

## Training for Real Project ~Management briefing note

A recent study of SWAp roles in sector reform and decentralisation in Africa<sup>1</sup> concluded in its recommendations that development partners should: *formulate a comprehensive capacity development strategy that responds to the question 'capacity for what and for whom?' and which avoids the current patchwork of initiatives driven by different agendas and funders. Capacity development strategies need to link up with or feed into emerging sector reform strategies.*

The same is true of the current water and sanitation sector in Uganda.

This briefing note presents the headlines of the *training for real project* commissioned under the auspices of the water and sanitation sector SWAp partner Programme Management Committee (PMC). The project is facilitated by WEDC, UK.

The Training for Real (TFR) project is being carried out in a series of stages to en-sure that it relates to current demands and priorities in the Ugandan Water and Sanitation Sector. The stages are: Phase 0: Inception (late 2003), Phase 1: Start up (2004), Phase 2: Institutionalisation (late 2004). The 3 month inception phase is now complete and the report is to be submitted to the PMC in December 2003. From the perspective of managing the sector the following inception phase findings are important.

### *Value for money*

An estimated 17% of the budget for FY '03/'04 is earmarked for capacity building (more than the amount on water for production and water resources information combined) yet goals for this sub-sector have not been set. The value of any investment in professional development is currently difficult to quantify and therefore justify. Information does not feedback to inform future resource allocation or operational frameworks. Just as with investments in physical infrastructure, money spent on staff training should be planned, designed, implemented and evaluated. This should be standard practice and not subject to one-off initiatives.

### *Co-ordination and direction required*

There is a clear lack of planning and strategic direction in capacity building and HRD, with predominance of "fire-fighting" and supply led, short-term interventions. It takes over 10 years to develop some sector professionals and, in a changing institutional environment, continued availability of qualified, experienced staff is likely to be more of a barrier to success than financial or other material constraints. Educational organisations will not be able to provide support to the sector unless there is a clear direction.

### *The position of training officer and similar cadre*

In many public sectors, including water and sanitation, training or capacity building has often been seen as something of an administrative function. Training officers mainly come from other non-training related disciplines for example engineering or administration. Involvement in training and capacity building is generally not seen as a valid profession in its own right. The people who hold managerial positions in this field rarely have any function-specific formal education or training. This means that the skills needed to address the complex demands of ensuring a consistently competent workforce or group of stakeholders are not given adequate recognition as a managerial function or position in the institutional hierarchy. In the case of the water and sanitation sector this situation fails to make sound business sense given the sheer amount of money that is being poured in to capacity building and training.

The revised TFR proposal is based on reinforcing the strategic component and combining a longer-term view with some immediate visible outputs and improvements to the manner that HRD is approached in the sector. See the inception report and the technical and financial proposal for full details.

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<sup>1</sup> Land and Hauck., (2003) '*Building coherence between sector reforms and decentralisation: do SWAps provide the missing link?*'  
ECDPM  
WEDC Training for Real Dec 2003