • Can reject projects outright if they are outside the strategy or will have no or negative impact |
| | • Collectively manage the budget for the entire cluster ($US 5 million per year) |
| | • Can initiate/propose projects with strategic impacts (one partner then accepts to develop and implement) |
| *Learning and influencing* | • Identify strategic learning objectives and policy issues and develop advocacy strategy |
| | • Seek synergy between actions (to promote greater impact, "difference from what happens how" and influence) |
| | • Identify and draw lessons from successes and failures |
| | • Ensure that there is EVIDENCE on which to base our opinions (set standards, challenge ourselves) |
| | • Challenge thinking in the region by bringing in new analysis from outside as well as from inside |
| | • Track / keep eye open for interesting initiatives relevant to WA and share with others in group |
| | • Decide what needs to be taken to global level |
| *Communication strategy* | • Define communications strategy (with wider public) |

## Annex 2: Roles and responsibilities of the West Africa Cluster Leader and Regional Secretariat

| | |
|---|---|
| **Managing/servicing the regional strategy committee** | • plan organise and report on RSC meetings |
| | • maintain communications between committee members |
| | • leverage funding (manage fundraising strategy) |
| | • implement communications strategy of the cluster (to wider public) |
| | • challenge the thinking and analysis in the committee - assure next/dynamic analysis from outside and inside |
| **Global level learning / links with other clusters** | • represent WA cluster at global level of GWI and report back to committee |
| | • develop links to other clusters |
| **Contract management HGBF** | • manage communications with HGBF |
| | • manage contract with HGBF |
| **Monitor & coordinate finance and projects at country level** | • contracts and financial management with partners |
| | • develop MOU at partnership levels and also for project implementation (contracts) |
| **Monitor and coordinate learning (policy level) across the regional and clusters** | • inventory regional level structures and build partnerships with them |
| **Monitor and coordinate learning at country level** | • draw lessons from failures and successes |
| | • identify cross-border issues and ensure country focal point/partners are informed |
| **Communications** | • French-English translation (bi-lingual group) |
| | • implement communications strategy of the cluster (communication with wider public) |
| | • Establish and maintain a data base of information on GWI and WA cluster |

## Annex 3: The GWI year in West Africa

The following diagram shows the key dates in the GWI year for the WA cluster as identified and agreed during the meeting in June 2007. It assumes a HGBF financial year starting 1 September. A global meeting is scheduled for June 2008 and these are likely to be held once a year in future.