

Promoting sustainable groundwater irrigation for building climate resilience in West Africa

IWMI-ECOWAS Webinar. March 18, 2022 (Friday). 0930 – 1130

Water plays a crucial role in human well-being, socioeconomic development and environmental health. Water availability is affected by many factors, including, but not limited to, climate variability and change, urbanization, industrialization and the need to produce more food to feed the growing population. A major challenge is exploring available water resources to balance the competing demand for water for domestic use, agriculture and other productive uses while maintaining healthy ecosystems and ensuring future water security.

There is a growing dependence on groundwater for diverse users and uses. In particular, shallow groundwater is used extensively for small-scale and farmer-led irrigation in many West African countries, from coastal to Sahelian agro-ecological zones. However, there are significant knowledge gaps related to the quantity of available groundwater resources and sustainable management of the resource. Thus, there is a pressing need to utilize existing knowledge and sustainable solutions to explore groundwater for diverse uses. Key issues that must be addressed include: deciding on the best time to irrigate using groundwater, conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water resources, mitigating trade-offs, and making groundwater irrigation accessible and affordable for smallholder farmers in an equitable and environmentally sustainable manner.

The objective of the webinar is to provide a case for promoting sustainable groundwater irrigation for building climate resilience in West Africa. The webinar will provide perspectives on the role and potential of groundwater to enhance socioeconomic development, water security, and climate and ecosystem resilience through targeted investments.

The webinar is aimed at planners, decision makers, water users, development workers, researchers, private sector organizations, investors and all stakeholders who are interested in the sustainable use of groundwater resources.

The webinar will focus on the following:

- Overview of groundwater and the untapped potential for building climate resilience in West Africa.
- Lessons from ongoing regional initiatives on groundwater irrigation.
- Systemic approach for groundwater irrigation in West Africa.

Partner organizations

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**)

Commission is the engine room of all ECOWAS programs, projects and activities. ECOWAS takes ownership of the grand objectives designed to improve the living conditions of the citizenry, ensure economic growth and create an environment conducive to development. Implementation of activities in the agriculture and environmental sectors revolves around four components of the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) adopted by the ECOWAS authorities. Among these are the promotion of strategic projects for food security and food sovereignty, as well as the promotion of a global environment conducive to regional agricultural development. <https://ecowas.int/>

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

The International Water Management Institute (**IWMI**) is an international research-for-development organization that works with governments, civil society and the private sector to solve water problems in developing countries and scale up solutions. Through partnership, IWMI combines research on the sustainable use of water and land resources, knowledge services and products for capacity strengthening, dialogue and policy analysis to support implementation of water management solutions for agriculture, ecosystems, climate change and inclusive economic growth. IWMI leads the Groundwater Solutions Initiative for Policy and Practice (**GRIPP** <https://gripp.iwmi.org/>) and is part of the Rural Water Supply Network (**RWSN**; <https://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/>). <https://www.iwmi.org/>

The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)

The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité permanent inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel) is an international organization consisting of countries in the Sahel region of Africa. Its mandate is to invest in research for food security and the fight against the effects of drought and desertification for a new ecological balance in the Sahel. <https://www.cilss.bf/>

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Date: March 18, 2022; Time: 0930 - 1130

Venue: Zoom

Agenda

Time	Activity	Responsible persons/organizations
09.30 – 09.40	Welcome and purpose	Olufunke Cofie
09.40 – 09.50	Setting the scene – ECOWAS Remark	ECOWAS Commissioner / Delegate
	IWMI Remark	Mark Smith (Director General, IWMI) /
09.50 – 10.05	Groundwater and the untapped potential for building climate resilience in West Africa	Karen G. Villhoth, Groundwater Expert and Global Coordinator, Groundwater Solutions Initiative for Policy and Practice (GRIPP)
10.05 – 10.15	Question and answer	Sander Zwart, IWMI
10.15 – 10.40	Lessons from regional initiatives The Sahel Irrigation Initiative; Sahel Groundwater Initiative	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) ;
10.40 – 11.00	Systemic approach for scaling groundwater irrigation in West Africa	Thai Thi Minh, Scaling Researcher, IWMI
11.00 – 11.20	Question and answer discussion	Rachael McDonnell (Deputy Director General – Research for Development, IWMI)
11.20 – 11.30	Closing remarks	

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Registration link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcufuqsqjgE9PQ12UHC0a-Ea7OqNj-RmAk>