

DRINKING WATER IN THE DRC



INTRODUCTION

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Africa's most "water-rich" country, only 52% have access to drinking water (31% in rural areas, 81% urban areas)¹

Key challenges in urban and peri-urban areas

- Weak cost recovery and financial viability of operators, especially the public water utility REGIDESO, due to non-payment of water bills by the government and a non-profitable tariff policy
- Degradation of water infrastructure due to lack of maintenance and new investments
- High water prices
- Non-continuous distribution of water due to, for example, lack of sufficient electricity and maintenance of equipment
- Informal provision of water service provision in peri-urban areas which leads to inadequate quality control and maintenance
- Rapidly growing population

Key drinking water challenges in rural areas

- Water-furnishing infrastructure is sparse
- Economically unattractive for operators due to weak cost recovery
- Informal provision of water service which leads to inadequate quality control, maintenance and pricing
- Lack of energy

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Overlapping and conflicting mandates

Water sector governance in the DRC is structurally weak and has so far been characterised by overlapping and conflicting institutional mandates as the management of the water sector is divided among several ministries and organisations, for example:

- The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources is responsible for the development of urban water supply services
- The Ministry of Rural Development is responsible for the development of rural drinking water supply services
- The Ministry of Public Health is also involved in the rural water sector through the Villages Assainis and Écoles Assainies programmes, which are designed to engage rural communities in the development of improved drinking water and sanitation services
- The Ministry of Planning has the responsibility for the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategic Development Plan (PNSD)

The National Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Committee (CNAEHA) which reports to the Ministry of Planning is responsible for the policy development and monitoring, coordination of ministries and cooperation with development partners in the water sector

Challenges

- Unclear mandate in peri-urban areas
- Lack of Finances/Investments

WATER SECTOR REFORM

Since 2006, the water sector is subject to ongoing reorganisation initialised with the help of international development partners, especially the German GIZ water reform project. Achievements so far have been, e.g.:

- Adoption of the new Water Law (2015)
- Development of the Public Water Service Policy (PNSPE) whose objectives are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and which guides the application of the new Law as well as defines the reorganisation of the sub-sector of drinking water
- Development of an Implementation Strategy of the PNSPE

¹ According to data provided by UNICEF