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AFRICA: the Water Utilities Partnership

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Institutional reforms and governance -

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The Water Utilities Partnership (WUP) is a programme which was launched in 1996 by the African Union of Water Suppliers (AUWS), with the participation of the International Training Network (ITN) and above all the Regional Centre for low-cost Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (CREPA) and the Training and Networking Development (TREND), with the aim of improving public water utilities in Africa.

Its objective is to raise awareness with a view to achieving integrated water resource management and to credit environmental issues with the importance they deserve.

The Programme is currently developing projects in four areas: institutional reform, performance indicators, leak control and the provision of services to low-income communities. The Programme budget totals 2 million US dollars per year.

The co-ordination of funding is regularly examined amongst the donors who support the WUP, particularly the World Bank, the European Commission and the English, French and Swedish co-operations.

An institutional monograph

An institutional monograph of the companies which supply water in 48 African countries was carried out within the WUP (20 English speaking, 23 French speaking and 5 Portuguese speaking countries).

In 34 of them, (notably 21 out of the 23 French speaking countries), water utilities are organised at national level with a single utility in charge.

An official sanitation utility exists in only 20 countries. Water utilities are linked to those of sanitation and, if need be, to electricity or gas in 28 out of the 48 countries involved in the survey.

In all cases, the facilities are State-owned. Delegation of these utilities to private companies occurs to various degrees in 26 African countries, 11 of which for less than 4 years.

Type of contract for the delegation of utilities	Countries concerned

BOT (Build Operate Transfer)	South Africa, Tunisia, Senegal
Leasing	Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Senegal
Concession	The Comoro Islands, Gabon, Morocco
Service Contracts	Mali, Sao Tome & Principe, Tunisia, South Africa

The follow-up of institutional reforms

To take things further, WUP is aiming to create tools for exchanging experiences and building institutional capacities among public and private, local or national water and sanitation operators in Africa.

In consultation with the African Union of Water Suppliers (AUWS), the World Bank and its new World Bank Institute (ex EDI), IOWater has proposed a project based on the creation of:

- **a documentation centre** on the institutional development of water and sanitation utilities in Africa,
- **ways of exchanging experiences** in order to promote specifically African know-how in this sector,
- **an identification and development system for research on institutional reforms** in Africa in this sector.
- **the necessary training means** for utility managers.

The project started at the end of 1999 and should last about 2 years. It aims at establishing a network of professionals from legal departments of ministries and public and private organisations which are involved in the management of water and sanitation utilities.

The documentation centre will be computerised: professionals will be able to search for and access to relevant documents through an interface on the WEB. This development will be facilitated by the setting-up of a pilot unit in Abidjan for document production.

In a first phase, the identification, the networking of professionals, information collection and validation will be carried out in 6 target countries which are already advanced in their institutional reforms: Ivory Coast, the South African Republic, Cameroon, Tanzania, Mozambique and Morocco.

Finally, the base on institutional knowledge will be broadened to other French and international institutional

experiences, selected in the International Office for Water's documentation base.