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Haïti : Reform of the drinking water supply and sanitation utilities IOWater helps the Haitian State to meet the challenge

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The Government of the Republic of Haiti started a thorough legal and institutional reform, due to the necessity of modernizing the drinking water supply and sanitation sector, to allow access to water and the building of sanitation facilities. A rational and more flexible organization of the water supply and sanitation utilities is thus needed to be closer to the populations, to optimize services and their costs, while complying with the rules of good governance.

Since September 2007, according to the Water Law now at the Parliament for signature, and at the request of the Haitian Ministry of Public works, Transport and Communications (MTPTC), in charge of the water utilities, IOWater has aimed at defining the future organisational model of the services, by taking into account the new triangular principle based on:

establishment of a regulator at national level to ensure the planning and coordination of the sector,

decentralization of assignments towards OREPAs (Regional Offices for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation), which will be the regional organizing Authorities; their share of responsibility is to be judiciously studied and the operating methods to be determined,

diversification of the methods for the field management of drinking water supply and sanitation.

The context is such that studies are simultaneously carried out in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and in rural areas, taking into account the specificity of these areas. After an inventory of the operating utilities in 2007, suitable economic, financial and technical analyses (including resource availability and quality), are carried out to develop:

- * the best suited technical master plans for water supply and sanitation (urban community systems, on-site sanitation and latrines in rural or suburban areas, drainage and excreta management, etc.), taking into account the vulnerability of the receiving environments (surface waters or aquifers),
- * the best possible balance between income and expenditure of the sector, based on pricing models adapted to the socioeconomic situation, by planning the necessary investments and by prioritizing them,
- * institutional scenarios for relevant organizations between the stakeholders of the sector, based on a legal and sustainable framework,
- * optimal financial arrangements taking into consideration the timely planning of investments to be made (international assistance, subsidies, loans, equalization, depreciation, etc.),
- * the future "action plan" of the stakeholders of the sector (OREPAs included), based on the technical and financial master plans selected for Port-au-Prince, for the rural and semi-rural areas.

For a finalization in April/May 2008, service providing is carried out to offer the Haitian Authorities varied and complementary "macro" strategies, of which it will be necessary to show the advantages, disadvantages and related risks; those will be based on realistic prospects as regards water demand and resource availability, while, for instance, taking into account the risks of drought, such as the one in 1997, and reducing health risks.

IOWater, together with CALIA Consultants, carries out this study by validating each alternative with the Haitian Authorities, which select the optimal overall models for all the territories (urban, suburban and rural). These actions fit in within a scope of harmonious management and operation between the Haitian water stakeholders, and set, in particular, the area of action of the OREPAs in the regions.