

**1. INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL WATER RESOURCES: THE CASE OF THE KOMADUGU-YOBE BASIN IN NIGERIA**

**OR**

**2. PERSISTENCE & OPPORTUNISM – THE REALITIES OF TRYING TO IMPROVE WATER GOVERNANCE IN WEST AFRICA**

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**Setting the Scene**

The action takes place in northern Nigeria in a river basin which has its sources in the northern uplands, and which flows (trickles) into Lake Chad. This basin, the Komadugu-Yobe, spans some 84,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and encompasses a population of 15 m. The area is mostly rural, but does include towards the head end, Kano city - Nigeria's third largest city, with a population of approximately seven million. The basin cuts across the Guinea, Sudan and Sahel savannah eco-zones. It runs parallel to the border with Niger. Mean rainfall is about 512 mm and water demand in the basin exceeds supply. The area has mostly small scale seasonal cropping, though there are two large Federal irrigation schemes fed from the river, both are under-utilised and poorly managed, but set to be expanded. Due largely to wetland and floodplain depressions, the area is also of a regional importance for nomadic cattle pastoralists. Nigeria is a federal state, and the management of the river basin and its water and wetland resources fall under the aegis of a complicated patchwork of Federal and State ministries, parastatals, and formal and traditional rulers.

**The (large) Cast of Actors**

- Federal Ministries: Federal Ministry of Water Resources(FMWR), Federal Ministry of Environment (FMEEnv), Federal Ministry of Agriculture (FMoA), Ecological Funds Office (EFO).
- Federal Parastatals: Hadejia Jema'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA), Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA), Ecological Funds Office (EFO).
- Federal politicians: Hon Dr Ahmed Lawan – Former Chair of House Cttee on Agriculture, now Chair of House Cttee on Education, and MP from a wetlands constituency; Senator Usman Albashir – Senator representing a wetlands constituency; Senator Ibrahim Kirikasama – Senator representing another wetlands constituency, Senator Mamman Ali – Senator representing a neighbouring constituency but wishes to use the wetlands issues for underpinning his political ambitions.

- Other Federal bodies: Komadugu Yobe Basin Coordinating Council (KYB-CC), KYB Technical Advisory Committee (KYB –TAC).
- State Ministries: State Ministries of: Water Resources; Environment; and Agriculture - each x 5 riparian States: Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno.
- State Governors: in each of the five riparian States; with that of Jigawa State being a maverick.
- Other State Bodies: Kano City Water Board, Jigawa State Flood and Erosion Control Agency.
- Emirs & Emirate councils: Kano, Hadejia, Ringim, Katagum, Bade, Nguru, Ngazargamu, Borno.
- Local Govt Authorities: Wudil, Miga, Kafin Hausa, Hadejia, Guri, Kirikasama, Zaki, Karasuwa, Jakusko, Bade, Geidam, Yusufari, Mobbar, Abadam.
- Development Agencies: DFID, World Bank, GEF, IFAD, IUCN
- Projects: Hadejia Nguru Wetlands Conservation Project (HNWCP), IUCN-Komadugu Yobe Basin Project (IUCN-KYB), Lake Chad Basin Commission GEF project (LCBC-GEF).

## **ACT 1: Antecedents & Problem Analysis**

The Tiga and Challawa Gorge dams (see map) were constructed in the upstream end of the Komadugu-Yobe Basin (KYB) to support irrigation agriculture in response to severe droughts, which afflicted Northern Nigeria in the 1970s. The two dams support two major irrigation schemes, the Kano River Irrigation Project (KRIP) and the Hadejia Valley Irrigation Project (HVIP), as well as providing a source of drinking water to Kano, a city of about 7 million people.

The Hadejia Nguru Wetlands (HNWs) at the centre of the basin has been a subject of conservation and development interest to the international community since 1987. It was then that the Hadejia Nguru Wetlands Conservation Project (HNWCP) commenced as a partnership of the United Kingdom Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) and the then states of Bauchi (including present Gombe state) Borno (including present Yobe state), and Kano (including present Jigawa state). This project evolved to become an IUCN 'wise-use of wetlands' project.

In September, 2002 the DFID-funded Joint Wetlands Livelihoods (JWL) project was started. Initially, JWL was designed as a "focus State" project based in Jigawa State, in line with the then DFID country strategy. It soon became obvious that the issues at stake required that the project have a basin focus, encompassing the five riparian States of Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi and Borno. Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, JWL, in concert with the basin stakeholders, has been making efforts to address a host of livelihoods, conflict management and governance problems, all having their roots in a single cause: poor water resource management in the basin. The project sees this as a result of institutional failure in the management of the basin's water resources – a water governance problem.

Decades of institutional paralysis and/or failure in water resources management, especially in the way the two large upstream dams are run, have resulted in a changed hydrology in the KYB. The previously seasonal rivers of the basin are now either perennial (due to the way the dam releases are managed), or are completely blocked and no longer flowing. Some areas of the wetlands have become dry and unproductive, other excessively flooded and choked with invasive typha grass. Production of irrigated crops, vegetables, and fish has taken a dramatic

fall, leading to a sharp rise in poverty. Pastureland for livestock has also been inundated the flood waters, increasing the incidence of conflict between herders and farmers over the depleting resource. Urgent physical interventions as well as institutional reform measures are required to address the problems of the basin on a sustainable basis.

## **ACT 2: The Approach**

During a stakeholder analysis in early 2003, it was realised that stakeholders within the basin are perceived to occupy different positions based on their level of influence/power and interest towards the management of water resources in the basin. Based on these dispositions, JWL engaged these stakeholders by employing strategies (including exchange visits, advocacy, training, media, etc) to improve on their position on the water management issue – for example by bringing together weaker actors to give them more influence, by bringing together actors with interest and influence to be more accountable to each other, and by informing and influencing powerful stakeholders to have a more positive interest.

Another approach which JWL employed in engaging stakeholders is working at three stages of representation of the stakeholders disposition, namely: Community, Wetlands and Basin levels. At the basin level, the project is working with mainly federal level stakeholders to develop an integrated basin level water management plan, and the promotion of dam operation procedure ratified at the basin level. Much of this is policy level influencing work through networks of influential actors. At the wetlands level, responsible stakeholders (mostly at the State level) have been engaged in a process towards the construction of a flow proportioning structure at critical positions in the river system so that water can be proportioned in the various rivers in order to mitigate local water shortages in some channels and control excess in other channels. At the community level communities are being assisted to organise themselves and articulate their demands for services from the relevant agencies. Particularly efforts have been made to promote connectivity between all three levels, so that community views attain a policy voice.

The result of this approach is the emergence of four platforms for stakeholder participation in the management of the basin: a statutory body advising the FMWR about the basin, the KYB-Technical Advisory Committee (KYB-TAC) has been revitalised as the core advisory body to the Federal decision-makers; State IWRM Committees have now been established in 4 out of 5 of the riparian states (Jigawa, Yobe, Borno & Kano); the riparian Local Government Chairmen have formed a forum for this purpose; and a local council representing all wetlands communities is now functioning (called the the Wetlands Development Initiative - WDI). These platforms/committees (most of which are now fully operational with executive committees co-ordinating the activities) have been conceived to set the stage for policy influencing, advocacy, communication and awareness raising and practical demonstration of activities on water management issues in the basin.

This stakeholder-oriented approach has been guided by which DFID's Drivers of Change (DOC) thinking. JWL has placed highest priority and given most attention to the development of strategic alliances around a specific issue that both affects, and has captures the imagination of a wide range of stakeholders. Initiatives catalysed by the project, but undertaken by stakeholders, such as massed community channel clearance work, lobbying of higher level decision makers, media tours of the wetlands, and visits by emirs, commissioners, NASS members to the basin (mainly fuelled by above mentioned platforms), have created a mass of support for a demonstration of sustainable change in the way water resources are managed in the basin.

### **ACT 3: Starting to show results**

All the efforts of JWL and the basin stakeholders have started to yield results:

- I. Improvements in Kano city water supply Intakes.** Until recently, the operation of the intakes for Kano's water supply was a major example of poor water management in the basin; a classic case of how different government agencies work (or do not work) together in the basin.

The Kano State Water Board (KSWB), which operates the intakes was barely on speaking terms with the Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA), the Federal Agency responsible for releasing water to the intakes. Kano city needs about 20% of the water released from the two dams at Tiga and Challawa, but largely because of the inefficiency of the intakes, during the dry season KCWB sometimes abstracts as low as a mere 3% of the released flow. Over-release in the dry season, making the rivers perennial, has triggered many of the physical problems seen in the wetlands, such as typha infestation.

A £15,000 study was commissioned by JWL, which proposed simple measures to rectify the problem. KCWB invested the equivalent of £8,000 and achieved spectacular improvements, prompting the Kano State to make further financial commitments towards a more sustainable solution to the problems of the intakes. As a result of the more efficient intakes, conflict between the Water Board and River Basin Authority is now negligible and there is a more integrated approach to water management.

- II. Better Relations Between Organisations.** In addition to the above 'quick-win', JWL managed to engineer a rapprochement between KCWB and HJRBDA by bringing the two organisations together at various stakeholder fora and focusing their attention and energy on the various problems at stake, rather than on each other's perceived lapses.

Since its inception, JWL has fostered a better working relationship between different stakeholder organisations and communities within and across different levels and states. The project goes about this through a wide range of communication activities by stakeholders throughout the HJKYB: exchange visits, face-to-face meetings, media tours, study tours, consultancy studies, seminars and workshops. All these form the basis of collective action by stakeholders. The Wetlands Development Initiative (WDI) and the 4 inaugurated State Integrated Water Resources Management Committees (SIWRMC) provide excellent examples of different communities and organisations in the basin working harmoniously together towards a common goal.

### **III. Budget Allocation to IWRM**

Nigeria has produced its PRSP – the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). States are producing state-level SEEDS. These are key for setting budget allocations. The State IWRM Committees are starting to be effective in influencing State governments' commitment towards inclusion of IWRM-related activities into the States SEEDS documents.

Already, members of the Jigawa State IWRMC have established a foothold in their state's SEEDS document to allow for future budget allocation to their proposed IWRM

plans. The other State IWRMCs are keen to do likewise and rapidly following suit. JWL has planned inputs to support them and the other state IWRMCs in this.

#### **IV. Contributions from States and Local Governments for Channel Clearance**

The wetland States of Yobe and Jigawa assisted the joint manual channel clearance efforts of affected communities along the dry Burum Gana channel in the wetlands with mechanical excavators. Subsequently, Yobe State donated N1.5 million (£6,000) to Dagona community towards typha grass clearance on the Old Hadejia River.

The same amount was provided by 4 local governments along the Kafin Hausa River for excavation work to open up the blocked mouth of the River at Miga. The sum of N250,000 (£1,000) was donated to the Wetlands Development Initiative (WDI) by Bade and Jakusko local governments, and N100,000 (£400) by Guri local government – all as part of pledges by 6 local government (more local governments are expected to join) to contribute N250,000 (£1,000) each.

This is both government spending its own money to correct water management problems, and collective action by different local governments.

#### **V. Formalisation of a Local Wetlands Council**

The council – the Wetlands Development Initiative - is a short step away from becoming a fully registered organisation with the Federal Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), having earlier been registered locally. The CAC has already reserved the name “Wetlands Development Initiative” for the new body, and the outstanding formalities are expected to be completed any time from now. WDI will then open a bank account, thus completing the formalisation process. The project has provided capacity building in areas such as planning, monitoring, communications and advocacy to the organisation which represents all wetlands communities and is inclusive of both women’s and nomads’ interests. The organisation is both a focus of action and a voice at high levels for these constituents.

#### **VI. Engagement with State and National Assembly Members**

- In February 2005, Dr. Ahmed Lawan<sup>1</sup> tabled a motion to the plenary session of the House of Representatives (the lower house of the Federal parliament) on the problems facing the Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands. The Speaker directed formation of an Ad-hoc Environment Committee, to make a fact-finding tour to the KYB and report back. This motion was as a result of lobbying, advocacy, a national IWRM seminar and other communications activities. The Ad-hoc Committee submitted its report in October. If the resulting bill is passed by the House, the Federal Government will be mandated to take specified short and long term measures to address the problems of the Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands in particular, and of the Basin, in general.
- In April 2005, the National Assembly approved the sum of N300 million (£1.2 m) requested by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources (FMWR) towards the

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<sup>1</sup> An MP from Yobe State, and the House Committee Chairman on Agriculture at the time (and also Chair of a national IWRM seminar organised by JWL in 2004).

procurement of Typha cutting machines. The FMWR plans to deploy these machine them to the wetlands where they are expected to be utilised in clearing the Typha grass blocking the irrigation channels of the Hadejia Valley Irrigation Project. Reservations by the “Due Process” (anti-fraud) Department under the Presidency, about the suitability of the machines for typha clearance are however holding back progress. Senator Ibrahim Kirikasamma from Jigawa State played important role in pressing the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to include the machines in its budget and mobilising support from his colleagues in the National Assembly to approve the proposals.

- In the last quarter of 2004, the Yobe State House of Assembly passed a Bill pledging the support of Yobe State Government towards initiatives targeted at addressing the problems of the Wetlands. Following the passage of the Bill the State Governor volunteered to host the proposed summit of the five riparian Governors of the basin States in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

## **VII. Building and Maintaining Networks**

The JWL project has invested considerable efforts in building a network with and between its stakeholders, and devotes a lot of care and attention in maintaining them. A delicate balancing act is often needed to keep all the different actors with their competing, and at times conflicting, needs positively engaged and focussed on the relevant issues.

Nonetheless, the forums, such as JWL Advisory Committee (JAC) and the KYB-TAC – the latter in the process of being re-awakened - are still making useful contributions towards addressing the basin's problems. Several local, regional, national and international media representatives have been engaged by JWL in a bid to raise the awareness of the general public on the issues as well as influence high level policy makers to take the necessary steps needed to tackle the problems.

### **CODA - Whither Water Governance in the New Architecture of Aid?**

At a State level, stakeholders, through their State IWRM Committees, are engaged in budget processes that address PRSP concerns. Links are being made into Federal budget making. However the project has concerns about where this type of initiative fits in the new architecture of aid.

The project has been successful in doing what it was guided to do: ‘assist Nigerians in getting Nigerian government money spent on resolving these problems’. It has also been successful in demonstrating that a political economy approach to development<sup>2</sup> can work in practice. However this is a project, not a programme, and thus appears to ill-fits an era of large sector programmes and moves into various forms of budget support.

This begs the question of how support to water governance in developing countries will fair in an era of budget transfer, low-transaction cost, aid?

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<sup>2</sup> Drivers of Change

