



Guidelines for planning and designing RWSS programmes

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DURING AND SINCE the Decade of Water Supply & Sanitation, understanding of the various components necessary for domestic water and sanitation projects has increased enormously, but this has not generally been translated into successful projects and programmes. The potential of village level operation and maintenance (VLOM) and improved health have not been achieved. The use of groundwater has not always been successful due to misjudgements and mis-interpretation of the hydrogeology.

The need for an integrated approach to domestic water supply, hygiene and water use education, sanitation and community organisation and management is now accepted by many people working in the sector. Integration of domestic water supply with other demands on water resources is also now recognised as essential. However, there is a lack of guidance for professionals on how to achieve this integration. Many of the books concentrate on a particular subject, and though referring to other subjects, provide little help on how to combine them in a project.

To provide a solution to this problem, a research and development project is developing guidelines to assist in the process of planning and designing integrated rural water supply and sanitation programmes. The Water, Engineering & Development Centre (WEDC) at Loughborough University in the UK and the British Geological Survey (BGS), supported by the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC), are being funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID) under its Knowledge and Research Programme.

The purpose of the guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines is to improve the methodology and practice for the development of sustainable rural water supply and sanitation programmes in groundwater dependent areas.

Organisations such as the FAO, the UNDP and the World Bank have written books and guidelines to support policy and strategy development, and there are several books available on project development. The level that has been neglected is the support of programme development.

Users

The guidelines are to assist planners and managers in national government departments to formulate programmes to organise and co-ordinate the activities of government departments, external support agencies, NGOs and others working in domestic water supply and sanitation in the programme area.

Definition of programme

There is much confusion in development circles between "project" and "programme", with the words often being used interchangeably. In a study of the literature various different definitions of programme were considered. A number of key words come out of these definitions: coherent, sector, geographical area, co-ordination, approach, activities, time, inter-related, procedure, framework. The other thing which came from the study are the opposing interpretations of the term "programme". On one side a programme is set of projects (sub-projects), each with its specific area, targets and time limits for control which add up to bigger areas and targets and overall time limits. In other words, a programme is just a bigger more complex type of project, with the emphasis on implementation. On the other side, a programme is a coherent framework or co-ordinated approach for activities ranging from specific projects to developing policy. The latter was considered the more appropriate for these guidelines.

Therefore, taking the latter interpretation and combining key words together in a suitable order, **the definition for programme is:**

a coherent framework of procedures and activities for co-ordinating and regulating projects within the water and sanitation sector in a defined geographical area.

Approach of the guidelines

Ownership

It has been realised in the past decade that for successful operation and maintenance of water supply points by communities, the communities themselves have to own them. This concept of ownership is an underlying principle of the guidelines. The guidelines themselves are only a tool. The resulting product - the programme - must be owned by the people who have used the tool to design it.

To try to achieve this, the approach of the guidelines is to ask questions. As far as possible, the answers should come from the users. The guidelines make suggestions as to what sort of information is needed, where to find it and how to use it, but the decisions have to be made by the planners and managers using the guidelines.

Integration

As mentioned in the background, integration of the various components of rural water supply and sanitation is essential. This integration is one of the fundamental goals of the guidelines. To achieve integration, relationships between



each of the major components is highlighted. A decision in one area is being cross-linked to another area. The order of decision making can be important. In some places, it will be necessary to make a decision on one thing before another can be developed.

The guidelines will allow for social, geographical and hydrogeological differences within the administrative areas by location-specific variations.

Structure of the guidelines

The guidelines are based on a standard programme cycle, as shown in the box. They will assist with the first three stages of this cycle.

Stage 1: project set-up

These are the steps to establish a project to carry out the exercise of preparing a programme. It is assumed that an instruction will be given by central government to undertake the exercise, so the steps start from there. It is anticipated that the Preparation Project will take about six months to complete.

Stage 2: situation assessment and analysis

Information gathering is necessary to understand the whole context of the proposed programme. Although the users may be very familiar with their working situation, it can still be very useful to step out of the day-to-day work and take a fresh look at the context. The type of information to be gathered includes social, economic and health as well as the technical issues of water resources and supply.

It is essential that views at all levels are taken into account. This includes the beneficiaries' views of their own problems and needs. The information gathering process addresses this by looking at each different level, central, provincial or regional, district, and by carrying out sample surveys in villages. As far as possible, the users will be encouraged to use participatory methods.

The information gathered is then assessed before being presented in a planning workshop, the analysis part. This *participatory planning workshop* is the core of the Guidelines. Users are encouraged to bring representatives from the various different levels and areas of expertise to participate in this workshop. The workshop uses participatory methods such as problem identification and problem tree analysis to set objectives in each of the areas, and SWOT analysis to look at the institutions in the sector.

Stage 3: design

This stage will take the objectives from the workshop and ensure that all the activities necessary to achieve them are considered. The cut-off level for the guidelines is at this activity level.

As well as the specific components of a water and sanitation programme, the Design of the Programme in Stage 3 will also address the systems for operation and management in Stage 5, the transition to start the programme in Stage 4, evaluation in Stage 6, and adjustments resulting from the evaluation in Stage 7.

Organisation of the guidelines

The guidelines are in two parts:

- simplified guidelines with flow-charts and checklists cross-referenced to:
- a supporting manual explaining how to carry out the steps in the guidelines, and providing additional information and details.

The contents of the two parts are shown in the tables at the end of the paper.

The Development of the guidelines

In June 1995, 36 governments endorsed a proposed project entitled *Sustainable Rural Water Supply and Sanitation using Integrated Water Resource Management Principles* prepared by the CSC. This has now evolved into the present research and development project, *Integrated Framework for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Groundwater Dependant Areas*.

The project started in August 1996 and is due to be completed in April 1999.

Participation in development

As far as possible, the developers of the guidelines have consulted with potential users. This has been done in two ways, workshops at international conferences, and pilot studies of draft guidelines with host government departments. The main events for this are:

- workshops at conferences
 - 22nd WEDC Conference in New Delhi, September 1996.
 - 23rd WEDC Conference in Durban, South Africa, September 1997.

- pilot study of draft guidelines
 - 1st Pilot Study with the National Co-ordination Unit in Zimbabwe, July and August 1997.
 - 2nd Pilot Study the Water Sector Reform Support Unit in Zambia, June, July and August 1998.

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Publication

The guidelines will be available after publication in April next year.



