



REGIONAL CONFERENCE
IMPLEMENTING THE ECOWAS RECOMMENDATIONS ON MAJOR HYDRAULIC
INFRASTRUCTURE IN WEST AFRICA: SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

*Regional Partnership WRCC (ECOWAS), Global Water Initiative (IUCN/IIED)
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CONTEXT

Over the period 2009-2012, the ECOWAS Water Resources Co-ordination Centre (WRCC) carried out a consultative process on large infrastructure projects in the water sector within ECOWAS countries. The project's overall objective is to contribute to the harmonious development of ECOWAS Member States and regional integration, by establishing a dialogue on water sector infrastructure (see www.dialoguebarrages.net).

In December 2011, the ECOWAS technical committee of water experts adopted guidelines on major hydraulic infrastructure in West Africa based on the work of a panel of independent experts and consultative workshops in the river basins and at regional level involving governments, basin organizations and civil society.

These guidelines comprise six priorities (Axes), 25 recommendations and 77 measures presented in the form of principles or products, but with little indication of who is to be responsible for defining them in detail or implementing them and in what way.

Some of the measures can be considered simply as good practice, already implemented in some cases in West Africa. Others are regulatory or methodological proposals which require further work on definition and implementation, particularly to specify the tasks, responsibilities and resources needed for their adoption by the Member States, developers and institutions involved in the environmental and social issues raised by major hydraulic infrastructure projects.

One of the guideline priorities focuses on capitalization and sharing of experience in the ECOWAS area to take more account of the environmental, economic and social issues surrounding the development and operation of infrastructure projects in the water sector (Priority 5). This is the background against which the present multi-stakeholder workshop is being held, following on from the previous workshop in September 2011 organized by the ECOWAS/GWI/IUCN/IIED partnership (see www.iucn.org/gwidams).

Another priority is to encourage project developers to adopt processes which bring in the affected communities as stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries in the projects (Priority 2). There are as yet no tools and approaches in the region that are well-established and accepted by all stakeholders for use in implementing the following recommendations and measures:



- **2.1 Integrate the affected communities as partners and ensure that they benefit directly from the dam throughout its lifetime**
 - 2.1.1 *Grant the affected communities direct benefits generated by the dam (farmland, electricity, drinking water, grazing, fisheries, etc.)*
 - 2.1.5 *Take account of intangible/cultural assets within resettlement programmes, acknowledging rights of access to land and making sure that communities are compensated for the loss of traditional uses*

- **2.2 Ensure that communities' living conditions improve after dam construction in relation to their previous situation**
 - 2.2.2 *Identify legitimate representatives of the communities who are able to conduct negotiations and sign the agreements*
 - 2.2.4 *Establish contracts for the plans through "demonstrable" agreements (between the project developer and representatives of the affected communities), possibly with recourse to a "moral" guarantor for their implementation (e.g. former judges, religious or customary personalities, ombudsman, etc.) and identification of the jurisdiction competent to deal with any conflicts*

The recommendations and measures identified in this way will be the theme of this workshop, where participants can discuss together ways of putting them into practice on the basis of past or current experiences so as to improve major dam projects.

They can also be linked into the key messages from the previous regional workshop in September 2011, which include the need to:

7. *Establish mechanisms to ensure tenure security for homes and farmlands by providing legal documentation that clearly allocates rights (use rights, property rights, etc.) to each resettled family.*
8. *Involve local people as partners in all stages of the decision-making process (e.g. type of housing, management of cultural heritage, choice of resettlement site) and only resettle communities after adequate negotiation when timely, accurate information has been given in a locally accessible language and format.*
9. *Build the capacity of resettled people and host communities so that they can live together and benefit from new and unfamiliar resources (irrigation, fishery...) and opportunities (tourism, commerce...).*
10. *Organize the fishery and establish a multi-stakeholder management body to ensure the sustainable management of the resource and the payment of taxes in favour of local development.*
11. *Ensure that the permanent arrangements for management of the dam and reservoir are clear (multi-stakeholder committee) once the construction phase is complete.*
13. *Establish an appropriate electricity supply system for resettled and host villages while ensuring that new sites are connected to the grid.*
14. *A percentage of the income from the sale of the electricity produced by the dam should benefit a local development fund for affected people.*
16. *Assess and compensate for the loss of cultural heritage and traditional use.*

The initiative comes within a context of major dam construction programmes in several countries of the region, which are designed to meet communities' current and future water, energy and food security needs against a background of climate change. From this perspective and taking a regional approach, there is an urgent need to improve these processes in social terms and to develop tools and approaches to implement the ECOWAS recommendations and ensure that affected



communities are better off afterwards than they were before, so as to avoid social situations that will prove harder to manage and redress as time goes on.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this technical workshop is to share West African experiences of displacement/resettlement and benefit-sharing with local communities, in order to develop consensual tools and approaches for implementing the ECOWAS recommendations. The realities of each country will be analysed specifically in relation to the above-mentioned recommendations and measures and the workshop will seek to identify and capitalize good practice in the form of advice for the future.

The expected results of the meeting will therefore take the form of good practice, key messages and recommendations validated by the participants. Overall, it is also hoped that, following these exchanges, the stakeholders present will take more account in their respective positions of the lessons learned from the debates. A final communiqué and workshop report will be produced.

The workshop will include three parallel approaches:

- Presentations/papers to present experiences in plenary session;
- Group work to identify issues, challenges and potential solutions;
- Each participant should, at the organizers' request, bring documentation illustrating the legal capacity of the various entities (villages, municipalities, associations, etc.) in the different countries to sign legally binding agreements.

The workshop will be attended by experts from various regional institutions or dam programmes working on the identified themes, together with scientists and civil society representatives.



PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

21 January	
	Opening remarks
Session 1 Plenary	Introduction General presentations: dialogue process, framework of the WRCC report, GWI-Dams...
Session 2 Plenary	Sharing our experiences and understanding the context - presentations by participants
	Lunch
Session 3 Groups	Sharing our experiences and understanding the context <i>5 working groups of 10 people around the issue</i>
After the Session	Organization and consolidation of experiences through the 5 groups (facilitators of each group) + preparation PowerPoint presentation
22 January	
Session 4 Plenary	Feedback of findings from session 3 group work
Session 5 Plenary	How to respond to the challenges identified? Proposed approaches and tools to implement the ECOWAS recommendations <i>5 working groups of 10 people around the issue</i>
	Lunch
Session 6 Groups	<i>Cont'd</i>
23 January	
Session 7 Plenary	Feedback and discussion Assessment of the meeting Analysis of the themes highlighted Final communiqué
	Lunch
Afternoon	Departure of participants