Emerging Good Practice in Urban Water Projects

Kenya: Water and Sanitation Service Improvement

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Project Objectives & Challenges

The history of water and sanitation in Kenya is characterized by many years of inadequate management of resources and ineffective infrastructure investments. During the 1980’s and 1990’s, Kenya made large investments to increase production and treatment capacity, but due to inadequate management and maintenance and a lack of commensurate expansion in distribution networks, these investments did not result in efficient and sustainable service delivery. By the early 2000’s there was widespread collapse of infrastructure. Water and sanitation service operations were untransparent, unsustainable and ill suited to respond to consumer needs. Households in informal settlements were disproportionately impacted and were forced to rely on alternative water supply sources (mainly kiosks and private vendors), bought at a much higher cost compared to piped water.

The development objectives of the project are to: increase access to reliable, affordable and sustainable water supply and sanitation services and improve the water and wastewater services in the areas served by the Athi Water Services Board, Coast Water Services Board and the Lake Victoria Water Services Board. Over five years, the project seeks to:

- Improve the percentage of population in project areas with access to safe water from 27 percent to 50 percent;
- Increase access to adequate sewerage services from 10 percent to 30 percent;
- Reduce unaccounted-for-water in Nairobi from 46 percent to 33 percent; and
- Increase the average hours of supply from 10 hours to 12 hours.

Client Initiatives for Improved Governance in the Water Sector

The Government of Kenya has initiated comprehensive sector reform to harmonize the management of water resources and water services and sanitation. The new service delivery framework separates functions between each aspect of service delivery: policy-making, regulation, asset-ownership/control, and service delivery. Institutional responsibility and accountability have been clarified, with service delivery institutions subject to specific contracts and transparent audits. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation now focuses on policy issues. New oversight institutions have been established: the Water Services Regulatory Board, the Water Services Trust Fund and a Water Appeal Board.
**Governance Measures Supported by the Project**

The project description includes “Sector Governance Strengthening and Project Transparency and Accountability Arrangements” and a Communications Strategy.

**Accountability**

The project rests on a results based management system: each Water Service Board will sign a formal performance contract with annual performance targets with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The Water Services Regulatory Board will be able to penalize Water Service Boards for non-performance. To avoid political interference and increase autonomy of operation, water and sewerage service provisions for participating water utilities will be ring fenced. The project increases oversight of service delivery and provides for three customer satisfaction surveys to measure perceived improvements. To ensure leak detection and identify illegal connections, the project supports the supply and installation of 6,000 domestic meters and 10 master meters for small towns.

**Transparency**

All project monitoring reports, results of audits, contracts between sector institutions and service provisions agreements will be made public in accessible form, including on the websites of Athi Water Services Board, Coast Water Services Board and Lake Victoria North Water Services Board.

**Participation**

The project seeks to involve communities in decision-making in the expansion of service in urban slums/informal settlements. To ensure a measure of autonomy, representation of broad stakeholder voice and to prevent the capture of the water services providers by any particular interest group, the Board of Directors of service providers will comprise a satisfactorily diversified group of stakeholders with the local authority itself holding a minority number of Board seats. The project will partner with efforts of development partners and NGOs working with consumer groups and communities to encourage independent oversight of service provision.

**Reference Documents and Contacts**

For more information on this project, please visit:


Project press statement December 20, 2007:


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This note is part of a review of infrastructure sector projects to identify emerging good practice within the governance and anti-corruption (GAC) agenda under the GAC in Infrastructure initiative by the Transport, Water and ICT Anchor. The focus is on GAC measures designed to improve accountability, participation and transparency by client sector institutions. The purpose of this series is to provide information that may be of interest to those involved in designing and implementing projects in the water sector.

The series is based on a review of project documents in recently approved projects. Therefore, no attempt has been made to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures introduced. Task Team Leaders for the featured projects have reviewed the notes and, in some cases, provided additional information.

The GAC in Infrastructure website provides links to publications and additional reference materials.

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