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# France : Governance of water supply and sanitation utilities - Something new in governance

- IOWater - Our projects : news and update -

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With the support of the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Regional Planning (DAEI), IOWater drew up 26 "country profiles" concerning Europe and priority countries ; these sheets are available on line on the website : [www.eau-international-france.fr](http://www.eau-international-france.fr) (Section "**Practical actions : water organization in 26 countries**").

These profiles are a source of very important information. They present the administrative context of the country, as well as quantified information on the water resource and consumption coming from international databases. The politico-institutional mechanisms are also approached with a synthetic presentation of the stakeholders involved in water management and of the regulatory framework. These sheets also include information on the management of river basins and water supply and sanitation utilities. Finally, bibliographical contacts and references supplement the presented synthetic information and allow going further in the search for information.

**In the field of management of drinking water supply and sanitation utilities, the International Office for Water developed legal, technical, economic, organizational and educational abilities which it makes available to national authorities, local authorities and utility operators, everywhere in France and over the world.**

These abilities allow :

- defining the best suited institutional frameworks ;
- Authorities to fulfill their duties ;
- optimizing the technical management of equipment ;
- organizing the financial management of the utilities and planning investments ;
- ensuring and following up the quality of the service ;
- capacity building and human resources management.

Within this framework, IOWater has just created a "center for the governance of water supply and sanitation utilities" to answer more efficiently to the various requests it receives from France, Europe and from the whole world.

### **Water in France**

In France, the drinking water supply and sanitation utilities are decentralized public services. **The Municipalities and Groupings of Municipalities are responsible for these utilities and own the infrastructures.**

The municipalities can manage them themselves directly or delegate them to a private operator within a very thorough legislative and regulatory arrangement.

France emphasizes the responsibility of local authorities, the necessary competition of operators, the follow-up of service quality (reports to the Mayor, performance indicators), the rigor of budgetary control and the transparency for users.

To support the efforts in investing and improving performances made by the local authorities, industrialists and farmers, the system of Water Agencies allows levying water charges and redistributing them according to the priorities of each Basin Management Plan.