

FIRST EDITION OF THE WEST AFRICA REGIONAL WATER FORUM (FREA0)

Theme: « *Value Water, Transform West Africa* »

Regional Thematic Group (RTG) 2: Water Infrastructure Financing

Unlocking Finance for Water Infrastructure in West Africa: A Brief Report on Resource Mobilization Strategies

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	: Mono Basin Authority
ABN	: Niger Basin Authority
ABV	: Volta Basin Authority
AEP	: Drinking Water Supply
APD	: Official Development Assistance (ODA)
BAD	: African Development Bank (AfDB)
BIDC	: ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)
BOAD	: West African Development Bank
CEDEAO	: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
CEEAC	: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
CEMAC	: Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CGRE	: ECOWAS Water Resources Management Centre
FPD	: Public Development Financing
FREAO	: West African Regional Water Forum
GIRE	: Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
GTR	: Regional Thematic Group
GWP-AO	: Global Water Partnership – West Africa (GWP-WA)
IDE	: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
OBT	: Transboundary Basin Organizations (TBOs)
ODD	: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
OMVG	: Organisation for the Development of the Gambia River
OMVS	: Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River
PAPV	: Vulnerable Populations Support Programme
PARGIRE	: Regional Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management
PPI	: Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI)
PPP	: Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
UNECA	: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

SUMMARY

Despite strong regional commitment, financing for water infrastructure development in West Africa remains constrained by uneven investment allocation, a significant financing gap, limited diversification of funding sources, and inadequate policy and strategic frameworks. Access to capital continues to be hindered by high investment risks, weak institutional capacities, limited access to credit, a shortage of bankable projects, heavy reliance on donor financing, increasing climate change impacts, insufficient data to support evidence-based decision-making, and significant environmental and social risks, among other factors.

From an environmental perspective, the region faces increasing pressures arising from climate variability and extreme weather events, deforestation and biodiversity loss, water scarcity and degradation of water resources, coastal erosion and sea-level rise, inadequate waste management and pollution, and recurrent flooding. These challenges continue to undermine the water sector's capacity to contribute effectively to sustainable development and regional resilience.

While West Africa has accumulated valuable experience in financing water infrastructure, there remains a need for policymakers and stakeholders to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and lessons learned. This is essential to support long-term strategic planning, institutionalize meaningful citizen participation, enhance institutional capacity, promote inclusive and equitable approaches to infrastructure development, and scale up the adoption of innovative financing mechanisms.

To facilitate discussions on these issues during the forum, a panel session is proposed to promote knowledge sharing, experience exchange, and dialogue among key stakeholders. The session will be preceded by two presentations: (i) Challenges and Constraints in Financing Water Infrastructure in West Africa, and (ii) Experiences in Mobilizing Financial Resources for the Water Sector in Côte d'Ivoire. These presentations will be delivered respectively by the Volta Basin Authority (VBA) and the Coordination Unit of the PAPV Project in Côte d'Ivoire.

The subsequent panel discussion will bring together representatives from the Volta Basin Authority (VBA), the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), the PAPV Côte d'Ivoire Project—which will share the host country's practical experiences—and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). The discussion will be moderated by representatives from these institutions and will provide a platform for exploring actionable strategies to enhance sustainable financing for water infrastructure development across the region.

INTRODUCTION

West Africa possesses considerable water resources and significant hydrological potential that can support economic development, regional integration, climate resilience, and improved livelihoods. The region is endowed with an extensive network of transboundary rivers, including the Niger, Senegal, and Volta Rivers, as well as important water bodies such as Lake Chad. These resources represent a strategic asset for the development of productive water infrastructure, including water supply systems, irrigation schemes, hydropower facilities, flood management infrastructure, and multipurpose water projects.

Despite this considerable potential, the effective utilization of water resources remains constrained by inadequate infrastructure development, limited investment, and significant financing challenges. The region's hydrological potential is affected by highly variable climatic conditions, increasing climate change impacts, and growing demand resulting from demographic growth, urbanization, agricultural expansion, and economic transformation. These challenges highlight the urgent need for substantial and sustainable investments to develop resilient water infrastructure capable of supporting inclusive growth and long-term regional stability.

The development of water infrastructure in West Africa goes beyond addressing water security challenges; it represents an opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation, promote peace and stability, enhance climate resilience, and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 6, which aims to ensure universal access to safe water and sanitation by 2030. However, achieving these objectives requires overcoming persistent barriers, including insufficient public investment, limited access to long-term financing, inadequate diversification of funding sources, weak institutional capacities, and a shortage of bankable projects capable of attracting private sector participation.

Given the strategic importance of water resources and the scale of investment required, there is a critical need to establish effective frameworks for dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge sharing among governments, regional institutions, development partners, financial institutions, private sector actors, and civil society. Such platforms can facilitate the exchange of best practices, promote innovative financing solutions, and support the development of sustainable approaches adapted to the realities of West African countries.

This report contributes to the ongoing reflection on “Financing Water Infrastructure in West Africa” by examining existing challenges, identifying opportunities for mobilizing additional resources, and proposing strategies to strengthen financing mechanisms for resilient and inclusive water infrastructure development across the region.

I. CONTEXT OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING IN WEST AFRICA

The context of water infrastructure financing is presented below.

1.1. Political and Strategic Context

The political and strategic context for financing water infrastructure in West Africa is characterized by the development and adoption of instruments and the establishment of policy frameworks designed to facilitate access to financing for water infrastructure. These include, among others:

The West African Water Resources Policy, adopted in 2008 and revised in 2015, remains ECOWAS's reference document on water. It is based on four (4) key principles, namely: (i) Integrated Water Resources Management for all member states, (ii) basin-based management, giving priority to Transboundary Basin Organizations (TBO), (iii) Water as a catalyst for integration, encouraging the development of multipurpose water infrastructure such as dams (e.g., for energy, irrigation, water supply, and navigation), and (iv) the "user-pays" principle based on progressive pricing to ensure the long-term sustainability of Infrastructures.

In addition to this policy, there are the current operational strategies for 2020–2030

- Regional Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management 2 (PARGIRE 2) 2021–2030;
- ECOWAS Vision 2050 - Infrastructure Pillar;
- PARI Water Regional Investment Program;
- Water, Peace, and Security Initiative;
- Energy and Water Strategy.

1.2. Socioeconomic Context

West Africa, with a population of approximately 470 million, accounted for nearly 30% of Africa's population. This region is characterized by its high level of water interdependence. It alone contains 28 shared river basins (out of 63 for the entire African continent), covering nearly 71% of the region's total land area, a level of water density and interconnection that is rare in the worldwide.

In the West African region, the development of water infrastructure is characterized by low coverage rates, which are linked to limited economic development, despite a recent resurgence in investment. This development is driven by the urgent need to manage water resources for agriculture, livestock, energy, drinking water, and other uses in the face of rapid population growth, climate constraints, and food security imperatives. Five (5) key points explain this socioeconomic context. These are:

- Inadequate infrastructures and insufficient investment: The region suffers from a long-standing shortage of water infrastructure, slowed down by poor past performance, although major investments are now returning.
- Socioeconomic impact: The development of this infrastructure is seen as a means of reducing poverty, addressing food insecurity, and promoting rural activities.
- Governance and financing challenges: ECOWAS has approved guidelines to provide a framework for projects, considering social and environmental risks and the need to secure financing, which is often difficult to obtain.

- Context of vulnerability: The region faces intense demographic pressures, climate-related stress, and security challenges that complicate the implementation of these projects.
- Role of the private sector: Private management of water transfer systems has proven to be a catalyst for improving living conditions, particularly in rural areas.

In summary, water infrastructure is important for economic recovery and sustainable development, requiring integrated management to overcome structural and socioeconomic obstacles.

1.3. Environmental Context

The development of water infrastructure in West Africa takes place in a context characterized by high climate variability, a chronic shortage of major water infrastructure, and growing demand in key sectors, including the energy sector. This context calls for addressing water stress while effectively managing the significant environmental and social impacts associated with water infrastructure development. The environmental context is characterized by:

- Climate Variability and Change: The region faces significant climate variability (droughts, floods), requiring solid water resource management.
- Major environmental impacts: Large dams, for example, alter flow dynamics, fragment aquatic habitats, and flood valleys, creating a need for sustainable management.
- Integrated and Sustainable Management: ECOWAS, with support from GWP-AO, is promoting guidelines to minimize environmental impacts and strengthen infrastructure governance.
- The Need for Cooperation: Water management requires a coordinated approach, particularly for transboundary river basins.

Given this context, it is clear that a return to large-scale water infrastructure projects such as dams and other facilities designed to support economic growth must take environmental constraints into account in order to ensure the sustainable use of water resources.

1.4. Financing context

The financing mechanisms generally correspond to the potential sources of water infrastructure financing. These include:

- Direct financial contributions from Member States: Although direct contributions from Member States would be easy to implement, they may nevertheless be unstable and unpredictable.
- In-kind contributions from Member States: Although in-kind contributions from Member States may be more important than direct contributions, donors may view them as representing a lesser commitment than direct contributions.
- A dedicated tax: a dedicated levy, such as an import tax, is a more stable and reliable source of financing than direct contributions from member states,
- Funding based on the user-pays principle: financing based on the user-pays principle may be difficult to justify for the ABM until the Authority is able to provide a clear service to its users;

- Financing based on the “polluter pays” principle: Financing based on the “polluter pays” principle can be difficult and costly to implement, and if the penalties are too high, it could generate more revenue than is necessary.

Sustainable financing mechanisms may include contributions from Member States, a dedicated tax, a user-pays financing mechanism, and contributions from donors. The choice of funding mechanisms will ultimately depend on how quickly the grant mechanism can be established and made available (for example, within 2 years, within 5 years). The financing mechanisms will also depend on how these financing mechanisms are expected to evolve over time. Other criteria include the revenue expected to be generated; the reliability of financing mechanisms; the complexity of implementation; technical, legal, or political constraints; and transaction costs. Based on these criteria, the most attractive financing mechanisms are:

- Contributions from Member States (financial or in kind);
- A dedicated tax;
- Financing through a user-pays system;
- Contributions from donors (for specific activities and/or investments).

Other financing mechanisms are either difficult to implement, do not generate substantial revenue, or are not considered feasible in the current economic context of the states.

II. STATE OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING IN WEST AFRICA

2.1. Mapping of Water Infrastructures Projects in West Africa

This section covers actions already undertaken, those currently underway, and planned actions related to the development of water infrastructure projects in West Africa. The focus is on assessing the level of investment for each initiative.

2.1.1. Completed or ongoing Water Infrastructures Projects in West Africa

The water infrastructure projects that have been completed or are currently ongoing in West Africa are significant; among them are:

- Rural drinking water supply project: launched by Senegal's Office of Rural Boreholes (OFOR), with a budget of 65 billion CFA francs.
- Emergency and Reinforcement of Drinking Water Distribution Systems Project: also carried out by OFOR in Senegal, with a budget of 10 billion CFA francs.
- The Sustainable Access to Safe Water Supply and Sanitation Services for Resilient Development Project (PASEA-RD) in Burkina Faso has a budget of nearly 10 billion CFA francs.
- Project to Strengthen Drinking Water Supply Systems in the Southern Region of Togo: a project worth more than 4 billion CFA francs.
- Multi-village drinking water supply project in the Matam and Tambacounda regions of Senegal: a project costing more than 2 billion CFA francs.
- Sambagalou Dam (Senegal and Mali): a hydropower project with a capacity of 1,010 MW and an estimated cost of 1.7 billion U.S. dollars.
- The Kandadji Dam (Niger) estimated at just under 800 million euros, with initial funding of 100 billion CFA francs (approximately 151–152 million euros).
- WACA project + (all 9 West African coastal countries): a program for coastal resilience and blue economy development, with \$240 million in financing.

2.1.2. Upcoming Water Infrastructure Projects in West Africa

Some water infrastructure projects planned for the West African subregion include:

- Continuation of the Kandadji Dam project in Niger, including hydroelectric power, irrigation, and securing the water supply.
- New medium-capacity dams in member states facing water stress, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger
- Expansion of WACA projects + against coastal erosion and coastal flooding along the coasts of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.
- Retention structures and urban flood prevention measures.
- Programs to expand drinking water networks in major urban areas such as Lagos, Accra, Abidjan, Dakar, Lomé, and Ouagadougou.

2.2. Level of Water Infrastructures financing in West Africa

West Africa accounts for one of the highest level of infrastructure financing commitments on the continent. However, the water sector including the development of water infrastructures remains underfunded, accounting for approximately 13% of total investments, and requires accelerated action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6). According to other sources¹, investments made between 2019 and 2023 through Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) and Public Development Financing (PDF) programs for infrastructures in the region remained broadly stable, reaching 22.1 billion USD for PPI and 20.2 billion USD for PDF. The main recipient countries of this financing line are Nigeria (37%), Ghana (26%), Senegal (14%), and Côte d'Ivoire (13%). According to the same sources, the region will need approximately 20 billion USD per year through 2040 to reach the infrastructure level of comparable developing countries. Key aspects of this water infrastructure financing in West Africa include, among others:

- High level of regional investment: The region attracts a significant share of total infrastructure financing in Africa (more than 25 percent), due to its high population density and water resources.
- A highly uneven sectoral breakdown: water the foundation of all processes and vital to humanity accounts for a smaller share compared to the transportation sector (40%) and the energy sector (34%).
- Funding shortfall: Despite investments, the current level remains below the annual requirements needed to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation, with a persistent gap to reach the 30 billion USD needed annually across the continent.
- Sources of financing: Investments come from a mix of public funding, international donors, private-sector initiatives (PPPs), and endogenous (community-based) strategies for the management and maintenance of infrastructure.
- Policy and Strategic Framework: ECOWAS, through the PPDU, plays a central role in structuring, developing, and preparing major transboundary water projects, with a view to enhancing their bankability and facilitating the mobilization of the financing needed for their implementation.

¹[Politique hydraulique et développement socio-économique rural: Evaluation de l'impact des Partenariats Public-Privé \(PPP\) sur la réduction des inégalités sociales dans le bassin arachidier](#)

Box 1. *Experiences with Autonomous and Sustainable Financing of River Basin Organizations in the Region.*

The experiences of the ABV, the ABN, and the OMVS are very interesting in terms of financing water infrastructures.

The ABV's experience relates to a study on the definition of self-sustaining and sustainable financing mechanisms. This study was based on fundamental findings, notably the inadequacy of the ABV's operating budget and member states' contributions, as well as the need for additional funding. She proposed financing mechanisms and supporting measures for the short term (0–5 years) and medium term (6–10 years). In the short term (0–5 years), working capital financing, regional funding, the additional “user-pays” tax, international funding, and government grants are the preferred mechanisms, and supporting measures focus on mapping out the payment process and strengthening the capacity of the Focal Points. For the medium term (6–10 years), the decision was made to implement the additional “producer-pays” tax and to establish a financial agency. The presentation on the ABN shows that, as with the ABV, a specific study was conducted in 2022, and its outcomes were adopted by the 9th Summit of Heads of State and Government. The proposed mechanisms are:

- Coupling with Community Levies, which involves allocating a certain percentage of the revenue collected by regional integration institutions (UEMOA, ECOWAS, CEMAC, ECCAS) from a tax on imports of products originating in third countries into their respective economic areas to the ABN;
- The introduction of “user-pays” and “polluter-pays” fees. The “user-pays” fee is based on the fact that water users contribute to the operation of the ABN in accordance with the principle that the ABN provides a service through hydrological information and forecasting, as well as strategic regulation of the resource. In contrast, the “polluter pays” fee is not linked to water withdrawal, but rather to the changes in the hydrological regime caused by the hydroelectric dam;
- Compensation for project and program management support services: This mechanism is based on the assumption that the ABN will be compensated in exchange for the role it plays in implementing the Investment Program's initiatives during the various phases of the project cycle;
- The capitalization fund, based on the principle that, at a given time, ABN member countries contribute capital which, when invested, generates regular interest, which is used to cover all or part of the organization's budget.

In the case of OMVS, operations are funded by contributions from member states, and project financing is provided by technical and financial partners. An institutional study was conducted to help shape the financing mechanisms.

2.3. Lessons Learned from Water Infrastructure Financing in West Africa

West Africa, drawing on its experience in financing infrastructure in general and water infrastructure in particular, has learned lessons that will help it

Lesson Learned 1. The Importance of Long-Term Planning: Water infrastructure projects require long-term planning to ensure their viability and sustainability. They must be integrated into a comprehensive, long-term development strategy in order to maximize their impact.

Lesson Learned 2. The Importance of Making Citizen Participation a Requirement or Obligation. It is undoubtedly clear that citizen participation is essential to ensuring the social acceptability of projects and their long-term success. Several infrastructure projects have failed due to a lack of effective stakeholder engagement that takes into account their level of interest and influence on decision-making. This civic participation helps to enhance the transparency and accountability of the various stakeholders, which are, moreover, essential for building the trust of investors and citizens.

Lesson Learned 3. The Need to Strengthen Institutional Capacity: Both public and private institutions must have the necessary capacity to manage water infrastructure projects effectively. To this end, past experience shows that their technical, organizational, and even financial capacities must be strengthened. On the technical front, for example, technological innovation must be sufficiently developed to help improve the efficiency and sustainability of water infrastructure projects. Finally, tailored capacity-building programs must be implemented for the institutions responsible for infrastructure.

Lesson Learned 4. The Importance of Adopting an Inclusive and Equitable Approach: Water infrastructure projects must be designed to benefit all communities, including the most vulnerable. They must not only be integrative in terms of geographical scope (cross-border projects, regional projects) but also inclusive, providing equal opportunities for everyone.

Lesson Learned 5. The Need to Embrace Innovative Financing: Water infrastructure projects require innovative financing to be viable. Experience has shown that conventional or traditional financing is no longer well-suited to funding water infrastructure, given its nature. Since these are very large investments with long-term operational lifespan, financial mechanisms with high interest rates are therefore not effective.

2.4. Challenges and Constraints in Water Infrastructures Financing in West Africa

There are numerous challenges and constraints associated with water infrastructure financing in West Africa including.

- **Lack of financial resources:** governments and local financial institutions have limited resources to fund water infrastructure projects in the face of numerous development challenges;
- **High risk:** Water infrastructure projects are often considered risky by investors, making it difficult to secure financing.
- **Weak institutions:** Public and private institutions responsible for managing water infrastructure are often weak and lack technical, financial, and sometimes even organizational capacity;
- **Corruption and governance:** Corruption and governance issues can discourage investors and make it difficult to access financing.

- Difficulties in accessing credit: Private-sector companies often have difficulty accessing credit, which limits their ability to invest in water infrastructure. High interest rates can therefore make water infrastructure projects unprofitable and discourage investors.
- Lack of bankable projects: Water infrastructure projects are often poorly prepared and do not meet donors' financing criteria.
- Dependence on donors: Excessive dependence on donors can limit governments' ability to make strategic decisions.
- Climate change: The impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods, can affect the availability of water resources and the sustainability of water infrastructure projects.
- Population growth: Rapid population growth in West Africa is increasing the demand for water and water infrastructure, which can make it difficult to plan and finance these projects.
- Rapid urbanization: Rapid urbanization can lead to wastewater management and pollution problems, which can affect water quality and public health.
- Lack of data for sound decision-making: The lack of reliable data on water resources and water infrastructure can make it difficult to plan and finance these projects.
- Insufficient coordination: Insufficient coordination among the various stakeholders (government, donors, private sector) can slow down the implementation of water infrastructure projects.
- Land ownership issues: Land ownership issues or conflicts over land use can hinder water infrastructure projects.
- Limited institutional capacity: Public and private institutions responsible for managing water infrastructure often have limited capacity to manage projects and attract investment.
- Environmental and social risks: Water infrastructure projects can have very significant negative environmental and social impacts. They may therefore be classified as very high risk, which limits access to financing from some development partners, such as KfW, for example.

Other specific constraints:

Financial constraints:

- Lack of financial resources
- High interest rates
- Difficulties in accessing credit, especially tailored credit

Institutional constraints:

- Weakness of public and private institutions
- Lack of technical and financial capacity
- Corruption and governance issues

Technical constraints:

- Lack of reliable data on water resources
- Difficulties in rehabilitating existing infrastructure
- Risks associated with climate change

Social and Environmental Constraints:

- Negative environmental and social impacts
- Lack of public participation and consultation
- Conflicts and insecurity

Political constraints

- Political instability
- Contradictory or changing policies
- Lack of coordination among stakeholders

Regulatory constraints:

- Strict environmental and social regulations
- Lengthy and complex approval procedures
- Lack of clarity regarding rules and standards

Capacity constraints:

- Lack of local skills and expertise
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining talent
- Limited capacity of public and private institutions

Security constraints:

- Security risks to workers and equipment
- Conflicts and insecurity in project areas
- Difficulties accessing project sites

Funding Constraints:

- Lack of innovative financing
- Difficulties in raising funds for projects
- Currency and interest rate risks

Challenges Management:

- Lack of transparency and accountability
- Difficulties in project management
- Risks of corruption and financial misconduct

III. SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING IN WEST AFRICA

3.1. Technical Solutions

The technical solutions for water infrastructure financing in West Africa are:

- Conducting thorough preliminary studies: One of the main reasons for the failure of financing applications for water infrastructure projects is the poor quality of the baseline studies. Even if the data is sound, the analyses used to guide the actions to be taken, institutional support, and the governance structure are very important.
- Having the right baseline data: To secure financing for water infrastructure, it is very important to use the right input data when proposing actions.
- Prioritize knowledge transfer: funding water infrastructure projects that rely entirely on imported expertise may not be sustainable. It is important to establish mechanisms and other measures for knowledge transfer.

3.2. Financial Solutions

Financial solutions for water infrastructure financing in West Africa include:

- Establish public-private partnerships (PPPs): PPPs can help mobilize the resources and expertise needed for infrastructure projects;
- Utilizing innovative financing and climate finance: Innovative financing tools, such as green bonds, investment funds, and results-based financing mechanisms, can help mobilize resources for infrastructure projects. Climate finance can help fund water infrastructure projects that contribute to the fight against climate change. To this end, water infrastructure would need to demonstrate a strong capacity for adaptation and/or mitigation.
- Allocate a portion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the development of water infrastructure: ODA can help finance infrastructure projects in general, and water-related projects in particular, in developing countries. For example, this type of funding may prioritize projects related to access to drinking water or agricultural production through irrigation;
- Also consider foreign direct investment (FDI): FDI can help finance water infrastructure projects in West Africa by better targeting these funds;
- Turning to partner development funds: Development funds from partners such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the West African Development Bank (BOAD), the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), and others, through specific development mechanisms, can help finance water infrastructure projects;
- Use results-based financing mechanisms: Results-based financing mechanisms, such as payments for ecosystem services and landscape valuation, can help finance water infrastructure projects that benefit communities

3.3. Key Recommendations

To facilitate access to financing, recommendations were made to three groups of stakeholders: ECOWAS (CGRE, PPDU), ECOWAS Member States (decision-makers), and

national and international institutions responsible for water governance (technical and financial partners)

3.3.1. Recommendations for ECOWAS (CGRE, PPDU)

For ECOWAS, through its operational agencies in the water sector (CGRE, PPDU, and others), it is recommended to:

- Prioritize investment in water sector, as it serves as the foundation for the development of other sectors such as transportation, agriculture, and energy;
- Develop resilient and sustainable water infrastructure projects in West Africa;
- Take the time to conduct thorough baseline studies to make better decisions ;
- Learn from past experiences with investments in the water sector;
- Develop financial models tailored to water infrastructure financing

3.3.2. Recommendations for ECOWAS Member States

For ECOWAS member states (Heads of State, Councils of Ministers, and Members of Parliament), it is recommended to:

- Adapt the legal and regulatory framework to support water infrastructures financing ;
- Create and maintain strong, appropriate, and specific policy frameworks for water infrastructure financing;
- Develop specific bilateral agreements to support water infrastructure financing.

3.3.3. Recommendations for national and international institutions responsible of water governance (technical and financial partners)

- Allocate more financial resources to the water sector in general and to water infrastructure financing in particular;
- Develop technical assistance programs with countries in the region to support the development of water infrastructure;
- Support the structuring of water infrastructure projects to increase financing opportunities;
- Develop exchange and knowledge-sharing programs for countries on water infrastructure projects.

IV. PROPOSAL FOR THE DISCUSSION PANELS

Session Title: Water Infrastructure Financing in West Africa: Addressing Challenges to Develop Concrete Solutions

Session Objectives:

Overall Objective: To help mobilize financial resources for water infrastructure in West Africa through concrete institutional and financial solutions.

Specific Objectives:

- ✓ Identify the challenges and constraints related to the sustainable financing of water infrastructure in West Africa;
- ✓ Propose concrete solutions based on past experiences in the subregion ;
- ✓ Establish a risk management system related to access water infrastructure financing in West Africa

Expected Outcomes of the Session:

By the end of the session, panel participants will have identified;

- ✓ The various challenges and constraints related to water infrastructure in West Africa;
- ✓ Concrete solutions for water infrastructure financing, based on past experiences
- ✓ The risk management framework established to secure additional financing for water infrastructure

Brief Description of the Session: It will take place in two parts. First, three separate presentations, delivered by subject matter experts, will be given over a total of 40 minutes. Following this series of presentations, a panel discussion will be held with three (3) panelists for at least one hour.

Detailed Session Schedule	Order Number	Duration	Presentations	Speakers
	1	10 min	<u>Title of Presentation 1:</u> Challenges and Constraints Related to Water Infrastructure Financing in West Africa	Volta Basin Authorities
	2	10 min	<u>Title of Presentation 2 :</u> Experiences in Mobilizing Financial Resources for Water Sector in Côte d'Ivoire	Projet PAPV de la Côte d'Ivoire
	3	1 Heure	Exchanges	ABV, ABN, PAPV RCI Project, BIDC

Synthesis Report on Water Infrastructure Financing in West Africa: What Strategies for Mobilizing Greater Financial Resources?

	4	5 min	Closing of the session	Moderator
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CONCLUSION

The inaugural edition of the West Africa Regional Water Forum (FREAO) will take place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 25 and 26 September 2026 under the theme: “Valuing Water to Transform West Africa.”

The objectives include, among others, (i) assessing the regional IWRM process in West Africa and formulating recommendations for its efficient implementation, (ii) assessing the implementation of SDG 6 on safe water and sanitation in West Africa and formulating recommendations to facilitate/accelerate the achievement of its targets in West Africa, (iii) to contribute to financing mobilization for the water and sanitation sector in West Africa, and (iv) to promote West Africa’s harmonious, visible, and effective participation in international water-related discussions, particularly the 2026 United Nations Water Conference co-hosted by Senegal and the United Arab Emirates

To ensure the efficient management of the forum’s groundwork, Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs) were formed around various topics, including “Water Infrastructures Financing.”

This report from the second working group provides a comprehensive analysis of this topic in terms of challenges and constraints, as well as lessons learned from past experiences with water infrastructures financing in West Africa.