RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (RWSEP)
AMHARA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

A Long and Careful Farewell

Guidelines for Donor Disengagement and Programme Support Withdrawal

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"
When the Programme stops, we can continue with this work. We will need some little support with maintenance, but we will follow our plan. The water points will continue. More latrines will be built. Our committee is strong and we are happy to have safe water.

KCC Chairperson, Emashenkoro Kebele

"

Abbreviations

ANRS	Amhara National Regional State	PIS	Participatory Information System
BoA	Bureau of Agriculture	PM	Programme Manager
BoH	Bureau of Health	PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
BoPED	Bureau of Planning and Economic Development	RCC	Regional Coordinating Committee
CSTC	Community Skills Training Centre	RRA	Rural Roads Authority
GoE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	RWSEP	Rural Water Supply and Environmental Project in Amhara Region
GoF	Republic of Finland	SAERAR	Commission for Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Rehabilitation for Amhara Region
IEC	Information, Education, Communication	SC	Sanitation Coordinator
KC	*Kebele* Coordinator	SWOL	Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Limitations
KCC	*Kebele* Coordinating Committee	TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
LLPPA	Local Level Participatory Planning Approach	ToR	Terms of Reference
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	WAO	Women's Affairs Office
NREPB	Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Bureau	WATSANCO	Water and Sanitation Committee
O&M	Operation and Maintenance	WPC	*Woreda* Programme Coordinator
OoA	Office of Agriculture	WCC	*Woreda* Coordinating Committee
OoE	Office of Education	WMERDB	Water, Mines and Energy Resource Development Bureau
OoH	Office of Health	WMERDO	Water, Mines and Energy Resource Development Office
PC	Programme Coordinator	ZCC	Zonal Coordinating Committee

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Programme Support Withdrawal

- The Information, Education, Communication (IEC) component of the Programme should, as a priority in its Phase II implementation, encourage and support the withdrawal process.
- The withdrawal of direct Programme Support should be an agenda standing item at all committee and other meetings at all levels.
- RWSEP partners should develop a priority list of sustainability indicators to be used as triggers for the withdrawal of Programme support at *kebele*, *woreda* and Zonal levels.
- Programme support should be withdrawn using a staged approach and mutual agreement, as withdrawal indicators are triggered.
- The Withdrawal of each *kebele* and *woreda* should be considered a unique event, and a specific plan should be developed by the Programme partners for each withdrawal.
- Certain Programme functions, such as Monitoring and Evaluation, and support to Maintenance facilities should continue even after withdrawal from specific *kebeles* or *woredas*, as should the regional networking activities for *Woreda* Programme Coordinators, IEC, Gender and Sanitation Groups.
- As maintenance support to water points is critical to sustainability, clear roles and responsibilities for *kebele*, *woreda*, Zone and Region should be developed, so that all partners agree on who is responsible for what level of operation, maintenance and repair.
- RWSEP should consider the development of a training module on Withdrawal for WPCs and KCCs, among others.
- The RWSEP Implementation Manual should include a section on implementing Withdrawal.
- GoE should encourage and facilitate the development of micro-credit at the *kebele* level as a priority, as the provision of micro-credit facilities is critical for the success of small scale income generating activities, which will be important to maintain community level contributions to water point maintenance.

Summary of Recommendations

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Monitoring and Evaluation System should be rethought on the basis of 'value-added' information. The goal should be to ensure that all participants have the kinds and amounts of information needed to effectively move the Programme forward, but no more: a minimized information system.
- Reporting formats for *kebele* and *woreda* level should be redeveloped using narrative (keywords), tick-box/checklist and tabular elements.
- An attempt should be made to determine whether *Kebele* level reporting can be raised from straight reporting to first level analysis, using a decision tree or other mechanisms to identify variations from reporting norms.
- Programme partners should agree on a short list of core information needs at all levels.
- RWSEP should mount a consultancy early in Phase II to analyse the Monitoring and Evaluation System. The key task of the consultancy should be to redesign the system to allow for automation and to reduce the level of effort needed to manage and operate it. The consultancy should be staged over at least three missions to allow for staff training and debugging the system after implementation.

Donor Disengagement

- Donor Disengagement should be carried out on a mutually agreed, staged, basis throughout Phase II.
- RWSEP should be placed as an independent unit operating within the Bureau of Planning and Economic Development. The Unit should relate to all relevant Bureaux, Departments and Offices on an equal basis and therefore no counterpart Bureau should be named.
- The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) should take on financial responsibility for mutually agreed activities and support costs on a staged basis throughout Phase II. This should include personnel costs for the RWSEP unit, and should be scheduled so that specific Programme elements are transferred in each Year, to avoid 'disengagement shock' at the end of the Phase.
- GoE should commit to, and RWSEP ensure that, the three fundamental strategies for Programme implementation (participatory approaches, multi-sectorality and gender sensitivity) will continue to underpin expansion and replication of the Programme through Phase II and beyond.
- As maintenance support to water points is critical to sustainability, GoE should establish and support maintenance and repair facilities at woreda, Zonal and Regional level to handle increasing levels of repair complexity.
- GoE should encourage and facilitate the development of micro-credit at the *kebele* level as a priority, as the provision of micro-credit facilities is critical for the success of small scale income generating activities.

Streamlining Reporting for Automation

Format

The most opportune entry point for automating the M&E system exists at the *woreda* level. The WPC has the task of reviewing, analysing and compiling up to 56 reports each month into his or her monthly *woreda* report. This takes a minimum of five days, or one-quarter of the WPC's time. No *woreda* offices have computers; few have electricity. Automation cannot reasonably be implemented at this level. By creating forms to facilitate the compilation of data, however, the workload of the WPC will be reduced, allowing more time for support to *kebeles*.

The forms, submitted to Zones and RWSEP, will make the task of data entry a lower level task, as much of the required information can be input without further analysis.. At the moment, professional expertise is needed to extract appropriate information. Data entry should not be done by managers or professional staff. It should be a support staff function. Given the lean nature of the RWSEP (and indeed the ANRS) structure, using professional time to analyse and input report data is a significant waste of scarce resources. Professional staff should be used to examine processed data, not to do the processing. While Zones are not computer equipped at present, this will probably change in the near future.

As mentioned above, the format of reporting at the *kebele* level could be modified to stress variance analysis rather than routine activity. The issue of cost/benefit is best left to the M&E Computerization consultancy scheduled for early in Phase II. Figure 3.2, Current *Kebele* Report Structure, lists the areas currently covered in the fifteen day reports which are submitted to the *woreda*.

At the *woreda* level, the creation of forms to facilitate the compilation of *kebele* data will both save time for the WPC and reduce effort at higher levels. Figure 3.3, Current *Woreda* Report Structure, list the areas covered in the monthly reports submitted by the WPC to Zone and RWSEP offices. Appendix E, Draft Report Form for *Woreda* suggests a draft form which might be used by the WPCs in completing their monthly reporting requirements.

Timing

With some exceptions, reports appear to be completed and submitted on time. The reporting schedule is onerous, with *kebele* level reports being submitted every fifteen days, and *woreda* compilations each month. Meetings are timed to coincide with the reporting period, to allow for review and discussion. Quarterly assessments are timed to coincide with the quarterly meetings of WPCs at the Regional level, and these gatherings are used mainly to discuss problems faced and solutions found. The automation of the system is not likely to disrupt scheduling and could perhaps facilitate quicker feedback and recycling of information. Increasing the speed of information sharing does not seem to be an issue, however. Quicker and more efficient retrieval of information, especially at the Regional level, will have a positive impact on Programme administration. RWSEP staff is currently stretched beyond reasonable capacity in its ability to process and act upon information.

While a heavy burden, increasing the length of the reporting period at the *kebele* or *woreda* level is likely to create more problems than it solves and cannot be recommended.

Table 3.2 ~ Current *Kebele* Report Structure

Topic	Content
Coordination	• KCC functioning • WATSANCO functioning
Community Participation	• at every water point • in every activity • numbers disaggregated by gender
Gender Group	• what committee is doing • gender training/participation in activities • Income Generating activities
IEC Group	• what committee is doing • activities such as drama, school activities, etc.
Sanitation Group	• what committee is doing • activities such as latrine construction, etc.
Collection of Funds	• by site; collected this period; collected this year
Technical Activities	• construction of water points & stage reached • materials used in construction • problems and constraints • artisan activities • level of participation by community • numbers disaggregated by gender
Environmental Activities	• LLPPA Programme site report • table describing type of work and activities • numbers disaggregated by gender
Plan for Following Period	• activities planned for next period • expected progress of activities
Problems & Solutions	• problems faced, solutions tried and results
Requests to RWSEP	• what is needed from the Programme to support upcoming activities

Table 3.3 ~ Current *Woreda* Report Structure

Topic	Content
Coordination	• KCC functioning, by *kebele* • WCC functioning
Community Participation	• by *kebele* • actions undertaken at community level • numbers disaggregated by gender
Gender Group	• what committees are doing (summary)
IEC Group	• what committees are doing (summary)
Sanitation Group	• what committees are doing (summary)
Collection of Funds	• variations from expectations
Technical Activities	• summary table includes: *kebele*; *gott*; type of work; participants (male/female/total); stage of work • includes technical, environmental, other activities
Finance by Activity	• summary table
Plan for Following Period	• activities planned for next period • expected progress of activities
Problems & Solutions	• problems faced, solutions tried and results

Distribution

Kebele reports are submitted to the WPC every fifteen days. The WPC compiles a *woreda* report once a month and submits it to the Zone and to RWSEP. It is not clear what the Zone does with these reports, although it is expected that they form the basis for discussion by the ZCC. As the Zone takes on more budget authority, its role will probably become more meaningful. RWSEP analyses the *woreda* reports and feeds the information back to the *kebeles* through the quarterly newsletter Mikikir. The reports also form the basis for discussion at quarterly meetings, inform planning activities and are extracted in the various reports RWSEP submits to GoE and GoF.

For the most part, it appears that information is reported and relayed in a timely manner. There is probably more information being processed than is necessary for the smooth running of the Programme but this is better than the alternative, which is to not have enough information. Over time, the kinds and amounts of information being reported at various levels should be decreased, as Programme participants are able to focus on the precise information they need to operate at their level. Helping to more carefully define those needs should be a major task of the automation consultancy to be mounted early in Phase II.

Automation Consultancy Terms of Reference

There is no question that information management is a heavy burden at all levels of the Programme. It is unclear that the computerization of its reporting system will, in the short term, ease that burden. Adding a computer to the reporting system will *not* be a panacea for dealing with information overload. It simply adds a new dimension of complexity to an already complex system. The addition of six more *woredas* during Phase II will further strain management capacity at the Regional level but is not likely to totally overload it. Automation at lower levels is not going to be possible in any case. The learning curve for database management is extremely steep, and in the first few months of operation, the system is likely to have enough bugs, glitches and other problems that efficiency will be decreased, rather than otherwise. Any computerization consultancy should include at least two return visits over the first year to help iron out teething problems and deal with staff training in the operation of the system. Staff training in general database management will also be necessary.

Looking towards the future, an automated system is a necessity. Assuming that the eventual goal is to expand RWSEP into every Zone, *woreda* and *kebele* in ANRS (RWSEP Phase X?), the monitoring of the Programme will be impossible without the processing power of a well designed and well managed information system. By then automation will probably be necessary at the Zone as well as at Regional level, with the original Regional automation devolving to the Zones and a new superstructure system being established at Regional level.

The consultant must be more than a software technician. He or she (or they) must have considerable experience in the real world of data processing and must understand non-formal collection methodology. It would be advantageous to have had on-the-ground experience in developing countries, as conditions of work, and the sophistication of the users of the system is different than in the developed world.

The core activities of this consultancy should include:

- a more precise definition of the information needs at *kebele, woreda*, Zone and Region;
- design of formats to more efficiently gather and report that information at each level;
- development of a data input, collation and reporting application at Regional level, based on an appropriate relational database engine, such as Access, Paradox, or other object oriented platform;
- training of staff in operating and managing the system, and possibly in general database management, unless this can be more effectively delivered in a different way.

The core outputs of this consultancy should include:

- an agreed, streamlined information list for each level;
- reporting formats for *kebele* and *woreda*;
- a front-end data input layer to enable Regional staff to easily input data from *woreda* reports;
- a flexible database structure which will allow the collation and retrieval of data as needed by all levels;

- a customized reporting system which will allow routine reports to be automatically compiled, and specialized reports to be compiled with a minimum of database programming knowledge;
- staff trained in system operation and maintenance.

Connecting Monitoring and Evaluation Output to Disengagement and Withdrawal

Automation Output and Utility

There is a great danger in flexible database systems. They allow the user to compare anything to anything, often resulting in hilarious, or dangerous, conclusions. One must be very clear what the priorities are, otherwise the system is quite likely to produce volumes of report data of marginal utility. The purpose of automating the system is to reduce the amount of information being processed by Programme participants, but an uncontrolled reporting system runs the risk of swamping participants with useless information. It is for this reason that it is suggested that the computerization consultancy automate the routine reports. The consultant will have to be guided, however, by the expressed information needs of the Programme partners, as it is not likely that he, she or they will have a working knowledge of the Programme. Before the consultancy, the Programme partners will have to agree to a short list of core information needs at all levels. Table 3.4, Preliminary List of Core Information Needs, provides a start to this exercise.

Quantitative and Qualitative Considerations

It is commonly assumed that gathering, inputting, manipulating and analysing quantitative data is the easy part, and the struggle will be dealing with the more qualitative aspects of the M&E system. Numbers can be quite dictatorial, and, even carefully and thoughtfully arranged, can create a misleading picture. A well designed reporting system will minimize the risk, by ensuring that presentations are at least statistically significant, but it is important to remember that statistical significance means only that if you gather the same data from the same sources again, you are likely to get the same results. That is, the result is not due to random factors. This is different than real world significance.

Group 1 data, raw numbers simply tallied, are the most reliable, and easiest to interpret This Group also provides, in many ways, the least useful information. Group 2 data, which needs processing before analysis, can become slanted through that analysis and results must be considered with this in mind during interpretation. Group 3 data is qualitative, and needs an entirely different approach to input, collation and analysis.

There are a number of approaches to processing qualitative information. The richest, and most difficult, develops direct narrative; a series of stories or vignettes. Case study methodology uses this approach. For the purposes of the Programme, it would probably be more useful to use a *key word* approach. It is probable that, with few exceptions, the narrative reports from *woreda* level deal with less than fifty key ideas. There are perhaps six levels of activity status, ten classes of problems faced, a similar number of solutions found, and so on. A one-half hour session with the WPCs would generate a first draft of such a list. Key words can be input much as quantitative data, and similarly manipulated and collated.

While not as rich or multi-dimensional as narrative reporting, the ideas remain, and analysis of the data is simplified greatly.

Table 3.4 ~ Preliminary List of Core Information Needs

Information Item	Kebele	Woreda	Region
status of *kebele* O&M account	number of *Birr* collected	variation from norm	large variation from norm
water point construction	when will point be completed?	stage of construction; materials used; funds spent	as per plan?
water point O&M	points guarded, clean, accessible, harmonious	as per plan?	variation from norm
KCC functioning' *kebele* committees (WATSANCO, Gender, IEC, Sanitation) functioning	committee meeting, planning, making decisions, active	meetings held; decisions made; reports received	variations from norm; deviations from plan
WCC functioning; *woreda* committees (Gender, IEC, Sanitation) functioning	committees meeting, planning, making decisions, active	meetings held; decisions made; reports received	variations from norm; deviations from plan
participation	numbers by gender	variation/by gender	large variation/by gender
sanitation activities	going on as planned	as per plan	variations; problems/solutions
environmental activities	going on as planned	as per plan	variations; problems/solutions
community plan implementation	on track	on track	variations
Monitoring & Evaluation	is the community doing what it should be?	reports submitted on time, complete and accurate	input for automation
Problems/Solutions	relevant extracts from other places	compilation; lessons learned	lessons learned; information sharing
Withdrawal	how close are we?	which *kebeles* are ready?	which *kebeles, woredas* are ready?

Information Provision for Decision-Making

Decision making in the Programme is decentralized. Information provision is likewise decentralized. It flows in all directions, horizontally and vertically, and impacts RWSEP participants and non-participants alike. The answer to the basic question of what information is needed at what level to effectively and efficiently move the Programme forward remains elusive. Through Phase I, the Programme has operated on a 'no risk' information philosophy: more information is better. The price that is paid for such a decision is a partnership heavily burdened by information processing. In Phase II, the philosophy must change to 'enough information is enough'. It is in the practice of information sharing and decision-making that the definition of 'enough' will become clear. The ideas in this chapter point only to starting points. As in all else in RWSEP, flexibility and the willingness to change things as reality becomes clear will be the key to an effective, efficient and *minimized* information system.

1. Rural Water Supply and Environmental Programme

The Rural Water Supply and Environmental Programme in Amhara Region (RWSEP) is a Programme supported by financial and technical inputs from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Republic of Finland (GoF). Phase I of RWSEP began in September 1994 and will end in June 1998. Phase II will be a continuation of the Programme. It will be implemented beginning in July 1998 and ending in June 2002. A major consideration of RWSEP has been sustainability and it is expected that Phase II will include a detailed strategy for Programme withdrawal and donor disengagement, with responsibility for continuation of the Programme shifting through the Phase to GoE.

During Phase I, RWSEP has been implemented in twelve *woredas* in two Zones: South Gondar and East Gojjam. In Phase II, it is expected that six *woredas* in two new Zones, West Gojjam and Awi, will begin implementation.

RWSEP uses as its umbrella framework the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) Five Year Plan. The Plan details the objectives for regional economic and political development to the end of 2000 (EC 1992). Activities in the Programme operate congruently with the Plan. In respect to rural water supply, the Plan target is to achieve 32% coverage by the end of the Plan period. This target will be achieved in the *woredas* which first participated in RWSEP by the end of Phase I. It appears that these will be the only *woredas* in the Region which will have achieved this rate of coverage by 1998 (EC 1990).

In Phase II, RWSEP aims to achieve

- improved technical and operational sustainability;
- improved social sustainability;
- improved environmental sustainability;
- improved institutional and financial sustainability.

It should be noted that while RWSEP focuses on rural water supply as an entry point to the community, it is simplistic to view the Programme as a water supply project. It would be more accurate to describe it as a multi-level institution-strengthening and capacity building project. The approaches adopted by the Programme as the core of its operations include:

- substantive participation at all levels;
- gender sensitivity;
- multi-sectoral programming;
- flexible, process oriented management.

Planning, decision-making and implementation processes operate on all levels, *kebele*, *woreda*, Zone and Region. Coordination of implementation is also decentralized and operates on all levels. While rural water supply is the 'window' through which RWSEP connects with its community partners, it is the community planning process, a variation of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which drives the implementation of a variety of developmental activities at the *kebele* level. These activities are supported and coordinated by *woreda* based personnel, who turn to Zone and Regional personnel for higher level support as needed.

Because of the decentralized and integrated nature of the Programme, a comprehensive Participatory Information System (PIS) has been developed to share information, ideas and progress up, down, and across the institutions and persons working on Programme activities. To support capacity building at various levels, the Programme has provided training in a number of areas, including:

- technical (water point construction, pump installation, pump maintenance, nursery development, latrine construction, sanitation promotion,);
- institutional (facilitating community planning, Information, Education, Communication, financial and project management, reporting and M&E);
- social (gender awareness, facilitating community planning, sanitation promotion, IEC, communication skills).

By effective use of 'train the trainer' and peer training approaches, close to ten thousand people in the Region have directly benefitted from Programme training. Well planned and implemented Information, Education, Communication (IEC) activities, using both traditional and modern media and including regular 'experience sharing', facilitate a shift in attitudes at all levels and provides solid information to support effective problem solving and decision making.

The overall objective of the Programme is "to achieve sustainable human and physical development for the communities to take responsibility for their own development".

The key concept is <u>sustainability</u>. By the end of Phase II, determination of what is sustainable without further donor support and what is sustainable at the *kebele* and *woreda* levels without further Programme support must be described, agreed by all stakeholders, measured, analysed and decisions on support withdrawal taken. For this reason, a consultancy was developed to review and recommend revision to the RWSEP Monitoring and Evaluation system and to develop a strategy for both Donor Disengagement and the Withdrawal of Programme Support.

2. Scope of Monitoring and Evaluation System Development Consultancy

Questions to Support the Development of Guidelines

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the consultancy can be found as Appendix A of this document. While most of the activities outlined in the ToR relate to the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, preliminary discussions made clear that the development of guidelines for the Disengagement and Withdrawal Strategies was the priority. The M&E system will be critical to the accuracy of decisions to be made regarding disengagement and withdrawal, but having guidelines in place was more important to key players than was revising the system.

With this in mind, a short list of questions was developed. It was expected that the answers to these questions would provide the basis for guidelines concerning Disengagement and Withdrawal Strategies, as well as pointing to the level, quality and content of the input which the M&E system will have to provide. The questions include:

Monitoring and Evaluation

- What information does each level need for effective planning, implementation, follow up and problem-solving/decision-making?

- How can that information be gathered and distributed in the most effective and efficient way at each level, between and among levels?

Donor Disengagement

- What philosophy or core values should guide the shift of Programme funding from donor to Government?

- What structures need to be in place?

- What agreements need to be made, at what levels, involving which people, positions and institutions?

- What sequence or steps should be planned for the takeover and further development of the Programme by the Government of Ethiopia as the donor disengages?

Programme Support Withdrawal

- What philosophy or core values should guide the withdrawal of RWSEP support from *kebele*, *woreda*, and Zone?

- What structures need to be in place?

- What agreements need to be made, at what levels, involving which people, positions and institutions?

- What indicators (technical, social, institutional, environmental, financial) should be used to signal or trigger withdrawal at various levels: *kebele*, *woreda*, Zone?

Priorities

A first draft of priority outputs for the consultancy was generated early in the assignment and was not significantly modified as the assignment progressed. Discussions with Programme stakeholders at various levels indicated that there was general agreement on this matter. Priorities, in descending order, were:

1. Withdrawal Strategy: philosophy, core values, structure and methodology;
2. Disengagement Strategy: philosophy, core values, structure and methodology;
3. Withdrawal Strategy: indicators for withdrawal of Programme support to *kebele*;
4. Withdrawal Strategy: indicators for withdrawal of Programme support to *woreda*;
5. Disengagement Strategy: sequencing of donor disengagement and take over by Government;
6. Withdrawal Strategy: indicators for withdrawal of Programme support to Zone;
7. M&E System: needs analysis and suggestions for streamlining process, output, distribution;
8. Connectivity between M&E outputs and Withdrawal/Disengagement Strategy
9. M&E System: automation (or other approach) to consolidation and distribution of information necessary to effectively plan, implement, monitor and problem solve at every level, AND to support Withdrawal/Disengagement Strategy;

It was agreed that the goal of the consultancy would be to address the first five priorities. Output connected to lower priorities would be useful for future development of the M&E system, but the production of guidelines for Disengagement and Withdrawal was critical for the implementation of Phase II.

Activities and Timetable

The consultancy was carried out over a four week period, from March 27 through April 24, 1998. Originally developed as a 1.5 month assignment, the shortened schedule was made necessary by a number of factors, including Programme resources, the consultant's availability and the fact that an M&E computerization consultancy, which could more logically take responsibility for system analysis, had been planned for early in Phase II.

Table 2.1 - Consultancy Schedule

Week 0	March 22 - March 28 (arrival March 27)	arrive; hold preliminary meetings with Programme staff; collect and review documentation
Week 1	March 29 - April 4	develop mission plan; generate initial material; meet with key players in Programme; attend IEC Coordinators' Meeting
Week 2	April 5 - April 11 (Tabaski April 6)	continue material generation; attend Sanitation, Gender, Woreda Programme Coordinators' Meetings; prepare for field visits
Week 3	April 12 - April 18 (Easter from April 17)	conduct field visits; verify information and impressions; draft Strategy
Week 4	April 19 - April 25 (departure April 24)	share draft Strategy, incorporate reaction in revisions; present final draft Strategy; depart

The activity set included a review of pertinent documentation, meetings with a wide range of stakeholders in the Programme at *kebele*, *woreda*, and Regional levels, and the generation of written materials and reports. Appendix B contains a list of meetings, and Appendix C a listing of documentation reviewed.

The mission was scheduled to coincide with the quarterly meetings of the Regional IEC Team and *Woreda* working groups, including the IEC Coordinators, Sanitation Coordinators, Gender Coordinators and the *Woreda* Programme Coordinators. Having these people gathered in one place at one time made it possible to gather a large amount of information in a relatively short time. To visit them in their offices, spread across twelve *woredas*, would have taken some weeks. Also, the quality of interaction was increased dramatically through group process, which would not have been possible if meetings were held one on one. Appendix D is a sample of the Briefing Note provided to meeting participants prior to discussing the issues.

Constraints

Time was a major constraint in completing the assignment, which is why significant priority setting was necessary. Easter week fell in the third week of the mission, further constraining an already short time frame by lessening the availability of Programme participants.

Due to person-power constraints at the Regional level, BoPED was unable to assign a counterpart the mission. Many RWSEP partners took time to assist in various activities, but the inability to work closely with a counterpart to ensure continuity is a great disappointment.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge that RWSEP staff, Focal Persons, Specialists, Experts and Development Workers at all levels, as well as members of the communities visited during the mission, were all most cooperative and helpful, taking time to assist, explain, present and discuss, in spite of heavy workloads and great time pressure. When thanked, most simply said "It's for *our* Programme. Of course I will help." This attitude goes further to explain the success of RWSEP than any set of sustainability indicators possibly could.

3. Tracking Progress: The Monitoring and Evaluation System

The Current System

Description

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System is part of a larger Participatory Information System (PIS) which has been designed to ensure a constant and regular flow of information between and among Programme participants at all levels. The PIS emphasizes two way dialogue and experience sharing among all partners. The foundation of the M&E process is the preparation of four year community plans, at the *kebele* level, by the community itself. This enables M&E functions to be undertaken by the community and responsibility for M&E reporting is centred on this level. Figure 3.1, <u>Monitoring</u> and <u>Evaluation Portion of Participatory Information System</u>, illustrates the M&E System.

Evaluation at the *kebele* level is conducted through quarterly community meetings organized by the *Kebele* coordinating Committee (KCC). The evaluation takes a standard Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Limitations approach and a SWOL report is prepared by *kebele* Reporters, usually a local teacher or Development Agent (DA). The decisions taken at the quarterly meetings inform activities for the following quarter. The report is submitted to the RWSEP Regional office, where a compilation is developed and sent back to participating communities as *Mikikkir*, a low cost newsletter. *Mikikkir* allows communities to find out about the progress of other communities, what problems are being faced and how these are being solved. It is one of a number of tools used by the Programme to encourage and support information sharing among participants.

Monitoring Reports are prepared every fifteen days by the *kebele* Reporters and are submitted to the *Woreda* Programme Coordinator (WPC). The WPC compiles the reports, which are discussed by the *Woreda* Coordinating Committee (WCC). The WCC includes IEC, Sanitation and Gender Coordinators as well as the WPC. A monthly *woreda* level report is approved by the WCC and is submitted to both the Zone and the RWSEP Regional Office. A quarterly assessment is conducted at the *woreda* level, which acts as a bridge between the monitoring and evaluation functions.

At the Regional level, reports are discussed on a regular basis with the RWSEP Regional Focal Persons (RFP). They share this information with their respective Bureau heads, who make up the Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) of the Programme.

Twice a year, a meeting is held at Regional level to discuss Programme performance, using SWOL methodology. The Bi-annual meetings are attended by WCC members, WPCs, ZCCs, Focal Persons and RCC members, as well as RWSEP staff. Not only are these meetings useful planning venues, they also provide the opportunity for a more encompassing view of monitoring and evaluation. As the Programme expands, so does membership in these venues, which currently stands at almost 120 persons. Programme success in expansion has created a significant challenge to the utility of the M&E system: the challenge of processing ever expanding amounts of information.

Figure 3.1 - Monitoring & Evaluation Portion of Participatory Information System

Four Year Community Plans

Outputs and Timetables

includes WPC, WIECC, WGC, WSC, to discuss 15 day reports, develop short term work plan and support

15 day meetings

Kebele Coordinating Committee (KCC)

Quarterly Reports

Wor Co

RWSEP for Mikikkir & Agga

Progress

Annual Workplan

Quarterly Assessment

FEEDBACK ?

RWSEP

Focal Persons

Regional Coordinating Committee (RC)

Quarterly networking meetings

Annual Workplan

Monitoring & Feedback fora for WPCs, WIECCs, WGCs, WSCs, RWSEP staff
CRITICAL ELEMENT OF SYSTEM

Biannual Regional Meeting

Boa

Strengths

The system *works*. Reports are prepared at all levels in a timely manner (Some concern over the timeliness of reports to the Zone has been noted in other Programme documents) and follow a standard format. While there is some difficulty in easily extracting more qualitative information from the reports, progress on activities is noted, problems (and their solution) identified, level of participation tallied, and, most importantly, plans for the next period identified. *Kebele* level reporting is verified by routine field visits by *woreda* personnel.

At the *kebele* level, the system allows a constant check on progress and provides the opportunity to celebrate successes. At the *woreda* level, the system provides a means of tracking to be sure that work plans are being implemented s expected, acts as 'early warning' of potential problems and identifies community level solutions to problems which can be shared with other *kebeles* facing similar issues. At the Zone and Regional levels, the system provides the input necessary to plan higher level support and to identify trends which can impact the Programme's future, as well as tracking work plan progress.

The system's starting point is the community, and it has been developed to encourage maximum participation and control of the system at the community level. Ultimately, the community itself is responsible for its own monitoring and evaluation, a part of community planning processes which is often neglected. While *kebele* reporters have been trained by the Programme, and receive a (very) small honorarium for their work, the system should be easily sustainable after Programme Support Withdrawal and Donor Disengagement. Monitoring and Evaluation is a part of Programme operations which should NOT be withdrawn from *kebeles* or *woredas*, even after all other support has ceased.

Challenges

The quarterly, monthly and bi-weekly reports prepared at *kebele* and compiled at *woreda* level are created using a SWOL framework, but there is no form in use; the reports are narrative in nature. Narrative style reporting is useful because the richness of the reality can be communicated, but it means that relatively sophisticated means much be used to extract, compile, analyse and synthesize the data. It is a labour intensive process, and those doing the work must be quite sophisticated in their understanding of the Programme and the relative importance of different kinds of information.

This created few problems during the first phases of Phase I, as only three *woredas*, with a limited number of *kebeles*, were involved. As more *woredas* became actively involved in the Programme finally totalling twelve, and additional *kebeles* were added in each, handling, analysing, compiling and simply storing the reports has become a serious issue. More and more Programme time is being spent managing an ever increasing flow of information.

As Phase II begins, and an additional six *woredas* in two new Zones become involved in the programme, plus expansion to new *kebeles* in already participating *woredas*, it is clear that the system must evolve to put less pressure on Programme participants at all levels.

At recent meetings of WPCs, as well as at bi-annual meetings, the emphasis has been on reporting problems and solutions, rather than reporting activities. This has been done because reporting routine was taking more and more time as new *woredas* and *kebeles* were added to the Programme. This is a good trend as it supports information to support Programme

progress, rather than information for its own sake. 'Value-added' information should be the goal of reporting at all levels. The first question that should be asked when examining the reporting structure is "how does this piece of information add value to the activities of the Programme?". If the answer is not clear, or is unsatisfactory, that information does not need to be gathered and reported.

Opportunities for Improvement

The lack of a formulized reporting system makes automation of the system difficult and labour intensive. Creation of a checklist and tick-box format for regularly reported outputs will help resolve this, but should not be done in a mechanical way that will lose the richness of the narrative. A hybrid approach would be best, combining narrative to describe qualitative measures and checklists to report quantitative indicators.

A basic model for such a hybrid format already exists, in the data gathering sheets developed to assist in the preparation of the Phase I Completion Report. These sheets, covering such areas as water points, latrines, contact women, and so on, can be compiled, revised and reformatted to allow the quick notation of data on critical indicators for monitoring of both Programme progress and withdrawal.

One addition should certainly be made to the reporting structure. As well as the currently used Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Limitations, Withdrawal must be added. The creation of a SWOLW system of reporting will assist in tracking signals for withdrawal and, just as important, will help integrate the concept of withdrawal as a natural and normal part of Programme thinking.

Kebele level reporting uses a format which is followed closely by all reporters. This will make the task of formulizing the report structure easier. The introduction of a form for reporting at the kebele level has the potential for confusion and could result in the need for training and familiarization, not to mention costs for printing and distribution of the forms. It is not clear that the benefits of introducing a new reporting format at the *kebele* level outweigh the costs. However, there is an unquestionable need to add a section on progress toward withdrawal, so the format will change to a degree in any case.

An argument can be made that the amount of information gathered and reported at each level exceeds that which is needed, with a cumulative burden as information flows through the system. Information overload begins at the *kebele* level, where raw numbers and activities are reported with no attempt made to provide front line analysis. For the most part, *kebele* reporters are educated, and are usually government functionaries. Community members have proved themselves capable of quite sophisticated analysis of the community reality.

It would be useful to examine the possibility of raising *kebele* reporting to the analytical level. This would mean a small amount of additional work for the *kebele* reporter but would ease the burden at the *woreda* level, and above. A decision tree could be developed which would enable reporters to identify *variations* from reporting norms, which would be reported narratively. Regular activities, number of participants, funds raised and so on, would be formulized through check boxes and tables. The simplification of the system at *kebele* level would flow upwards, easing data input and analysis at other levels, and streamlining reporting.

4. A Long and Careful Farewell: Draft Guidelines for Donor Disengagement

Philosophy and Core Values

It is clear from the Programme Documentation for Phase I that there was an expectation that RWSEP would continue past its four year implementation. There is no reason to call a period 'Phase I', if there is not to be a 'Phase II'. What is less clear from the documentation is what the roles of donor and government would be in Phase II and beyond. This is addressed to some extent in the Phase II documentation, but only in that a 'strategy for donor disengagement' would be developed early in the Phase. The intent, however, is clear. It is expected that there will be a 'Phase III' of RWSEP. It is expected that there will *not* be GoF involvement in that Phase. This means that by the end of Phase II, all RWSEP operations will be the responsibility of GoE.

The implications of this statement are significant. RWSEP activities are complex, multi-dimensional and cut across levels of government, as well as a number of sectors. While viewed by some as a water supply project, most Programme activities actually precede any direct connection with water point development. Concerns have been raised that there will be the temptation for GoE to focus on the concrete aspects of the Programme (i.e. water point construction) and to pay less attention to the more ephemeral commitments to community participation, multi-sectorality, intensive information sharing and gender sensitivity that have made the Programme so successful. There must be agreement that *all* RWSEP operations will be the responsibility of GoE by the end of Phase II.

With this over-riding principle in mind, the core values of donor disengagement should include:

- Disengagement to be carried out on a mutually agreed, staged, basis throughout Phase II;
- GoE to take on financial responsibility for mutually agreed activities and support costs on a staged basis throughout Phase II, including personnel costs for the RWSEP unit;
- GoE will commit to the continuation of the fundamental strategies of RWSEP implementation: substantive participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels; gender sensitivity; multi-sectoral programming; flexible, process oriented management;
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities of all partners, and how these will change over Phase II;
- Continued building of capacity at all levels to assure sustainability of RWSEP and provide expertise for other development activities;
- Integration of critical support structures, such as maintenance and repair and monitoring and evaluation systems, without which replicability and sustainability will not be possible.

Staged Disengagement

The four year span of Phase II offers the opportunity to gradually shift responsibility for Programme functions to GoE. At the operational level, much of the work is already

performed by government functionaries. As functions, and related financial responsibility shifts, capacity and effectiveness can be monitored and tested. Small problems and bottlenecks, which are inevitable, can be identified and resolved. Deficiencies in capacity can be supported and rectified. Maintenance of the core values of the Programme is made easier. Sustainability of the Programme is more likely.

The plan to spend the first year of Phase II to consolidate gains made in Phase I creates an additional opportunity to test the mechanisms for staged withdrawal, as GoE begins to take on responsibility for established *woredas* while RWSEP staff and resources are not yet consumed with the tasks of expansion.

Financial Responsibility

Functional and financial responsibility go hand in hand. The argument for staging financial responsibility is similar to that for functional shifts. A slow and steady handover allows the time to identify bottlenecks and deficiencies and correct them before they become overwhelming. The possibility of sustainability is improved and the maintenance of core Programme values is ensured.

Commitment to RWSEP Strategies

The Appraisal Report (February 1998) focuses on RWSEP strategies as the most important 'lessons learned' during Phase I. It suggests that

- 'ownership' of RWSEP activities by Programme stakeholders is a direct result of the encouragement of participation *at all levels* in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- successful continuation and replication of activities will depend both on using these strategies, and ensuring their integration in the other activities of Programme participants;
- there is a direct and unbreakable connection between community involvement in community level planning and the multi-sectoral implementation of those plans. A commitment to one demands an equal commitment to the other;
- RWSEP core strategies (participation...including IEC, gender sensitivity and multi-sectorality) are highly appropriate, but GoE capacity to implement them over a range of activities will need to be further strengthened.

The message is clear. The 'soft technologies' of multi-sectorality, participation and gender sensitivity are the drivers of RWSEP success. The continuation of these strategies is essential if sustainability is to be achieved.

Roles and Responsibilities

As Phase II progresses, there will be shift in the roles and responsibilities of the Programme partners. There appears to be clear, if somewhat general, agreement as to who is responsible for what aspects of Programme implementation as of the beginning of the Phase. These

agreements need to be further defined over the four year time frame of the Phase. Each partner must be fully aware of their roles and responsibilities for each year of the Phase.

Capacity Building

The Programme Appraisal Report suggests strongly that there is a need for continued capacity building at all levels. The authors of the report emphasize capacity building in the 'soft technologies', but there will also be a need for support, training and exposure to harder skills of management, logistics and M&E analysis. As the Programme moves towards Support Withdrawal from those *kebeles* and *woredas* which are ready, additional skills in the facilitation of this delicate series of steps will also be needed. The Programme budget emphasizes training, as well as experience sharing. This will be a investment with a large and positive return, as it is clear that an understanding of the importance of development *process*, as opposed to development *activity*, must continue to grow within the Region.

Integration of Support Structures

There appears to be total agreement that the Programme will not be sustainable unless there is an efficient and effective maintenance and repair system to support *kebele* water points. It also appears that the Regional level maintenance workshop has been designed to mainly support the needs of electrified bore hole pumping systems. While this is important and useful, it does not address the needs of the *kebeles*, whose water points are either gravity fed from springs or utilize hand pumps mounted over hand dug wells.

The provision of a repair and replacement system for these water points is essential. There should be a spare parts stock at *woreda* level, and, if *kebele* level artisans are judged not qualified to undertake certain kinds of repairs, artisans possessing these qualifications should be available at *woreda* level. The basic principle of the system is that repair and/or replacement should take place at as low a level as possible.

As the ultimate goal is for the *kebele* to be responsible for the costs of O&M for their water systems, the *kebele* should, in theory, pay the costs of transport, new parts and repairs. It is not clear that there are many, if any, *kebeles* currently in a position to cover the cost of any but the most basic repairs. There will not be a simple solution to this challenge and, for the time being, the Programme is likely to have to at least subsidize the costs of repair and replacement of more sophisticated or expensive parts. Figure 4.1 outlines a multi-level maintenance, repair and replacement system.

The M&E system is another ongoing support function which should not cease after Donor Disengagement or Programme Support Withdrawal. In fact, it should be expanded, as and when possible, to cover the entire water system of the Region. This expansion is well beyond the scope, mandate or resources of the Programme but the GoE should seriously study the positive impact of participatory Monitoring and Evaluation on the provision and maintenance of water supply, as well as on other development initiatives. After such a study, it is likely that

Figure 4.1 - Pump Maintenance Hierarchy

Kebele Level Maintenance

routine maintenance, including lubrication and tightening parts replacement of piston leather replacement of handle

Spare Parts, Service & Advice

Requests for Assistance

Minor pump repair; basic spare parts distribution; training of kebele pump attendants

Woreda Level Maintenance

Spare Parts, Service & Advice

Requests for Assistance

Secondary pump repair and rebuliding; routine spare parts distribution; training of woreda staff

Zonal Level Maintenance

Spare Parts, Service & Advice

Requests for Assistance

Major pump repair, rebuliding and/or replacement; major spare parts distribution centre; major training facility

Regional Level Maintenance

the expansion of such a system will be considered an essential part of at least public health service to and possibly all development activities with the people of ANRS. M&E plays an important role in Programme Support Withdrawal but, more important, it connects planning with implementation, and provides a framework for a variety of community level development activities. Support to, and expansion of, such a system will have impact well beyond one project, Programme, or sector.

Structure and Operation

The structures which manage and implement the Programme are, except at the *kebele* level, government Bureaux, Departments and Offices at the Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* level respectively. The system has worked well in Programme implementation and there is little reason to make significant changes. At the Regional level, the major questions are whether the RWSEP Unit should continue, and, if so, where within the governmental system it should be located. At Zonal, *Woreda* and *kebele* levels, the major question appears to be how the Coordinating Committees should relate to the Development Committees at each level.

Regional

RWSEP operated during Phase I using a Project Implementing Unit structure. Established at the Regional level, it was connected first to the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Bureau (NREPB) and, after a restructuring, to the Water, Mines and Energy Resource Development Bureau (WMERDB). The unit includes one full time expatriate coordinator and a small national staff, including a Programme Manager, Water Expert (TA), and Administrator as well as support staff. The unit disburses donor funds, handles programme start-up and continuation, provides coordination and continuity, and supports programme planning, implementation and monitoring.

There has been serious international criticism of a PIU/PMU approach to development project management. Detractors point to the high cost of running such a unit and that little local level capacity is built by such a structure. Further, because a PMU is dismantled at the end of a project, susainability is impossible. In the case of RWSEP, neither of the first two criticisms seem to apply. Cost of running the unit is relatively low, and will decrease in Phase II. Capacity and skill levels of government personnel assigned full time or as part-duty to the Programme has been, and is likely to continue to be, improved. Most important, at this time the capcity of the Bureaux is limited to the point that it is unlikely that any of them could effectively take on management of the Programme.

The ssue is not one of competence but rather of person-power. The Regional government operates a very lean structure. The philosophy of operating with the minimum necessary personnel is a good one but government *systems* have not kept pace with decreasing human resources. This means that a much smaller number of government functionaries are attempting to cope with systems which were designed around a much larger bureaucracy. Reforms to government planning, reporting and financial systems are under way, but it will be some time before new systems are in place, tested and personnel trained in their use. Until that time, personnel at all levels of government, especially professional staff, will be

significantly overworked.

It appears that for Phase II, the best option is to continue management of the Programme through this mechanism. In order to ensure sustainability, GoE should, over the Phase, take responsibility for Unit personnel costs. Table 4.1, RWSEP Personnel Responsibility Phase II, suggests a staged approach for implementing this.

Table 4.1 ~ RWSEP Personnel Responsibility Phase II

Personnel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Government of Ethiopia Project Manager Water/O&M Expert Sanitation Expert Administrator Secretary Drivers (2) Drivers (2)				
Government of Finland **Technical Assistance** Programme Coordinator Water Expert Operation & Maintenance Expert Sanitation Expert **Programme** Administrator Secretary				
Drivers (2) Drivers (2)				

Bureau of Planning and Economic Development (BoPED) has responsibility for coordination of development activity in the Region. BoPED is also the only multi-sectoral Bureau in the Region (other Bureaux are either sector oriented or are, as the case of WAO, sector-neutral). Given the multi-sectoral approach taken by RWSEP, and BoPED's mandate to coordinate development activities, this Bureau is the most logical place to situate RWSEP. While this could be done in a number of ways, the most sensible approach would be to establish RWSEP as an independent unit of BoPED, with no counterpart Bureau. The unit should relate equally to a number of Bureaux which have been involved in Programme planning and implementation, including WMERDB, Bureau of Health, Bureau of Agriculture, Regional Administration and Women's Affairs Office.

Zone and Woreda

Zones have only a marginal role in Programme implementation but provide important technical, monitoring and financial support functions. These functions will probably strengthen in Phase II, especially because of the Zone's new budgetary responsibilities. Zonal personnel are involved in all information sharing and management activities and it is doubtful that changing RWSEP structure at the Zonal level will be necessary.

Woredas are intimately involved in the day to day planning, implementing and monitoring of the Programme, by supporting *kebele* level activities. The relationship between the WCC and the WDC needs more clarity. As the WDC is the government structure at *woreda* level which is responsible for development activities, a method of connecting the two committees is desirable for sustainability. It does not appear logical to simply hand over WCC responsibilities to the WDC. Membership of the WDC is broader than the WCC and its mandate is equally broad. In order to rationalize structure, however, it would make sense to realign the WCC as a sub-set or working committee of the WDC. This would ensure an institutional link at the *woreda* level between RWSEP and other development activities.

Programme Activities

Most Programme partners at all levels seem to have a good understanding of Programme philosophy and activity. This is very good, because without an understanding of the connection between Programme process and Programme activity, RWSEP can be viewed as simply a water supply project. It is not clear that attempting to operated RWSEP as a 'water project' will result in long term sustainability.

Figure 4.2, RWSEP Entry and Development Process, outlines Programme Activities. The graphic does not do justice to the complexity of the Programme. To truly show the depth and inter-connectedness of Programme Activities, the Figure would cover several pages, and would be neither easy to follow nor particularly useful. In the interest of simplicity, the process is described linearly: left to right; down; right to left; down; left to right and so on. An attempt to acknowledge the cyclic nature of the process is made by ending the page by repeating the first steps. The most important thing to notice is that water point site selection does not occur until the *eighteenth* step.

Figure 4.2 - RWSEP Entry and Development Process

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┌────────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ◇──────────────◇      ⬡──────────────⬡
│ IEC, Monitoring │      │ Informal Info/│      │ ID of new      │      │ Woreda reps    │
│ and Evaluation  │─────▶│ Experience    │─────▶│ woredas        │─────▶│ attend         │────▶
│ Processes       │      │ Sharing among │      │ by RCC         │      │ biannual       │
│ Underway        │      │ woredas/      │      ◇──────────────◇      │ meeting        │
└────────────────┘      │ communities   │                             ⬡──────────────⬡
                        └──────────────┘
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⬡──────────────⬡      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌────────────────┐
│ Experience    │      │              │      │              │      │ Work Plan (to  │
│ sharing with  │◀─────│ WPC selected │◀─────│ WCC          │◀─────│ RWSEP, focal   │◀────
│ WPCs          │      │              │      │ Established   │      │ persons, RCC,  │
⬡──────────────⬡      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      │ Board)         │
        │                                                           └────────────────┘
        ▼
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⬡──────────────⬡      ◇──────────────◇      ⬡──────────────⬡      ⬡──────────────⬡
│ WPC Training  │      │ Selection of  │      │ Sensitization │      │ Gender        │
│ by RWSEP      │─────▶│ kebeles       │─────▶│ of KC         │─────▶│ Training of   │────▶
⬡──────────────⬡      ◇──────────────◇      ⬡──────────────⬡      │ DAs           │
                                                                    ⬡──────────────⬡
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┌────────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ◇──────────────◇      ┌──────────────┐
│ Selection and  │      │ KCC, WATSANCO,│      │               │      │ Community     │
│ Training of    │◀─────│ other         │◀─────│ Site Selection│◀─────│ Planning      │◀────
│ artisans       │      │ committees    │      │               │      │               │
└────────────────┘      │ established   │      ◇──────────────◇      └──────────────┘
        │               └──────────────┘
        ▼
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┌────────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐                           ┌────────────────┐
│ Construction of│      │ Other Activities                           │ IEC, Monitoring │
│ Water Point    │─────▶│ as Appropriate│───▶( Programme Support )──▶│ and Evaluation  │
│                │      │ (latrine      │     (   Withdrawal    )    │ Processes       │
│                │      │ construction, │                            │ Underway        │
│                │      │ nursery       │                            └────────────────┘
│                │      │ development,  │
│                │      │ small scale   │
│                │      │ irrigation,   │
│                │      │ income        │
│                │      │ generation,   │
│                │      │ etc)          │
└────────────────┘      └──────────────┘
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To view RWSEP as a water supply project is simplistic, although its success in bringing safe water to rural communities has been most impressive. RWSEP is a capacity building and institutional strengthening project, operating at a number of levels in society and cutting across and between sectors. A universal understanding of the nature of the Programme is critical to its successful replication.

Agreements and Understanding

To ensure continued cordial relations within the Programme partners, it is essential that there be clear, _written_ understandings on several key issues. These include

- how to deal with the impact of the new ANRS Five Year Plan, expected in 2000 (EC 1992), on Programme targets in Phase II;
- role and responsibilities for all Programme partners. Who is responsible for what, who will provide what and when must be clear and transparent to all partners;
- the shift of financial responsibility for Programme implementation from GoF to GoE and specific listings of which body will pay for what parts of the Programme over each year of Phase II.

Plan Targets

The umbrella under which RWSEP operates is the ANRS Five Year Plan, which sets development targets through 2000 (EC 1992). A key target which impacts the Programme is that of providing safe water to 32% of the rural population by the end of the Plan period. This target has already been reached in the first (pilot) woredas to become involved in the Programme, and it is expected that middle and new woredas which became involved later in Phase I will reach that target before the end of Phase II.

However, Phase II of RWSEP will run through 2002, by which time a new Five Year Plan will have been introduced by the Region. It is probable that targets for water and sanitation will be set higher in the new Plan. If this is the case, the GoE should commit to investing the resources necessary to bring those woredas which had achieved the 32% level up to the new target. RWSEP Programme funds should not be used to do so.

Roles and Responsibilities

There is less than total clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities of the various Programme partners. There have been advantages in maintaining loose areas of overlapping responsibility among Programme partners during Phase I, as this allowed for flexibility and enabled the Programme to shift quickly to address challenges with minimal debate as to whose job a particular task should be. This was particularly true during the early part of the Phase, when only three _woredas_ were actively involved. As the Programme enters Phase II, there are twelve _woredas_, and six more will be incorporated over the Phase. The Programme structure is becoming too complex to allow for individual negotiation of responsibility. Specific terms of reference have been developed for the RWSEP unit, ZCC, WCC, _woreda_ level technical committees and _kebele_ level technical committees. These should be reviewed

and revised in light of Programme Support Withdrawal and Donor Disengagement strategies. If it is decided to assign a counterpart agency to RWSEP, detailed and clear Terms of Reference will be needed, especially to define decision making roles, for BoPED, the counterpart Bureau, and RWSEP unit.

Financial Support to the Programme

Donor and GoE should have in place at least general and hopefully specific lists of who will pay for what parts of the Programme in each year of Phase II. In general, GoE should take on each year at least one major additional financial responsibility, including more of the cost of supporting the unit. Appendix F, Budget Sharing/Transfer of Responsibility Through Phase II, suggests a staged approach to the shift of financial responsibility from GoF to GoE. Table 4.1, RWSEP Personnel Responsibility Phase II, is extracted from the Appendix, and details a suggested arrangement for GoE takeover of RWSEP personnel over the Phase.

Allocation of budget by GoE for RWSEP activities can be handled in a number of ways. To maximize flexibility, it would be best to allocate a single line item: RWSEP, within the BoPED budget, and allow disbursement according to the RWSEP work plan. This will facilitate the shifting of resources to address specific needs more easily than having a detailed government budget. The need for flexibility will be especially important as Withdrawal of Programme Support begins, as some communities are likely to need small amounts of unplanned support to reach withdrawal levels.

Sequencing Disengagement

The timetable for donor disengagement should be flexible but rigorous. Delays in handovers or in shifts of financial or programming responsibility should be made only for substantive reasons. Agreement to delay a handover or shift should be made by mutual consent and for a specific period only. The Appraisal Mission, conducted in February 1998 has suggested that Donor resources be used for expansion of the Programme, while GoE take over all costs connected with *kebeles* which became involved in Phase I. This is an appropriate principle, but flexibility has always been a hallmark of the Programme, and this should apply here as well. The handover/takeover of Phase I *woredas* should be handled in a staged manner, over the first years of the Phase. Soon thereafter, beginnings should be made at handover/takeover of the first Phase II *woredas*. The aim is to minimize 'disengagement shock', which is likely to occur if a large amount of new responsibility is 'dumped' by the donor over a short period of time.

Appendix G, Inventory of RWSEP Support, provides an inventory of RWSEP support functions, along with the agent responsible for delivery. This inventory is important to review, as the Programme is engaged in a large number of inter-related activities, implemented by a wide range of agencies at various levels. While most of these activities are implemented by government agencies, mainly at the *woreda* level, initiation, coordination and management is done by RWSEP at Regional level. As GoE takes on more and more responsibility for RWSEP functions, the utility, and perhaps necessity of a Regional implementation unit will become more apparent, even after Phase II closes out.

Appendix F, Budget Sharing/Transfer of Responsibility Through Phase II, details funding of Programme functions, and suggests a staged approach for GoE takeover of Programme financing. In general, little change is expected in Year 1, as GoE funding for the year is already in place. Those areas that require little direct investment besides personnel, which GoE already supports, should be taken over. These include construction site selection and confirmation, water quality testing, and fuel.

In Years 2 and 3, a range of mainly overlapping funding arrangements should be put in place, as GoE takes on responsibility for Phase I 'pilot', and then 'middle' *woredas*. By Year 4, GoE should be preparing to take over the first Phase II *woredas*, as well as the 'new' Phase I *woredas*. GoF funding will begin to taper off in Year 3 and will further decline in Year 4. By the end of the Phase, GoE will be expected to shoulder the entire burden of continuing the Programme.

Figure 4.3, Sequencing of Takeover of RWSEP Participating *Woredas*, describes support arrangements and responsibilities of GoE and GoF in respect to Programme *woredas*.
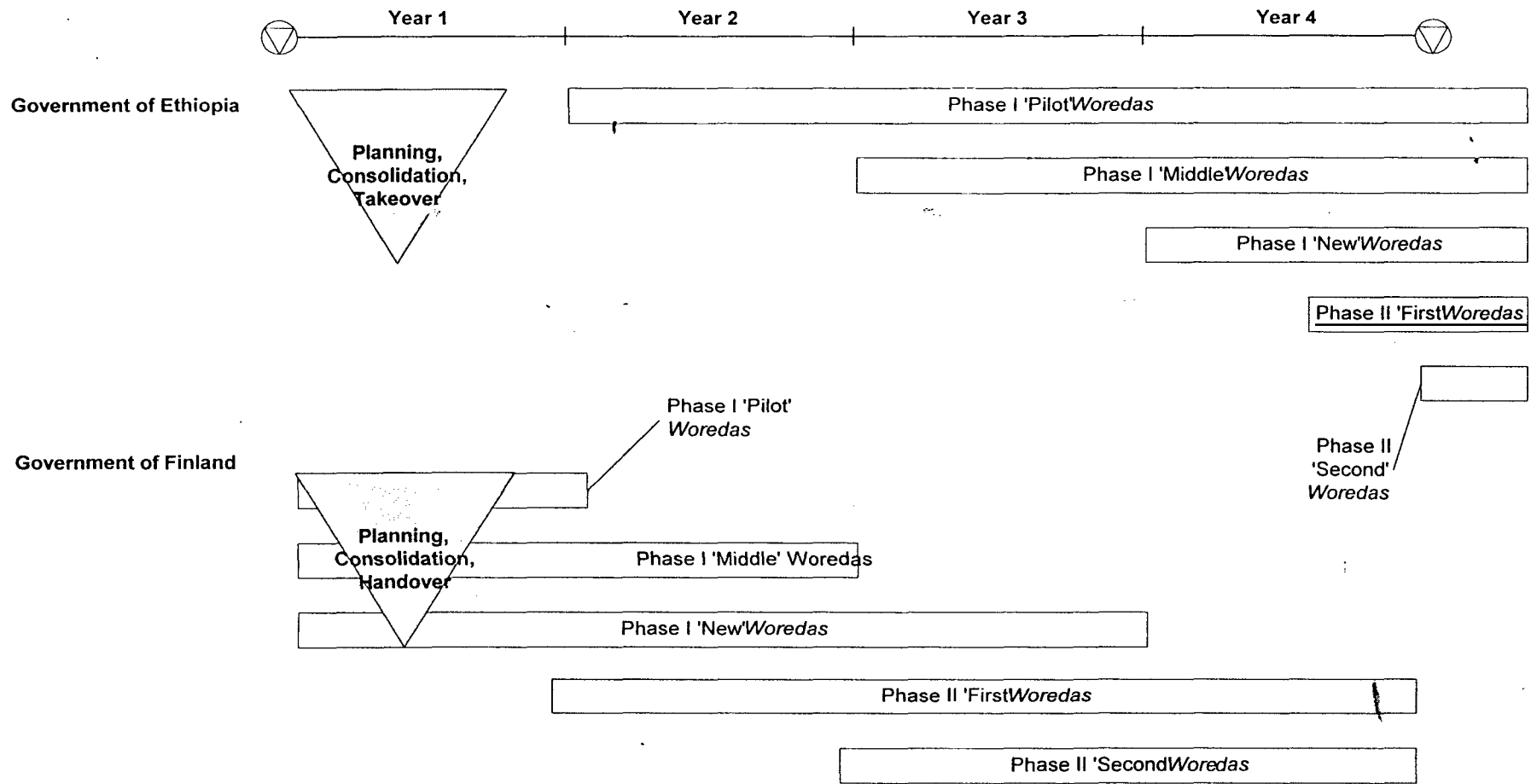
Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4

Government of Ethiopia

Planning, Consolidation, Takeover

Phase I 'Pilot'*Woredas*

Phase I 'Middle*Woredas*

Phase I 'New'*Woredas*

Phase II 'First*Woredas*

Government of Finland

Planning, Consolidation, Handover

Phase I 'Pilot' *Woredas*

Phase I 'Middle' *Woredas*

Phase I 'New'*Woredas*

Phase II 'First*Woredas*

Phase II 'Second*Woredas*

Phase II 'Second' *Woredas*

Figure 4.3 - Sequencing of Takeover of RWSEP Participating *Woredas* Phase II

5. Encouraging Community Independence: Programme Support Withdrawal

Philosophy and Core Values

There is general agreement among Programme participants that withdrawal of programme support is necessary, inevitable and *doable*. At the *kebele* level, withdrawal will encourage community participation and control. At the *woreda* level, withdrawal will allow for greater independent decision-making. The over-riding principle of Programme Support Withdrawal must be *celebration*. Withdrawal should be positioned as something to strive for: an achievement to be proud of.

With this over-riding principle in mind, the core values of programme support withdrawal should include:

- Programme Support Withdrawal must become part of the vocabulary of the Programme, as have gender, IEC and participation. It should be a standing item for *every* committee meeting, *every* training event, *every* interaction among Programme partners;
- Support Withdrawal will be accomplished in a staged and consensual manner;
- The decision to withdraw from a particular *kebele* or *woreda* will be based upon the achievement of key indicators which will be monitored at various levels of the Programme. Initiation of discussions concerning withdrawal can be made by any level;
- in general, it is expected that the first *kebeles* to be involved in the Programme will be the first to have support withdrawn. Likewise *woredas*. There will probably be exceptions, however;
- after withdrawal, support and input will continue to be needed for periodic assessments (M&E), high level or major maintenance and, possibly other matters;
- the coordinators' networks (IEC, Gender, Sanitation, etc) at *woreda* and *kebele* level MUST continue
- the development and implementation of micro credit facilities is essential to continued development at the *kebele*. A comprehensive rural micro-credit facility, not directly connected to RWSEP or any other Programme, should be established as soon as possible.

Withdrawal as Celebration

Withdrawal must not be seen as a punishment for being successful, or for participating in the Programme for too long. It should be positioned as a *reward* for taking responsibility for the development of the community. *Kebeles*, and *woredas* should strive for withdrawal and should actively seek to be independent of RWSEP support.

This attitude will not spring into being overnight. A major task of the RWSEP IEC Plan for Phase II will relate to Withdrawal. The concept and methodology for withdrawal must be discussed by all Programme partners on a continual basis. By Year 3, every Programme decision should be automatically filtered through the lens of withdrawal.

This approach to withdrawal can be supported by making the first withdrawals a matter of considerable, positive public attention. A ceremony, much like those mounted to 'officially' hand over water points to a community, might be organized to raise public interest in the withdrawal process.

Integration of Withdrawal as a Core RWSEP Function

When the Programme began, there was little attention paid to such issues as gender sensitivity or sectoral integration in what was then Region Three. IEC was unheard of. There was, in fact, considerable resistance to some of these concepts. In the past four years, multi-sectorality, gender issues and IEC as core elements of development process have become accepted, natural elements of development work in the Region. Withdrawal must become as ingrained in development thinking and practice in the Region as these other concepts.

The Programme has expended considerable resources to raise awareness at all levels about IEC, gender and the need for sectoral integration. To effectively position Withdrawal as a core element of the Programme, resources must be allocated to activities designed to do so. This could include short training modules for WPCs and KCCs. The Programme Implementation Manual, currently under development, should include a section on implementing Withdrawal.

Staged Withdrawal by Consensus

The Programme supports a wide variety of activities and processes at *woreda* and *kebele* level. Some of these have been labelled as primary, or Tier 1 activities, and others as secondary, or Tier 2. As Donor Disengagement is being considered as a slow, staged process, so Withdrawal is more likely to successfully be carried out in a slow, staged manner. By starting by withdrawing marginal support from Tier 2 activities and, over time, moving toward withdrawal for Tier 1, monitoring of continued progress can occur, and interventions, if necessary, can be arranged.

A consensual approach to deciding upon withdrawal is the most likely to be successful. Please note that 'consensus', contrary to popular usage, does NOT mean that everyone agrees 100% with the decision. It means that everyone has had an opportunity to express his or her point of view, and is satisfied that this point of view has been respected and considered in arriving at a decision. All participants must agree that the *process* of decision making was a good one, not that the decision arrived at is perfect. No decision satisfies everyone.

Development and Monitoring of Key Indicators

At the *kebele* level, there are certain key indicators that point to the potential for successful withdrawal. The most basic of these, such as the functioning of *kebele* committees, participation in *kebele* activities, funds available in the O&M account, can be evaluated quite easily, using a checklist approach. If indications are positive, more in-depth quantitative and qualitative measures should be taken to confirm readiness for withdrawal. At the same time, discussions should begin among the Programme partners leading to decisions concerning

support Withdrawal.

Support Withdrawal by Time of Entry

There will be considerable pressure on those *kebeles* and *woredas* that have been involved in the Programme for the longest time to move quickly towards Withdrawal. As a general principle, this is sensible. However, Withdrawal decisions should be based on the potential shown by the *kebele*, and ultimately the *woreda*, to continue activities and development without Programme support. The Withdrawal process will involve a number of activities, including measurement of specific indicators, consultations, and staged planning. The length of time a particular place has been involved in the Programme should be secondary to the ability of the place to continue activities and assure sustainability.

Ongoing Support After Withdrawal

There are several Programme functions that must continue after Withdrawal from a particular *kebele* or *woreda.* These include Monitoring and Evaluation, and maintenance/spare parts support. The first will support the community's continuing need for information, and the Programme's need to monitor ongoing progress at the community level. The second will ensure that water points continue to function.

Support to the Coordinators' Networks

The Coordinators' networks (Gender, Sanitation, IEC) should continue. The on-going sharing of experience will be critical to sustainability, and the experienced coordinators from long-standing Programme communities will be helpful to those just becoming involved in the Programme. The cost of sustaining the network is minimal compared to the benefits gained by all participants.

Micro-Credit Development

Availability of small amounts of money to cover start up costs for *kebele* level income generation activities is critical to the support of entrepreneurship at the local level. Communities in the Region are, for the most part, cash deprived. This makes it difficult to sustain any activity in which there must be at least some cash contribution by community members. As the ultimate goal of the rural water supply strategy is to have communities take on the entire cost of developing and running their systems, it makes considerable sense to support the development of income generating activities at local level.

Structure and Operation

Planning for Withdrawal

Before implementing the Withdrawal Strategy, certain preliminary steps must be taken. These first steps set the stage for a fair and agreeable process:. They have been discussed above, and include:

- IEC activities to raise awareness and understanding of the Programme Support Withdrawal process, and to position it as a challenge to strive for and a reward for excellent performance;
- The integration of Programme Support Withdrawal into all RWSEP activities, meetings and gatherings at all levels.

Once these preliminary steps have been put in place, the Withdrawal Strategy sequence itself can be implemented:

- Primary Measurement process is initiated at *kebele* level, and suggests potential for Withdrawal;
- Secondary investigation begins AND discussions among Programme partners commence. Consensus is reached to begin Withdrawal;
- Site specific Withdrawal Plan is developed, including assessment criteria for sustainability;
- First Stage (Tier 2) Withdrawal occurs, including a sustainability assessment;
- Second Stage (Tier 1) Withdrawal occurs, including a sustainability assessment;

Throughout the process, a monitoring function should be in place for consistent and effective follow-up to ensure sustainability, and to deal with any challenges that occur in specific Withdrawal processes.

The Withdrawal of each *kebele* and *woreda* should be considered a unique event, and a specific plan should be developed by the Programme partners for each withdrawal. While each plan will contain common elements, the sequence, timing and further interventions necessary should depend upon the unique circumstances being faced in each place.
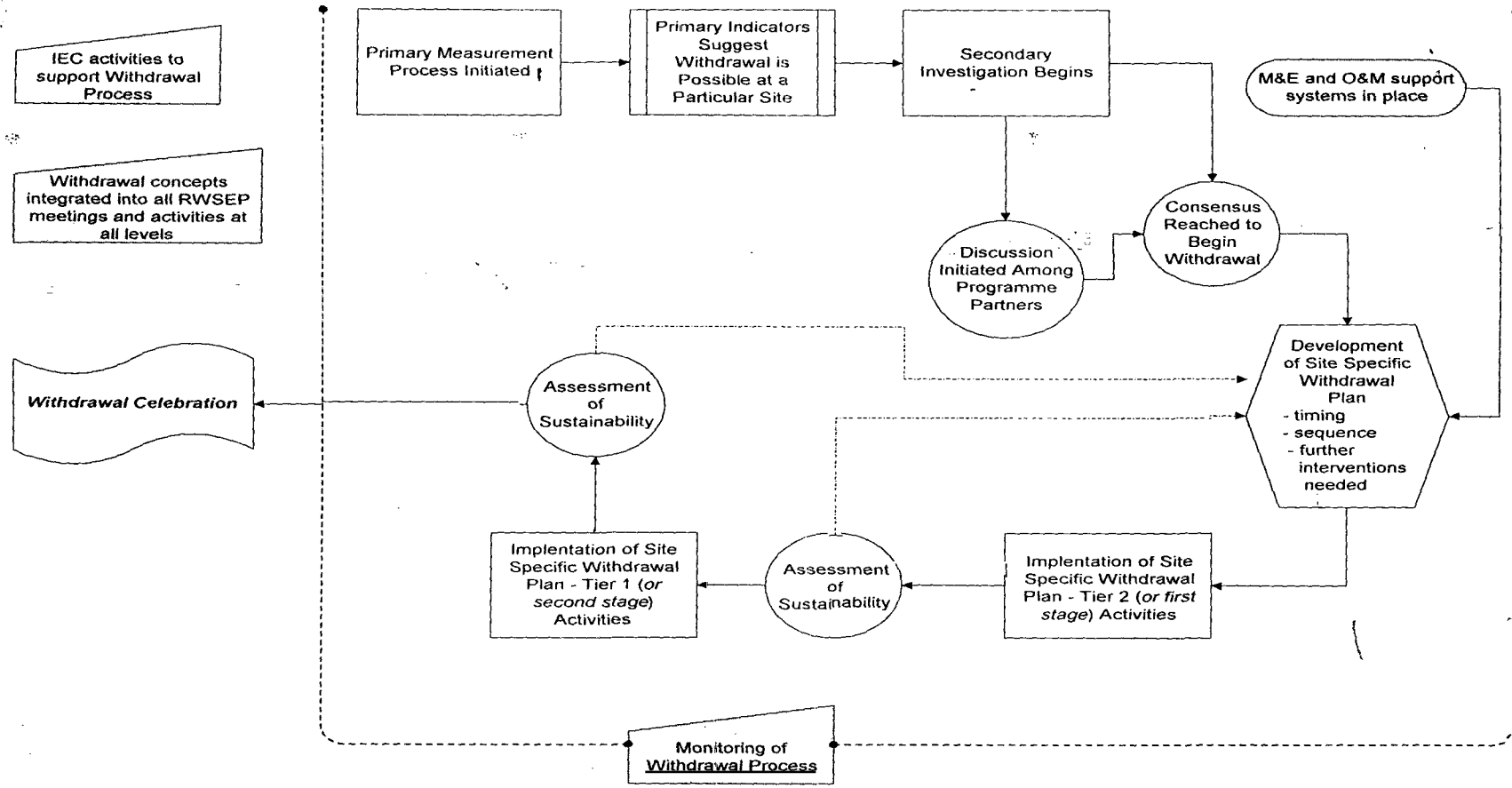
Figure 5.1, Steps in the Withdrawal Process, outlines the steps.

The steps in a particular withdrawal process, as well as the sequence, should be determined through consultation with *Kebele* and *Woreda* Coordinators, other appropriate development groups at *kebele*, *woreda*, zone and Region, and, most importantly, community members themselves. For at least the first few Withdrawal processes, there should also be direct and central involvement by RWSEP Regional level staff.

Decision-Making

There is a strong and widely expressed point of view that the communities themselves should decide when Withdrawal should take place. While there is no question that communities should be intimately involved in the decision-making process, they should not be the only players involved. RWSEP is committed to wide ranging participation at all levels, and withdrawal decisions should have similarly wide-ranging input.

Figure 5.1 ~ Steps in the Withdrawal Process

IEC activities to support Withdrawal Process

Withdrawal concepts integrated into all RWSEP meetings and activities at all levels

Withdrawal Celebration

Primary Measurement Process Initiated

Primary Indicators Suggest Withdrawal is Possible at a Particular Site

Secondary Investigation Begins

M&E and O&M support systems in place

Discussion Initiated Among Programme Partners

Consensus Reached to Begin Withdrawal

Development of Site Specific Withdrawal Plan
- timing
- sequence
- further interventions needed

Assessment of Sustainability

Implentation of Site Specific Withdrawal Plan - Tier 1 (*or second stage*) Activities

Assessment of Sustainability

Implentation of Site Specific Withdrawal Plan - Tier 2 (*or first stage*) Activities

Monitoring of Withdrawal Process

The initiation of the Withdrawal process could be done at any level, based upon measurement of previously agreed key indicators. Discussions concerning the readiness of a particular *kebele* or *woreda* to begin withdrawal should be held, moving towards consensus as to a timetable and a sequence for Withdrawal. It may be that specific further interventions are necessary before Withdrawal can begin, or be concluded. If so, these should be included in the Withdrawal Plan, or added to it if they are not identified until after Withdrawal has begun. Flexibility, and the willingness to work in partnership should inform Withdrawal as much as in all other Programme activities.

Agreements and Understanding

Roles and Responsibilities

There is an assumption, often unspoken, that after Programme Support Withdrawal the community will be expected to maintain all activities and provide all support needed to sustain gains made over the Programme's involvement in the community. This is a valuable and noble assumption. It is also quite unrealistic. Whether continuation of Monitoring and Evaluation, some aspects of which the community can certainly sustain, or the replacement of an entire well-head, which it just as certainly cannot, there will continue to be the need for Programme or Government intervention to support community efforts. There must be realistic clarity about what the community can reasonably provide.

This can best be accomplished by the development of clear definitions of the community's role and the government's role, and how interaction will occur through and after the Withdrawal process

Operation and Maintenance

An integrated O&M system for water points does not currently exist. Such a system must be established to ensure sustainability. Workshops and/or technical personnel at *woreda*, Zone and Regional level should supplement and support *kebele* level artisans to provide service for more complex repair problems. Figure 4.1, Water Supply Maintenance Hierarchy, shows the relationship among facilities at various levels for providing Operations and Maintenance support. It should be noted that this system should not just support RWSEP water points, but all water points in the Region.

Establishing Micro Credit

There have been plans in place for micro-credit schemes in the Region for some time. To an extent, the Amhara Credit and Savings Institution has attempted to provide such a service, but it suffers significant limitations and a full scale, rural based micro credit facility has not yet been implemented in the Region. While RWSEP has developed a Community Fund which has taken on some of the roles of a credit facility, this is a temporary and ultimately inefficient approach to the provision of community level credit. Ethiopia has become a member of the African Regional Micro-Credit organization and the Region should move

quickly to establish strong facilities in this area. The credit facility should not be tied to RWSEP, or any other specific development project. It should be a stand-alone, umbrella facility able to offer support across programmes, projects and other initiatives.

Much literature has been distributed concerning micro-credit and there are a number of models which have been successfully implemented, including the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh, and the Women's Initiative Fund in Ghana. Experience has shown that micro-credit operates more effectively if the following guidelines are used:

Lend to Groups

Loans are made to small self-support groups rather than to individuals, although often it is an individual who uses the money to start an activity. The *group* guarantees the loan, and is responsible for paying it back. Group pressure can therefore be used to ensure that an individual pays back his or her loan, as an individual default will mean that the group cannot receive further loans. In some places, traditional 'self help' groups are already in existence, and these have been tapped as the source of lending groups. In others, small 'self-selected' groups were formed specifically to access credit. There has been less success in 'adding on' credit functions to groups formed for other reasons, such as improved seed clubs, or in working with groups of more than about fifty people.

Further Loans Depend on Timely Repayment

After the first loans are made to a group, it cannot receive more loans until the first are paid back. Some schemes allow further loans after a certain percentage, say 75%, has been repaid.

Gender Lending

Loans made to women tend to have better repayment rates than loans made to men. In some cases, the difference has been so great that the credit facility has stopped making loans to men entirely. As well, income generated by women tends to be invested in the family...in food, clothing, school fees for children and so on, while income generated by men tends to be investment in men's activities. Women's income, therefore impacts more directly on community development and improvement in the quality of life.

Lend Where the People Are

Micro-credit facilitators have the most success in lending funds, as well as higher repayment rates, when they operate at the community level. Programmes which depend upon groups coming to an office in town to receive loans and make payments tend to be remote from people's lives and do not fare well in the long run.

Withdrawal Signals

The measurement of signals or triggers for initiating the Withdrawal process would best be

done on two levels. The first level would measure basic indicators, such as committee functioning, water point operations, and implementation of other activities, using a simple, checklist format. The *kebele* reporter could take on the task of routine measurement at the *kebele* level, with the support of the WPC. At the *woreda* level, the WPC would perform the task. in consultation with Zonal and Regional personnel.

The second level would be implemented when first level measurement indicated that Withdrawal could be begun. This would involve a more sophisticated analysis of committee functioning and progress on activities and would take the form of a 'mini-consultancy', combining on-the-ground investigation with desk work comparing the site to established norms for Withdrawal. Appendix H, Support Withdrawal Indicators, provides a comprehensive list of indicators, the level each would be measured on, and the Group (1. or 3) identifying the complexity of the measurement.

At the same time, discussions would be initiated among the various Programme partners to develop a consensus concerning Withdrawal from the site and the timing and sequence of the Withdrawal steps. Any further interventions needed before, or during, Withdrawal would hopefully be identified at this time.

Appendices I, Primary Programme Support Withdrawal Check List - *kebele* level, and J, Primary Support Withdrawal Check List - *woreda* level, are drafts which can be used to develop frameworks for level one measurement.

Sequencing Withdrawal

Figure 5.1, Steps in the Withdrawal Process, outlines the process of withdrawal. While withdrawal from each *kebele* and *woreda* should be dealt with as a unique event and should be undertaken using a plan developed specifically for that site, there will be a number of common elements in each plan and it is probable that in most cases a similar sequence of events will occur.

In a few cases, the KCC might take the initiative, and RWSEP might as well, but the Woreda Programme Coordinator is the most likely source of initiation for withdrawal at the *kebele* level. One area of discussion should focus on those areas of support which can be withdrawn in the first stage. Usually, the first area to have support withdrawn will be small scale irrigation. as RWSEP supports only the provision of hand tools in this area, a one time cost. This would be followed by withdrawal from other soil and water conservation activities. This is token withdrawal but is a significant first step. Small successes are important, as they build confidence at the community level, both in their ability to conduct activities without financial support and in the withdrawal process itself.

The next area to have support withdrawn will usually be nursery development. Again, Programme support is limited in this area, although more significant than for small scale irrigation. and so withdrawal from supporting these activities should not have too great an impact.

If the *kebele* has achieved the ANRS target of 32% water coverage, support to water point construction will have already ceased. If not, efforts should be made to attain that target. If this is not feasible, an agreement should be reached to withdraw support to this area anyway.

Withdrawal of support to sanitation activities would coincide with this.

Withdrawal of support through the Community Fund should not be done until there is a viable credit facility to take its place.

Support to animal health is a new initiative for RWSEP, in cooperation with BoA. The construction of rural roads is another new venture. Both of these elements have been generated out of community plans and are likely to have significant impact on rural quality of life, as well as supporting Income Generation activities and other Programme initiatives. It is unclear what the status of these initiatives are, and how withdrawal might impact these activities. As in all Support Withdrawal decisions, the circumstances of a particular case should be taken into account before withdrawal proceeds.

Institutionalization of an Effective Process: Government Commitment to Maintenance and Expansion of RWSEP

An examination of Figure 4.2, RWSEP Entry Process, shows a complex and multi-faceted set of interactions, most of which seem to have only a marginal connection with the provision of rural water supply. The success of the Programme should underline the fact that these interactions are a necessary part of successfully implementing water supply, or any other development activity at the community level. This is just as true in urban settings as in rural ones.

It is expected that the Government of Ethiopia, Amhara National Regional State, will continue to maintain and to expand RWSEP through and beyond Phase II. In order for this to occur, GoE will need to internalize and institutionalize a development process based upon wide and full participation at all levels, gender sensitivity, and multi-sectorality.

In the Appraisal Report, Drs Vainio-Mattila and Harris point out that at Regional level only WAO, and to a lesser degree BoH, has been systematic in integrating RWSEP planning into their regional plans. In spite of rhetoric to the contrary, there appears to be little evidence of multi-sectoral cooperation outside of RWSEP, and little interest by the Bureau which is mandated to provide water supply in the very successful RWSEP process. These factors mitigate against the continuation of the Programme.

There are balancing positive factors, however. There are a number of professional staff in various Bureaux who believe in the Programme and in the effectiveness of the approach. The Appraisal Report recommends that RWSEP make significant efforts to familiarize senior management in the Region with the utility and effectiveness of participation, gender sensitivity and multi-sectorality. This will hopefully be done, with positive effect. BoPED, being multi-sectoral by mandate, can play an effective role in facilitating acquiesence to at least inter-sectoral cooperation, if not multi-sectoral planning and implementation. It also appears committed to doing so.

At *woreda* level, the situation is less polarized. The professional cadre is small, resources are scarce, and sharing is a standard practice. *Woreda* functionaries, however, depend upon direction, as well as budget, from Zone and Region. If that direction does not support participation, gender sensitivity and multi-sectorality, it becomes extremely difficult to follow through.

Commitment is the key word. If GoE is willing and able, at all levels, to commit to the continuation of a process which has been proven to work, the Programme will continue, expand and replicate. If not, the Programme will fade away.