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**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES <sup>1</sup>**

for the

**RURAL TOWNS WATER AND SANITATION PROGRAMME  
of the Directorate for Water Development, Ministry of Natural Resources**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This document sets out the policies and guidelines of the Government of the Republic of Uganda, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, related to the strategy for provision of water and sanitation services to small towns and rural growth centres. This has resulted from project preparation activities under the Rural Towns Water and Sanitation Programme (RTWSP). The policies and guidelines which follow represent a major shift in government strategy towards a decentralized approach to the operations and maintenance of services currently provided by Government, to ensure sustainability of the investment.

2. This document provides a general direction toward an appropriate project implementation process. Each town has its own social, economic and cultural profile which may necessitate the modification of the proposed implementation strategy.

**PRINCIPLES**

3. *A demand driven negotiations approach*, allowing the beneficiaries a choice in determining the key elements of the project at the planning stage, is essential to ensure that limited government funds are channeled to communities that will maintain their new or improved water supply and sanitation systems. It also expedites project implementation by encouraging beneficiaries to meet their commitments on schedule. This demand driven negotiations strategy is based on individual towns, or groups within those towns, first deciding whether or not they want to participate in the programme and then deciding the type of water supply and sanitation systems that they want. Decision making will be guided by government construction grant regulations and by technical consultants, an important consideration being the willingness of beneficiaries to contribute a portion of the capital cost and to pay for all of the operation and maintenance costs for their systems.

4. User groups within each town, formed on the basis of *management units*, will determine the type of water and sanitation facilities they want and how to manage them, including operation, maintenance, repairs and revenue collection. They will also take responsibility for addressing related hygiene and sanitation issues. The roles and responsibilities of these and other bodies in the process is described in detail in Paras. 8-12.

<sup>1</sup> *These Policies and Guidelines were initially drafted in July 1992 and have gone through several revisions to date reflecting operational experiences from project implementation. The Policies and Guidelines should be regarded in the context of an evolutionary and iterative document being continually refined with added experiences. For this reason it is important to keep track of the different versions by dating the document upon each revision.*

## OBJECTIVES

5. The objectives of the RTWSP are:

- a) To assist all towns to obtain basic water and sanitation services, while encouraging the higher levels of service for those who can afford it and for purposes of economic development.
- b) to increase the capacity of communities, the private sector and government to provide and maintain sustainable water supply and sanitation facilities in small towns whereby government facilitates private sector provision of goods and services to the communities;
- c) to promote better health, through improved personal hygiene, excreta disposal and environmental management practices; and
- d) to ensure that the gender issue is addressed in such a way that both sexes are involved as decision makers; women are empowered and enabled to determine their own development collectively with men; and women are involved as agents of change and not just beneficiaries.

6. *Basic service for water supply is defined here as a protected, year-round supply of 20 litres per capita per day, preferably within 250 to 500 meters of all households and serving 200 to 300 persons per outlet; and basic service for sanitation defined as an improved household latrine, with a concrete slab.* In places where there is population congestion, unfavourable geological formations and high ground water table, lined pit latrines will be promoted. To encourage higher levels of services for piped water supply systems, the GOU will finance the source and distribution costs for individual connections under normal cost sharing arrangements (Para.13), and individual beneficiaries will be required to pay the cost of connecting to the system. Due attention will be paid to match service levels of sanitation and water supplies. Piped sanitation systems will only be encompassed within the RTWSP if:

- a) The nature of the community is such that on site sanitation would not be viable or would be environmentally damaging.
- b) If a piped sewerage system was an inherent result of a chosen higher service level for water, for which the community can demonstrate commitment to maintain in the same way as for their water supplies.

7. *Operation and maintenance costs will be fully borne by the beneficiaries ( and institutions) including the replacement of components with useful life expectancies of up to about eight years.*

## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

8. *Institutional responsibilities* can be divided into two broad areas: (i) mobilization and long term support through district and town political and administrative mechanisms, and (ii) training and technical assistance through a consulting firm contracted by DWD to first assist towns to identify their management units and then to assist them to plan and manage their water and sanitation facilities.
9. Mobilization and long term support can only be provided by district and town political and administrative authorities, particularly in a decentralized system. For this reason actual planning and design of systems will begin only after a mobilization phase during which local authorities have a major lead responsibility.
10. Technical assistance and training in the towns would be provided by a combination of extension services through government personnel and consultant representatives at the local level. This combination takes advantage of the experience of local personnel regarding the composition and dynamics of the town and of consultant experience in the RTWSP policies and implementation procedures; ensures residents that someone is accountable and accessible, and provides for follow-up support. It also makes best use of a limited number of more highly trained personnel, allowing them to serve throughout the country.
11. Extension services at the local level, through the existing **Local Committee (LC)** system where appropriate, will include amongst others (i) community mobilization including identification and establishment of their management units, (ii) assistance to communities to assess their needs and to plan their water supply and sanitation systems, (iii) promotion of proper hygiene and excreta disposal practices, and (iv) Coordination of the assistance program for private mechanics, small works contractors and latrine artisans. Technical support services at the national level will include (i) training of local extension personnel, (ii) planning assistance to towns and to management units within towns to help them plan their water supply and sanitation systems and train them to manage them, (iii) preparation and review of beneficiaries plans, (iv) preparation of designs, specifications and bidding documents, and (v) supervision of construction. At the end of each project one or more national consulting firms should be able to manage implementation in new project areas, and local government and NGO personnel should be capable to provide follow-up support to town management units.
12. The responsibilities of each institution involved in project implementation are as follows:
  - i) **Communities** will plan and manage their water and sanitation facilities and improve their health by putting lessons learned about improved hygiene and proper disposal of excreta and sullage water into practice.
  - a) A **Water User Group (WUG)** is a set of individuals and or households that collectively plan a point source water supply system in their area, manage it and collect revenue to maintain it. For this purpose, and to look after sanitation and hygiene education, each Water User Group will be represented by a **Water and Sanitation Committee (WSC)**, which, by their choice, may be established by one or more WUGs with common interests.

- b) In the case of piped systems serving more than one WUG, the **(Water User Association) (WUA)**, made up of chosen representatives of the WUGs it encompasses, will be formed. Each WUA will be expected to put in place a technical and financial management system commensurate with the complexity of the system for the day to day operation and maintenance of the system.
  - c) WSCs, or WUAs for piped systems, interface with DWD and technical/training consultants to plan community water supply and sanitation systems and determine how to manage them.
  - d) WSCs/WUAs will sign a *Beneficiaries Agreement* with DWD and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or the Town Clerk (depending on the town status), based on a *Beneficiaries Plan* for each WUG that (i) specifies the responsibilities of government and beneficiaries, (ii) describes the proposed water supply construction plans in sufficient detail to allow design drawings and specifications to be prepared and DWD to check for conformance to *Construction Grant Guidelines*, and (iii) provides a basis for legal ownership by the beneficiary WSCs, or WUAs in the case of piped systems, that serve more than one WUG.
  - e) WSCs, or WUAs for piped systems, manage the community's water supply and sanitation interests including operations, maintenance, revenue collection, accounts keeping, repairs and replacement of components. All WSCs, unless otherwise specified in their *Beneficiaries Plan*, will collect revenue from individual beneficiaries in their area and promote improved environmental sanitation and personal hygiene practices.
- ii) **Local authorities** will provide the organizational framework and political support needed to implement the programme and for monitoring and evaluation. The District and Town Administration and LCs will:
    - a) Facilitate initial mobilization activities.
    - b) Mobilize the town's population including the identification of WUGs and the establishment of WSCs.
    - c) Support WSCs and WUAs, including assistance in resolving appeals submitted to them by WUGs, WSCs and WUAs.
    - d) The Town Clerk or the Chief Administrative Officer will sign *Beneficiaries Agreements* on behalf of local government.
  - iii) **Other ministries**, particularly the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Health, will participate in project implementation by identifying and assigning local staff as local extension personnel or to include related activities in their normal work schedule. These ministries will also provide follow-up support to better ensure sustainability.
  - iv) The **Consultant**, contracted by DWD, will have a multi-disciplinary team made up of community development, health and technical (water and sanitation) specialists to implement the project. The consultant will:
    - a) Establish project offices in appropriate regional centres and in participating towns, staffed by persons hired by the consultant and assigned by government and local NGOs.
    - b) Train local extension personnel to implement the town programme.

- c) Assist local authorities to mobilize communities including identification of WUGs and establishment of WSCs.
  - d) Assist WSCs and WUAs to prepare their Beneficiaries Plans, providing information to them about technical and management options, including costs, technical constraints and construction grant regulations.
  - e) Prepare construction designs, specifications and bidding documents.
  - f) Assist WSCs/WUAs to prepare a signed Beneficiaries Agreement with DWD and their district.
  - g) Train WSCs/WUAs to manage their water supply and sanitation interests.
  - h) Supervise construction and provide support to DWD in its monitoring and evaluation role.
- v) DWD will be the government agency accountable for the overall implementation of the project. DWD will:
- a) Set policies/guidelines and the regulatory framework for RTWSP implementation.
  - b) Mobilize national and international financial resources.
  - c) Engage the services of consultants and contractors and supervise them.
  - d) Procure materials and equipment as and when required.
  - e) Supervise programme implementation, monitor progress, and refine policies and guidelines.
  - f) Ensure interagency coordination.
  - g) Introduce the programme to local decision makers and community members.
  - h) Sign Beneficiaries Agreements with WSCs/WUAs when facilities plans, terms and conditions for a construction grant have been negotiated and agreed upon.
  - j) Provide technical support to programme towns through its local District offices.
  - k) Approve tariffs
  - l) Provide backup support services
  - m) Carry out Monitoring and Evaluation of the systems performance including technical and financial audits.

## CONSTRUCTION GRANT GUIDELINES

13. Government has responsibility for assisting communities to obtain basic water and sanitation services and for ensuring that public funds are spent on cost effective facilities that will be maintained. In financial terms this means that communities should pay part of the capital cost and all operation and maintenance costs for improved water and sanitation facilities. For the basic service for sanitation, the beneficiary will bear all the capital cost as well as the operations and maintenance costs. With regard to water supplies and communal sanitation facilities in the form of public latrines or piped sanitation, (where acceptable as defined in Para. 6), community contribution to the capital costs, paid in cash as indicated in para 14, has a number of advantages. First, community contributions, being proportional to the capital costs, serve as a guide to help communities choose systems that are within their financial means. Second, they provide a basis for community ownership of the system.

14. Financing arrangements under the RTWSP will be as follows:

- a) The community will pay part of the capital cost for water supply and piped sanitation installations (Community Contribution) and total operation and maintenance costs. Initially the Community Contribution will be 5% of the capital costs. For private connections, the cost of the connection will be borne in full by the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries will bear all costs involved in sanitation except in under circumstances mentioned in Para 6.
- b) The Per Capita investment support to the communities for the chosen water supply and sanitation systems will be determined on the basis of specific local conditions as assessed during the project design phase.
- c) To better ensure sustainability, a national rehabilitation program is to be established to assist communities to pay for replacement of major equipment with a useful life expectancy of more than 8 years (Para 7). Future rehabilitation and expansion of source works and mains will be financed on an appropriate cost sharing basis from this future program. All rehabilitation and expansion of secondary piping in a community and individual connections will be paid for by the beneficiary.

15. Communities are reticent to give cash in return for a promise of a new facility, while government is reticent to invest time and money to help a community obtain the facilities if it won't meet its commitments. To build confidence, community contributions will be collected during the planning and design phase and the total amount should be realised before signing of construction contracts. The community contributions to the capital costs will be retained within dedicated bank accounts jointly controlled by WUGs and the Project prior to the preparation of construction contracts. Actual payment will be required only after the water source has been tested for capacity and quality.

16. Since the community contributions have to be made by the community into dedicated accounts prior to the signing of construction contracts, they have to be in the form of money. In addition, in kind contributions of labour or materials as a substitute for money are considered undesirable since they often lead to disputes with contractors regarding delays and associated costs; and reduce the accountability of contractors for quality. Finally, particularly in the case of piped services, future operations and maintenance will mostly rely upon the willingness of the community to raise monetary revenue, and therefore in kind contributions would not represent an assurance of future sustainability.

17. It is important that communities are able to *choose the technology* that will give them the highest service level that they want, can afford, and can maintain. Different priced water supply options for both point sources (springs, wells and boreholes) and piped systems will be identified, and information materials, easily understood by community groups, showing typical designs, costs (capital and operation and maintenance) and management options will be prepared. Through an iterative process involving the local extension personnel and first WSCs, and later WUAs for piped systems, with consultant assistance WSCs/WUAs will prepare a Beneficiaries Plan. Where appropriate (para.6), related sanitation/sewerage options will be included in the process.

18. Over design of pumps, piping and storage tanks should be avoided, and individual components should be locally available. Options will include manual, electric, diesel and solar pumps (both deep-well and surface mounted centrifugal pumps) as well as conventional and smaller, locally-made storage tanks. Handpump models suitable for corrosive groundwater conditions, i.e. with a PH value less than 6.8, are recommended. Groundwater sources including spring catchments, augered or dug wells and boreholes should be used whenever possible, as treatment of surface water is expensive and difficult to manage in rural towns.

19. *Construction* of public facilities will be done by qualified contractors and awarded through competitive bidding, following pre-qualification, where appropriate. Guidance and training will be provided to enable beneficiaries to build improved household latrines. The phasing of the selection of suppliers and contractors by DWD will be such that there will be a minimal delay between the finalisation of the chosen service level and commitments being met by a community group, and the commencement of supply and construction activities, thus ensuring minimal danger of loss of community enthusiasm and commitment resulting from possible periods of delay caused by procurement procedures of the agencies involved.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

20. *Operation and Maintenance of point source water supply systems* (handpumps, spring catchments, and stand pipes) will be the responsibility of individual WUGs with day-to-day management provided by their WSCs; and maintenance of all **on-site sanitation systems** will be the responsibility of individual households. The WSCs will appoint a care taker who will be trained in the proper use of the water point, simple repairs and maintenance, and sanitation and hygiene extension work. DWD will assist WSCs/WUAs to resolve technical problems through its District Engineers who can advise groups on the best course of action to take. Local government personnel will monitor the maintenance system and provide back-up support such as planning and implementation of water and sewerage systems extensions. **Maintenance of piped water and sanitation systems** will be the responsibility of WUAs who normally will contract operation, maintenance and repair functions to a private entity. Area meters should also be installed to act a check on meter accuracy and leaks in the system.

21. To maintain their water supply and sanitation systems, communities must have access to *spare parts* and components that will need to be replaced. The private sector in individual towns will be encouraged and if necessary supported to participate in stocking required spareparts and also provide repair services.

## HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

22. Communities, programme personnel, private contractors and mechanics will require considerable *training* to undertake their responsibilities and to learn about programme policies and procedures. All project personnel will (i) learn communications skills that encourage dialogue and participation rather than rely on directives, (ii) master effective work planning skills including monitoring, evaluation, and problem resolution, (iii) gain a thorough knowledge of the policies and the technical details of the programme, and (iv) obtain specialized training and practical experience for their particular assignments. During project preparation general training (i-iii above) as well as specific training materials for each project specialist (iv above) will be prepared and tested, as will simple presentation materials needed to help local authorities and communities to plan their water supply and sanitation facilities. Orientation programs for decision makers will also be required in order to expose them to the new way of doing business in the water sector.

## TOWN IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

23. Prior to officially inviting a particular town to participate in the project, DWD will carry out a "low key" rapid resource survey in order to confirm the population size and geographic distribution; the need and willingness of the town/communities to participate and pay; and to identify technical options that are feasible. Thereafter the project will establish a formal contact with the district and town.

The below listed steps of the implementation process provide only a general direction toward an appropriate project implementation process. Each town has its own social, economic and cultural profile. This fact does not make it possible to develop a rigid process which could be repeated in each project town. The key is an honest approach to the task leading to a flexible and adaptable implementation strategy.

- a) *Promotion and Situation Analysis Phase:* A series of meetings will be held at the district and then town levels, so that a representative of DWD can discuss the programme with local authorities and others as requested. The outcome of this should be a decision by the relevant local authorities in the towns concerned as to whether or not they wish to participate in the RTWSP. If yes, DWD would then authorize a consultant to assist the town to mobilize for negotiations, planning and design activities.

The consultant will establish an office in each project town and carry out the inventory and analysis of the existing water supply and sanitation situation. Based on the detailed knowledge of the existing situation the consultant will prepare a rough design and costing of feasible water supply and sanitation options as well as basic management, operation and maintenance options.

At the end of this step the project will hold an Initiailization Workshop to present and discuss the analysis of the existing situation, feasible technological options and their implications for the community (community contributions, tariffs, management, operation, etc). The Town Council will be required to pass a resolution which would invite the project to continue to work in the town, accept the technological options relevant to the town and outline a strategy for the payment of the community contributions.

- b) *Mobilization and Negotiation Phase:* During this Phase, the Consultants team will identify and select local extension personnel who together will assist the communities assess their needs and preferences in the water supply and sanitation sector while raising their awareness of the potential impact of improved facilities on health and to increase their capacity to achieve this by mobilizing those most concerned with improvements and strengthening the community's organisational capacity for self-help activities. The communities will be assisted to form preliminary management unit groupings and representation. Negotiations relating to desired service levels, technologies, their capital costs, recurrents costs, management arrangements and tariffs will be held between the Communities and Consultants assisted by the extension staff.



A Project Review Workshop will be held at the end of this phase. At the workshop the team will represent the results of the negotiations with the required to reflect the decision made at the Workshop. The amount of Community Contribution will be determined and communicated to the communities.

- c) *Planning and Design Phase:* The local extension personnel would then work with the representatives of the management units to help them determine the final delineation of WUGs, WSCs and WUAs and the most appropriate service levels for each of them financially, organizationally, and technically. A mix of technologies is likely, where spring catchments, augered or dug wells, and boreholes fitted with handpumps would be more common in low-income peripheral areas, and piped schemes would be more common in the higher-income core area where commercial activities are centred.

This process results in the Beneficiaries Plan for each system and its related signed Beneficiaries Agreement. Following this, design and detailed cost estimates will be finalised, the community contribution paid, and construction contracts then finalised and signed. It is important to note that the progress of each of the groupings will vary, such that whilst details of a WUA piped scheme are being completed, construction may have commenced or even been completed for one or several single source developments for WUGs/WSCs.

- d) *Construction and Training Phase:* The project will develop a detailed curriculum for the community training needs. The training requirements will be different in each project and will predominantly depend on the type of water supply technology(ies) chosen by the potential users, level(s) of service and the skill available in the town.

After finalisation of the bidding documents for goods and works, construction will start after award of contracts following competitive bidding process.

Prior to the commissioning of the improved water supply and/or sanitation systems each WUG/WUA will enter into an agreement with DWD outlining the benefits and obligations of each project partner (community, DWD, District and Town administration) and the conditions for the transfer of the ownership of the system to the community. (Performance Contracts)

- e) *Management, Operations and Maintenance Phase:* This step follows the commissioning of the completed works and hand over to the communities as per the terms of the Performance Contract signed between the community and DWD. Follow up management and operation & maintenance training will be provided, if necessary, by the Urban authorities and DWD.