

# Transformative Futures for Water Security Initiative (TFWS)

## West and Central Africa Regional Dialogue Harvest

The West and Central Africa (WCA) Regional Dialogue is a participatory, multi-stakeholders dialogue co-convened by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and co-designed and facilitated by Perspectivity.

WCA regional dialogue convened in over 50 participants representing key identified stakeholders' groups in the Water Sector bringing high level expertise from government, academia, civil society, etc. Over a period of two days, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, participants from Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Benin and Togo went through an interactive and dynamic process inspired by Future Search methodology. Collectively, they explored the central question of the initiative: *“What are high-ambition, collective actions that will create strong alignment of knowledge and research, policy, business and on-the-ground implementation to deliver future water security?”* and they worked on providing concrete regional input for the TFWS Global Conference that was held in February 2023 in South Africa.

This document represents a high-level summary of the outstanding themes of the regional dialogue. It was co-prepared by the facilitation and hosting team.

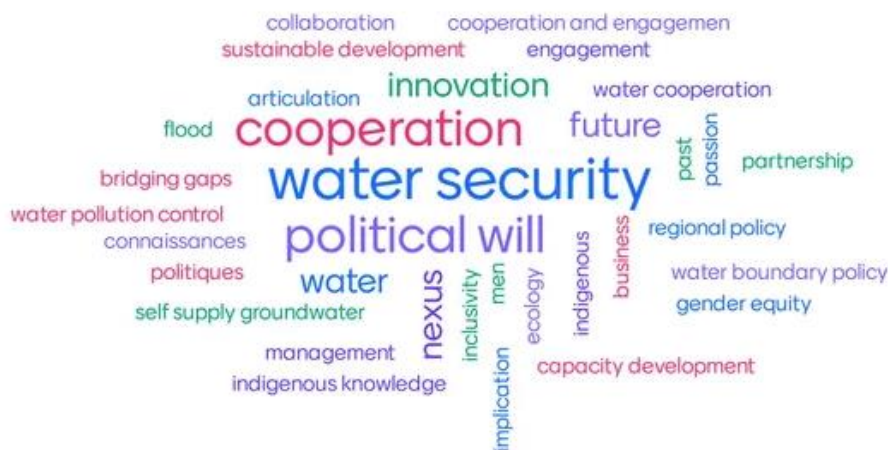


Image 1 - Word Cloud of the words that stayed with participants from day 1. Showing water security, political will, cooperation, innovation, nexus as some of the most repeated words.

## Process Overview

West and Central Africa Regional Dialogue was the fourth of eight regional dialogues done during the month of January 2023. It followed a series of co-design seminars that defined the central question and co-designed the process. The outputs of the regional dialogues were used to finalize the design of high-ambition missions during the TFWS Global Conference in South Africa. Summary of the high ambition missions can be found [here](#). Further details about the initiative can be read [here](#).

The Regional Dialogue process enabled the diverse and intergenerational stakeholders to explore the central question by working collectively on four progressive and self-managed tasks.

In mixed groups, participants:

- Explored the Past: what happened in the past and what were the factors that caused the current situation?
- Envisioned the Future: what is the desirable, motivating and the best possible scenario of the future?

Then, in their respective stakeholders' groups, they took responsibility of the desired future by deciding what to Let Go Of and what To Keep from the old/current practices.

### Working Interface

The interface gathering all the information and harvest documents resulting from the tasks can be reviewed following this link:

<https://padlet.com/Perspectivity/WestCentralAfrica>

### Youth CoHosts

The dialogue was co-guarded by youth cohorts: Jacob Amengor, Michèle Okala, Abir Benromdhane, Axel Martinez Nieto and Carolina Tornesi.

### IWMI Regional Representative

The regional dialogue was co-hosted and supported by Olufunke Cofie; IWMI Regional Representative – West and Central Africa.

### Facilitation and Harvesting

The facilitation was done by Facilitator Nele Blommestein and the harvesting was done by Perspectivity Partner Eliene Rogaar. The Technical support was done by Nohad ELHajj.

### Language

The regional dialogue was held in English and French.

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Our journey of a thousand miles began the steps we took these two days.

## Stakeholders' Groups

The eight stakeholders' groups invited:

- Youth
- Policy (makers and implementers, regional and national levels)
- Local government and public water service providers
- Knowledge generators (academia, research, indigenous knowledge, and solution providers such as start uppers/entrepreneurs)
- Funders and investors (insurance companies, IFIs, innovative finance, private equity, etc.)
- Civil society NGOs/CSOs (gender advocates, disabilities, religious, traditional authorities, community voices)
- Users group (agriculture, industry, energy, ecosystems) \*
- Private sector (multinationals, SMEs, private water utilities)



## Dialogue Highlights

Participants acknowledge the rapid changes the region is witnessing from industrialization to livelihood. The participants shared their extensive experience and practical insights. They thought from a collective perspective and took responsibility from their individual standpoint.

The dialogue revolved around the following main themes:

- Financing mechanisms and availability of funds
- Accountability of governments
- Institutional capacity
- Regional cooperation and sectorial cooperation
- Conflict
- Aging infrastructure
- Data integration
- Research applicability

**The most highlighted factors the participants agreed lead to the current situation**

- Regulations and policies are not well enforced
- Academia is not aligned with practice and policy.
- Research is not part of the decision-making processes related to water.
- Transboundary conflicts.
- Inadequate infrastructure.
- Funds are directed to aid rather than infrastructure.
- Lack of collaboration between civil society organizations.
- Lack of knowledge sharing and data sharing and integration.
- Lack of data around groundwater.
- Dominated by engineering knowledge and lack of traditional/indigenous knowledge integration.
- Lack of political will and Water sector is not prioritised politically
- Shift to industrial economy, coupled with changes in livelihood
- IWRM/WASH investments are not enough.
- Lack of evidenced based or science-based decision making.
- Lack of practical capacity development.
- Working in silos within the sector and across different sectors
- Mining negative impact

## Emerging Concrete, Action-Oriented, Ambitious Regional Priorities

- New business models for water infrastructure
- Exchange of knowledge across the nexus. IWMI is well placed to do this as part of the transformative futures programme.
- Domesticating technologies: knowledge generated not imported
- Vocational and technical capacity development especially for youth and women
- Forecast recovery of water investment, full cost recovery.
- Social entrepreneurship to solve access issues for local communities
- People centered insurance models
- Migrate from centralized management models to river basin management models.
- Introduce the environmental knowledge (including indigenous and ancestral knowledge) through the entire education system.
- Citizen science for data collection
- Trained child soldiers in armed conflict regions for water governance
- Platform of cooperation and collaboration
- Collaboratively co-creating living labs in watersheds for research and innovation
- Knowledge and experience exchange from South to North

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The “water conversation” goes beyond water people talking to water people  
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### An overview of the best possible responses for a water secure future

- Tripple hellix effect collaboration public/private sector and academia
- Adaptive flexible policies and institutional setups.
- Create higher incentives for investors to invest in water sector.
- Stakeholder collaboration, everyone has a voice in water management.
- Consider water a social good not an economic good.
- Monitoring technologies especially for ground water.
- Innovative financing ecosystem.
- More innovation in research and technologies. Scaling up of solutions and also of traditional practice.
- Transparency in government
- Participatory governance
- Institutional arrangement for transnational cooperation.
- Develop risk management plans and insurance models.
- Invest in early warning systems
- Inclusive decision making processes that is evidence -based.
- Develop business models that work for both private and public sectors, aimed at ensuring water security
- Better access to technologies like virtual reality especially in rural areas.
- Usage of risk index maps, land use maps etc..
- Stronger partnerships and collaborations
- Develop new science-based (watershed) structures to manage the water resources at a local level.
- Media role in communicating water related issues especially targeted to youth
- Systemic, sustainable career development support is established for the youth
- Improved and appropriate wastewater management (centralized, decentralized)
- Peer-to-peer learning programs (regional and global)
- Have high quality data on the water resources and understand the resource present.
- Create a sense of ownership of the water resources

For additional points, check the padlet.

### Main Keeps and Let Gos per each stakeholders' group present

To reach and take responsibility of the desired future:

1. Youth
  - Kept volunteering, innovation and creativity
  - Let go of tokenism, bureaucratic practices and unconducive professional environment
2. Policy / Local Government
  - Kept river basin organizations and WEFE nexus
  - Let go of political bad influence and bad governance
3. Knowledge generators
  - Kept traditional/ indigenous practices and applied research in academia
  - Let go of overlaps of institutional mandates, centralized and non-digitized systems and donor driven research agenda.
4. Civil society NGOs/CSOs
  - Kept collaboration, youth contribution and implementation of practical local scalable solutions.
  - Let go of working in silos and non-skilled advocacy.
5. Private sector
  - Kept promotion of circular economy and public-private partnerships
  - Let go of political instability and unnecessary developments on waterways and catchment areas.

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In order to get buy in from policy makers, we need to carry out studies to demonstrate the cost of inaction or water insecurity.

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## ABOUT PERSPECTIVITY

Perspectivity builds inspiring collaborations for sustainable growth. We work with groups and individuals to address complex realities in organisations and communities. In current times of increasing complexity, blue prints have become obsolete. As Perspectivity, we dare to look at the world upside down. We bring a fresh perspective!

### More info

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