

MISEREOR

Promotion Guidelines for Water Programmes and Projects in Africa



Water - Source of Self-reliant Development

"It is not enough to lead the people to water. The people must make water their own by practising sustainable management, and by appropriately utilising this resource for economic development."

Bishop Paul Ouédraogo,
Chairman of the Commission for Socio-pastoral Affairs of the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of Burkina Faso and Niger

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1 Background

For a number of years, there has been an ongoing debate within MISEREOR concerning the preparation of promotion guidelines for various sectors. The following guidelines have now been established for the promotion of programmes and projects in the water sector in Africa, one of the key segments of MISEREOR's promotion. They were produced on the basis of a series of meetings and discussions with partner organisations and professional experts.

In line with these consultations, the promotion of water programmes in Africa will be oriented towards newly-defined goals and quality criteria. The latter should be discussed with our partner organisations so as to adapt them to the respective country contexts.

2 Goals of Water Programmes and Projects

The following goals for water programmes and projects in Africa were derived from MISEREOR's guiding principles, which include "fighting hunger and disease, and promoting justice, peace and integrity of creation":

2.1 Securing Basic Rights in the Water Sector

The emergence of civil society has generated developments in legislation governing water supply. Water programmes now increasingly need to take into account the legal and political aspects of water supply. These include participatory area planning with the population, the monitoring and influencing of trends in government policymaking, as well as lobbying and advocacy work in both the South and the North.

2.2 Access to and Utilisation of Sufficient Quantities of Safe Water^{4*} Improves Food Security

Water supply affects food security in several respects, since water is used:

- a) for drinking and cooking purposes;
- b) as a production input in crop farming and animal husbandry (irrigation and watering animals), and in food processing;
- c) for washing, and for other domestic purposes.

One special strategy for water programmes in dry zones is the storage of water for use during periods of drought.

2.3 Improving the Health Situation through Hygienic Water Management that is Conducive to Health¹

According to WHO, the majority of diseases worldwide are caused by the consumption of, or contact with, unsafe water.

Water programmes and projects can significantly improve people's health by sensitising them to improved hygiene behaviour, and by providing them with access to safe drinking water.

2.4 Fostering Social Justice and Peaceful Conflict Management^{3,6}

The organisation of water supply is usually a joint, participatory task in which potential conflicts over the granting of rights can be peacefully resolved, since the shared goal of gaining access to water often unites the people concerned. Water supply programmes can lead to greater social justice, because in most cases they involve target groups that are disadvantaged and marginalised.

*The superscripted figures are cross-references to other promotion policies, see page 6.

2.5 Equal Participation of Women and Men in Water Projects²

Water programmes should pay special attention to the key role played by women in family water supply. Involving women in male-dominated decision-making structures such as village committees, and taking women's needs into account in water projects, can be significant milestones in the emergence of gender equality within a society.

2.6 Protecting Existing, and Harnessing New, Water Resources⁴

in accordance with the principles of social, ecological and financial sustainability

Global water demand doubles every twenty years. Therefore, water programmes should include locally appropriate measures for active water cycle management that replenishes the ground water, allows other resources to regenerate and thus guarantees sustainable natural resource management.

3 Beneficiaries of the Cooperation

MISEREOR's work is pro-poor in orientation. The poor in Africa live predominantly in rural regions. Therefore, most water programmes in Africa cooperate with the rural poor. Cooperation sometimes includes activities in small towns, or particularly needy quarters of periurban zones, and may involve correspondingly needy institutions such as health centres or prisons. Water programmes also seek to influence policymakers at all levels, and therefore also cooperate with municipal councils, government commissions and regional planning authorities. Some regions maintain networking and service centres that increase the efficiency of their infrastructure. In the long term, these can develop into independent small enterprise structures that provide maintenance and repair services to local water supply systems.

4 Types of Project Eligible for Promotion

Based on the above-mentioned goals, typical project constellations have been identified in which water can play an important role. These can also occur in a variety of combinations. To date, the more or less integrated water programmes that include a health and/or agricultural component have been the dominant model. The newer types of programme include measures for organisation development of user groups, or for supporting advocacy work to secure rights, and projects with a political orientation.

4.1 Water Supply Measures Planned, Implemented and Sustainably Managed using Local Resources

In these more traditional water programmes, the usual promotion of construction measures needs to be balanced by the promotion of approaches and instruments for the preceding socio-economic analysis, and for targeted work with user groups. The guiding motive is to maximise the latter's own inputs and self-responsibility. Training to strengthen gender sensitivity is a further important component of these programmes.

4.2 Rural Development Projects in Conjunction with Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Water Supply Components^{1, 4}

This also includes the promotion of thrifty water management, e.g. through appropriate irrigation methods, and watershed development and protection.

4.3 Integrated Water Projects that Incorporate Hygiene and Sanitation Measures, as well as Public Health Education, as Integral Components¹

4.4 Awareness-Raising, Organisation Development and Advocacy Work in the South

internally, e.g. through:

- ◆ organisation development with water user groups to foster capacity-building, strengthen self-reliance, and facilitate advocacy work;
- ◆ strengthening of solidarity within dioceses, parishes and village communities;
- ◆ training in mediation for peaceful conflict transformation;

externally, e.g. through:

- ◆ measures to influence regional and national legislation;
- ◆ lobbying and advocacy work to gain access to locally-available funds, e.g. funds from the Jubilee 2000/'drop the debt' campaign, local EU promotion, etc.;
- ◆ advocacy work to increase legal certainty in the water sector;
- ◆ capacity development for political dialogue, enabling actors to better articulate and assert their rights, e.g. by strengthening grassroots organisations, through political education of partners, and through the networking of water user groups.

4.5 Awareness-raising and Advocacy Work in the North

internally: within MISEREOR, in committees, donor groups etc.

externally: political lobbying and advocacy work.

4.6 Combinations of Projects in the South with Advocacy Work in the North

e.g. through PPS projects ('PPS' stands for MISEREOR's 'project partnership' scheme for people in Germany who wish to actively support not just the work of MISEREOR in general, but a particular, specific project or programme).

4.7 Training and Networking Projects to Strengthen Local Partners

Professionalisation of the social, technical, legal and economic aspects of work facilitates access to locally-available funds, e.g. funds from the 'drop the debt' campaign, local EU promotion, etc.. This also includes training measures to strengthen gender sensitivity.

4.8 Projects of Appropriate Waste Water Treatment, especially at the Institutional Level

(e.g. anaerobic technology).

Against the background of these promotion guidelines, it seems appropriate also to indicate which types of project MISEREOR classifies as "ineligible for promotion", and therefore supports only in exceptional, warranted cases. These include

- ◆ urban water supply projects,
- ◆ the financing of technical units and heavy machinery,
- ◆ fully-subsidised water supply programmes,
- ◆ deep-well drilling (>200m),
- ◆ the construction of very large retention reservoirs,
- ◆ privatisation without user participation, and
- ◆ an isolated, purely technical implementation of construction measures.

Definitely excluded from promotion are

- ◆ measures that might ignite or exacerbate conflicts, e.g. by giving preferential treatment to certain groups, or by ignoring traditional rights, and
- ◆ measures that bring about an over-utilisation of natural resources, e.g. the promotion of animal watering points in semi-arid zones which might cause over-grazing.

5 Quality Criteria for Water Programmes and Projects

Beyond the various project types, quality criteria have been emerging from experiences in water programmes and from the professional debate. MISEREOR and its overseas partner organisations should certainly take these criteria into account. The relevant quality criteria in each case should be actively discussed and agreed upon, and clearly formulated in the request for project support. Generally speaking, the following quality criteria should be considered:

5.1 Equal Participation by Women and Men in the Planning, Implementation and Administration of their Own Water Project

The funding request for a water project describes how the beneficiaries are to be involved, as well as which rights of participation and which obligations they will have during the various phases of the project. Women, who in many cultures are responsible for the family water supply, should have an equal opportunity to incorporate their interests into the planning process, just as men do. They should be fairly represented at decision-making level within the planning structures (e.g. village committees).

5.2 Project Planning and Implementation are Transparent⁷

Other aspects in addition to beneficiary participation which should be made transparent and adequately explained include the decision-making hierarchies within the partner organisation, the choice of location and technology, and the bill of costs.

5.3 The Partners Regularly Monitor Project Impacts with Reference to Indicators, and Continue to Qualitatively Develop their Water Programmes

Objectives for project phases, and indicators to measure project progress, should be described. Reports based on regular monitoring and indicators should reflect the current status of the project, and should document relevant insights gained. The experiences and insights should be fed back into project work, and should be reflected in the high quality of possible subsequent requests for project support.

5.4 The Conflict Potential and Conflict Management Mechanisms are Analysed and Taken into Account in the Planning Process

Tense relations between sedentary population and nomadic pastoralists, ethical and economic imbalances, a large number of migrants etc. are aspects which require special attention in the planning of water programmes. A strong focus may have to be placed on potential conflicts over traditional rights of use and rights of way, and such issues will then need to be addressed through appropriate strategies and approaches.

In addition to those mentioned above, the following criteria apply to all water programmes that include construction measures:

5.5 Strategy for Awareness-raising (On Economic, Hygienic, Ecological and Organisation Development Aspects)

This should be set out and explained in detail. Although awareness-raising is the point of entry into cooperation with the population, it should remain ongoing throughout all phases of the project (with corresponding focuses), in order to guarantee sustainability.

5.6 Survey of Socioeconomic Data on the Situation of the Potential Beneficiary Groups

The socioeconomic data can be surveyed using a variety of methods. The data should also shed light on the socioeconomic potentials of the various sections of the population. The project partners should document clearly all socioeconomic analyses that exist, and use those documents as a basis for negotiation of the monetary and/or non-monetary inputs to be made by beneficiaries.

5.7 Long-term Strategy to Maximise the Water User Groups' Own Inputs⁷

Bearing in mind the pro-poor orientation of MISEREOR's development work, socio-economic surveys and analyses should help define the scope of financial participation by beneficiary groups in the costs of construction measures and subsequent maintenance requirements.

5.8 Sustainability of Completed Waterpoints through Increased Self-responsibility of User Groups

This includes a transparent strategy for maintenance and repair, e.g. involving **awareness-raising, training of and regular appropriate support to user groups, which should of course continue after completion of the construction measures,** and training of local artisans or creation of service centres etc..

5.9 Construction Measures Comply with Requirements of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Where construction measures are planned, these should satisfy the conditions laid down by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Cross-references to other MISEREOR policy papers

¹ Health

² Gender

³ Conflict Management

⁴ Rural Development

⁵ Urban Development

⁶ Community Development

⁷ Long-term Programmes