



USAID
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The West Africa Water Initiative

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Ensuring access to clean water and adequate sanitation is an essential component in sustainable, long term development.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) formally endorsed “partnerships” as a model for action. Organizations around the world are strengthening existing alliances, and fostering new collaborations to make progress on achieving WSSD and Millennium Development Goals. As part of the global movement towards partnership, the 45 million dollar West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) was created. Inspired by the vision of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, this public-private partnership grew from years of experience with World Vision and other international non-governmental partners. The initiative is currently engaged in water supply, sanitation, hygiene, and integrated water resources management activities that will provide benefits to more than 500,000 people in West Africa by 2008.

A Partnership in Action

The “West Africa Water Initiative” was launched in 2002 to maximize the impact of water-related investments by both private and public actors, targeting interventions on highly vulnerable rural and peri-urban populations in the developing world. In its initial phase, the alliance invests in small-scale potable water supply and sanitation activities in Ghana, Mali, and Niger, as the entry point for an integrated approach to water resources management. Collaboration with other organizations creates programmatic synergy and accesses the complementary strengths of a number of affiliated partners. The initial budget from all partners is more than \$45 million for six years.

The impact of this initiative will be significant, and result in increased access to services, improved health and welfare, and more sustainable management of water resources for hundreds of thousands of people. In particular, it will support U.S. efforts to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.” In addition, WAWI hopes to foster a new and potentially replicable model of partnership and institutional synergy that ensures technical excellence, programmatic innovation, and long-term financial, social and environmental sustainability in water resources management.

West Africa Water Initiative Partners

The current members of the Alliance represent a broad spectrum of institutional types, including a private foundation, a bilateral donor, international NGOs, universities, a public international organization, and a private for-profit sector industry association. All of these organizations have a broad international reach.

WAWI partners are:

- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development
- Desert Research Institute
- Helen Keller International
- International Trachoma Initiative
- Lions Clubs International
- United Nations Foundation
- UNICEF
- USAID



Adequate water supply enhances income generation by allowing people to spend less time securing potable water, and more time on productive livelihoods.



Lack of clean water plagues many rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana, Mali and Niger, where WAWI focuses its activities.

- WaterAid
- Winrock International
- World Chlorine Council
- World Vision

Many other institutions are also associated with the Initiative, including USAID implementing organizations such as Associates in Rural Development, Inc.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has committed more than \$19 million of its resources over six years to this new alliance. USAID's investment commitment currently reaches over \$6 million to be spent over four years. The World Chlorine Council (a private sector industry association) will contribute a product donation valued at \$300,000. Other partners bring significant matches of their own resources to the table, totaling over \$18 million.

The partnership has a geographic focus on West Africa in its initial phase, specifically in Ghana, Mali, and Niger. Alliance activities in all three countries will build on current partner efforts to expand service delivery, prevent and control trachoma and guinea worm, and promote sustainable and productive use of water resources. The full range of activities that will be undertaken by all partners includes: well drilling and rehabilitation, hand and solar pump installation, alternative water source development, construction of latrines, household and school based sanitation and hygiene education, community mobilization and governance, hydrogeological analysis, capacity building, and policy development.

USAID Focus Areas

USAID support is directed to strengthening the Integrated Water Resources Management scope of the activities, embedding potable water activities in a broader, cross-sectoral framework. Specifically, USAID focuses on areas of intervention including Livelihoods and Income Generation, Governance and the Enabling Environment, Information Management, Gender Mainstreaming, and Hygiene Behavior Change. Investments support institutional strengthening, capacity building, information management, stakeholder participation, water policy reform, and financial sustainability, as well as targeted on-the-ground technical support and service delivery. Through its interventions, the Agency plays a catalytic role in WAWI as a whole, expanding the areas of activity and long-term approach of all partners in line with the principles of integrated water resources management.

In addition to its financial and technical support, USAID has supported partnership consolidation through efforts in communications, development of an initial Memorandum of Understanding, resource mobilization, and technical analysis and capacity building on cross-cutting issues. USAID has also supported the recent development of a five year strategic plan for WAWI, which lays out a collective vision to consolidate the WAWI operational model for increased impact and scaling up.

For more information, contact the USAID Office of Natural Resources Management, Water Team or see <http://www.waterforthepeople.org>.