

Briefing Note 2: Bulawayo Water Supply

Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility



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Context

Following the completion of the CRIDF Report entitled “Bulawayo Water Supply Options Analysis”, the report has been disseminated to a number of parties including the World Bank and various other parties. At the end of October, I spent a week in Harare as a World Bank consultant to attend the closing workshop of the World Bank Water Sector Investment Analysis, which I have managed for the World Bank. The trip was also used to meet new government officials in the water sector. During the first week of November I visited Matabeleland for CRIDF (based in Bulawayo) to work on the preparation of the Eastern Limpopo Small Dams project. This briefing note is on the meetings held regarding the CRIDF Bulawayo Report and the current situation regarding the city’s water needs.

Meetings

A number of meetings were held during the trips with groups and individuals where Bulawayo’s water situation was discussed and at which the CRIDF report was referred to and/or specifically explained.

1. Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate. The meeting was requested by the World Bank and was held in the Ministry offices in Harare. It was attended by the Deputy Minister (Eng Simon Musanhu), the Acting Principle Director of Water (Mr Choga) and a number of Directors. The issue of Bulawayo water was specifically discussed including the contribution of the CRIDF report, especially related to the costs of water from the Zambezi.
2. Completion Workshop of the Zimbabwe Water Sector Investment Analysis, arranged by the World Bank. Bulawayo water was noted as critical and the CRIDF report was used to emphasise the costs of supplying water from the Zambezi and the need to find alternatives. The Deputy Minister and other senior participants were provided with printed copies of the CRIDF report. The meeting was attended by Eng. Simela Dube, Director of Engineering Services, Bulawayo City – he was given a copy of the CRIDF Report and arrangements were made for a meeting in Bulawayo.
3. Mr Eddie Cross, MP(MDC) Bulawayo South. Meeting arranged by World Bank specifically about Bulawayo water and the CRIDF report. Mr Cross welcomed the report as bringing the knowledge on supply from the Zambezi up to date. He endorsed the report for wider circulation.
4. World Bank and GIZ. Discussions were held with Mike Webster (WB) and Helmut Lang (GIZ). The CRIDF report is well received. Both organizations are seeking ways to assist Bulawayo to explore alternative

sources of water. CRIDF should remain engaged in the issue.

5. Bulawayo City Council. A meeting at the Bulawayo City offices was held on the afternoon of Tuesday 5 November. It was attended by the Town Clerk, Mr M Nyoni, and the Directors of Housing and Engineering Services, Assistant Director of Health and representatives of Director of Finance. I presented the report which was well received. They noted that it was in line with their general understanding of the situation and that it was useful to have the confirmation. There is a difficulty in that the water from the Zambezi and the Gwayi-Shangani Scheme will be sold to the city by ZINWA. The city is concerned that this will be at a very high cost and they will have no alternatives. For this reason they are keen to undertake their own exploration of alternative sources. They would welcome support to do this.

6. Dr Eric Bloch. Dr Bloch is a highly respected commentator in Zimbabwe and has been a long-term champion of water for Bulawayo and Matabeleland. I met him at his home and discussed the CRIDF Report. He indicated that the Gwayi-Shangani Scheme is advancing. It is funded with Chinese funds on a zero interest loan over 25 years in exchange for 9 uranium concessions – this is unvarnished but very interesting.

Conclusions

1. The CRIDF Report on alternative provision of water from the Zambezi for Bulawayo is becoming more widely known of in the country. It is well received as a useful input to the knowledge base.
2. The World Bank in Zimbabwe (specifically the Water Specialist and the Country Economist) is particularly supportive and is advocating for a wide distribution of the report.
3. The City of Bulawayo is looking for support in identifying new sources of water, especially the testing of potentially high yielding aquifers in Matabeleland North.
4. The World Bank Multi-donor Trust fund for support to Zimbabwe is nearly exhausted and is scheduled to close in June 2014. GIZ is engaged in on-going support in Matabeleland including providing limited bore-hole drilling and testing equipment.
5. Although CRIDF may not be able to support Bulawayo directly in seeking a solution, we should seek to remain engaged. Finding alternatives to supplying Bulawayo from the Zambezi remains an important international waters issue in the region.

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