

## **CONTROL OF WATER ABSTRACTION FROM THE WATER SOURCES**

Water is essential for human life and to sustain various aquatic living organisms. It is also an important economic driver as an essential requirement for industry, power generation, commerce and agriculture. The government and the responsible institutions together with water users need to make sure that abstraction is sustainable and does not damage the environment. The control of how much, where and when water is abstracted is done by issuing water use permit.

The main objective of this Audit was to assess whether the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MoWI) through the Basin Water Boards (BWBs), effectively control water abstraction so as to protect water sources from overuse.

The Ministry of Water through Basin Water Boards is the identified main Auditee for the control of water abstraction from the water sources.

The audit covered the period of five financial years from 2011/12 up to 2015/16, for the purpose of establishing trend on measures undertaken in order to control water abstraction

### **Main Audit Findings**

All visited BWBs planned to give out certain number of permits, however important component such as water balance was not considered before issuing water use permit. It was further noted that there was no involvement of key stakeholders in process of planning for water use. Stakeholders such as Water User Association (WUA), NGOs, LGAs, and the concerned ministries were not involved.

Inspections of water sources were not conducted properly as in some places water was still used without permits from the respective BWBs. It was observed that some abstracting structures were used to abstract water from upstream rivers leaving the downstream without water.

Geographical coverage of basins and inadequate resources were claimed to be the causative factors of failure to conduct regular inspection. No follow up was made to determine whether water users, abstracted the permitted amount of water.

It was also revealed that collection of user charges were not effectively done as not all the users paid what they were supposed to pay. Both large and small scale water users were not paying their tariffs timely as prescribed in their abstracting permits. Several urban and municipal water authorities did not pay their water use fee to the Basin Water Boards as required, and the system set for collecting water bills was weak. This hassled to the weakening of monitoring activities which could have been conducted using the money collected.

Actions taken by Basin Water Boards to illegal water users were not deterrent hence the activities of illegal water abstraction were increasing throughout the visited basins.

The Audit noted that communication and information sharing between MoWI and BWBs with other actors on the control of water abstraction was not effective. It was further noted that, having different reporting structures has weakened coordination. The LGAs report to the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) while the Basin Water Board report directly to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation has weakened their coordination.

## **Audit Conclusion**

MoWI particularly at the BWBs level are not effective enough to Control water abstraction. This is because there were no proper plans for water abstraction. BWBs had failed to have effective mechanism to monitor abstraction levels and control unauthorized water abstractors as they did not conduct regular inspections. BWBs also did not effectively collect water use fees from the authorized users and the actions taken to prevent unauthorized users were not deterrent enough to stop the tendency of abstracting water illegally. Moreover, coordination between MoWI, BWBs and other stakeholders like LGAs was not effective enough to facilitate smooth information sharing between them.

## **Audit recommendations**

The following are the recommendations issued:

### **The Ministry of Water and Irrigation should ensure:**

- 1) Integrated Water Resource Management and Development Plan is finalized and implemented in all Basin Water Boards and also ensure that Water sources inventory is conducted by all BWBs
- 2) Basin Water Boards are staffed with required professions and equipped with all necessary equipment required for inspection and monitoring activities

### **The Basin Water Board should:**

- 1) Ensure regular inspection is done so that water users are complying with their water use permits requirements.
- 2) Improve internally generated funds by improving the financing mechanism of Water Resources Management (WRM) activities.
- 3) Ensure all users including water authorities and Government institutions are paying for water use fee timely and without any reluctance.