


blue book

water, life
and human
development



Niger



2nd edition

Situation analysis

National policies and strategies for water and sanitation

Several policy and strategy documents have been developed for the water and sanitation sector and whilst these cover many aspects of the sector, they do not yet form a coherent whole. The national policy for the water supply subsector is more developed than the one for sanitation. For this latter subsector, various activities are underway that are aimed at putting a coherent policy in place; however, this process is being complicated by the large number of ministries involved. A draft document entitled "Hygiene and sanitation strategic framework" has been submitted to the Government for adoption. The transfer of competencies to local authorities, as set out in the spirit and the letter of the decentralization laws, has not yet taken place. This is particularly the case in urban areas where the leasing contract arrangement completely ignores the communes (local authorities). Rural communes are endeavoring to play a more important role in the sector through their investment plans, with the assistance of non-state stakeholders, in particular the local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

On a more operational level, the sector is included in the Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (SDRP : *Stratégie de Développement accéléré et de Réduction de la Pauvreté*), updated in 2007, and in the Rural Development Strategy adopted in 2003, in which water supply and sanitation is one of the 14 priority programs. More recently, a new reference framework has emerged in the form of a national water supply and sanitation program (PNAEPA : *Programme National d'Alimentation en Eau Potable et Assainissement*), aimed at putting a programmatic approach in place and at increasing sector financing to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). However, the lack of resources available for realizing this participative ambition could lead to the development of a new form of centralization that would leave the communes little scope for carrying out their role as contracting authorities for water supply and sanitation services at local level.

A high number of public stakeholders

In conjunction with the other ministries concerned, the Ministry of Water (MH: *Ministère de l'Hydraulique*) is in charge of designing, developing and coordinating the implementation of the national water and sanitation policy. However, MH only theoretically focuses on aspects relating to coordination, regulation, monitoring and evaluation and supporting newer stakeholders (notably the com-

munes). This is due to lack of resources (MH staffing levels have not increased) and to the fact that the current staff profiles are not aligned to their new roles (particularly as regards the back-up support function). Moreover, project management is still mainly

Niger, its inhabitants and its water resources

Niger is a vast and sparsely populated country (in 2008 there were 14.7 million inhabitants within an area of 1,267,000 km²). Its population growth rate currently stands at over 3% per year and this rate of growth looks set to continue. It is estimated that the population of Niger will increase to nearly 18 million inhabitants by 2015. Niger is still a predominantly rural country; less than one inhabitant out of five lives in a town, with the majority of these urban dwellers living in the capital, Niamey, which will have





centralized at MH level and there are few opportunities for other stakeholders to get involved.

In addition to the Ministry of Water there are several other ministerial departments involved in the water and sanitation sector. These

a population of over one million inhabitants in 2010. This population data is fundamental to understanding the pressure that is currently being placed on access to water supply and sanitation services.

On a country level, the overall assessment in terms of water resources is good. Surface water is generally shared between Niger and its neighboring countries and comes mainly from the Niger River. Surface water is only exploited to a limited extent, however. Around 20% of renewable ground water is currently exploited and there are major technical constraints involved in accessing this resource in some regions (the productive aquifer is deep and so expensive to reach).



are the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the Ministry of Livestock and the Farming Industry, the Ministry of Planning and Community Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Environment and Desertification Control, the Ministry of Equipment, the Ministry of the Interior, Public Safety and Decentralization and the Ministry of Mines and Energy.

The number of competent ministerial departments involved, particularly in the sanitation subsector, is a major constraint: demarcation disputes are common; defining a national policy and coordination are both difficult.

Local authorities that find it hard to establish themselves as contracting authorities

Decentralization is progressing gradually and, in reality, the communes are still not particularly involved. Most of the water services that fall outside the perimeter of the lease contract granted by the public asset-holding company (SPEN: *Société de Patrimoine des Eaux du Niger*) to the private water utility (SEEN: *Société d'Exploitation des Eaux du Niger*) are managed by users' associations or village water point committees, with management being delegated to small private operators in certain cases. There are occasionally pilot projects that do involve the communes and that provide them with capacity-building, but these remain the exception rather than the rule.

Water supply and sanitation are still not yet considered priority areas by the Association of Municipalities (AMN: *Association des Municipalités du Niger*), who currently plays a relatively small role due to the fact that only a limited number of competencies have actually been transferred to the communes.

An experienced civil society

The civil society within the water and sanitation sector in Niger can be broken down into several distinct levels. The first is local level, which consists of users' associations who are often operating water supply systems by themselves, whether this service be provided through stand-alone facilities or through piped networks. Some of these users' associations have a wealth of relevant experience and often constitute the only form of local governance. There is no functional federation of these users' associations, however.

At national level, the civil society consists of national and international NGOs (to which can also be added decentralized cooperation entities, which are very active in Niger) and consumer associations.

Situation analysis

Out of the 765 NGOs/Development Associations (DA) active in Niger, over 75% are estimated to be involved in water and sanitation projects. Around half-a-dozen of these work exclusively in the sector, often developing particularly innovative approaches: for example, the NGO Eau Vive's work on building the capacities of the communes, the *Réseau d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales* (RAIL) or the *Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement* (CREPA) and their work on sanitation technologies.

These NGOs and development associations often work independently of each other, in an uncoordinated manner, which means their capacity for action is limited. At the beginning of 2008, the consumer associations played an active role in calling for a price freeze on the water tariff as part of a more general protest against the rising cost of living.

A local private sector that is full of promise

Due to the limited success of community-based management, the Government made the decision to delegate management of the water service in the small towns. This has led to the emergence of several local private operators and to mixed, but generally encouraging, results. A comprehensive review of this delegated management has not yet been thoroughly conducted by the Ministry of Water (MH), whose role is also to regulate the water service in rural areas and small towns.

The majority of other private actors within the sector are works contractors, equipment suppliers, engineering firms and back-up support consultants. These actors have all developed considerably over the last 15 years but they are still hindered by a lack of public contracts, as well as by the fact that the public procurement procedures are complex, cumbersome and lack transparency.

A sector coordination that is very recent and still hesitant

The National Water and Sanitation Commission (CNEA: *Commission Nationale de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement*), created in 2006, is composed of 55 members representing 7 delegations: the state (20 members), local authorities (8), NGOs and sector associations (7), private companies from the commercial sector (7), users of the sector (8), national and regional specialist bodies (3) and development partners (2). The CNEA has held only two of its four statutory meetings since it was set up. On each occasion, it has

selected its own topics for discussion, but the decisions made and recommendations put forward have not been properly followed up. The CNEA secretary role is carried out by the MH, who does not have the necessary resources available to ensure it is able to serve the interests of all those involved.

Who has access to the water and sanitation services?

There are currently two sources of information available for assessing access to water supply and sanitation services in Niger: the figures published by the Government (that come from a calculation of the theoretical number of people with access based on the number of existing facilities) and those figures published by the JMP¹ (based on a compilation of the results of recently conducted household surveys). As can be seen in the table below, the difference between these two sets of figures is considerable:

Estimated access in 2008		Government ²	JMP ³
Water supply	Rural	62.19%	39%
	Urban	71.79%	96%
Sanitation	Rural	No figures since 2006 ⁴	4%
	Urban		34%

It could be argued that the JMP tends to overestimate the access to water supply in urban areas and that in contrast, the overly restrictive definition of an 'improved sanitation facility' used by the JMP results in access to sanitation services being under-estimated. There have also been calls for the Government to review its calculation method, as this does not take account of the actual distance of the population from the water points, whether the facility is functional, the difficulties associated with drawing water or the quality of the water provided.

1 Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), a WHO and UNICEF joint initiative, that regularly publishes figures for all countries worldwide.

2 Source: *Revue hydraulique nationale* (In English: National Water Supply Review, June 2009), preparatory documents for the annual sector review.

3 Source: Joint Monitoring Programme. Estimates made at the end of 2009. In accordance with the JMP definitions of access, only the 'improved sanitation facility' category has been included.

4 For access to sanitation, the 2009 national water review uses the EDS household survey results from 2006, which are also those used for the JMP calculation.



Regardless of which figures are used to describe the situation in 2008, the conclusion is the same: if the current trend continues, Niger will not be in a position to meet its MDG targets, either for drinking water or sanitation.

Financing the sector

It is difficult to compile information on financing for the whole sector, mainly due to the fact that responsibilities are so poorly distributed and due to the shortcomings of the monitoring and evaluation system. Nevertheless, certain trends can be seen to emerge.

Sector financing mainly depends on external contributions. In 2008, around 20% of the required funding came out of the national budget and a large part of this domestic contribution was dedicated to operating costs. Between 2001 and 2008, around 155 billion CFA Francs were invested in the water supply sector; around 99 billion of this investment was for rural areas and 56 billion for urban areas. This is two to three times lower than the amount needed to meet the MDG targets. The effectiveness of public expenditure is still an issue and the sector's absorption capacity for water supply remains static at around 20 billion per year, which again is two to three times below the amount deemed necessary



to meet the MDG targets. There are no reliable figures available for the budgets allocated to hygiene and sanitation. This is due to both the dispersion of responsibilities and the fact that a large part of these budgets are directly executed by NGOs and decentralized cooperation entities.

In terms of financing mechanisms, the most commonly used tool is still the project or program. Over the last few years, however, there have been two noticeable developments. The first of these is the Government's initiative to put a programmatic approach in place (for water supply, initially) that is linked to a medium-term objective; secondly, a certain number of mechanisms have been introduced, with the aid of German and European funding, that focus specifically on communes.



Progress made

since the publication of the

The package as described in 2005	Progress seen at the end of 2008 and areas for improvement	Observations
1. Developing access to basic services		
Double the SEEN network connection rate	12,985 private connections (of which nearly 2,000 were social connections) have been installed. The number of users per connection has gone down from 25.5 to 24.2, so slight progress has been made. In total, an additional 265,000 people now have access to the network.	Could do better
Provide service to the outlying (poorly planned) settlements of Niamey	Little progress has been observed in these areas. Even where service has been extended, the number of standpipes remains limited due to the existence of a subsidized tariff that penalizes both the client and water utility (SEEN).	Poor
Construct 50 small-piped systems per year in small towns	At the end of 2008, there were 580 small-piped systems compared to around 300 at the end of 2004. The target set in the 2005 Blue Book has therefore been exceeded as an average of 70 new networks per year were constructed between 2004 and 2008.	Very good
Construct large diameter wells in rural and stock-breeding areas	In 2004, there were around 12,500 large diameter cement-lined wells in Niger. At the end of 2008, there were 14,741, i.e. 2,241 more had been constructed; this equates to an average annual increase of 560 cement-lined wells.	Inadequate
2. Improving the institutional framework		
Extend awareness of legislative, legal and regulatory texts	No particular effort has been made in this area since 2005. The local authorities (and, particularly, newly elected officials) receive only very little information on regulatory matters. The Guide prepared by MH may help to partially fill this gap.	Inadequate
Strengthen the link between the WSS sector and the poverty reduction strategy	Whilst the budget allocated to the WSS sector (Budget allocated / Total public expenditure) stood at 4.3% between 2005 and 2007 ¹ , the proportion of this budget that was actually utilized (WSS expenditure / Total public expenditure) remained at an average of 3.02% over the same period. This is far below the target of 6%. The PNAEPA is supposed to ensure there is a link with the SDRP.	Inadequate
Make the National Water and Sanitation Commission (CNEA) operational	The CNEA was created in 2006, but no real consultation has so far been set up between the different stakeholders.	Poor
Improve understanding and monitoring of access to water and sanitation	The quality of the information held in the IRH (<i>Inventaire des Ressources Hydrauliques</i>) database continues to deteriorate as, at no point in communication chain, is there any real motivation to keep this up-to-date.	Poor
Develop the civil society's capacity for action	Although the CNEA has been set up (where the civil society and private stakeholders represent just over a quarter of the members), no real progress has been made either in organizing the civil society or in increasing its contribution.	Poor

¹ The figures relating to total public expenditure were provided by the IMF in April 2008.



first Blue Book Niger

The package as described in 2005	Progress seen at the end of 2008 and areas for improvement	Observations
3. Giving priority to sanitation		
Provide the 10 largest towns in Niger with sanitation master plans (PSA: Plans Stratégiques d'Assainissement)	Only the city of Niamey has a sanitation master plan, which was updated in 2001. Sanitation master plans for the towns of Maradi and Dosso are due to be developed very shortly.	Highly inadequate
Construct 500,000 pit latrines	This was a target set out in the PNAEPA 2015. The total number of household latrines constructed as part of all projects active in the sanitation sector since 2000 is estimated to be 95,000. This means that, for the target to be met, the current rate of construction needs to increase fivefold.	Highly inadequate
Construct sludge disposal sites in Niamey, Maradi and Zinder	There have been no disposal sites constructed since 2005, not even in those towns where a pilot study was undertaken.	Poor
4. Decentralizing financing		
Develop practical financial tools that are accessible to local stakeholders	There has recently been an increase in the number of investment funds open to local authorities (FICOD, FSIL, PAMED, PAC2, PEADD, etc.). The local authorities' bank is not yet operational, although the foundations for this have been put in place with finance from the European Union.	Inadequate
Promote local financing of on-site sanitation	There has been no improvement in financing of the sanitation subsector. In most projects, the subsidy level varies from between 75 and 90% of the cost of a household latrine. The prevailing economic situation of the last decade has negatively impacted on local capacities for financing sanitation.	Very poor
5. Guaranteeing sustainable services		
Build the capacities of local stakeholders and develop practical tools appropriate to their environment	There have been some interesting activities undertaken at project level, notably those designed and conducted by NGOs; however these are rarely capitalized upon. A Guide to managing sanitation facilities is currently being developed by MH.	Highly inadequate
Improve the reliability of the hand pump supply chain	The breakdown rate for boreholes equipped with hand pumps remains high, at between 25 and 30%. There is no system in place for monitoring the maintenance supply chains. There are still several areas of weakness: the failure or total lack of an after-sales service; management that is still predominantly community-based; lack of organization of the artisan-repairmen and a network of spare parts that is of poor quality.	Poor
Develop back-up support for the water service providers in small towns	Back-up support is to be provided by the local branches of the Ministry of Water, which do not always have the necessary skills required. The experiment of delegating this back-up support task to the BCC (<i>Bureau de Contrôle et de Conseil</i>) needs to be further explored within the pilot regions and then expanded across the whole country.	Inadequate

Challenges

1. Making sanitation an absolute priority

The progress made over the last five years with regard to sanitation and hygiene has been very slow. It is now clear that Niger will not meet the Millennium Development Goal targets and the country is, in fact, losing rather than gaining ground. Access to sanitation and hygiene remains a huge challenge; one that, in order to be tackled effectively, needs to focus firmly on the basics, such as preventing open defecation, increasing the involvement of local stakeholders (and, notably, the communes), communicating strong health and hygiene messages and supporting households' investment. A policy that is ambitious and wide-ranging and that is granted sufficient resources, both out of the national budget and by external partners, is also required to overcome this challenge.

Proposed indicators • The number of households with an adequate sanitation system. The proportion of financing dedicated specifically to hygiene and sanitation in the overall sector budget.

2. Improving decentralization

Although municipal elected officials have completed their first term in office, the actual transfer of competencies and resources has still not yet fully taken place. Whilst interesting innovations have been developed by some stakeholders, projects struggle to ensure the communes are fully involved as contracting authorities for investment and there are still only very few financial tools available to communes. In addition to the MDG targets, work within the sector over the next ten years needs to focus on reinforcing the communes' contracting authority role and on the repositioning of the State to reflect this transfer of responsibility. The 'assistance' element is vital to meeting this challenge: this involves training the hundreds of elected officials and providing them with appropriate tools.

Proposed indicators • The percentage of elected officials having received training and awareness-raising sessions. The number of tools provided to the communes. The proportion of financing directly utilized at commune level.





3. Reducing the inequalities in access to water

Huge amounts of investment have been made in improving access to drinking water over the last five years. This has been a combined effort by the Government of Niger, its financial partners and non-Governmental stakeholders. The access rate has increased for both rural and urban areas. Nevertheless, high levels of inequality remain as far as access to services is concerned. Inequalities in terms of accessing water resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Geographic inequalities linked to a lack of planning tools or to poorly defined priorities. Financial inequalities caused by the fact that rural areas are poorly aligned to towns (meaning users pay a high price for water before they even have access to the service). Reducing these inequalities remains a huge challenge and will require a change in planning-related practices.

Proposed indicators • SEEN's service penetration into the outlying or informal settlements of large towns. The access rate per commune. The quality of the water distributed. The effort made to mobilize water resources in disadvantaged areas.

4. Coordinating and involving all stakeholders

The CNEA, an invaluable platform for dialogue and consultation, is a promising first step. However, this coordination platform needs to be both operational and effective if it is to provide added value to the sector. This is particularly true for hygiene and sanitation where stakeholder interventions remain uncoordinated, thus diminishing the effectiveness of any progress made. The communes, who are newly emerging as stakeholders, also need to be better represented and more involved.

Proposed indicators • The frequency of CNEA meetings. The resources allocated to running the CNEA. Following up on its recommendations. The number of consultation platforms in place at regional or local level.



5. Strengthening the human resources capacity of the State and Local Authorities

In order to ensure that decentralization is effective, assistance needs to be provided by the State when transferring water and sanitation competencies to local authorities. To do this, competent and appropriate human resources need to be put in place, notably through the creation of locally-based posts. The Ministry of Water should ensure it has the skills required for planning, decentralization, local development and managing municipal water supply and sanitation services. The existing managers need to further their skills and expertise through appropriate training. Tools to manage and assist the local contracting authorities for water and sanitation services are to be developed and disseminated.

Proposed indicators • The number of managers and staff recruited and appointed to central and decentralized services. Skill profiles created. Support tools developed and put in place for local authorities and users. The number of staff placed in training. The number of staff made available to communes for water and sanitation.

The Millenium Endeavor

The hygiene and sanitation package

In order to function properly (and to meet the MDG targets), hygiene and sanitation needs to assert itself as a sector in its own right. Leadership for the sector needs to be developed based on strong political will, a clear national policy framework, an effective coordination body and the committed involvement of all stakeholders.

The inequality package

All areas that encounter problems in accessing water services need to be identified and prioritized in the investment plan.

Multi-village and inter-commune approaches should be promoted in those areas that are disadvantaged in terms of accessing the water resources.

In the large towns, and notably in Niamey, specific investment programs should target outlying settlements, including those areas where there is no clear land ownership status.

Direct financial contributions from rural users to initial investment needs to be developed in such a way as to take actual local financial capacities into account and to include alternative approaches (physical or material contributions, participation in management, etc.).

The coordination package

A permanent and truly operational secretary needs to be put in place for the CNEA, assisted by competent human resources to oversee its coordination activities (organize meetings, prepare resolutions, monitor their application).

The CNEA should create intermediate platforms for consultation at local or commune level – not all stakeholders are able to travel to Niamey for meetings.

The local package

The local capacity-building package is considered crucial by the National Committee for the Blue Book Niger, who is particularly interested in monitoring its implementation over the next few years. This package includes an institutional and financial element that consists of putting sources of finance in place that are actually accessible to communes (15% of the sector budget to be managed by communes in 2012 would be a reasonable target given that their own resources are so low). This package also includes a large capacity-building component aimed at communes' elected officials and managers, as well as the creation of water/sanitation technical posts at commune level.



The efficiency package

Conditions need to be created to enable the effective absorption and utilization of budget lines.

This package is, perhaps, more 'technical' than the others, but it is vital for the future of the sector as, with the exception of the urban water supply sector, the capacity of existing stakeholders to effectively absorb available budget has not yet been proven. This package covers several aspects: improving the planning capacity for public expenditure; improving the speed and efficiency of public procurement procedures; the need to recruit qualified human resources to carry out the various assignments within the sector.

The sustainability package

Ensuring the water service in rural areas remains sustainable is an essential task that should be the focus of an annual report; a report in which the National Committee of the Blue Book Niger would like to be involved. The three stakeholders involved in ensuring sustainability of the water and sanitation service at local level (the users, communes and private operators) need to find their bearings and a form of regulation needs to be put in place. This should be carried out through widespread implementation and reinforcement of the BCC approach (Bureaux de Conseil et de Contrôle, Support and Control Offices in English). The creation of a communal water fund is also an avenue worth exploring.

The Blue Book



Background and purpose

The publication of the Blue Book: water, life and human development is the result of a commitment made in Kyoto (March 2003) by the World Assembly of Water Wisdom (Assemblée Mondiale des Sages pour l'Eau). The Blue Book provides a critical overview of the water and sanitation sector; an overview that takes the opinions of users, citizens and local decision-makers into account. The Blue Book aims to measure – at regular intervals and in an independent manner – the qualitative and quantitative progress made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation within a given territory or country. Five Blue Books (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal) have been published since 2005. This edition is the second Blue Book to be published in Niger.

Its added value

What is the added value of the Blue Book in relation to the vast number of other on-going initiatives?

- It is a participatory process that is based on both the reality seen in the field and a critical analysis of observed situations relating to access to water supply and sanitation.
- It is a tool to be used for promoting exchange, dialogue and mobilization of all those involved in water and sanitation management with a view to developing large scale project portfolios.
- At country level, the Blue Book reinforces local initiatives, the right to water, equal access for all to basic services and poverty reduction.
- At regional level, the Blue Book contributes to the development of a vision built around citizenship and to the decentralization of decision-making and financial resources; it also encourages the international community to seek more innovative and effective means of cooperation.

The contributors

The Blue Book Niger is a joint initiative of a group of water and sanitation sector stakeholders from Niger, brought together within the National Committee for the Blue Book Niger (CNLBN: Comité National du Livre Bleu Niger). At international level, the Blue

Book initiative is led by the International Secretariat for Water (ISW) and various partners, who together form the Blue Book International Steering Committee. The development of the Blue Book in Niger was overseen entirely by the CNLBN, supported by the NGO Eau Vive and the International Secretariat for Water. This synthesis has been compiled by Bruno Valfrey-Visser (International Steering Committee) based on work carried out by a team of national consultants: Mahaman Sidi, Sadissou Oumarou, Drahmame Coulibaly, Mahamadou Idrissa Kelessi, Maman Sani Rabiou and Hamidou Issaka.

National Committee for the Blue Book Niger

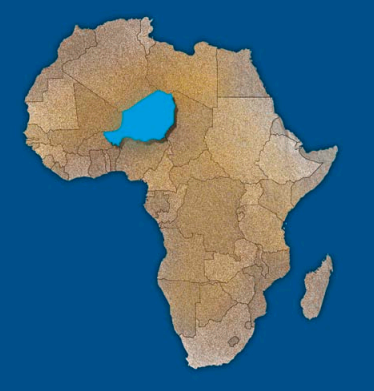
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The method

The Blue Book Niger was developed in a participatory manner over a period of more than 24 months. Consultations were organized at district level and discussion groups were held with users in both rural and urban areas. The objective was both to obtain users' opinions firsthand and to have a free and open debate on those issues affecting the sector. The country report (which is available on the internet or on request from the CNLBN) and this synthesis document were discussed and revised during a national workshop held in Niamey on the 25th February 2009.



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