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**SUSTAINABLE WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES
FOR ALL IN A FAST CHANGING WORLD**

**Operationalising district hand pump mechanic
associations: a case of Uganda**

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BRIEFING PAPER 1870

Although a lot of effort and initiatives have been put in place, the issue of functionality of hand pumps in Uganda is still a big challenge currently at 83%. The non-functional hand pumps are reported to be spread all over the Districts of the country. The main reasons for the low functionality of the hand pumps were identified as lack of effective hand pump mechanics in the communities to repair the hand pumps coupled with lack of spare parts. A need was therefore identified to support the user communities to ensure sustainable use and maintenance of the rural hand pumps, One of the key areas was ensuring well trained and coordinated District hand pump mechanics associations (DHPMA) to carry out preventive and minor repairs on the hand pumps. The paper looks at: the formation of DHPMAs, efforts taken to operationalise them in the Districts, challenges and lessons learnt.

Introduction

Hand Pump Mechanics (HPMs) have played an important role in contributing to the improvement of functionality of water supply sources through repair works. In Uganda, the HPMs were facilitated to form district based Hand Pump Mechanic Associations (HPMAs), to provide them with; legal recognition, promote networking, improve skills and linkages with private sector water operators and Local Governments (LGs). The main objective of establishing HPMAs was to create a mechanism through which the Community Based Maintenance System (CBMS) could be technically supported.

The operationalization means that HPMAs are fully functional and are being engaged by LGS and other development partners. Engagement of HPMAs in Operation & Maintenance (O&M) activities by LGs required formal clearance or instructions on procurement processes to LGs by central Government organs.

A framework; providing guidance on how District Local Governments (DLGs) can engage HPMAs to carry out O&M activities of rural water supply facilities; was thus formulated by the Ministry of Water and Environment and approved by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) on 9th December 2013.

Need for a framework

HPMs had failed to access the sector conditional grant for the repair of rural water sources. The existing LG procurement guidelines do not have any provision for their engagement in a monopoly way. Some HPMs tried to aggregate themselves into companies limited by shares. However, their limited sources of capital could not enable them compete with other stronger companies. Authority and clearance from Central Government (CG), particularly from Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) was required to avoid legal issues associated with procurement of service providers. Aggregating HPMs into associations and formulating a legal framework provided them with opportunities to cooperate with LGs and access the O&M funds.

The framework provided directions and answers to some key questions of; how to engage the HPMAs using the District Conditional Grant, how to outsource major repairs to HPMAs and how government can support HPMAs, empower local HPMs in an accountable manner, alongside other actors in the water and

sanitation sector, and in cooperation with LG. It addressed challenges that are not covered within the existing legal framework of the Ministry. It specifically:

- Enabled and facilitate HPMA to be much more self-sustaining as they participate in O&M activities
- Ensured that HPMA provide more and better services to local communities contributing to the national goals for water supplies.
- Provided a legal basis upon which the LGs (both district and Sub-county) can engage HPMA in O&M activities of rural water supply facilities.
- Enabled the LGs effectively utilize specific community O&M skills, participatory methodologies and technical knowledge of locally based HPMA in order to move functionality from 80s % to 90s %.

Hand Pump Mechanic Association (HPMA)

All the 111 Districts of Uganda currently have HPMA formed. The HPMA is an aggregation of trained HPMA from different Sub-counties; the number of members affiliated to each HPMA depends on the Sub Counties in that particular District; governed by a constitution. A HPMA registered with the HPMA must subscribe to its constitutional provisions and regulations. The executive members of the HPMA have authority to administrate over HPMA and engage them to carry out O&M activities on behalf of the HPMA.

It is required that a member of a HPMA be a practical and experienced technician/artisan with training in repairing point water sources/piped water scheme and should be recognized formally (by letter of recommendation) by the Sub-county authority.

The HPMA legally register with the DLG as a Community Based Organization (CBO and its administrative structure follows that of any other normal association or CBO manned by executive members elected by its entire members. A HPMA is not a government institution or embedded in a government administrative structure and therefore its members are not employees of government.

Memorandum of understanding

Under the framework, HPMA are required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with LGs. The MoU is the legal document binding the DLG and HPMA and stipulates roles, obligations and responsibilities of each of the parties. It is recommended that the MoU for cooperation and engagement is effective for a period of one Financial Year (FY) and can be renewed every year depending on the recommendation of an evaluation report on the successes registered in the improvement of functionality value.

Activities requiring engagement of HPMA

HPMA are engaged in:

- Monitoring and collecting data on the status of the Water Supply Facilities (WSFs). This includes, visiting a facility and recording whether it is working or not working and transmitting the results to the District Water Office (DWO), assessing the repair needs, recording the serial number, coordinates and status of water and sanitation committees (WSCs).
- Major repairs of water sources that are considered beyond community capacity and require replacement of expensive parts

Modality for repair contract

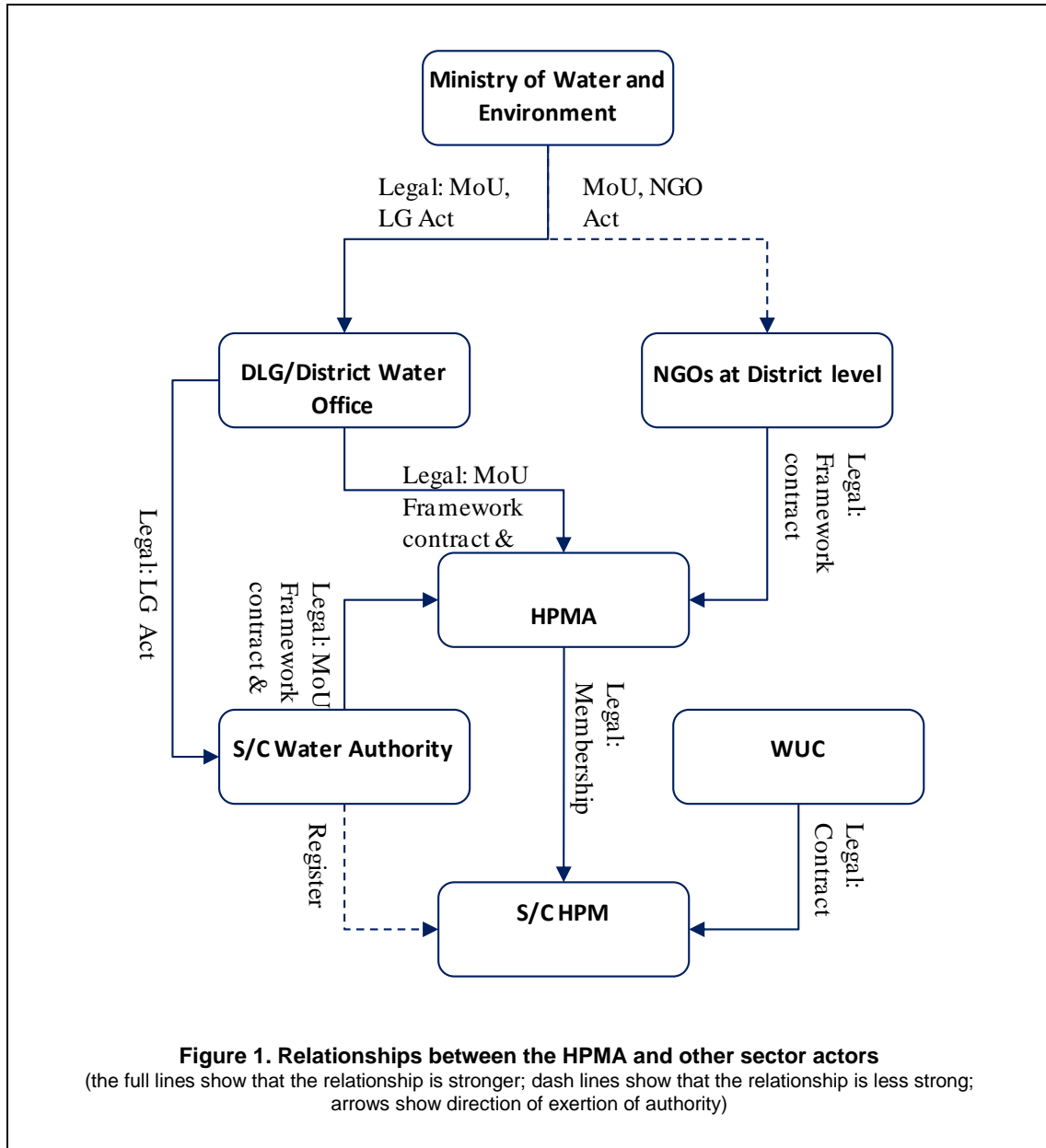
The WSCs through the caretaker reports break down of the water facility to the HPMA or Sub County (S/C). The S/C or the HPMA conducts an assessment of the fault and classifies the type of repair required. In case the repair is classified as minor, the HPMA informs the WSC and S/C of the fault including the costs involved. In case of major repair, the HPMA shares the assessment report with the DWO who then formally enters into a contract with the HPMA to repair the facility.

Payments for major repairs by HPMA

Payments for works and services provided by HPMA are made using funds from either the community capital cost contribution; this is about 1% of the total capital cost of the source paid by the community to confirm their commitment and ownership before a source is implemented; or the O&M budgets in the

District Water and Sanitation Conditional Grant (DWSCG). It is either the responsibility of the HPMA to obtain the spare-parts or they are supplied by the DLG depending on the conditions and terms of the MoU. However, it is recommended that for sustainability, it is advisable that the HPMA take responsibility of acquiring the spare-parts.

Relationships with HPMA



How HPMA are engaged

Initial preparation for cooperation with the HPMA must be planned and budgeted, especially when District Water and Sanitation Conditional Grants (DWSCG); the funding to the district local governments to implement the decentralised water and sanitation activities; are to be utilized. Estimates are made for the number of water sources requiring major repairs, those which require monitoring for functionality information and those to be worked on under the HPMA/DLG cooperative arrangement. A MoU is then signed and attached to the annual work plan as evidence that the DLG plans to cooperate with the HPMA in that FY.

Once the work plan that incorporates water facilities repair/maintenance and monitoring activities has been approved, Terms of Reference (ToR) should be drawn by the DLG. The ToR should:

- Define the scope works to be done and services to be provided by the HPMA/HPMs.
- Stipulate the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the DLG and the HPMA in the O&M activities to be undertaken.
- Define the roles of the beneficiary communities and the institutions that will be involved in the cooperation should be stipulated.

A framework contract is then signed between the DLG and the HPMA and should contain:

- Special conditions of contract, ToR, MoU and all the necessary documents needed to make the contract effective and valid.
- The time frame for the contract
- payment schedule

At the district level the DWO draws up the supervision or contract management plan that form part of the quality assurance strategy. Technical back-up is provided by the Ministry/ Technical Support Units (TSU) to ensure that value for money is realized out of the works and services provided by the HPMA.

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan is also drawn indicating the HPMA's activities and time schedule. The results of the M&E help to identify the lessons learned and inform decision on what needs to be amended, removed or added in the cooperation arrangement.

HPMAs supporting arrangement

An O&M section exists at national level in the Rural Water and Sanitation Department (RWSSD) to support functionality of rural water facilities; this is assisted by the Functionality Thematic Team (FTT) which is a collection of all sector stakeholders. HPMAs are supported by TSUs and NGOs at regional level.

The district Water Officer is their focal point at District level. In Uganda, there is no structure at the Sub-county level that supports O&M activities of point water supply sources in rural area. The support provided by the Sub-county is currently limited to identification and recommending a HPM for training.

Challenges

The main challenge to operationalising of the HPMAs is basically limited funding toward O&M and the lack of strong O&M structures at Sub County level.

Lessons learnt

In the districts that have started engaging the HPMAs, it is reported that there has been reduced cost of major repair and timely response to hand pumps breakdown; this is expected to be quantified during the valuation exercise at the end of financial year 2013/14. The initiative has awakened the sector to think seriously on the issue of establishing O&M structures at the Sub County level and improve on the funding levels for O&M.

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