

Availability of, and access to, water resources have a strong bearing on populations and ecosystems as well as on livelihoods, economic growth and overall development in Africa. Although Sub-Saharan Africa on average is well-endowed with water resources, these are unevenly distributed, highlighting the need for good water governance. To promote poverty alleviation and inclusive growth, it is important that water resource development takes place in the context of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in the supervision and distribution of freshwater resources. However, water is already scarce in some parts of the continent – the annual water availability is 4008 m³ per capita which is below the global annual of 6498 m³ - making it difficult to meet the human rights to food, water and sanitation, maintain ecosystem services, and even challenging peace in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The fact that a large share of the African water resources crosses national boundaries complicates water management and development efforts. Another challenge is the increasing water demand, generally caused by urbanisation, industrialisation, population growth, expansion of irrigated agriculture, and increasing living standards. Meeting the increasing demand will be further obstructed by reduced water availability, due to unsustainable use, pollution and climate change. People living in poverty, especially women and girls, are disproportionately affected by water stress through reduced access to water and unstable energy and food prices. A number of challenges are apparent for the management and fair distribution of water resources in Africa, such as:

Climate change

The impacts of climate change on water resources in Africa include: flooding, drought, changed rainfall distribution, drying-up of rivers, melting of glaciers and the receding of water bodies. These effects have devastating impacts on ecosystems and communities, ranging from economic and social impacts to health and food insecurity. Vulnerability

varies according to countries' geographical positioning and the capacity to mitigate or adapt to the changes. As per cent of the water resources in Africa are transboundary in nature, it is imperative to underline the importance of regional cooperation in all planning pertaining to numerous aspects, including impacts on climate change.



Inauguration of an irrigation project in Uganda, funded by Sweden as part of the support to regional cooperation in the Nile basin. Photo: Maria Vink.

Resilience and transboundary water management.

Water security in Africa is compromised by a highly variable climate which destabilises economies, societies and livelihoods. Predicted climate change trends are likely to exacerbate problems for many, particularly the most vulnerable and poor. Water stress can undermine the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals on food security, water and sanitation, and on ecosystems. Transboundary water resource management to promote resilience to weather-induced shocks can make countries that cooperate reap benefits by strengthening healthy ecosystem services that rely on well-functioning shared river basins.

IWRM and poverty alleviation

Sida's support to transboundary water resource management in Africa aims to promote the application of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in the supervision and distribution of water resources in the institutions, or River Basin Organisations (RBOs), that coordinate the use of shared rivers. The poverty alleviation aspects of IWRM are at the centre of Sida's engagement. The availability and functioning of freshwater ecosystems have a significant impact on the livelihoods, health and security of the poor.

SWEDEN'S ENGAGEMENT

The annual support from Sida to the water and sanitation sector in Africa, including transboundary water management, is currently approximately 144 MSEK (2016). Sida's support is mainly provided to African partners, such as the African Union (AU) and the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), civil society or research institutions. Cooperation with other development partners is a priority why support is sometimes provided via multilateral channels, such as the World Bank managed Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) programme. Cooperation around the Nile and river basins in Southern and Eastern Africa have received the most support (Okavango, Pungwe, Zambezi rivers), while support to West Africa has increased more recently (Volta, Niger). To ensure that the rights of poor and vulnerable groups are in focus, Sida works according to a rights-based approach. Examples of typical Swedish support are presented below.

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER GOVERNANCE

Governance is a key component to obtaining sustainable regional water management. Therefore, Sida supports the development of inclusive and accountable institutions.

Sida's support has enabled the Okavango riparian states to establish a secretariat, The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), to promote inclusive and transparent planning and decision making. OKACOM will also facilitate the development of a Water Allocation Strategy to ensure equitable sharing of the river's water resources. The Sida-supported Shared Waters Partnership (SWP) seeks to address challenges that are related to lack of trust and consensus between the Nile Basin states, impacting agreements on water management. Information sharing between governments and society enhances accountability and improved and more transparent investment planning.

Intensified stakeholder participation in the Pungwe basin has led to increased understanding of upstream-downstream water management challenges and helped to build trust.

WATER MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholder participation and access to high quality information are key ingredients to balancing different user needs and prioritise development options. Swedish support contributes to improved access to information, for instance through hydrometric stations and resource inventories as

good quality pre-investment preparation is another key feature for successful joint development projects. CIWA assists RBOs to prepare bankable projects, such as hydropower plants and irrigation schemes. During 2016, CIWA supported 11 organisations responsible for transboundary water management and development in Africa.

The Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) has facilitated community stakeholder engagement in fisheries and water resource management in Uganda and the DRC for improved food security. With Sida's support, Rwanda, Tanzania and Burundi will construct a hydropower plant in the Rusumo Falls which will provide electricity to 1 million people from 2020.

LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENTS



A women's association in Pungwe basin has received support to start a fish farm. Photo: Maria Vink/Sida

Sida's support to transboundary water management has a direct effect on poor peoples' livelihoods. OKACOM is implementing strategies and activities to promote conservation agriculture for improved rural household livelihoods in the basin, including commercialisation of natural products. Through a small grants component in Sida's support to the Pungwe basin, local communities in Mozambique have improved their livelihood through income generating activities. Furthermore, 274 families and 2460 school children have benefited from an irrigation scheme in Zimbabwe. Sida also supports the West Africa Environmental Governance Partnership (PAGE) that aims to promote sustainable water management in the Volta, Senegal, Niger and Mono river basins.

Policy direction – water and sanitation

Sweden promotes efficient, fair and sustainable management of water and sanitation. Sida's interventions are directed by result strategies at country, regional and global levels