



A wave of European solidarity

The rise in non-governmental cooperation is not specific to France alone. In many European countries (Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and so on), local authorities are mobilising part of their water and sanitation budgets on behalf of southern countries.

Although each may follow a different route based on its own history and practices, their common target is the least well-off communities and the local authorities responsible for them.

The Province of Turin is allocating one thousandth of a euro per cubic metre of water billed to specific international cooperation projects aimed at implementing sustainable water resource management models.

The challenge is there to be met: by bringing together elected officials and users, we can strengthen the European network of international solidarity stakeholders which met in Zaragoza in September 2008, in order to prolong the global initiative to reinforce solidarity initiatives, launched by France in Mexico in March 2006. www.pseau.org

Support for increasing the capabilities of the 3 public water establishments in Lebanon

The programme concerns regulation of sanitation, on-site sanitation, water resource protection and user involvement. Co-financing: French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Rhone-Alpes Region, CORAIL, Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency, Greater Lyon Urban Community

The main subjects of a water partnership

The local authorities in the North and the South provide mutual support to better meet the needs of their populations, in particular with regard to:

- **access to the service** by all users, regardless of their means;
- the search for **equalisation**, enabling the richest to help the least well-off;
- **user involvement and information**;
- **supervision and regulation** based on transparency and the ability to monitor the management of services;
- the need to **include sanitation in any drinking water investment**.

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COMMITTED TO WATER FOR THE WORLD.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AMONG LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

Three objectives:

- To build sustainable partnerships between local political decision-makers
- To meet local needs, flexibly and responsively
- To give tangible form to civic solidarity

Local authorities are now recognised as being relevant players in water and sanitation service provision. Alongside the United Nations, States, NGOs, funding institutions and companies, they are effective partners with an as-yet under-exploited international cooperation potential.

Decentralised cooperation offers local authorities opportunities to create partnerships with local authorities in other countries and support their projects, after signing of an agreement and ensuring compliance with international commitments.



Photos : Inauguration-Orange-bekaa / MEEDDAT - Mignaux telegestion Orga / ACF - Libéria / Solidarités Tiers Monde Mali

Cooperation between local authorities is an effective way for people to show their solidarity and help to improve access to water and sanitation.

In France as in Europe, the wave of solidarity from the citizens and their elected officials is a very real one. Despite the currently unfavourable economic climate, the majority of the French (76%) expressed their desire to continue and even increase public development aid; this led to a renewed commitment by elected officials in favour of water-related cooperation.

[Source : CSA / Coordination Sud survey "The French and the position of Europe in the world" October 2008]

Sharing of expertise

Both in the North and the South, local governments, local technical departments and users share the same concerns, responsibilities and powers. This human aspect of the sharing of know-how gives greater meaning and impact to the programmes designed to reinforce the position of the stakeholders in the south. Decentralised cooperation offers a tangible opportunity to share experiences and pool expertise.

Local authorities are a means of stimulating greater complementarity between players, greater understanding of local issues and a better response to needs.

A flexible and responsive intervention model

Because it is less constrained by bilateral or multilateral relations issues, because it brings the citizens together around concrete projects, whether they be local elected officials, technicians, entrepreneurs, association managers or users, decentralised cooperation offers an immediate response to the needs of populations without access to water and sanitation.

Its ability to adapt to different contexts leads to reciprocal exchanges and support: decentralised cooperation offers scope for testing new financing mechanisms, new approaches to users, new knowledge sharing tools, new pricing practices, and so on.

An expression of civic solidarity

Long-term decentralised cooperation programmes involving the populations can, both in the North and the South, arouse a real sense of civic responsibility on the subject of water.



Programme to enhance communal project management expertise in Gao, Mali

The programme concerns the production of a plan to organise the public sanitation service and boost the capacity of the private sector. One objective is to include the population in the strategic technological choices and develop awareness-raising activities to drive changes in attitudes concerning water and sanitation risks and to promote hygiene.

Co-financing: Greater Nancy urban community, City of Maxéville, French Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, French Development Agency, International Association of French-Speaking Mayors, Association of Large French Cities Mayors - AMGVF and the Rhine-Meuse Water Agency.

A financing model enjoying considerable success in France

French local authorities are mobilising to finance drinking water and sanitation infrastructures. To do this, they can call on a range of legislative texts enabling them to commit funding in complete transparency to both the users and their supervisory authorities.

Since 2005, the "Oudin Santini" Act has supplemented the 1992 Act authorising local authorities to finance international solidarity programmes from their general budget. This arrangement (although without any obligation) enables the local authorities and the Water Agencies to devote up to 1% of their water and sanitation budget to cooperative programmes. The annual potential from this funding amounts to 120 million euros.

In developing countries, French local authorities have supported about 300 infrastructures and skills enhancement projects, amounting to 17 million euros in 2008. The origin of this financing can be broken down as follows: 3 M€ from the Urban Communities, 3 M€ from the towns, 3 M€ from the Water Boards, 5 M€ from the Water Agencies and 3 M€ from other partners

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/actions-france_830/cooperation-decentralisee_1054/index.html

see Decentralised Cooperation Act of 1992, Oudin Act of 9 February 2005, Thiollière Act of 25 January 2007.

Partnership of Oubritenga communes

As part of the decentralisation programme, the 7 communes¹ of the Province of Oubritenga (Burkina Faso) are the project owner for drinking water supply and sanitation equipment projects. The project to improve access to sanitation in Oubritenga, in close collaboration with the local technical departments, drilled 15 new wells and renovated 42 hand-pumps and 12 public latrines on behalf of 25,000 people. These projects were synchronised with the creation of a water supply points management committee and training of the local elected officials in order to guarantee the long-term future of these infrastructures.

Co-financing: Limousin Region, Water Agencies of Adour-Garonne and Loire-Brittany and French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

1. Smallest administrative subdivision administered by a mayor and a municipal council