

Budget Analysis of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene coverage needs in Benin

SUMMARY

Over the years 2017-2021 of the national strategies for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in rural areas, the Benin government showed commitment to providing and making basic drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services accessible through an 83 per cent increase in allocation of financial resources to the WASH sector.

Despite these encouraging increases, Benin's commitment to provide universal coverage of drinking water to the population by 2021 has not yet been achieved. In 2021, 30 per cent of the Beninese population still lacked access to basic drinking water. Access to basic hygiene and sanitation services remained a major challenge as 52 per cent of the population (in 2021) still practiced open defecation.

Considering the minimum cost necessary to achieve SDG 6.1 and 6.2, estimated at US\$1,872,292,800, and a cumulative expenditure of US\$167.493.600 between 2017 and 2020, i.e., a financing requirement of US\$1.692.194.400.000 over the period from 2021 to 2030, an increase in allocation for WASH is imperative for ensuring the achievement of SDG 6.1 and 6.2 by 2030.

Introduction

The Government of Benin is committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), that aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation services for all.

In the country, several ministries are working on providing access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services for the population. The main three ministries being:

- Ministry of Water and Mines (MEM): which implements three budgetary programmes, namely the 'Steering and Support to MEM Services', the 'Water' Programme and the 'Mine'

Programme. The Water Programme includes projects for the development of hydraulic infrastructure and sustainable water management, drinking water supply, sludge treatment and wastewater treatment.

- Ministry of Health (MOH): which intervenes in the hygiene and sanitation sector through the implementation of the hygiene and sanitation promotion programme and quality control of health products and water.
- Ministry for Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD): which is involved in hygiene and sanitation through waste collection and management systems, rainwater drainage, riverbank development, and the rehabilitation and development of city roads.

To achieve SDG 6.1 and SDG 6.2, the government has set up agencies whose aim is to reinforce the actions of sectoral ministries. These are the National Agency for Rural Drinking Water Supply (ANAEPMR), the National Agency for Primary Health Care (ANSSP), which is involved in health, hygiene and basic sanitation promotion and the protection of mothers and children, and the Living Environment Agency for the Development of the Territory (ACVDT). The latter manages projects aimed at improving the management of solid household waste, the development and drainage of the banks of the Cotonou and Porto-Novo lagoons and the development of primary, secondary and tertiary roads. In addition, reforms have been carried out by the National Water Company of Benin (SONEB), which is responsible for the collection, transfer, treatment and distribution of drinking water, as well as for the disposal of wastewater in urban areas.

Achieving universal access to drinking water and basic hygiene and sanitation services still requires considerable resources, despite all the investment efforts made so far by the Government and the Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs). It is therefore essential to review budget allocations and analyse expenditure trends on water, hygiene and sanitation. The purpose of the note is to assess the extent to which the allocations meet the needs of the population, particularly women and children, and to increase the knowledge of policy makers on budgetary issues related to the performance of the sector.

This technical paper summarises findings presented in the paper '*Analyse budgétaire l'eau, l'hygiène et l'assainissement – Bénin 2022*' authored by UNICEF Benin to support making this work and its findings accessible to a wider audience within UNICEF and implementing partners within the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector.

¹ Water and Sanitation Program (2012), *Impacts économiques d'un mauvais assainissement en Afrique : Bénin*

1. Reasons for investing in the WASH sector

In Benin, it is estimated that US\$104 million is lost each year due to poor sanitation, the equivalent of 1.5 per cent of the national GDP. US\$79 million (about CFAF 43.5 billion) is lost each year due to premature deaths from unclean water and poor sanitation and hygiene. Child deaths are directly attributed, in 90 per cent of cases, to unsafe water and poor sanitation and hygiene. The loss due to open defecation is estimated at US\$75 million per year and the loss due to health care expenditure related to poor sanitation and hygiene is estimated at US\$3.1 million (CFAF 1.7 billion).¹

2. National strategies in the water, hygiene and sanitation sector

Two strategy documents have been adopted and are accompanied by funding plans:

1. The National Strategy for Drinking Water Supply in Rural Areas (SNAEP-MR) was validated by all stakeholders in the water sector in Benin in May 2017 and is the reference document for the sector for the period 2017-2030. It plans to: (i) ensure access to an improved source of drinking water for the entire rural population of Benin; (ii) guarantee the availability of drinking water on a continuous and sustainable basis; (iii) permanently ensure the quality of drinking water; (iv) guarantee good governance of the hygiene and sanitation sub-sector.
2. The National Strategy for the Promotion of Basic Hygiene and Sanitation in Rural Areas (SNPHAB) is the reference document for all actors in the basic hygiene and sanitation sub-sector, developed in 2018 to cover the period 2018-2030. The SNPHAB targets include an increase of at least 50 per cent in the proportion of rural households with

sustainable access to: (i) adequate hygiene and sanitation practices (household hygiene, handwashing and menstrual hygiene); (ii) drinking water quality; and (iii) sustained access to adequate sanitation and hygiene services. It is also expected that open defecation will be ended in a sustainable manner in 100 per cent of Benin's villages by 2030.

3. Challenges and issues in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector

The water, hygiene and basic sanitation sector has made significant progress in recent years. According to national data between 2017 and 2020, drinking water coverage rates rose from 55 per cent to 63 per cent in urban areas and from 41.8 per cent to 70.2 per cent in rural areas.

In recent years, investments have been directed primarily to rural areas. According to the ANAEPMR report, the rural drinking water coverage rate in 2020 was 70.16 per cent, compared to 53.7 per cent in 2019.²

These figures show that significant progress has been made between 2017 (41.8 per cent) and 2020 (70.2 per cent) in rural areas, compared to urban areas. There are, however, significant regional disparities. A number of departments (districts) have a drinking water supply rate below the national rate.

As for open defecation, despite a small decrease from 54.2 per cent in 2012 to 54 per cent in 2018 and around 52 per cent in 2020, more than half of Benin's population continues to practice open defecation.

Methodology

The budget analysis for WASH in Benin focused on the years 2017-2021.³ An overview was made

² *Ministère du Développement et de la Coordination de l'Action Gouvernementale, Suivi de la mise en oeuvre des ODD – Rapport 2020.*

of the existing national strategies for WASH and the challenges and issues the country is facing. Subsequently an analysis of the budgets was done per sector (water, sanitation, hygiene) over the years in question. An overview was given of which ministry contributed to which sector annually and what the expenditures were. An analysis was done on the findings and estimates were provided for reaching SDG 6. For this the [UNICEF public finance tool](#) was used (tool 1 in chapter 4).

Results

Analysis of budget allocations to the water, sanitation and hygiene sector

1. Annual budget allocations as a percentage of GDP and general budget

Budget allocations for WASH are a very small proportion of the general budget and GDP.

Table 1: Annual budget allocations as a percentage of the general budget - Source: WASH budget analysis database, authors' calculations

Type of allocation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Budget allocations for water as a percentage of the general budget	1,2 %	1,6 %	4,0 %	2,5 %	2,8 %
Hygiene and sanitation budget allocations as a percentage of the general budget	1,5 %	0,6 %	1,0 %	1,2 %	1,9 %
WASH budget allocations as a percentage of the general budget	2,7 %	2,2 %	5,1 %	3,7 %	4,7 %

The proportion of WASH allocations in the general budget is not stable. It fluctuates with a peak of

³ *Analyse budgétaire l'eau, l'hygiène et l'assainissement – Bénin 2022 (UNICEF)*

5.1 per cent in 2019 and a low of 2.2 per cent in 2018. Access to safe drinking water was prioritized between 2017 and 2019 but decreased from 2020 onwards. On average, annual budget allocations for access to drinking water represent 2.4 per cent of the general budget and those for hygiene and sanitation represent 1.2 per cent of the general budget.

The budget allocation for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in 2021 was 0.8 per cent of GDP. Budget allocations for hygiene and sanitation as a percentage of GDP vary between 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent over the period 2017-2021, averaging 0.2 per cent per year. This average is far from the 2015 Ngor Declaration⁴ target of at least 0.5 per cent.

2. Annual budget allocations by sector

Budget allocations for WASH are made up of allocations for the water sector and allocations for the sanitation and hygiene sector in Benin from 2017 to 2024.

Between 2017 and 2021, the budget for the water sector grew by an average of 24 per cent per year. This is a remarkable effort, but despite this, almost 30 per cent of the population is still lacking access to drinking water. In addition, water infrastructure set up for the supply of drinking water must be maintained so that it continues to operate.

Between 2017 and 2021, the budget for hygiene and sanitation (H&S) recorded an increase of 35 per cent with an average annual growth rate of 8%. This allocation effort is still not up to the needs of the population. In a context where 52 per cent of the population practice open defecation, it will be necessary to invest in the establishment of sanitary infrastructures that will enable the

⁴ The [Ngor Declaration](#) on Sanitation and Hygiene is a new vision which, in line with the proposed UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aims at achieving universal access to adequate and sustainable sanitation and hygiene

population to adopt acceptable hygiene behaviours.

3. Share of water and sanitation allocations in the WASH sector

For 2021, allocations to the water sector constitute 60 per cent of the WASH budget, compared to 40 per cent for hygiene and sanitation (H&S). The water sector's share of the budget has grown from 46 per cent in 2017 to 80 per cent in 2019. However, from 2020 onwards, it starts to decline and continues to do so until 2021, reaching 67 per cent in 2020 and 60 per cent in 2021, while remaining higher than for H&S.

The decrease in the share of the water sector budget in the overall WASH budget is due to the growth in the MCVDD's sanitation allocations, which have increased from US\$10,000,000 (CFAF 5.8 billion) in 2019 to US\$25,600,000 (CFAF 15.2 billion) in 2020 and US\$47,770,000 (CFAF 28.1 billion) in 2021. This growth has led to an increase in the share of hygiene and sanitation budgets from 20 per cent in 2019 to 40 per cent in 2021 after a downward trend from 2017 to 2019, from 54 per cent to 20 per cent respectively.

4. Contribution of the ministries concerned with water, hygiene and sanitation

Interventions in the water sector are entirely carried out by the Ministry of Water and Mines (MEM), which also intervenes in hygiene and sanitation, particularly in wastewater treatment. On average, the MEM contributes 70.7 per cent of WASH allocations per year.

Table 2 Breakdown of annual WASH expenditure by sector - Source: WASH budget analysis database, authors' calculations.

services and eliminate open defecation, by 2030. It was compiled and signed by African Ministers responsible for Sanitation and Hygiene at AfricaSan 4 in 2015.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
EHA (en millions FCFA)	42550	28815	63949	58994
MEM	47 %	79 %	91 %	74 %
MCVDD	53 %	21 %	9 %	26 %
MS	0,3 %	0,3 %	0,2 %	0,1 %
HA (en millions FCFA)	23093	7645	12834	19393
MEM	2 %	21 %	54 %	21 %
MCVDD	98 %	78 %	45 %	79 %
MS	0,5 %	1,3 %	0,8 %	0,3 %
EAU (en millions FCFA)	19457	21 170	51 116	39601
MEM	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The MEM is the only sectoral ministry involved in increasing access to drinking water. With the rate of access to drinking water still at 70.2 per cent in 2020, it is essential to provide this ministry with the necessary financial resources to reach the 30 per cent of the population who still lack access to drinking water.

The average annual contribution of the MEM to hygiene and sanitation allocations is 21 per cent.

The Ministry of the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD) contributes an annual average of 29 per cent of the allocations for WASH and 78 per cent of the allocations for hygiene and sanitation. This ministry, apart from road works and urban development, is also involved in the construction of health infrastructure through projects whose allocations are used much more for actions other than sanitation. The allocations for the installation of latrines have therefore not been taken into account. Given the crucial problem of open defecation, which is 52 per cent prevalent in Benin, particularly in rural areas where this practice has a prevalence of over 70 per cent, it is essential that a specific project for the construction of basic hygiene and sanitation facilities be set up to provide institutions (schools, colleges and health centres) with latrine blocks and hand-washing facilities, and all communes, particularly rural localities, with multi-service infrastructure in public places (markets, bus stations, etc.).

The Ministry of Health contributes the least to WASH allocations. It should have much more financial resources to work on the adoption of behaviours on personal hygiene, food hygiene,

menstrual hygiene, and environmental hygiene in order to prevent many diseases that cause the nation such a loss of income.

5. Annual budget allocations for basic sanitation and hygiene (SDG 6)

As open defecation is still practiced widely, access to hygiene and sanitation services must be improved by investing more in these services. However, the analysis only looked into government investments. The areas covered by basic hygiene and sanitation can be broken down as follows:

- excreta and domestic wastewater management;
- water facilities development (standpipes, boreholes and modern wells);
- drinking water quality (from drawing to consumption);
- personal hygiene, including hand washing with soap and water and menstrual hygiene.

The available data does not allow for an exhaustive presentation of the allocations according to this disaggregation. Overall, the resources made available to the Ministry of Water and Mining for the "Water" budget programme contribute to the achievement of SDG 6 through the implementation of drinking water supply projects, the strengthening of drinking water supply systems, and the management of excreta, domestic wastewater and faecal sludge in urban and rural areas.

The share of hygiene and sanitation decreased from 2017 to 2019. With the response to COVID-19, this share has risen to 17 per cent of allocations in 2020, before returning to a very low level in 2021.

Overall, allocations and expenditures for the achievement of SDG 6 have been on the rise since 2017, demonstrating sustained efforts to achieve the 2030 targets. But it is necessary to

assess these allocation and expenditure efforts against the estimated minimum cost of achieving SDG 6. The costing, carried out by the Directorate General for Coordination and Monitoring of the SDGs, estimates the achievement of SDG 6 at CFAF 1,153.6 billion, or an average annual expenditure of CFAF 77 billion. The costing reveals that efforts remain to be made at almost twice the expenditure achieved in 2020.

From 2021 onwards, an average of CFAF 105 billion must be spent per year. These financial resource requirements are far in excess of what has been spent to date to achieve SDG 6.1 and 6.2. It is suggested that the State allocate much more resources to this sector and that development partners increase their development aid to Benin to finance the gap necessary to achieve SDG 6.

Discussion

Decentralization of expenditure and equity

Overall, budgetary allocations for water interventions are distributed according to the needs in different localities. However, there is some disparity in the allocation of budgetary allocations for the promotion of access to drinking water in some departments (districts).

To reduce regional disparities, departments (districts) with low drinking water coverage rates should be prioritized, taking into account population density.

The analysis on the decentralization of allocations and equity could only be carried out for the water sector due to the unavailability of information on the distribution of allocations to hygiene and sanitation by department (district).

Financing the water, sanitation and hygiene sector

The WASH sector in Benin is funded from two sources: domestic funding, provided by the government, and external funding from donors and sponsors. In 2021, external resources accounted for 51 per cent of allocations to the WASH sector, divided into 57 per cent for water sector funding and 42 per cent for hygiene and sanitation sector funding.

Between 2017 and 2019, support from Technical and Financial Partners increased from 30 per cent in 2017 to 74 per cent in 2019, before falling to 57 per cent in 2020 and 51 per cent in 2021. The water sector benefits much more from TFP support than the hygiene and sanitation sector.

On average, external resources for the water sector amount to 62 per cent of its budget and those for hygiene and sanitation represent 32 per cent of its budgetary allocations. The water sector is much more heavily financed by external resources. Benin thus has short-term resources to meet the targets, but the state should also take the necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of these resources over time.

Conclusion

Over the past five years, the Beninese government has shown commitment to providing and making basic drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services accessible through an increasing allocation of financial resources to the WASH sector. An analysis of the sector budgets shows an 83 per cent increase in allocations, which rose from CFAF 42.55 billion to CFAF 77.93 billion between 2017 and 2021. The funding of the water sub-sector was the most remarkable in terms of its contribution to the sector's budget allocations. From CFAF 19.46 billion in 2017, budgetary allocations to increase access to drinking water rose to CFAF 46.74 billion in 2021. Expressed as a percentage of GDP, allocations for the sector as a whole represent an average of 0.6 per cent of GDP, of which 0.4 per cent for water and 0.2 per cent for sanitation, compared to

the minimum of 0.5 per cent recommended by the Ngor Declaration.

Despite the encouraging effort of increasing allocations to the sector, Benin's commitment to provide universal coverage of drinking water to the population by 2021 has not yet been achieved. In 2021, 30 per cent of the Beninese population is still waiting for access to drinking water (ANAEPMR, 2021). Access to basic hygiene and sanitation services remains a major challenge due to the number of Beninese who continue to practise open defecation (52 per cent, World Bank, 2021). In the current context of the Sustainable Development Goals and the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges have become even greater in terms of achieving SDG 6. Considering the minimum cost necessary to achieve SDG 6, estimated at CFAF 1,153.6 billion⁵, and a cumulative expenditure of CFAF 103.2 billion between 2017 and 2020, i.e., a financing requirement of CFAF 1,050.4 billion over the period from 2021 to 2030, an increase in allocation for WASH is imperative for ensuring the achievement of SDG 6.1 and 6.2 by 2030.

⁵ *Direction Générale de la Coordination et du Suivi des ODD (2018), Costing des cibles prioritaires des ODD, Résultats estimation des coûts du pilier 1*

KEY POINTS

- *The share of the water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) sector in the state budget increased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent between 2017 and 2021. This effort has led to an improvement in drinking water coverage rates, which rose from 41.8 per cent in 2017 to 70.2 per cent in 2020 in rural areas and from 55 per cent to 63 per cent in urban areas. It has also reduced the prevalence of open defecation from 53.9 per cent in 2018 to 52 per cent in 2020. Despite this progress, nearly 30 per cent of the population still lacks access to safe drinking water and more than 50 per cent of households continue to practise open defecation in 2021. In line with the Government's ambition to achieve universal access to safe drinking water and appropriate and sustainable hygiene and sanitation services and to end open defecation by 2030, it is recommended that the state invests more in WASH with budget allocations and expenditures reaching at least 1 per cent of GDP.*
- *More than half (52 per cent) of the population practises open defecation, which leads to numerous diseases that affect the health of the population in general, and children in particular (diarrhoeal diseases, intestinal worms, chronic diseases, etc.), resulting in significant loss of human life and resources for the nation. Moreover, the distribution of investments in water, hygiene and sanitation shows some regional disparities. Some of the more populated departments with less drinking water receive less investment from the National Agency for Rural Drinking Water Supply (ANAEPMR). In addition, almost all the budgetary allocations of the Ministry for the Living Environment and Sustainable Development (MCVDD) for hygiene and sanitation are for interventions in urban areas. In order to promote the reduction of social and regional inequalities and sustainable development where no one is left behind, it is recommended that an effort be made to ensure equity in the distribution of budget allocations according to established results. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) support this effort through the definition and implementation of a specific project for the construction and management of public multi-service hygiene and sanitation infrastructures in rural areas.*
- *The Ministry of Health (MoH) contributed 0.9 per cent of the WASH budget allocations in 2021, up from 0.1 per cent in 2020 and 0.3 per cent in 2017. Despite this increased contribution, the MoH contributes on average 0.4 per cent of WASH allocations and 1 per cent of hygiene and sanitation allocations each year. The current context of non-monetary poverty established at 26.1 per cent in 2019 (EHCVM 2019), aggravated by monetary poverty of 38.5 per cent and the COVID-19 pandemic, leads to unhygienic living conditions for the populations. In view of the challenges of good health and well-being of the population, especially children, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that the Ministry of Health invests more in hygiene and sanitation by implementing high-impact hygiene interventions through a project aimed at changing the unhygienic behaviour of the targeted populations within a defined timeframe for the improvement of public health.*
- *The budget analysis for water, hygiene and sanitation shows the presence of several allocations for the same action (latrine construction, domestic wastewater management, excreta management), spread across the three ministries (MEM, MS and MCVDD) and sometimes merged with allocations for other works, leaving insufficient traceability. Moreover, the sectoral budgets concerned do not highlight budget lines reserved for hygiene and basic sanitation. For more synergy of actions and a better follow-up of the financing of the sector, it is recommended that the Government sets up a coordination of interventions in the WASH sector, which will provide the ministries concerned with budget lines, from which interventions for the achievement of SDG 6 will be financed according to the attributions of the sectoral ministries and the objectives to be reached.*
- *The minimum cost of achieving SDG 6 is estimated at CFAF 1,153.6 billion through the costing of priority SDGs. The cumulative expenditure from 2017 to 2020 for the implementation of interventions in favour of SDG 6 is approximately CFAF 103.2 billion, leaving a financing requirement of CFAF 1,050.4 billion. From 2021 onwards, an average annual expenditure of CFAF 105 billion will be required to achieve targets 1 and 2 of SDG 6 by 2030. These financial resource requirements are far in excess of the expenditure made to date for the achievement of SDG 6 (267 per cent of annual expenditure in 2020). It is recommended that the state invests more in the sector and that development partners increase their development assistance to Benin to finance the gap needed to achieve SDG 6.*

References

UNICEF Bénin (2022). *Analyse budgétaire l'eau, l'hygiène et l'assainissement – Bénin 2022*

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