Emerging Good Practice in Water Resource Projects

Lesotho Water Sector Improvement Project in Support of the Second Phase of the Water Sector Improvement Program (adaptable program lending)

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Project Challenges & Objectives

Lesotho has embarked upon a series of progressive reforms within the water sector over the past decade. These were aimed at enabling the country to better capitalize on development opportunities afforded by an abundance of water and a geographically strategic location.

In support of these efforts, the World Bank has a long-standing commitment to the water sector in Lesotho. The Bank was engaged in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project for over twenty years and has been supporting the Water Sector Improvement Project, a two phased adaptable program lending initiative that has established a long-term program of support to strengthen the institutions in the water sector.

However, additional reform and change of practice are still needed as a result of the corruption uncovered in Lesotho Highlands Water Project. While the case was successfully prosecuted and companies were disbarred from future World Bank projects, the case revealed governance challenges, which the project seeks to address.

Phase 2 of the Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP) is aimed at increasing the bulk water supply system through the Metolong Dam and Water Supply Program (Program) to enable the Water and Sewerage Authority to meet its targets of increasing private water connections in greater Maseru from 50 percent today to 80 percent within six years.

The Program is a multi-donor funded program aimed at improving the water supply to Maseru and nearby towns in support of the government of Lesotho’s efforts to sustain socio-economic growth and development. The Development Objective for the Bank’s support to the Program is: (i) developing and sustaining an environmentally sound, socially responsible, and financially viable framework for the Program, (ii) increasing the quantity of safe, bulk water supplied to Teyateyaneng, and (iii) strengthening institutions and related instruments in the water sector.
Client Initiatives for Improved Governance in the Water Sector

Building on traditional structures and mechanisms for ensuring consultation at the community level and the experiences of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, the Government has established a comprehensive framework for managing productive relationships. The framework is implemented by the Metolong Authority’s dedicated staff who have specific responsibility and mandate to manage communication and cooperation with key external stakeholders, among which are potentially affected communities. Under the supervision of the Community Liaisons Manager for example, two Community Liaisons Officers work at the project site as part of maintaining open dialogue with the specially created Dam Committee and to facilitate interaction with the local structure of the Joint Committee. Another example is the bi-annual “Metolong Expo”, an open conference which provides a regular forum for updating stakeholders on progress, including the media. Through these efforts the Government is increasing transparency in the implementation process.

Governance Measures Supported by the Project

Accountability
A sub-committee to the Board of the Metolong Authority has been established to address issues of governance, transparency and accountability. Provisions have been made for the sub-committee to develop a Governance Improvement Plan to: (i) assess project corruption risks; (ii) identify anti-corruption measures involving all the major stakeholders in a collaborative process; and, (iii) to set out a governance improvement plan. This is supported by a Risk Management Plan including a Monitoring and Evaluation component to oversee implementation.

Participation
In April 2005, community representatives formed a Dam Committee with the assistance of a local NGO. This committee provides a forum for to interact with dam planners, share information, express concerns and an avenue by which communities can actively participate in the planning process. The Dam Committee consists of area chiefs, community council members, and community members from both the upstream and downstream communities.

In order to integrate within the local governance structures, a Joint Committee was formed by the three Community Councils with jurisdiction over the project area the within the catchment. In addition to improving communication and transparency each Community Council will play a role in identifying labor from its area with the Dam Committee coordinating these efforts.

As part of the communications strategy, the project will:
- Increase public participation;
- Develop a community outreach strategy;
- Provide mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder feedback in the decision-making process;
- Create understanding and awareness between the project and the various stakeholders to promote positive approaches to constructive partnerships;
- Develop benchmarks for, and assess stakeholder perceptions;
- Provide resources to engage a consultant to assist in the development and implementation of the strategy within the Metolong Authority.
Transparency
The project seeks to increase transparency and disclosure of information. Traditional vehicles, such as newsletters, websites and media releases are coupled with a bi-annual stakeholder event – the Metolong Expo – to updated stakeholders on progress and increase accountability in relation to implementation progress. Development of a State of Water Resources Report made publicly available through the Lesotho Water Sector Information Management System Portal will continue to build on the Ministry of Natural Resources’ efforts to increase transparency by enabling all entities within the water sector to collect, verify, share and store their data, information and knowledge in a controlled and hierarchical manner available to the broader public.

Reference Documents and Contacts

For more information on this project, please visit:

Metolong Dam and Water Supply Program:

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