



Stronger Management Systems Aid the Transition to Decentralized Government

Overview

A change in the structure of local government in the Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province, held out the promise of better public service delivery, and this is now being realized thanks to an innovative World Bank project using an incentive-based approach. The results have translated into more water connections and better waste handling for households and a more responsive complaints resolution system.

Challenge

In 2001, the Punjab government introduced a series of fundamental reforms creating a new level of local governments, known as Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs), with the mandate of municipal service delivery. However, these TMAs were under-equipped to deliver on their mandate. Shortcomings included requisite capacity for operations and management of existing services; technical skill sets for provision of municipal infrastructure; planning for future investments; municipal finance; urban management; and responsiveness to their citizens. Moreover, the capacity of the provincial government to oversee and coordinate TMAs remained weak, as it struggled to adjust to its revised oversight role. These issues were exacerbated by the rapid urbanization in Punjab over a sustained period, and stagnating infrastructure and service coverage, including for basic services like water and sanitation. With TMAs unable to deliver on their mandates, there was a high risk of significant gaps in the provision and management of municipal services across the province affecting millions of people.

Approach

The Punjab Municipal Services Improvement Project aims to improve the viability and effectiveness of urban services provided by participating TMAs, and to make such improvements sustainable and replicable in other TMAs

MULTIMEDIA

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More Results 

47%
of households are now connected to the water supply

through the creation of a performance-based management framework. This framework includes a variety of customized capacity building interventions to enhance the TMAs' ability to deliver on their mandates. These interventions include: computerization of financial management systems; participatory planning for prioritization of investments including Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-based land-use planning; creation of operations and maintenance framework for infrastructure assets; citizen complaint tracking and resolution systems; and a centralized province-wide performance tracking system. These interventions were first introduced in 37 TMAs, selected on the basis of their performance against criteria such as own-source revenue generation effort and development spending capacity. Having been successfully piloted, these activities have now been scaled up to 68 additional TMAs across the province. High performing TMAs have been given the incentive of infrastructure development grants for sub-projects in municipal sectors of their choice, prioritized through the planning exercise.

1,281

TMA Staff Have been Trained

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Results

The Punjab Municipal Services Improvement Project, which aims to increase the viability and effectiveness of urban services delivered by TMAs across the Punjab province, has made substantial gains in improving the capacity of TMAs to fulfill their mandate. The project's activities have contributed to the following results:

-An average of 47 percent of households were connected to water supply systems in mid-2011 in 10 TMAs, compared with 41 percent in mid-2006.

-An average 67 percent of solid waste was being disposed of at landfill sites in mid-2011 in 18 TMAs, as opposed to 50 percent in mid-2006.-

There were 37 TMAs with more than 90 percent citizen complaint resolution efficiency in mid-2011, up from 20 TMAs in mid-2010. A new citizen complaint tracking system has now been introduced in 68 additional TMAs in the Punjab since.

-Eighteen out of 37 partner TMAs were generating monthly Performance Management System reports in mid-2011, utilizing a province-wide integrated and standardized system for tracking indicators related to municipal services. This is up from 12 TMAs in mid-2010. The system has since been introduced in 68 additional TMAs in the Punjab.-

The project trained 1,281 TMA staff since 2006 in areas such as information technology, planning, and operation and maintenance of infrastructure assets.

-Updated GIS-based municipal service maps had been provided to 37 TMAs by mid-2011 for future enhancement and planning, up from 30 by mid-2010 and none at project inception. This has since been introduced in 68 additional TMAs in the Punjab.

Voices

“By adopting PMS, I am able to redress public complaints regarding sanitation in better way, as now we have better and reliable information .”

—*Mr. Ansar Abbas, Sanitary Inspector*

Bank Contribution

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is providing US\$50 million.

Partners

The Punjab Government's Municipal Development Fund Company, the implementing entity for the project, has established a reputation for itself as a viable vehicle for the institutional development of, and provision of performance grants to, local governments. The government of Punjab, as well as numerous donors, envisages routing funds for local governments for performance-based service delivery through it.

Toward the Future

It is expected that the tools developed by the project, and gains coming from them, will be institutionalized at the provincial level in the Punjab through support from key stakeholders. This model is replicable in other provinces of Pakistan as well, with Sindh already using it with some variations through a project funded by the Asian Development Bank.