



BENIN

Water and Sanitation Profile

POPULATION AND HEALTH STATISTICS	
Population (2008)	8.7 million ^a
Proportion of population living in urban areas (2008)	41% ^a
Average annual urban/rural population growth rates (1990-2008)	4.3 / 2.7% ^a
Under age 5 mortality rate (2007)	123/1000 live births ^b
Under age 5 mortality rate due to diarrheal disease (2004)	15.6% ^b
<small>Note: Most recently available data provided. ^a World Bank. 2009 World Development Indicators (WDI) Database. ^b World Health Organization (WHO). World Health Statistics 2009.</small>	

WSS SECTOR OVERVIEW

Benin is a West African nation where poverty remains widespread. Benin possesses substantial water resources, but these are unequally distributed throughout the country, and the water supply and sanitation (WSS) infrastructure remains limited. However, Benin has made progress developing its WSS sector, having attained the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for drinking water access. With respect to sanitation, an estimated 800,000 people have gained access to improved sanitation since 1990; however, the country still lags far behind its MDG target for improved sanitation.¹

In rural areas, the government and international donors have succeeded in significantly expanding WSS coverage under a clear development framework. The national utility responsible for urban areas, however, has not been as successful in defining a cohesive national strategy to improve and expand coverage.

¹ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP). *Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water, 2010 Update.*

The most prominent areas requiring improvement include: 1) effective decentralization; 2) support to sustain the national water company of Benin, *Société Nationale des Eaux du Bénin* (SONEB), through improved planning and management functions and development of a commercial and financing strategy for both potable water supply and sanitation; and 3) strengthening WSS monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Stronger M&E processes will better link WSS sector improvements to poverty reduction frameworks, especially as better linkages between sanitation and health continue to be embedded within broader national poverty reduction strategies.²

WATER AVAILABILITY IN BENIN	
Renewable freshwater resources per capita, m ³ /person/year (2008)	1,189 ^c
Water withdrawals, m ³ /person/year (2002)	18 ^c
Projected water resources per capita, m ³ /person/year in 2015	948 ^d
<small>Note: Most recently available data provided. ^c UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). <i>FAO Aquastat Database</i>. "Freshwater resources" refers to estimates of runoff into rivers and recharge of ground water and does not include flows from other countries. ^d Note this value was calculated using a straight-line calculation based on average population growth rates (1990-2008) with no adjustment for consumption or technology changes. Data was obtained from <i>World Bank WDI Database</i> (population) and <i>FAO Aquastat Database</i> (water resources).</small>	

WSS SECTOR FRAMEWORK

Benin is revising its national water policy, which includes a strategy for sanitation and hygiene, promotion of integrated water resources management (IWRM), and creation of a regulatory agency with oversight of WSS service provider delivery standards. Responsibility for the water sector lies with the *Ministère des Mines, de l'Énergie et de l'Eau* (MMEE, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Hydraulics/Water Resources), which initiates,

² African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), et al. *Getting Africa on Track to Meet the MDGs on Water and Sanitation (2006).*

coordinates and regulates water resources activities. Until 2003, responsibility for urban WSS was vested in the Benin Water and Electricity Corporation (SBEE). Institutional reform separated the functions of water and electricity supply, and SONEB was established as a semi-autonomous enterprise. SONEB now acts primarily as the public drinking water utility in urban areas. Since December 2003, local councils have been empowered to be the contracting authorities in drinking water supply and distribution, within their respective territories and in accordance with the national policies and regulations.

The *Direction Générale de l'Eau* (DG Eau, General Directorate of Water) is responsible for overseeing and coordinating drinking water supply in rural areas. At the provincial level, DG Eau is represented by 11 provincial water divisions. Responsibility is being shifted to the local level, which includes 77 municipalities. In some rural municipalities, user associations play an important role at the local level, though they are generally only involved in the daily management of small facilities, such as hand pumps and piped networks, while DG Eau plans and implements construction projects.

Coordination in the sanitation sub-sector is not as well defined or coordinated as in the drinking water sector. In urban areas, the Direction Hygiène et Assainissement de Base (DHAB, Directorate of Hygiene and Basic Sanitation which is part of the Ministry of Health), shares responsibility for sanitation with SONEB as well as other government directorates. In rural areas, DHAB provides sanitation services to institutions, such as schools, health centers, markets, and government facilities.

THE URBAN SUB-SECTOR

SONEB is currently supplying urban areas in approximately 70 out of 77 municipal districts. Eighty percent of the demand for water is concentrated in four urban areas (Cotonou, Porto Novo, Parakou, and Abomey/Bohicon). The Government of Benin (GoB) recently outlined specific goals, including rehabilitating and expanding the water processing plants at Védoko and Godomey.³ SONEB needs

³ World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF). *Benin: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (2008).

KEY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Agency	Description	Contact Information
DG Eau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates IWRM in rural and semi-urban areas via 11 water service divisions; Planning and implementing capital projects. 	
DHAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency within the Ministry of Health; Defines national sanitation policy. 	Clegbaza Guy Médard crepaben@bow.intnet.et.bj 229-315316
MMEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets national water policies; Supervises implementation of policies in urban and rural areas. 	
Rural Municipalities and User Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume WSS service responsibilities; Co-finance capital costs and recovery of O&M costs. 	
SONEB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National, semi-autonomous public WSS service provider for all urban areas. 	Jean-Michel Klican, Assistant General Director jmklican@yahoo.fr 229-21312272 www.soneb.com

support to improve management as well as capacity. Overall, operation and management (O&M) reforms in areas such as billing and financial planning are necessary preconditions for the utility to work toward expanding coverage. Currently, the pricing and billing system for water consumption is unsustainable, as water tariffs do not cover the real costs of production and distribution.⁴ If SONEB can successfully transition from its reliance on government subsidies, it will be in a better position to more sustainably expand services to poorer urban and peri-urban areas.

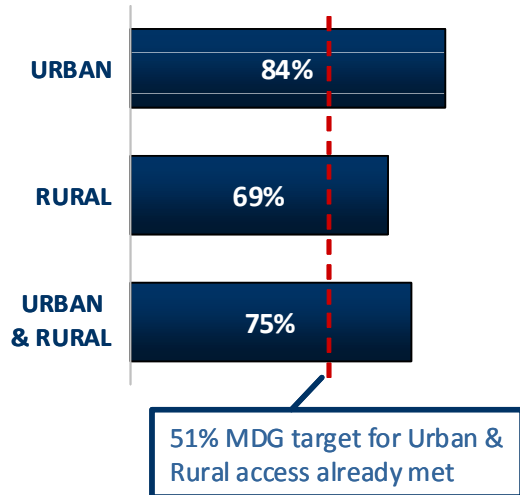
Funding to train and retain staff has been historically weak due to poor systems of accountability and the practice of limiting skilled personnel to short-term contracts. As a result, SONEB does not have the human resources necessary to fully implement commercial plans and finance improvements.

THE RURAL SUB-SECTOR

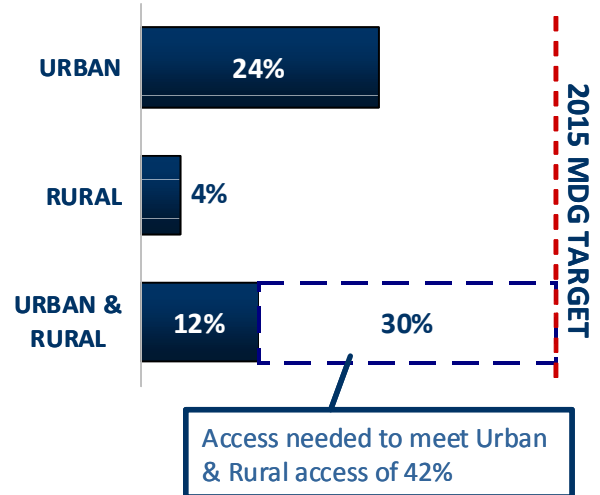
In rural areas and small towns, a national WSS strategy was developed and implemented through the

⁴ AfDB/Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). *African Economic Outlook: Benin* (2007).

Meeting MDG 7: Access to Water in 2008



Meeting MDG 7: Access to Sanitation in 2008



Data Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), *Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water, 2010 Update*. Note on comparing baseline data from earlier reports: The JMP methodology uses all available data in each successive report. This means that estimates may be recalculated for earlier years if more data becomes available. The JMP notes that these new estimates may affect the baseline reported in earlier data sets.

Assistance Program for the Development of the Water Supply and Sanitation framework (PADEAR). PADEAR, financed through strong support of multiple development partners, created a unified framework for WSS interventions and funded multiple projects throughout Benin. The rural sub-sector is making great strides through PADEAR and its M&E system used on both government and donor-assisted projects.

Recently, the rural sub-sector strategy has been renewed to focus on achieving the MDGs; it emphasizes a demand-responsive approach, decentralization of decision-making, cost recovery, private sector participation, and reinforcement of the central government in the role of sector coordinator and regulator.⁵ Development of rural water supply institutions and service is gaining momentum in the private sector, such as borehole drilling. Furthermore, the government has adopted a medium-term, goal-oriented water budgeting approach through its Water Budget Programme (BPO). This program seeks to balance investment among different districts throughout the country. It allows donors to align their own contributions with government projects. Most donors are aligned with the BPO, which accounts for

about 90 percent of rural and small town financing.⁶ However, continued improvements may not be sustainable as new municipalities, created through Benin's decentralization policies, begin to come to grips with the requirement to co-finance capital improvement projects and operate and maintain systems without the ability to train and retain the necessary technical staff. Although sanitation coverage remains low in rural areas, it may improve as budgetary reforms increase the timeliness of WSS budgetary allocations from the national government to the rural service providers.

DONOR INVOLVEMENT

Institutional and service management capacity may be a greater need than financing, but progress is expected as the process of decentralization empowers local municipalities to manage and monitor their systems. Key donors in these efforts include the African Development Bank, French Development Agency (AFD), and the World Bank/Water and Sanitation Program in addition to several countries' development agencies. Over the past 20 years donors have provided US\$87 million in support to water sector reform in Benin.⁷

⁵ AMCOW, et al. *Getting Africa on Track to Meet the MDGs on Water and Sanitation (2006)*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)/Integrated Regional Information Networks. *Benin: Water sector corruption (2009)*.

DONOR	ACTIVITIES	CONTACT INFORMATION
African Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements projects such as the Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Project (PAEPA); Meeting drinking water and sanitation needs of the rural populations of Atlantique and Zou through PAEPA. 	
Belgian Cooperation Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides support in the Atacora and Donga regions. 	
Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prominent donor in the WSS sector, supporting PADEAR in the Zou and Atlantic regions. 	
French Development Agency (AFD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports access to WSS services as a part of the city management decentralization process; Supports the development of sustainable administration of rural water supply schemes in cooperation with Dutch and German efforts; Supports privatization and creation of autonomous public utilities. 	Robert Didier afdcootonou@groupe-afd.org Tel: 229-31-34-53
German Development Partners (GTZ) and German Development Bank (KfW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment/conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in rural regions; Decentralization and municipal development; IWRM and potable water supply; Support to SONEB and PADEAR in the Mono and Oueme regions. 	Petra Windisch-Stumpf petra.windisch-stumpf@gtz.de Tel: 229-21-31-03-95 Ina Joachim kfw.cotonou@kfw.de Tel: 229 21 31 01 67
Japanese Cooperation Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports efforts primarily in the rural areas of Mono, Couffo, Oueme, Plateau and Zou regions. 	
Kuwait Fund, Arab Bank for Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finances projects in village water supply projects. 	
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand-washing campaign to improve hygiene; Increasing access to sanitation through latrines and water supply access through wells; Increasing WSS service management through capacity building, especially at local provider level. 	C. Dansou Tel: 229-21-30-41-53
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided support to the Zou region and other rural areas through PADEAR; Assisted in drilling 200 boreholes for water supply; Providing sensitization and monitoring support for sanitation efforts. 	
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional reform and capacity building at the national level, and for WSS service provider; Development of regulatory agency; Development of IWRM framework. 	Joseph Baah-Dwomoh Tel: 229-21-31-35-64
World Bank/Water and Sanitation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and capacity building for WSS regional institutions; Support for non-state utilities; Biodiversity management; Some infrastructure development in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. 	Tel: 229-21-30-58-57
<p>^eContact information may change frequently and therefore be different from what is noted above.</p>		

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Additional references that aided in the development of this report include: the SONEB website; International Secretariat for Water (ISAW), *Benin Blue Book; Water, Life, and Human Development* (2009); African Development Bank (AfDB) country profile, *AfDB and Benin* (July 2009); AfDB, *Benin Result-Based Country Strategy Paper, 2005-2009, Mid-term Review Report* (July 2008); and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Evaluation of Sector Approaches in the Water Sector, Country Report: Benin* (December 2007).

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