Making Water
Work for Village

unity-Managed Water Service P

A Handbook for Municipalities

MAKING WATER WORK
FOR VILLAGES

Community-Managed
Water Service Provision

Report to the Water Research Commission

by

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Getting started

Water provision to all households in rural and urban areas has been one of the main developmental strategies of the democratic government since 1994. It continues to be a key item on the government's agenda as both a basic human need as well as a route out of extreme poverty. Increased water provision often reduces the burden of disease, increases community health, improves environmental conditions and creates opportunities for more effective local economic development. Together these factors contribute to a more dignified and sustainable quality of life for all South Africans.

The important and increasingly urgent task of quality water provision is now the mandate of municipalities. In rural communities where the villages in a single local authority are often spread out over a large geographic area, local governments face the significant challenge of carrying out this mandate efficiently and effectively.

This workbook is designed to assist municipalities to explore ways of managing these challenges. The one option is through developing community level systems that will operate and maintain water schemes. The facets of community-managed schemes are explored in this guide, which is divided into two sections:

Part 1 - Introducing community-managed water schemes

Part 2 - How to establish and support community-managed water schemes

Introducing community-managed water schemes examines the contribution that community-based water service providers can make to improve the functioning of water service provision. It goes on to highlight the elements necessary for successful community-managed water service operations and maintenance (O&M). These elements lead into a discussion on the relationship between the Water Service Authority (municipality) and the Water Service Provider (in this case, the community-based organisation) and the advantages that this system has for municipalities and for communities. Throughout this section **Reports from the Community** highlight a range of experiences of communities and municipalities in implementing such schemes.

How to establish and support community-managed water schemes is the second section and focuses on the practicalities of establishing community-based operations and maintenance of water provision in villages. Here the relationship between the Water Service Authority and the Water Service Provider is examined more closely and the process for setting up and maintaining this relationship is discussed. The handbook provides the user with practical steps to ensure sustainable community management of schemes.

We hope that this practical guide will assist those who intend to establish community-managed operations and maintenance systems. The handbook highlights the value of CBO partnerships in increasing efficiency and effectiveness and in persuading municipalities of the potential benefits for both municipalities and the villages they serve.

Part 1

Introducing community-managed water schemes

While access to water has increased dramatically since 1994, there are challenges, both old and new, that result in many households and villages not sharing fully in these benefits. Installing water provision schemes is considered by some a primarily technical service and a once-off event. However, many municipalities are realising that successful water provision must be based on a strongly people-centred development process.

People from rural villages are the key factor in maintaining quality service of water provision. To develop a broader picture of the implications of community-managed schemes, this section provides municipalities and water service providers with information on:

A.   Community-based water provision: combining quality service and community empowerment

B.   Legal frameworks guiding municipalities on the establishment of community-managed water provision

C.   The challenges to the establishment of community-based O&M of water provison

D.   The benefits of community management: Working towards sustainability

Local and international experience has shown that community management of O&M systems at the lowest appropriate level for rural water supply schemes increases the success and sustainability of these schemes. This experience shows that a number of key elements contribute to successful community management of O&M.

A. Community-based water provision: combining quality service and community empowerment

Elected representatives to local municipalities are very likely to know the villages and communities under their authority. Many local councillors will have spent their childhood in these outlying rural settlements. The harsh economic conditions of these villages are familiar to councillors, as is the strength of communities to survive such conditions. This familiarity means that councillors are ideally placed to develop delivery options best suited to these communities.

Community Management

This process places community members at the centre of the O&M of water service provision schemes in rural villages. A number of steps are required to establish a community management system. Once this is completed, the day-to-day management of water provision is ongoing: making sure water is available to community members and dealing with problems as they arise. The success of community management is measured in competent technical water provision services as well as social and economic factors, such as the extent to which communities continue to support the scheme and participate in related decision-making. Often this community management takes place through Village Water Committees (VWCs).

There are five key elements that should characterise successful community management:

1. Communities are unique and diverse

O&M community management of water schemes should be sensitive to all stakeholders in the village. Those operating the scheme should be constantly aware that "communities are groups of men, women and children of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, with often common, but sometimes also conflicting interests and ideas". It is vital that the voices of different groups in the community are heard so that different interests influence the way WSAs implement and manage the scheme. This will allow community members to find joint solutions to effective and efficient O&M. It is often difficult for 'outsiders' to know the shared history of residents and grasp the complexities of village relations. Basing management at the lowest appropriate level (often the village level) will ensure that such complexities, which may hinder effective water provision, are recognised and taken into account in the operation and maintenance of the schemes.

What is a community?

So often the term 'the community' is often used to describe a group of beneficiaries: a settlement of people that live in the same geographic or administrative area. 'Community' often implies that the people living in the same area are a 'unit' and share the same interests and problems; that they are a homogeneous group with similar socio-economic backgrounds and living conditions. And, importantly, that they will all be equally and unanimously committed to the new developments in their village.

This image is only part of a broader picture. Within a community there are sub-groups and individuals with unique concerns and priorities, and differing interests and ideas of what will benefit their village. It is important that the common factors that bind a community together are understood. Even more important is that municipalities are aware of how the differences between residents may be incorporated into the project to ensure that all voices are heard. It will also assist planners to know the points of conflict in a community so that proactive measures may be taken to manage them. This is particularly true when introducing a new way of accessing a precious resource such as water.

2. Involve all stakeholders

While not every member will be directly involved in O&M, the community management approach encourages each person to take an active interest and participate at various levels in the setting up and running of the rural water scheme.

Giving stakeholders a voice at the beginning of the project and then regularly through follow-up and feedback sessions (similar to ward committee interactions) will promote a continued and active interest in the scheme. This in turn increases the chances of long-term project success because everyone will feel that they are contributing to making the scheme successful by ensuring that it continues to provide them with the type of service they need.

Consultation

This concept is used to mean any interaction between communities and people who are wanting to impact in some way on a community. Often this process is simply understood as a compulsory meeting to inform a community about some change that will be taking place. This could include building a factory, school or water scheme. Consultation is too often viewed as one or two meetings that decision-makers need to get out of the way before going ahead with their plans.

Effective consultation, on the other hand, is a dynamic, ongoing process. It is motivated by the belief that people know their own communities better than anyone else and that they are in the best position to determine what is in their community's best interest. Consultation processes offer opportunities to discuss and debate the best solutions for communities and so ensure their ongoing value for the village. Together decision-makers and community members can make well-informed decisions and thus implement initiatives that are supported, realistic and worthwhile for community members. Consultation increases both acceptability and accountability.

Explaining the process of consultation and assuring community members that the best possible solutions for the whole community will be found jointly is fundamental to ensuring success. Thus community members will recognise that choices and priorities may be difficult but are necessary for a sustainable water scheme.

3. Acceptability

Community level structures that are established to manage the O&M of the water scheme must meet with the approval of the community. Communities are entrusting their water provision to this group and so need to feel secure that this management group is acting in their best interests in all situations.

Acceptability can be ensured through suitable selection procedures that are approved by the community members. They will come from and will be based in the village they are serving and as a result people will more likely be able to assess whether or not they are managing their scheme effectively.

By making sure that the Village Water Committee is acceptable to community members, ongoing commitment to the O&M of the scheme is increased, which in turn is likely to increase the potential for responsible users.

4. Accountability

Basing O&M in the village makes it easier to ensure that Village Water Committees are accountable to the community. Systems and procedures, such as regular reporting and feedback, need to be developed to ensure that community members are properly informed of what the VWC is doing. Procedures for holding the VWC to account when people feel dissatisfied are also important. Ways of doing this might include a requirement in the CBO's constitution concerning regular meetings, and report-back to the community. The WSA must ensure that the water service provider (WSP) meets these requirements.

Water Service Authorities

A WSA is a municipality (metropolitan, local or district) and cannot be any other type of institution. While municipalities have many other service obligations, as WSAs they are responsible for ensuring access to water supply and sanitation services.

WSAs are authorised by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government under the Municipal Structures Amendment Act. The WSAs have a choice. They may carry out the functions of water services provision itself or they may enter into a contract with another water services provider.

Water Services Providers

A WSP physically provides the water supply services to consumers in terms of the contract with the WSA. This task can be performed by the municipality itself, or by another body, such as a non-governmental organisation or a ommunity-based organisation (CBO). No person or group may operate as a WSP without the approval of the municipality.

By keeping the WSP accountable for providing a good service, the community members are exerting their basic rights to water and a safe living environment. Through this empowering process they are putting democratic values into practice in their daily lives. This in turn may reap positive rewards for development of the village in general as people will develop an evidence-based belief in their role of active citizens.

The VWC is accountable to both WSA and the village in the way it manages vandalism, unauthorised connections, application of subsidies, how water is used and issues such as pollution control. Again, it is the proximity of the VWC to the residents that finds it well-placed to engage with these social and administrative aspects of water service provision.

Reports from the Community

Makopung Village
Transparency and fairness ensure success

The village of Makopung in Limpopo Province has a population of about 1 000 people in 143 households. The Makopung Water Committee was elected and charged with the task of improving the water situation in the village.

The project consists of a solar panel system, with a diesel unit for backup. The solar system has been adapted to allow problems to be easily identified by the operator. The single borehole driven by a solar system project has been running successfully since 1996. In November 2000 the project received the Mvula Trust Incentive Bonus for successful management of the scheme and full recovery of the O&M costs.

When asked why their project was so successful, community members, amongst others, said that "**Transparency and fairness** are important. During construction everyone earned R15 a day, including the committee. They changed labourers every 14 days so that all could have a chance to earn something. **Regular reports** must be given to the people, who have access to the books. **Budgeting** must be done very carefully so as to spend only what one has. The Induna's role is taken very seriously. The committee works with him all the time."

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5. Involvement of women
As water and sanitation are traditionally women's responsibilities, it is important to ensure that women's voices are heard.

Gender inequality in communities
The way our society is structured is man-centred: more value is placed on what men say, men are therefore in more leadership positions and as a result men decide on what is important for communities.

In contradiction to this is the fact that when women run projects they tend to be more accountable and inclusive; projects are more likely meet their objectives and more people in general benefit. As with breaking down the patterns of separation and inequality that characterise apartheid structures, breaking down this inequality between men and women is the main path to creating a just and fair society and making sure that all stakeholder contributions are valued equally.

Community management approaches need to be continuously aware of the potential of programmes to break the patterns of gender inequality. They should actively strive to include both men and women in decision-making and O&M of a project. Gender sensitivity training for both local councillors and VWC is vital to ensuring that women are comfortable making inputs and taking key decisions. It is only with their unique insights that a comprehensive and balanced perspective of needs and solutions for water provision will be achieved.

Nhlungwane Village
Continuous payment leads to Cost-recovery

The water project in the village of Nhlungwane, Southern KwaZulu-Natal, has been operating since November 1997. In early 2002 it won the 2002 Water Institute of South Africa SWSS Excellence in Rural Water Supply Award.

Just over four years after commissioning, it is one of two projects in the province known to have **collected more O&M services fees than they have costs**. In reflecting on the reasons for their success, committee and community members ascribed it to **continued payment** by the community, and **opportunities to express concerns** through regular community meetings. The predominantly women-managed committee expressed a strong sense of ownership of, and responsibility for, the scheme. Key to their involvement has been participation in the planning and construction of the scheme, as well as in operating it.

Towards achieving community management

The above elements are all closely linked and contribute to a sense of responsibility and ownership amongst community members towards their scheme. These elements and the sense of pride they create work together to achieve good quality, sustainable, cost-efficient and effective community-managed schemes. The next section highlights the benefits of community management for both communities and municipalities.

These elements may be seen as the foundation for establishing and maintaining effective rural water provision schemes. Assisting municipalities to implement community-based schemes are several pieces of legislation. These are explored in the next section.

B. Legal frameworks guiding municipalities on the establishment of community-managed water provision

Water and sanitation provision is now the responsibility of local government. There is a legislative framework guiding municipalities in developing effective water provision schemes for their communities, which will be examined briefly in this section. These laws and policies provide municipalities with a range of implementation arrangements for managing village-level operations and the maintenance of rural water schemes. This process is at the heart of developmental local government.

There are a number of policies and laws that provide a guide for municipalities in carrying out their water provision mandate. They include:

- The Water Services Act (No. 108 of 1997)
- The Local Government Municipal Structures Amendment Act (No. 33 of 2000)
- The Municipal Structures Act (No 32 of 2000)
- The Division of Revenue Act (DORA)

In this section each of these will be examined as they relate to setting up and managing rural water schemes.

Following the demarcation of municipal boundaries in December 2000, many districts and towns became responsible for remote rural areas previously outside their boundaries. In many cases the local authority did not always have sufficient expertise, capacity, and resources to provide effective and efficient services to these areas. In many cases this led to uneven service delivery, and in some cases entire rural areas remained unserviced. In such cases, WSAs need to consider their options for maximising the extent and quality of service provision.
provision.

1. The Water Services Act

The Water Services Act provides for the establishment of Water Services Authorities (WSAs) and gives priority to the provision of basic services to all. In terms of this Act, municipalities in their capacity as WSAs must ensure access to efficient, affordable, economical and sustainable water services for all people under their jurisdiction. They should also make relevant by-laws and develop local water services development plans. WSAs have the task of ensuring water provision to households.

In providing household water, WSAs (municipalities) are faced with a choice. They may either perform the function of Water Service Provision themselves, or they may contract another organisation to fulfil the tasks of water provision. The Water Service Provider (WSP) is responsible for the provision of water supply and sanitation services. In cases where the WSA decides to contract another organisation to fulfil the WSP function, this is called a Municipal Service Partnership (MSP).

2. **Municipal Structures Amendment Act**

This Act makes provision for Water Services Authority functions to be carried out by Category C Municipalities (District). However, there is an exception to this where a Category B Municipality (Local) may be authorised to perform the WSA function by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government as advised by the Minister of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). Powers and functions that authorise both district and local municipalities to be responsible for water services were promulgated in January 2003.

3. **Municipal Systems Act**

The WSA can contract any of a number of institutions or organisations to fulfil the WSP function. If the WSA is a district municipality it could contract the local municipality to perform water service provision; however, it may also appoint a community-based organisation, water board, or a company.

A wide range of options is available to local governments with regard to establishing community-based O&M systems in terms of the division between Water Services Authorities and Water Services Providers. Here the roles of district municipalities and local municipalities, and the specific circumstances and conditions in a given area, should guide decisions that ultimately best serve the village.

Options range from establishing community-based WSPs, to a local contractor or SMME being paid by an external WSP to carry out some operational tasks of the supply system. In general, water provision functions that a community-based WSP can carry out include:

- daily operations of the scheme and minor repairs
- customer relations
- communication with the community
- revenue collection (where services exceed the Free Basic Water allowance)
- maintenance
- basic financial management and reporting.

However, the specific functions to be fulfilled by the WSP will be determined by the contract between the WSA and WSP. The extent to which a CBO will be able to carry out all the above functions will depend upon:

- The technology of the scheme
- The size of the scheme and community
- The capacity and skills within the community-based WSP.

Municipalities must assess these factors carefully to determine the skills gaps that may need to be addressed in establishing MSPs with CBOs.

The Alfred Nzo District Municipality
Dividing the responsibilities for maintaining water schemes

The community-based WSPs in the Alfred Nzo Municipality are expected to appoint, pay, and manage their own personnel. Furthermore, they will be responsible for operation and maintenance of the water infrastructure. This includes carrying out minor repairs to the schemes, financial management and revenue collection, customer relations, and conflict resolution.

In addition, the Support Services Agent will maintain an active support role to ensure that contracts and agreements with these external contractors are established and functioning. For instance, while minor repairs are expected to be carried out by the Water Services Provider, major repairs will be contracted to external engineering services.

The WSP will invoice the Support Services Agent for costs incurred on a monthly basis. The Support Services Agent will then ensure that the money is paid from the District Municipality into the community (WSP) bank accounts. Thus WSPs are fully responsible for the money in their bank accounts, for collecting fees from the users, and for paying staff members.

4. **The Division of Revenue Act (DORA)**

This Act, which is enacted each year, determines the division of nationally raised revenue from National Government to Provincial and Local Government. This equitable share is an unconditional grant to local government for providing basic services to the poor. The amount of equitable share a municipality receives is based on the number of poor households within a particular municipality. Since water provision competes for a share of this grant with other basic services, it is in the municipality's interest to make water provision as cost-effective as possible. DORA also makes provision for other transfers from national departments to local government to facilitate the development of water services.

Again, an option for achieving low costs is to contract the management of operations and maintenance of water schemes to community-based organisations. In small, stand-alone rural schemes that are often some distance from the municipality's office, it makes financial and logistical sense to delegate the day-to-day running to community members.

Tarkastad, Eastern Cape
Small financial changes make a huge difference to the poor

In Tsolwane Local Municipality, in and around Tarkastad, free basic water provision for poor families in the two towns (Tarkastad and Hofmeyer) has been implemented since August 2001. Here the equitable share is only used to pay for free basic water for poor households (where no-one in the family is employed). The service charges for the rest of the inhabitants of the towns have been increased by 10%, which adequately covers free basic water to all. The final household bill for paying residents has not increased much. Poor households have their services subsidised by 95% so that they only pay R3.50 for all services including water, sanitation and refuse removal. Tsolwane Local Municipality has gone further than most municipalities, and their policy represents a major achievement. However, they have not managed to extend these benefits to any people in the rural areas under their jurisdiction.

The Impact of Free Basic Water: *Reducing and recovering O&M costs*

In July 2001, National Government initiated its Free Basic Water policy, which means that every household now has a right to receive some free water each month. The suggested amount is 6 kiloliters per household per month; however, each municipality may decide on the amount. In reality, especially in rural schemes where communal standpipes are used, households will rarely go above this consumption level.

The primary impact of this policy is that once free basic water is provided, users will no longer have to pay any tariffs. As a result many rural water schemes will be fully dependent on subsidies for their continued sustainability. These subsidies will have to be carried by local government. Therefore, it is in local government's best interest to keep the costs of water provision and O&M as low as possible. Here a system of community-based O&M offers the most cost-effective option.

Establishing pro-active village involvement in the provision of water services gives residents information on choices on available service levels. Here, some people are likely to opt for higher levels of service, such as yard connections. This leads to higher water use for which residents will then be charged. This allows for some cost recovery, as well as cross-subsidisation within the scheme.

In addition, when residents are no longer required to pay tariffs (because of free basic water), it will be more challenging to keep them involved in the sustainability of the scheme. Other incentives, such as continued good quality service using community-based groups for O&M is the best way to ensure continued community interest.

In exploring options for establishing community-based WSP, there are a number of factors that indicate that community-managed projects are beneficial to local or district councils and to community members themselves. The next section considers the factors that must be in place for successful CBO involvement in O&M of community-managed water provision.

C. The challenges to the establishment of community-based O&M of water provision

In exploring options for establishing community-based WSPs, there are a number of factors that indicate that community-managed projects are logistically, financially, socially and politically beneficial to local or district councils and to community members themselves. This section highlights some of the challenges that may face CBOs in the establishment and O&M of community-managed water services.

1. Acceptability and accountability of CBOs

Municipalities need to assess whether a particular CBO is acceptable or not to the community. While some of this information may be found in CBO accounting and administrative records, these may not always be available due to general lack of experience at community level. Municipalities should then examine the CBO's affairs further by conducting interviews with previous project beneficiaries or previous employers.

CBOs are highly motivated partners and often take on responsibilities more eagerly than local municipal officials who have to attend to many other tasks. Municipalities need to incorporate institutional capacity-building as part of their MSP and more broadly as local economic development (LED).

While the binding contract between the two partners is the primary legal framework for holding each other to account, budget control and justification of spending, regular progress meetings, and other monitoring tools also ensure CBO accountability to the WSA.

2. Capacity of CBOs

People have rich and in-depth knowledge of their own villages and the wider community in which they live. Community members are often the most aware of internal village relationships and can make informed decisions and plans for setting up and running water schemes. Community organisations are in a good position to decide where to locate tap points most conveniently and how to ensure cost-recovery and user payment (where applicable).

Community members might need some training in technical or bookkeeping skills, community liaison and conflict resolution. This capacity-building complements and strengthens what residents already know and do. This contribution to community empowerment significantly outweighs any training costs. It is in the best interest of the municipality that VWC members receive appropriate training, as this training will contribute to ensuring that WSPs are capable of fulfilling their tasks.

Reports from the Community

Mankotsana Village
Innovative problem-solving

In 1995, Mankotsana Village, in the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo Province established a water project to expand reticulation and ensure more reliable water provision. There are approximately 8 000 people in the town, and the project services a total of 791 households. The following is part of a report on the Operation and Maintenance of the project, carried out by the Village Water Committee.

Researchers visiting Mankotsana found that the Village Water Committee was highly capable of operating and maintaining the scheme, and even carried out major repairs (or ensured that they were carried out) without having to consult the municipality.

"There have been three breakdowns in the last year. The first one occurred when the engine was struck by lightning. The committee reported this to the electrician who had installed the engine, and he repaired it for R4 000. The second breakdown was caused by the mainline pipe bursting. They had to hire a car to go to Pietersburg to buy the needed parts. The car hire cost R400 and the parts R3 482. The operator repaired the pipes himself. If there is a lot of digging and backfilling to be done the committee employs casual labour at R30 a day. The third breakdown also had to do with burst pipes, but as they had bought spares the previous time they could do the repairs without a trip to town. During the breakdowns, they told us they had a second engine, which they used as a backup."

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3. Reliability of CBOs

CBOs that are motivated to serve their community and that receive sufficient training for both their technical and administrative responsibilities are likely to carry out O&M tasks innovatively and with resourcefulness. The experience of Mvula Trust shows that in projects where communities control 'village bank accounts', and have direct access to relatively large sums of money, less than one percent of money has ever been lost or stolen. Even this loss could be prevented through proper accounting systems and appropriate outside monitoring.

4. Community management: a continuing process

Establishing a community management system requires careful planning to build a solid foundation and commitment to sustain the full and continuous participation of community members. It is not a single event, it is a process that, if successful, endures in the community.

Community management is often unpredictable and so may take longer that anticipated to become fully functioning. This may be frustrating for all stakeholders. Patience with the process as community members come to grips with new concepts and information will benefit implementation and maintenance of management in the long run.

Community members that are more involved in decision-making are likely to attend to the scheme, and, if they choose services that are above the FBW minimum, be more willing to pay for services delivered. These factors directly and positively influence the success and sustainability of the scheme.

5. CBOs must be acceptable to the community

The idea underlying community management is that the CBO operates in the interests of the whole community and that this translates into high acceptability among residents. In practice, making sure that the CBO is in fact 'acceptable' to the community needs to be carefully negotiated. It is the responsibility of both the WSA and the community to decide upon the local group and their mandate to ensure that the needs of both parties will be satisfied.

6. Selecting a CBO WSP

In a quickly changing and often highly politicised climate it is very important for the WSA to work within the appropriate political structures when selecting a WSP. Careful assessment of the village will ensure that WSAs work with the appropriate ward councillor and ward committees, and the traditional leaders. As in any community management process, involvement of all stakeholders is crucial in determining which group to work with within a community.

There are two options available to Municipalities for selecting CBOs as WSPs.
- *Elections*: Communities may select candidates through community meetings and community elections.
- *Tendering*: The WSA may also opt for a situation in which different groups from the community 'tender' to become the WSP, and the WSA then selects the best candidate.

While elections may seem to be the more participatory process of the two, groups tendering are 'representatives from the community': they come from and reside in that community. The most important factor to consider in any selection process is the level of acceptability of the CBO to the residents; be they elected or selected.

The Alfred Nzo District Municipality
Setting up a Water Service Provider

The Support Services Agent (SSA) carried out surveys and assessments in the 33 villages of the Alfred Nzo Municipality to determine local conditions related to water use, payment issues and levels of commitment. Once this had been completed, the SSA started to prepare the people in the villages to develop Community Based Organisations that would function as Water Services Providers. These groups submitted their 'Expression of Interest' to the council.

All community members were equally informed of the requirements of Water Services Providers, and that all were in a position to form groups and submit Expressions of Interest. The SSA assisted in this process by helping groups with details of financial management, community relations, customer–provider relations, and conflict resolution, as well as identifying the developing needs in the community

The Expressions of Interest included:
- a statement of willingness to become the Water Services Provider
- an outline of the applicants' understanding of the issues and activities involved in being a Water Services Provider
- motivation for why they felt they would be 'the right people for the job'
- an indication of their ability to manage water services in the local community.

The best candidates were selected by a panel for each scheme, which included the Ward Councillor (representing the politicians at the local level), a representative of the District Municipality, two community members from the community under discussion, and representatives from the SSA.

This committee selected a prospective Water Services Provider, and nominated the candidates to the District Municipality, which approves the nominations.

7. Involvement of traditional authorities

Research conducted by Mvula Trust and others has shown that involving traditional leaders when establishing community management of a water (and sanitation) scheme increases chances of success and sustainability. Encouraging the support of traditional leaders will lend credibility to the programme, where gaining the traditional leader's sanction is vital.

It may not always be necessary to make official arrangements for the involvement of traditional leaders. It is important, however, to keep these leaders informed of proceedings at all times, and this may be achieved by inviting traditional leaders to participate in community meetings organised during the process.

Traditional leaders have been known to play a significant role in addressing problems and, if necessary, ensuring that solutions are found and implemented. The co-operation between the VWC and the traditional leader around sensitive village issues (such as non-payment) will often strengthen the authority of the committee. This co-operation could be made official by including it in the constitution of the VWC. It is important to address concerns of traditional leaders regarding the project and their role in it. Without their backing, project success could be undermined.

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Reports from the Community

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The Uthukela District Municipality
Working with existing local structures

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In the Uthukela District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, a system of "Ward Development Committees" is currently being established. There are formally demarcated Ward Committees which are the lowest level political structures in local government. The Ward Development Committees are based largely on these, and will have a number of functional committees such as roads, water, electricity, and health. Since each ward will have within its borders a number of *Izigodi* (units roughly based on villages), these functional ward committees will have to co-operate with structures at *Izigodi*, or village level. Many of the villages currently have a Village Water Committee. Most likely, these VWCs will have to make way for localised democratic processes. Individuals that are at present part of the VWCs may stay in place, but only if they are chosen and accepted through a democratic process.

8. Continued support to the project

Continued and sustained support is one of the most critical aspects in establishing a successful community-managed water project. At the time of commissioning a VWC may be properly functioning, well trained, and very committed yet without continued support many committees may experience a range of ongoing problems. These may be caused by changes in personnel, technical problems with the system that are not fixed, or dissatisfied users.

Continued support has to be built into the process of establishing a community-managed O&M system. Here a Support Services Agent can play an important role. The aim of the SSA is to support the community-based WSP. This agent may be an organisation or consultant contracted by either the WSA or the village WSP.

Once these factors have been considered and elements for successful community-managed projects have been put in place, the village residents will begin to experience the benefits of managing the scheme for themselves. The next section looks at the benefits of community management for operating and maintaining rural water schemes.

The next section looks at the benefits of community management for operating and maintaining rural water schemes.

D. The benefits of community management: working towards sustainability

The elements and legislative guidelines above already provide a good idea of what benefits a community-managed approach has for delivering a quality water provision scheme and maintaining it in a sustainable way. This section outlines five benefits to show the specific advantages of community management.

Benefits which show specific advantages of community management

1. Effective use of time and capacity

Villages in rural areas are often located far apart and are linked by poor quality roads. Travelling to each one takes time and resources – both human and financial. While most municipalities are responsible for supplying services to widely spread-out villages, the challenges of servicing these distant, small rural water schemes may seem daunting to municipalities with limited resources.

Rather than hiring additional personnel, community management offers a time- and capacity-efficient option. In these situations, municipalities may enter into a Municipal Service Partnership with community-based organisations such as a Village Water Committee (VWC). These VWCs then take on the responsibility of managing the day-to-day functioning of the rural water scheme. This process frees municipalities to play a more effective oversight role and provides the community with an opportunity to build its own capacity to manage its affairs.

2. Efficiency

This term refers to the speed of delivery and quality of the services. As such, village-level responsibility for O&M will considerably increase the efficiency of water provision. The closeness of the VWC to problems that may arise and the speed with which a problem or complaint can be dealt with is likely to be greater than waiting for a distant local authority to rectify the issue. It is usually easier for someone who is in the village all the time to deal immediately with a problem. VWCs are trained to deal with a large range of O&M problems efficiently. This is likely to prevent large-scale crises from developing as both technical and financial problems can be managed quickly and immediately.

3. Saving costs

Given the limited financial resources of municipalities combined with high demands to deliver a range of basic services, community management offers a way of establishing a more cost-effective system for water scheme O&M. Not only can community management save costs through higher efficiency and lower timeframes; it is also cost-effective because it is often based on local volunteering or part-time work. This saves the costs of full salaries, as well as time and travel costs for municipal technicians or contractors who would have to travel to the communities.

4. Enhancing local economic development (LED)

Local economic development is a process of identifying and using local resources for creating sustainable economic and social development in local and regional areas to assist in job creation, developing local markets, establishing small medium and micro enterprises, addressing poverty in local areas and empowering the community.

Community management offers a way of encouraging community ownership and through the process of establishing a successful project or effective system, community members strengthen their capacity to make things happen. Once the community members themselves have established a successful project, this may lead to new initiatives and plans being undertaken by the community members. In addition, since the community members have been directly involved in deciding on what services to put in place and how to operate them, these services are more likely to be designed to support other productive tasks.

5. Sustainability

Sustainability refers to a range of ideas and processes that aim to implement development plans in ways that benefit communities in the short-, medium- and long-term while simultaneously ensuring that the environment and other resources are not depleted in development plans.

As communities will have their own best interests at heart in any planning and development schemes, they will ensure that environmental and human sustainability is promoted.

The unique circumstance of each village needs to be assessed carefully to help municipalities make appropriate arrangements for household water provision. It is intended that the information provided thus far in the guide will persuade municipalities to consider the positive option that community management offers.

Part 2 of this workbook focuses on the implications for WSAs in setting up and supporting WSPs. Here the factors that lead to successful and sustainable water schemes will be explored from a practical perspective.

✏️ *Notes:*

Part 2

How to establish and support community-managed water schemes

This part of the manual provides a step-by-step guide to establishing systems in ways that enhance the capacity of the municipality to deliver more effective and efficient services.

Part 1 provided councillors and officials with information on the potential value of placing day-to-day management of water provision in the hands of community-based organisations. This second part of the book provides municipalities with a practical guide for setting up lower level (usually village level) management systems for the operation and maintenance of rural water schemes. These practical steps will also suggest how the municipalities can boost the technical and administrative capacity of community-based organisations and place the power for managing water in the community's hands.

A successful project

Before looking at the detail of these steps it is useful to keep in mind the overall picture of the intended outcome of a community-managed rural water scheme. A project will be successful when:
- It is delivering an appropriate and equitable level of service in terms of water of good quality, sufficient quantity, at affordable prices over a prolonged period of time.
- It is being used by all the village residents.
- The system functions well, technically and administratively.
- It does not have a negative effect on the environment.

This implies that:
- Users are satisfied.
- Operations and Maintenance (O&M) projects are delivering services within their budgets.
- That the management of the scheme is institutionalised through a partnership between a WSA and a WSP.
- There is useful external support (financial, technical and ongoing training support) when needed.

The process for establishing community-managed water schemes

The process for establishing community-level water service providers is described in the steps on the next page. These steps are explained in detail in this next section.

Outline of each step

Each of the 15 steps that follow contain the following information:

Objective: This is the aim of the step for each municipality as they proceed with developing a community-managed O&M.

Outcome: This is the desired situation once the municipality has implemented the step

Taking the steps: This offers information on the way to proceed and components that must be taken into account in practice

In your municipality: This is a list of 'what to do' points in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Notes: Space for readers to make comments for their own use.

Preparing the ground

Project preparation

Step 1: Deciding which villages to target first for community-based O&M

Step 2: Assessing village willingness and commitment

Step 3: Budgeting for community-managed O&M: money, time and effort

Step 4: Assessing existing technical and management systems

Step 5: Establishing a community-based Water Service Provider

Planting the crop

Implementing the process

Step 6: Agreeing to a scope of work for the VWCs

Step 7: Employing staff to conduct O&M

Step 8: Determining technical and managerial training needs

Step 9: Developing a good working relationship between WSAs and WSPs

Step 10: Financial management and planning

Step 11: Building relationships between village resident and the WSP

Planting a new crop

Deciding on future plans

Step 14: Evaluating the project

Step 15: Developing projects in more villages

Watering the crop

Maintaining the project

Step 12: Continued support to build strong O&M in villages

Step 13: Monitoring progress

Preparing the ground: Project preparation

A lot of preparation work takes place before a community-based organisation is established and before the O&M of the water scheme can be performed by a competent local organisation. Just as when a farmer wants to plant a crop, a number of factors must be in place to ensure a successful harvest.

The farmer needs to decide which crop is appropriate for the climate of the area, and s/he studies the natural environment and takes advice from experts who know the area.

In the same way, in villages, municipalities that plan on establishing community-managed O&M schemes need to research whether the village is ready for such 'planting'. Just as mielies will not grow in a rain forest, or bananas in the desert, each village has its own 'climate' that the municipality has to be aware of so that the correct O&M system for the local water scheme is established.

Once the correct crop is determined, the soil needs to be prepared carefully before the seeds are planted: here a careful combination of rain, tilling and fertiliser make the soil fertile.

In the same way, municipalities need to make sure that the ground is properly prepared in the targeted villages. The appropriate combination of consultation, consensus building and training must be in place for a CBO to be established to manage the O&M. To do this, WSAs must have the correct equipment: sufficient time and financial resources, and facilitators who use participatory methods when working with the community.

Only once the soil is well prepared can the crop be planted.

Deciding which villages to target first for community-based O&M

Objective

To assess which villages will be targeted for local level water service provision through community-managed O&M systems.

Outcome

The municipality has identified the villages where a community-managed O&M system will be established.

Taking the steps

1. Reflecting on the changing relationship between local government, citizens and water provision

Before looking at the suitability of villages it is useful to reflect briefly on changes that local government has undergone, particularly since 2000 elections, and how this impacts on the delivery of basic services.

The increasingly prominent role that local government plays in delivering basic human rights and basic services, such as water, electricity and housing is an outcome of the changing nature of governance in South Africa. This ongoing process of transformation continues to reshape municipalities from regulatory bodies into strategic organic systems that continually strive to meet residents' needs.

One of the most noticeable shifts in this transformation is the central position that people hold in developmental local government. This is because planners value the knowledge that they have because they live in the places where projects happen; they understand their world, and what is and is not possible within that world. Residents in a particular municipal area are the key partners in analysing, planning, implementing and monitoring community development plans. It is this idea that shapes the vision and practice of community management.

In community management the basis for any negotiation and implementation of rural water provision schemes is acknowledging that people have been managing water, agriculture and other community development activities since they settled in the area.

By acknowledging existing institutional structures, WSAs (municipalities) and facilitators are according residents appropriate respect and entrenching the idea that the way they have been managing water is valuable and will contribute to future planning.

This acknowledgement is a stepping stone for implementation that is linked to the unique characteristics of each village. Planners and implementers include village-level realities, which then means that local management may be different in each village. Differences in people's age, gender, social status, educational background and economic situation need to been seen as a welcome opportunity to ensure that all residents' voices are reflected in programmes. Thus, programmes need to consciously and proactively reflect the full spectrum of ideas and interests of the village.

2. Criteria for selecting the villages

A general guideline is that community-based O&M systems are suitable where the village being served is:

- small and far from the local or district municipality's office
- the technology of the scheme is relatively simple to maintain
- although not strictly necessary, it is useful if the village has already organised itself in some way, and there are some structures to work with, such as local development forums or small CBOs.

In your municipality...

1. List several villages in your municipal area that you think may be suitable for the introduction of such schemes.

2. Review your IDP audits and find information that provides you with recent information on the villages; you may also wish to speak to ward councillors and officials who have a good working knowledge of the villages.

3. Assess how these villages meet the criteria listed above.

4. Then choose the most suitable villages.

Notes:

Now you can develop a strategy for approaching these villages (Step 2) to find out whether they are receptive to the idea of local-level O&M.

Objective

To ensure that the community is a willing and committed partner in the O&M of their water scheme.

Outcome

Villages will be committed to establishing a partnership with WSAs for local water provision.

Taking the steps -

Once the municipality has selected the villages, they need to find out whether these villages are eager to establish the necessary structures to perform O&M in their water scheme. This constitutes the first phase of consultations with stakeholders in selected villages.

1. Consult with communities to gauge whether they will find such a management scheme acceptable

Community-managed water schemes require a co-ordinated effort from a range of stakeholders to establish and support O&M:

- Municipalities (funders and overseers)
- potential service providers (managers)
- the residents in a village (collaborators)
- other stakeholders (Service Support Agency) (advisors and experts).

What is a reasonable, acceptable consultation process?

Consultation is a word that is often used by a range of people to describe interactions with communities. This means that 'consultation' could simply be a meeting where communities are informed of changes that are about to take place in their village 'for their own good'. However, this is not a democratic or inclusive process. Here such limited consultation is likely to increase obstacles encountered in the implementation, which may stall the whole project. On the other hand, it is also true that consultation does not mean that the project facilitators and planners are striving for total consensus; trying to get everyone involved to agree totally is neither realistic, necessary nor an efficient use of time and resources.

Rather facilitators and municipal planners should aim to strike a balance and aim for "what can you live with". Reflecting with villages on what is desirable and in the interests of everyone is useful in obtaining general agreement that will allow implementation plans to move ahead.

Why is consultation important?

The motivation for consultation processes is for village residents to be integrally part of determining the development of their communities and their lives. It is an empowering and ongoing process where people, most of whom have been politically, socially and economically marginalised in the past are given a voice. This opportunity to articulate their needs leads not only to a growing sense of their own role as agents of change in their village, but also makes planning more collaborative and increases chances of successful implementation and maintenance.

It is the task of the municipality and the facilitator to initiate discussions with village residents. This will ensure that a wide range of community voices form part of the very first contact with the municipality. This effort will in turn offer a guarantee that the process is as inclusive as possible.

The ideas and desires of local leadership, established development forums and traditional leaders are important, as it is often these people that have a wholistic sense of developments within their community. It is also important to discover smaller groups' perceptions. The voices of women's groups, youth groups, entrepreneurial groups, stokvels and growers' associations should shape an idea of the village commitment to the project.

It is also important to gather information and include people that are not organised and have generally remained marginalised or 'voiceless': women, people living with HIV and AIDS, the elderly, the very poor, and people with disabilities. These groups have a particular interest in a good water service and are likely to benefit significantly from a O&M system that functions to serve the whole village. Thus all these people need to be actively involved as far as is reasonably possible.

The importance of interest and commitment

Commitment is crucial to success. Municipalities need to investigate whether residents are indeed committed to the management of their own water supply. If this is not explored, planners may soon be frustrated that villages lack commitment. For communities to develop and sustain commitment, the following is needed:

- A felt need for improved management of the water supply system and service delivery
- An efficient flow of information, that helps people to make a cost-benefit analysis of community-managed O&M
- Effective support systems when problems arise
- A perception that the project objectives are feasible, worthwhile, achievable and sustainable
- Minimal political rivalries.

Forms of commitment

- Verbal agreement to the development and implementation of O&M in the village
- Providing labour during construction
- Willingness to take decisions and bear responsibility for these
- Willingness to keep agreements and be transparent

Such information would include:
- Prioritising issues around water
- Identifying problems and their solutions
- Encouraging active participation by the community members.

This process, using participatory and inclusive methods, will enable village residents to see their role as central to the success of the project. They will also realise that they have the ability to manage their own scheme. This empowering idea will make people comfortable with solving their own problems. Experience has shown that when people go through a process of problem identification and when they discover for themselves linkages between problems, they start to feel ownership of the problems and responsibility for finding solutions.

The best way to ensure that people are eager to be involved in their village development is by including them in decision-making processes. In identifying solutions and jointly planning actions, planners will ensure the active involvement of village residents in O&M. These actions may include:
- opening and closing taps
- keeping taps clean
- reporting breakdowns to the CBO WSP operator
- active monitoring role for the wider community after selection of a village water committee.

At the end of this initial interaction, the facilitator, the responsible municipal officials and ward councillors should have established:
- who the various stakeholders in the community are, what their respective roles are, and how to work with them
- open, respectful and constructive working relations with the community
- the support of the community leaders and community members
- the beginnings of a solid partnership between facilitator, village representatives, and residents in general.

In your municipality...

1. Select a good facilitator (see the criteria and description on page 30).
2. Determine the roles and responsibilities between the municipal officials and councillors and the facilitator.
3. Set up site visits.
4. Meet with relevant stakeholders and village residents.
5. Determine the levels of commitment using the factors that indicate commitment highlighted in this step.

Notes:

Facilitating community development: the role of the facilitator

The municipality, along with the ward councillor, initiates the relationship between the facilitator and the villages. It is essential for the facilitator to identify the community leaders and to work closely with them; the same applies to traditional leaders. These leaders can then introduce the facilitator to the community.

Characteristics of a good facilitator
- prioritises responses from the village
- is prepared for meetings
- has the necessary equipment
- has carefully considered the layout of the meeting venue and will position chairs to encourage group work
- is aware that literacy levels may be low and finds creative ways to accommodate that
- speaks in a language that most people are comfortable with
- shows leaders and residents respect
- can describe how the process of interaction will work to all players in a way that makes the process easy-to-understand
- is committed to working in a way that upholds democratic processes
- is energetic and knows how to get all people in the meeting to participate

Using participatory approaches
- always places people and their experiences centrally to any process
- designs meetings as opportunities to empower the whole village
- uses a range of methodologies to uncover village-level needs and desires related to water
- uses these methods for facilitating decision making:
    - deciding on objectives
    - encouraging participation
    - prioritising needs
    - managing conflicts and competing interests
    - reaching agreements
    - determining a way forward

Once municipalities have gauged the extent to which villages are open and committed to establishing community-managed water schemes it is necessary to review the financial requirements of this process.

Objective

To identify all costs that need to be budgeted for establishing and running a community-based O&M system.

Outcome

The municipality will be aware of the projected costs for establishing and running a community-based O&M system, and will decide whether community-based O&M is a viable financial option for the municipality.

Taking the steps ---

Budgeting and financial planning for the setting up and continued support of the projects is one of the main factors that will determine the sustainability and long-term success of the project.

1. Initial cost for long-term gain

When the budget for establishing the community-based management structures is outlined, it is important to keep in mind that initial financial outlay is usually earned back easily through the long-term low costs of the O&M system.

- Community-based staff are often employed on a part-time basis and therefore their salaries or allowances are generally lower than that of regular municipal staff.
- Problems can be efficiently dealt with, without time delays and travel costs, especially when spare parts are stored in the village.

Municipalities therefore need to weigh higher initial costs against the long-term lower running costs. With the general aim of cost-efficiency dominating local governance, it is evident that this system holds benefits for the municipality's budget.

2. Costs involved

When budgeting for this project, there are three phases of expenditure that need to form part of planning.

1. Costs of establishing the system

Note these costs are specific to this type of participatory initiative:

- Facilitation: either a municipal employee or an external facilitator
- Community consultation: site visits, community meetings
- Training the WSP committee members and staff members: technical, administration, book-keeping, management, and conflict resolution
- Developing necessary documentation: constitutions, contracts, research findings and regular reports

2. Costs of running the system

These costs would be incurred in any water service provision programme:

- Salaries or allowances of CBO WSP members and staff (operators, bookkeepers,etc.)
- Diesel and electricity required for daily operations
- Spare parts and repairs, and infrastructure replacement
- Ongoing village consultation.

3. Costs of continued support

Here too the costs would be incurred in any water service provision programme:

- Municipal staff and support agents' time
- Travel costs from municipality or support offices and village
- Major anticipated repair and replacement work
- System extension
- Emergency fund
- Ongoing village consultation.

Community-managed WSPs will vary in their ability to manage their water schemes. Each one will require a support system that offers ongoing assistance. A support agent should be appointed for this purpose to service several villages.

3. Budgeting time and effort

Establishing a CBO WSP or any form of community-based O&M takes time which is likely to be the biggest item in the budget. While project plans may seem straightforward on paper, in practice implementing these plans may be complex and challenging. Thus building sufficient time into programmes is important for successful implementation. Doing so is likely to result in high levels of community satisfaction, as residents are likely to be more comfortable with the pace of the project developments. However, taking too long because of lengthy administrative processes will lead to growing community dissatisfaction and declining support for the project. To avoid this, a committed municipal team and an experienced facilitator are key.

Note: Steps 7 and 8 on contracts and financial planning provide more information on the ways in which money moves between the municipality and the CBO and the accountability required to ensure that monies are spent properly.

1. Determine the financial costs involved for all three phases of project implementation, over a planned duration.

2. Determine how the establishment of the community-managed O&M will be aligned with the IDP-based water services development plan and the financial implications of this.

3. Determine how the financial and time resources will be allocated from the overall council budget (capital expenditure as well as equitable share allocations).

4. Get approval from Council for the expenditure.

5. Decide on accounting procedures required of the CBO.

> **Note:** Steps 7 and 8 on contracts and financial planning provide more information on the ways in which money moves between the municipality and the CBO and the accountability required to ensure that monies are spent properly.

Notes:

Assessing existing technical and management systems

Objective

To collect information on technical infrastructure and management systems and structures already in place in a village, that may be useful in the planning and implementation process.

Outcome

Village residents will be aware of the required technical and managerial capabilities required for effective community-managed O&M.

Taking the steps –

1. An audit of technical and administrative capacities

A lot of information about the village will have been gathered from initial meetings with community members, about the structures that exist and the general capacity of the residents to cope with O&M. Now additional information is needed to provide a more complete picture of the technical and administrative capacity of systems within the village. From this picture, the facilitator, along with the municipality and village residents will need to:

- identify the gaps that exist in administration and technical capabilities
- decide how best to respond to these gaps.

The questions below highlight the focus areas that will help stakeholders to find out more about the systems in the village:

1. What kind of water scheme is present in your village?
2. Who is currently responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the system?
3. How would you rate people's current levels of satisfaction with the water provision service?
4. Who is currently involved in operation and maintenance of the scheme?
5. Describe the most common operation and maintenance problems that this scheme experiences?
6. Who benefits most from this scheme in your village?

This information will serve as the basis for assessing both the positive aspects and the current challenges related to the present scheme, and highlight potential gaps that must be addressed by a new O&M system.

Questions to ask the current O&M team

1. What is the current estimated use of water per household?
2. For what purposes is the water being used?
3. How would you rate the levels of user satisfaction with the scheme?

The value of asking these questions directly of the current operators is that it will provide a more detailed view of the current technical and administrative scope of the present system. Additional information should also be available from IDP auditing or analysis processes as well as municipal departments such as town planning and the engineer's office.

2. Identifying the gaps

After gathering information through these questions, the answers have to be analysed. The evidence obtained in this analysis will then enable stakeholders to identify gaps in village-level technical and administrative expertise. Where possible, existing structures and resources should be used.

3. Responding to the gaps

Depending on the specific gaps, municipal officials, councillors and the village residents need to develop appropriate responses to ensure good service delivery. These will be discussed in detail when considering the technical, managerial and financial training that community organisations will undergo to ensure that they are suitably equipped for the O&M tasks (Step 7).

4. Recording the information

Once information is gathered it should be recorded in a way that makes accessing it in the future easy. This information will form the basis of good quality monitoring and evaluation as it will provide those reviewing the process with a clear idea of its history and progress.

In your municipality...

1. To get a sense of the current conditions, have meetings with :
   - key people in the villages who are associated with local level water provision
   - ordinary village residents who will be able to tell you about the quality of water provision service
2. Look at the challenges and problems that these people identify. These need to be woven into the new O&M initiative to ensure that old difficulties are avoided.
3. Make sure that this information is carefully recorded and stored so that it can be used in a review process. Appoint one person to be responsible for this, as this task is vital to being able to measure the success of the project (see Steps 12 and 13).

Notes:

Once there is a clear understanding of the present water provision situation, the process can move towards establishing a community structure to manage daily operations and maintenance.

The farmer has prepared the ground well for planting. Now the crop has to be planted: the VWC has to be formally established to perform the O&M of their village water scheme. The farmer will be considering the timing of this planting very carefully, and must thus be aware of the rhythms of the community – when people are most likely to be receptive to the new scheme is essential. The farmer will not be able to plant the crop on his own, so getting a work crew to assist him/her will allow the seeds to be planted at just the right time.

In village O&M, teamwork is required for this to be a successful initiative. Everyone on the farmer's work team needs to know their specific tasks from planting the seeds in the correct way, at the correct depth, to covering the seeds with compost and fertiliser. The farmer may even need to train key staff members in the more technical tasks. In the O&M scheme the WSA, WSP and village residents all need to be aware of each other's responsibility. Training may be needed in some instances to increase or improve people's skills.

Once the seeds are planted and covered they begin to germinate and grow with the help of the right kind of fertiliser and enough water. So too, the VWC is 'planted' in the village soil and needs constant care to grow and flourish so that it is able to produce a bountiful harvest. For the VWC this comes in the form of ongoing training and support to enable O&M to run smoothly.

Objectives
- To conduct a participatory process that ensures that the CBO has the mandate from the community to perform O&M.
- To ensure that the selected VWC WSP is respected, capable, and sufficiently skilled to perform its tasks.

Outcomes
- CBOs will begin to function as a WSP based on sound training in O&M and related skills.
- Communities will be supportive of the O&M work of the CBO.

Taking the steps -

The process of setting up a community-based organisation goes through three phases:
- Consultation with the community on the establishment process
- Selection procedure
- Establishing a CBO.

1. Consultation
Once the initial consultations have been conducted with communities, and the technical and administrative conditions have been assessed, municipalities can proceed with plans to establish a community-based organisation to manage the O&M of the village water provision. In order to do this in a way that promotes democratic processes, it is important that village residents give a potential water service provider the mandate to perform O&M tasks on their behalf. This is likely to be through community meetings to expose village residents to the idea and practice of community-managed O&M.

2. Selection
Once residents are fully supportive of the idea of establishing a community-managed scheme, they need to participate in the process of selecting a CBO to do this job. This selection can take place through a number of procedures that include:
- election from group of nominees
- 'tendering' through expressions of interest
- choosing an existing group or committee.

The selection and establishment of a local level WSP is a crucial step in the process towards community-managed O&M. Therefore, the facilitator co-ordinating this process must be very experienced and knowledgeable. Should the facilitator not have the necessary level of experience, the municipality may call on an experienced Support Services Agent to facilitate this particular phase.

The establishment of the CBO WSP is often conducted too quickly, and the people who speak the most or are the most powerful are chosen. They, however, may not be the most appropriate or acceptable for the job. The facilitator needs to stimulate openness and transparency from the beginning to ensure that the most widely acceptable team is selected.

3. Establishing a Community-Based Organisation

The community-based organisation, such as a Village Water Committee (VWC) may already exist or may still have to be formed from amongst village residents. Developing a constitution is necessary for the establishment of a WSP. It is likely that the municipality with the help of a facilitator or support agency will need to assist the VWC to develop a constitution. The constitution should include the following details:

- Name of the organisation
- Rules
- Objectives
- Membership
- Powers and functions
- Structure(s)
- Procedures
- Duties and obligations
- Area of operation
- Dispute resolution mechanisms
- Rules governing financial matters of the organisation
- How the organisation would close (if necessary).

1. Assess the conditions in the villages to discover whether it is necessary to either use an existing CBO or establish a new village water committee.
2. Budget sufficient time for this process, both for village residents to decide on the appropriate procedure of selection and then for the selection of a VWC itself.
3. Conduct information meetings to familiarise residents with the procedures of establishing an O&M VWC.
4. Choose the most appropriate procedure for selection:
   - Hold elections
   - Call for tenders
   - Select an existing group
5. Use the facilitator or support agency to play an impartial role in these selection procedures as they all involve a high level of community consultation where there are likely to be competing interests.
6. Choose one Village Water Committee.
7. Assist the VWC to make sure that the proper organisational requirements are in place.
8. Develop a constitution and accept it.
9. Enter into a contract with the VWC WSP to provide water linked to a specific water scheme. It is not necessary for VWCs to register in terms of the Non-profit Organisations Act (No. 71 of 1997) unless they are managing many schemes and/or very large amounts of money.

Notes:

Establishing a VWC and entering into a Municipal Services Partnership is not the end of the process. There is still a lot that needs to happen, initially and on an ongoing basis to ensure that water service delivery is optimal in villages. The next steps look at the scope of work for the new WSP.

Objective

To define the tasks that the newly-established VWC will perform.

Outcome

VWC members, municipal officials and ward councillors are comfortable with *their scope of work for managing O&M.*

Taking the steps -

It is at this point that the municipality and the village-level VWCs determine the areas of work that will make up their O&M tasks. Once this is decided, areas in which training is required to fulfil these duties must be identified and the training then conducted.

There are two main areas of knowledge and skills development:

- **technical O&M** of the scheme: system maintenance skills for the operators, overseeing technical performance and monitoring and solving technical problems
- **management** of the scheme and the VWC
  - financial: bookkeeping and basic accounting skills for the bookkeeper
  - social: daily interaction with users, conflict resolution, relationship building with village, municipality, and support services agent.

1. Determining the scope of work

The municipality, together with the Village Water Committee, must decide on the tasks for which the WSP will be responsible. Depending on the levels of skill and competence, both current and to be developed, these tasks may vary from village to village. In general, VWCs will maintain the scheme from the storage reservoir through to the tap use and maintenance. This includes the following:

- reading meters
- daily operations of the scheme
- minor repairs
- customer relations
- communication with the community
- revenue collection (where applicable)
- maintenance
- basic financial management and reporting
- management of staff, such as the operators and bookkeepers.

The Water Services Authority may delegate all or some of the provider functions to a VWC. The free basic water policy means that it is highly unlikely that there will be any tariff collection in the targeted villages. However, if for particular reasons, such as an unusually high use of water and tariff collection does take place in the communities, cost recovery and tariff collection may need to be included in the VWC's scope of work.

The following criteria will guide decisions about the scope of work of the individual CBO:
- the level of technology required to operate the scheme
- the distance from a town
- current skills of the members of the VWC
- availability of Support Services Agent to assist the WSP whenever needed.

Preventive maintenance is key to effective O&M. To ensure that the VWCs are increasingly competent in the early detection of technical and other problems, regular visits by the Support Services Agent will be essential. This support will focus on monitoring results, and detecting potential problems early on and thus avoiding time-consuming and costly repairs.

Whatever the technical infrastructure and capabilities of the VWC, communities will require continued support for:
- preventive maintenance
- major repairs
- system rehabilitation
- future extensions.

In your municipality...

1. Determine the particular scope of work together with the VWC and the community in general.

2. Decide which technical, administrative and management tasks the VWC will take on.

Notes:

Employing staff to conduct O&M

Objective
To assist the WSP to know their obligations in terms of employment legislation and developing systems to meet these obligations.

Outcomes
- All WSP staff will have employment contracts.
- The WSP will be making the required contributions to relevant employee bodies.

Taking the steps ------------------------------------

To perform the technical and managerial tasks, people have to be employed by the CBO-WSP, and there are various factors that must be kept in mind by the WSP.

- It is important that the provisions of the legislation and the regulations are followed: dates and amounts stated on the various official payment return forms are usually reviewed annually to ensure that the employer is operating within the law. *(For a list of the laws, see Appendix A.)*
- Particular emphasis is placed on labour relations, employee benefits and employee income tax.

Who is an employee?
An employee is someone who works or renders services to another person or organisation
- for more that 24 hours per month
- and is supervised in the performance of tasks.

Considering the type of work that may be done for a CBO WSP, this description means that persons working for a CBO WSP are likely to be considered employees. To avoid any disputes, employment contracts should be entered into between the CBO-WSP and any person appointed to do work for or provide services to it for more that 24 hours a month. These should include:
- name of the employer
- name of the employee and identity number
- a short description of the duties
- hours of work
- leave conditions.

Fair labour practice in the WSP
WSPs should know about fair labour practice and regular working hours, leave time, payment, ending contracts, providing relevant training and various basic conditions of employment to ensure that the contracts that employees sign and conditions of work are acceptable and legal. A CBO WSP must make sure that they comply with these conditions.

Who to employ?

The WSP should promote equal opportunities for all people to be employed. This means that people who are usually excluded in local communities and villages must be fairly represented among those that the WSP employs. Women, and people with disabilities have traditionally been assigned non-paying work in a village situation; however, their competence and ability should not be restricted and they need to make up a significant percentage of the total workforce in all levels of operation and maintenance.

What happens when people are not able to work any more?

In cases where employees work for 24 hours a month or more, the WSP has to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund to provide for situations where employees are not able to continue with their duties, either temporarily (illness, maternity,) or permanently (long-term chronic illness), or termination (retrenchment and some kinds of dismissal).

Both employees and the WSP must make contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. To do this, the WSP must register as an employer with the Unemployment Insurance Commissioner and then pay in the monthly contributions, either to the South African Revenue Service or the Commissioner. The contribution to be paid amounts to 2% of the employee's income, 1% is deducted from the employee's pay and the employer contributes 1%. These amounts can be paid monthly, quarterly, six-monthly or annually by arrangement with the Commissioner.

Safe working conditions

Part of O&M will include low-level technical operations and minor repairs. To ensure employee safety, WSPs must ensure a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of its employees. Machinery should always be in good working condition, safety gear (face-masks, gloves, protective shoes and clothing) must be available and worn when required.

Income tax contributions

Employees who earn under R30 000 per year from 2003 do not have to pay income tax. This amount varies from time to time. In the case where employees are paid more than this amount, the human resources officer of the municipality will advise the WSP on the provisions it must make in terms of the **Income Tax Act**, 1962.

What happens should someone sustain an injury or die?

If an employee is injured or contracts an illness resulting from the performance of his/her work duties, s/he must be compensated. If the employee dies as a result, this compensation will go to his/her family. The Compensation Commissioner pays this compensation.

In terms of **The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act**, 1993 (Coida), the employer must:
- register his employees
- pay annual contributions
- report any accidents or illnesses
- make the necessary claims in the event of an accident or illness.

s

1. Consult the municipal human resources officer and get advice on the WSP's legal obligations to employees.

2. Draw up the appropriate employment contracts with WSP employees.

3. Develop a system for keeping records of employees (payments, income tax, UIF contributions, compensation fund contributions).

4. Ensure that you are making the required contributions.

Notes:

Objective

To set up a training programme incorporating all the training needs of the new WSP administrative and technical staff members and contractors to enable effective performance.

Outcomes

- VWC members are appropriately equipped to manage a range of tasks and situations.
- The organisation is well managed and the O&M functions are carried out effectively.

Taking the steps --

1. Technical training

For water to be provided to meet village requirements adequately, operations staff must understand how their village scheme works. They should know:

- where the water comes from
- where the main pipes and the reticulation pipes are.

The operations staff should be trained to **manage the pump** that is being used in their village. They must know how to **repair leaks and broken taps** and how to **maintain soakaways** hygienically. They must also be able to **read the meters** if these are installed. It is also important that staff know **when to call for help**.

2. Managerial training

In all situations it is important that VWCs know what the task involves and are able to assess whether this is being performed properly. Management can be divided into social, technical, and financial management. Managers need skills in planning, organisation, decision-making, co-ordination, control and monitoring so that they are able to:

- monitor the work of operators
- contract outside expertise and monitor their work
- pay staff and external contractors
- communicate with local government and other stakeholders such as Support Services Agents
- facilitate community meetings and community decision-making
- respond to conflicts within the community.

Training to enable VWC managers to perform the above tasks will enhance effective management to ensure that:

- users are satisfied
- users are willing to contribute to the scheme's functioning
- tariffs are collected where applicable
- conflicts within the community are prevented or resolved.

Who to train?

Financial management and technical management responsibilities are likely to be assigned to certain staff members who should then receive the necessary training. More general management skills such as project planning, assessing O&M performance and facilitating community decision-making should form part of the training for all VWC WSP members.

In addition, external contractors may perform certain tasks, so it will not always be necessary to train the operators in fixing major breakdowns. However, CBO operators will play a crucial role in detecting technical problems early on.

When does training take place?

Once VWCs have been established, training and capacity-building to prepare the organisation for the technical, financial and general management responsibilities will be required. Training is not a once-off event, it is ongoing for ensuring quality water delivery.

One of the key ways of providing ongoing support to VWCs is through regular training in managing increasingly complex situations, familiarising members with new legislation and policies, and developing a solid relationship between the Water Services Authority and the Water Service Provider.

In your municipality...

1. Assess the current skills that the VWC has to perform the tasks set out in the scope of work.

2. Determine the skills gaps and thus the training needs in the VWC, for both immediate and ongoing training.

3. Decide who will conduct the training - either the municipality itself or an external agency, such as an NGO.

4. Assess whether the training has been successful by the extent to which VWCs are able to perform their tasks independently and satisfactorily.

Notes:

Objectives
- To examine the contractual relationship between the water services authority and the water service provider.
- To develop a functioning relationship between WSA and CBO WSP based on mutual trust, accountability, and continued support.

Outcomes
The WSA and the WSP work well together to deliver effective water provision services in villages.

Taking the steps -

The contracts between the WSA and the WSP outlines their relationship and determines their obligations to each other and the community for the supply and delivery of water.

1. Contractual agreement
The WSP has the responsibility of managing its contract with the WSA, as well as any other contracts it may have entered into with, for example, repair contractors or a services support agency. Likewise, the WSA is responsible to the WSP for meeting its contractual obligations: bulk water supply, major repairs and financial and other support. This contract should be simple, fair and binding in terms of the Water Services Act to ensure that:
- water services are provided on an efficient, equitable, cost-effective and sustainable basis
- the terms of the contract are fair and equitable to the WSA, the WSP and consumers the terms comply with the Act.

1.1 The Model Contract
A 'model contract' is available from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry that provides municipalities as WSAs with a model that should then be amended to suit the local conditions between specific WSPs and the WSA. While it is not compulsory that WSAs use this model it is useful and includes all necessary clauses to ensure water provision arrangements that are in line with the Act. This model contract has a number of useful features that will help municipalities to shape the contract to their needs. To help WSAs there are 'choices' that appear in **bold italics** where municipalities may select the option best suited to their circumstances.

This 'model contract' should be used as a guide for drawing up a contract that suits the purposes of the WSA and the WSP. It is important that the WSA also consults with municipal legal experts to make sure that the contract is clear and works in the best interests of the WSA, the WSP and the village. (See Appendix B for an outline of what this contract will include.)

1.2 Assumptions of the Model Contract

The model contract is based on the following assumptions:

a) The CBO WSP requires a period of training and capacity-building prior to it becoming responsible for the provision of water services. The CBO could either be established as a new organisation, or it could be an existing CBO that requires training and capacity building.

b) The CBO WSP is responsible for the following WSP functions:
   - management of the water services system, being operations and minor repairs and minor maintenance
   - customer relations
   - revenue services.

c) The level/s of service may include any of the following:
   - household connections with meters
   - communal standpipes
   - communal standpipes with prepaid meters.

d) The CBO WSP will be allocated funds to carry out its duties as laid out in the contract.

e) Where applicable, receipts for water services are paid to the CBO WSP.

f) The CBO WSP is responsible for covering the costs of providing the water services, and therefore the CBO WSP carries the financial risk for the provision of water services.

g) The WSA is responsible for major maintenance and preventative maintenance including the development of a maintenance programme.

h) The WSA provides support services to the CBO WSP.

i) The CBO WSP pays a fee to the WSA for any major maintenance and support services provided by the WSA.

The water services provider functions that a CBO WSP fulfils might vary depending upon the specific circumstances and the capacity of the CBO WSP. In some cases a CBO WSP may be able to fulfil all the WSP functions; however, in other cases some functions may need to be fulfilled by the WSA as support services to the CBO WSP.

2. Developing a good working relationship

Developing and nurturing any relationship takes time and effort, and the relationship between the WSA and the WSP is no different. It is important for the municipal councillors and officials to have regular contact with the VWC, and for relevant people in the municipality to encourage such interaction. The ward councillor should also attend the community meetings to nurture this relationship.

Key characteristics for a good relationship between WSA and CBO WSP are:
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities
- Mutual respect and accountability
- Open communication and listening.

Mutual accountability is important for developing a good relationship. Areas of responsibility that facilitate this are:
- Budget control and keeping satisfactory expenditure records
- Regular progress meetings
- Effective reporting channels.

3. Systems and procedures

In order to be successful in carrying out and managing all the above tasks, systems and working arrangements must be established beforehand, and agreed upon by all stakeholders. This will ensure that there is a wide acceptance for the roles and functions of the project.

Contractual activities (reporting and accounting) should be put into a system that is practical and useful for both parties. For instance, if the municipality prefers to have six-weekly or bi-monthly progress meetings in the municipal offices, it should make sure that this is feasible, and pay for the VWC-members to travel to the town. So too, if a WSP decides that it is useful to attach a narrative report along with the financials at the end of each month, it should make sure that all staff are able to meet this obligation. If these kinds of procedures do not form the foundation of the relationship between the WSP and the WSA, the general management of the project will be disorganised and ultimately fail to deliver a good service to the village.

The involvement of the community should include agreements on:
- Cleaning of the standpipes: *who is responsible? does this responsibility circulate? how often do they get cleaned?*
- Consumption patterns: *who will open the taps? at what times will the taps be open? how much water per family per day?*
- Actions to be taken against people who vandalise the standpipes, or who do not leave the tap-point clean. If penalties or sanctions are to be imposed, the community has to agree on these beforehand.

In your municipality...

1. Decide on the contract that is realistic and suits the local conditions of the water service provider.
2. Assign your legal team to draft this contract; here the 'model contract' may be used as a guide.
3. Make sure that the WSP and the village in general are satisfied with the stipulations in this contract.
4. Sign the contract and supply this information to the provincial and national authorities.
5. Stick to the agreements in the contract and renegotiate them if they hinder effective delivery.

Notes:

The WSP and the village should now be fully aware of the obligations they have for the O&M of the water scheme. The WSP will have received training to equip its staff to perform these functions adequately. An important component that needs a closer review is financial planning, as this is vital for effective performance of the VWC.

Objective

To set up a financial management system that is effective, efficient, easy to control, and with sufficient responsibility at WSP level.

Outcomes

- Financial management systems continually strive to be transparent and effective.
- The WSA monitors and supports the WSP to enable them to carry out these tasks.

Taking the steps -

The WSA and the WSP have to decide on the division of financial roles and responsibilities. Delegation of financial responsibilities should correspond with delegation of operational responsibility. Thus, a CBO WSP that is responsible for daily operation and maintenance of the system needs the necessary financial resources to be made available to carry out these tasks.

With the implementation of Free Basic Water (FBW), the costs of water provision are likely to be carried exclusively by municipalities. The information below is based on the FBW plan.

1. Financial planning duties

Financial planning and management involves activities such as:

- payment of operators, book keepers and committee members
- book keeping
- collection of fees where appropriate
- managing payments for breakdowns and repairs
- management of any other costs.

At an implementation level, delegating financial responsibility together with operational responsibility means that the WSP should have a bank account, with sufficient funds for it to carry out all its operation, maintenance and management tasks.

2. Accessing funds

This means that the WSA and WSP together have to decide on a system of transfer of funds. There are a number of ways of structuring this arrangement.

- An agreed amount of money is deposited into the community bank account monthly which the VWC WSP then uses for all costs.
- A start-up amount is deposited, after which the WSP submit claims for all their expenses to the WSA who then, upon approval, deposit the money into the VWC WSP bank account.

Another method of financial management is **incentive-based**. Here the VWC calculates and agrees to a monthly budget for O&M, which is deposited in the community bank account at the beginning of every month. The money that remains at the end of each month is for the VWC WSP to keep and use as they choose (in consultation with the village residents). It may then be accrued for an emergency or extension fund, or invested in other community development initiatives. This system encourages the WSP to work as cost-effectively as possible.

It is important that all financial rules, systems and methods of payment that are agreed upon are transparent, and are understood by all involved. It is especially important that they are geared towards enabling VWCs to deliver a good service to the village.

In your municipality...

1. Decide which method of deposit best suits the financial management skill of the VWC, along with the O&M duties (this may alter over time to meet changing conditions).
2. Ensure that the municipalities have the capacity to manage the regular and *ad hoc* financial requests from the WSP.
3. Train staff if necessary to make sure that the new demands made of the municipal financial departments can respond effectively to these new challenges.
4. Ensure that WSPs (usually key staff) are sufficiently trained to meet the demands of financial management.
5. Monitor the expenditure of the VWC.
6. Identify potential problems and address them promptly to avoid time consuming and often destructive consequences of financial mismanagement of the project.

Notes:

At this point WSPs should begin to function to fully meet the water service provision needs of their village. The WSA role is now to
- *continue to make bulk water available*
- *maintain good financial oversight of the project*
- *monitor the progress of the project through building healthy, mutually respectful relationships.*

Building relationships between village residents and the WSP

Objectives
- To define clear roles and responsibilities for community members and VWCs in relation to the operation and maintenance of the scheme.
- To build the communication skills of community and VWC members.
- To develop mechanisms for managing disputes between communities and VWCs.

Outcome
Community members agree on the expectations and tasks that they and the CBO need to carry out in order to maintain the scheme effectively.

Taking the steps -

Through meetings and negotiations, village residents should be clear that the O&M of the water scheme is a 'whole community' responsibility. As in the relationship between the WSA and the WSP, there is a mutual accountability for the sustained success of the project between the village residents and the VWC WSP.

As central players, members of the community need to understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting the WSP in O&M. To gain this understanding village residents need:
- Sufficient information to make good decisions about, for example, service levels, tariff setting, maintenance schedules
- To be included in the decision-making and problem-solving processes around their water scheme.

One way to do this is for the VWC to organise regular stakeholder meetings to which all community members are invited. At these meetings the following should be discussed and adopted:
- new arrangements that have to be made
- changing existing arrangements
- any problems encountered by either the WSP or residents related to service delivery and responsible consumption of water.

In cases where the VWC is not functioning properly the residents should know about and be comfortable using channels for making complaints. Residents, as the recipients of the service, should be able raise these problems during the stakeholder meetings, in order to try to find a solution together with the VWC. If the VWC is not willing or able to address the problem to the satisfaction of the stakeholders, then the Support Services Agency (SSA) should be brought into the picture to mediate an appropriate solution.

1. Train the VWC to develop and nurture a good relationship with residents.

2. Monitor the regularity and content of stakeholder meetings (through reviewing minutes of the meetings, or ward councillor report-backs).

3. Monitor interactions between the WSP and the SSA to ensure that community complaints are managed appropriately.

4. Listen seriously to complaints and find viable solutions that both satisfy the residents and raise the standard of service delivery.

Notes:

Now the seeds are growing fast, with the help of sufficient rainfall, irrigation, sunlight and fertiliser. But the crop is not yet ready for harvest. The farmer spends most of his/her time making sure that the conditions for ensuring steady growth are maintained.

In the same way, VWCs are up and running, and here the WSA must be vigilant that the conditions for sustained success are being maintained. Continued support through regular interaction such as meetings and ongoing training are vital for the healthy growth of the village water committee and the general empowerment of the village; and to ensure that people receive water.

Objective

To establish systems of continued support for the CBO, in order to ensure sustainability and good functioning of the scheme.

Outcome

A system exists to support the WSP and the village as a whole in cases of major breakdowns, financial or social problems or conflicts, and other emergencies.

Taking the steps -

As mentioned before, support for village level O&M must be ongoing. The extent to which the VWC becomes more competent, and the village receives a regular good quality service will impact on the expectations of the village and the VWC. Feeling secure that this service is something upon which they can rely will empower the village residents to think about more long-term needs and services. This community-managed approach will help residents realise that they are their own most powerful agents of change. The improvement in water delivery will have positive consequences in other areas and broaden individuals' horizons and expectations of what they want and what they are capable of achieving.

However, no matter how well-prepared and trained the WSP is at the time it takes up its tasks, it will require continued support. Without structured, reliable support, the chances of success and sustainability of the community-managed scheme decrease substantially.

The support typically required by a WSP includes:
- Operations (technical) mentoring
- Major maintenance
- Major repairs
- Bulk purchasing
- Annual reconciliation of financials.

Continued support is focused on pre-determined issues, such as major repairs or annual reconciliation of the books. A SSA should be appointed to provide this support service. Here too a contractual relationship is entered into where the SSA and the WSA or WSP will decide:
- to whom the SSA is accountable
- the costs of services
- who will pay for what
- time-frames for support delivery.

In the first few months of operations, the WSP will need more support than later on, and so a gradual scaling down of support is likely, to the point where a six-monthly or annual support visit of the Support Agent is conducted; with the option of additional services when necessary. The support should never be completely stopped and should be available over the entire life span of the project. The WSP should always know whom to contact, and for which issues.

In your municipality...

1. Find a suitable SSA.

2. Determine how they will be reimbursed and by whom (from the WSP or directly from the WSA).

3. Oversee the SSA/WSP relationship.

4. Monitor the decreasing level of reliance on the SSA to determine that it is indeed as a result of increased skills levels of the WSP.

Notes:

Objective

To set up a monitoring system that will identify problems quickly and respond to these before they become a threat to the sustainability of the community-managed scheme.

Outcomes

- A monitoring system is in place, with a clear division of responsibility between VWC WSP, municipality and the SSA.
- Results of monitoring are fed into the process swiftly and serious problems are averted.

Taking the steps -

Monitoring is checking, collecting and analysing information about a project to ensure that it is performing as required. It is an ongoing process that should be an integral part of the project. Monitoring happens from project inception through to evaluation and beyond. It should also happen within every level and between every level with the aim of optimising resources and ensuring the best possible service delivery. Effective monitoring assesses project performance and then takes steps to make sure that any problems or challenges are managed and resolved; that adaptations to the objectives and the outcomes are made if necessary; and that the WSP makes changes accordingly.

A monitoring team that is made up of stakeholders from the municipality, the WSP and the SSA should be nominated to conduct regular monitoring of different aspects of the project, technical, managerial and community relations.

1. The scope of monitoring

The things that need to be monitored and reported to the WSA are:

- How much water has been supplied?
- How much money has been spent?
- How much has the power cost?
- Is the supply reliable?
- Is the water quality acceptable (taste, appearance)?

The first three will be reported by the VWC, and village residents will be in the best position to report on the last two.

There are also more technical aspects of the O&M to be monitored such as:

- Effective pump operation
- Leaks
- Broken taps
- Blocked soakaways
- Regular meter readings.

If problems are identified whilst monitoring, they should be recorded, solutions found and implemented. If a problem persists it will be referred to the SSA.

In your municipality...

1. Identify when, where and who in the project should conduct formal monitoring.

2. Collect and keep all records.

3. Set up a mechanism to act on necessary changes to objectives, outcomes and implementation.

4. Feed these reports into larger evaluation processes.

Notes:

The farmer has been successful in bringing the crop to maturity and now it is ready for harvest. The farmer knows that for an even more successful crop, s/he together with the team of workers that made the crop a success will need to reflect on what made the previous crop successful. In this process they will identify what could have been done differently to ensure an even higher yield. It is in this process that the farmer will start to make plans to expand the crop.

So too, once the project has reached a stage where it has been functioning for a while, the planners and implementers should develop and then implement a process to evaluate the project. Once the findings of this evaluation have been shared amongst the village residents, planners and implementers, they should all have an opportunity to express what they believe would improve their own project. They should also reflect on ways that this information could inform the future expansion of the initiative within current projects and to other villages.

Finally the farmer plants the new crop, on the old land as well as new land, taking the recommended modifications or improvements into account. Here the project will be expanded to include more villages and lessons learnt from the first villages will mould the plans for the next set of villages. This will ensure the development of even better projects, with higher levels of participation, increased time and cost efficiency, regular delivery and swifter response to O&M problems, and a more productive working relationship between villages and municipalities.

Objectives
- To develop overall perspective on the achievements of the project.
- To discover the gaps and identify lessons learnt.
- To develop a way forward for the future working of the current O&M initiative and for the expansion of the project to other villages.

Outcome
Lessons that are uncovered are fed into current projects and inform plans for future projects.

Taking the steps -

Evaluation forms a part of every project. It is often regarded as the final step in a programme or project. However, the evaluation of ongoing support activities is an important time of reflection, learning and re-planting. Evaluations are lengthy and important components of successful project implementation, and in this step the process will be outlined briefly. Municipalities should consult more widely for a comprehensive evaluation plan.

1. The evaluation process
The evaluation process aims to discover the impact of the project activities. It does this by measuring the original objectives with the end-of-project situation and suggesting recommendations for future projects. It answers the questions:
- Have the original objectives been achieved?
- If not, what are the reasons?
- What has been achieved instead?
- What can be done differently in future projects?

From these general questions, more specific questions can be drawn up and used in the field. These will address the specific objectives the stakeholders have with regard to after-construction-support.

The most important difference between monitoring and evaluating is that monitoring assists planners to adapt the present conditions when aspects of the project are unsatisfactory, and take action to rectify the situation, whereas evaluation reviews the achievements and challenges of the completed project. Evaluation involves checking, collecting and analysing information about past programme development. This helps project planners to make decisions about continuing the project or not, or to make decisions about how to improve similar projects. Evaluation tells planners about the effectiveness of the strategy and the implementation.

> Evaluation of community-managed O&M should answer the question:
> *Are municipalities providing villages with a good quality, sustainable level of service through this approach?*

2. The evaluation team

As with monitoring, external people play an important role in evaluation. These people should have suitable experience in defining policies and institutional framework to support community-managed water supplies, or those who provided financial support for such projects. This could include representatives from national and provincial departments and foreign donor agencies.

3. Information for the evaluation

Evaluation data may be gathered through baseline information collected during the planning phase (Steps 2 and 4) and may be obtained from both quantitative and qualitative sources. As mentioned previously, baseline information must be analysed, stored and be easily accessible to users, if it is going to maximise its value. Adequate filing guidelines are essential for keeping records and other documents. This is vital to the success of the project, and so additional training to complement filing skills by staff is useful. Analysis of this data will allow evaluators to interpret the information and draw reliable conclusions. These conclusions will then serve as a basis for reflecting on the project and identifying ways of working more optimally in future projects.

The presentation of information is also important. If the data is presented in a complicated way, it will be unattractive to a potential user and will diminish the possibility of an accurate evaluation, thus impacting on future project planning. Potential users may also need the information in different formats. For example, heads of municipal departments will need summaries on maintenance performance to update themselves on key areas of work, whereas others may need an entire report to determine the effectiveness of, for example, training and skills development. When information is fed back to the village, it should be accessible to people who have varying levels of literacy and education.

In your municipality...

1. Start thinking about the evaluation process at the inception of the project, i.e. at Step 1. This will ensure that planners and implementers are aware of the type of data that they need to constantly collect throughout the project to inform the evaluation.

2. Develop an evaluation process soon after Step 5 (establishing the VWC) with criteria for assessing the impact of the project on the village (i.e. were the aims of the project met?).

3. Allocate time and resources to evaluate ongoing support to village water committees.

4. Establish a process with a facilitator for village residents to express their opinions of the project

5. Review the project together with all relevant external (donors, SSA) and internal (staff, residents) stakeholders.

Notes:

Developing projects in more villages

Objective

To identify villages in which the VWC system of managing O&M can be replicated.

Outcome

Municipalities will start to work in more villages and village level management of O&M will be expanded.

Taking the steps -

After the evaluation process is complete, the findings are likely to be used in two ways. The first is to incorporate these into the current projects in ways that boost their efficiency, effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The second is to use the findings (lessons learnt) to shape the planning and implementation of projects.

Municipalities will again go through the process of identifying villages, assessing the situations in each one and then establishing village water committees to manage local O&M of water provision. At each step the lessons that were learnt in the first round should shape the planning and implementation in subsequent rounds.

In your municipality...

1. Draw up a document of lessons learnt.

2. Identify how and where each of these lessons may shape the development of plans and practical implementation at each step.

3. Develop a checklist for planners and facilitators to be used as they guide village residents and VWC through the process of setting up the system for managing their own O&M.

4. Develop a checklist for planners and facilitators on the levels and types of support that village water committees need to enable them to perform optimally.

Notes:

Enjoying the harvest

In this handbook, municipal councillors and officials have travelled a long route. The journey started with thinking about the advantages for municipalities and communities of community-managed water schemes. The factors that need to be in place to secure the positive impact of such projects were explored, before reviewing and examining more practical aspects of setting up such a project in villages.

From entering the community and finding out what potential existed for village residents to manage their own O&M of the water scheme, to developing systems to monitor the village level implementation of the projects, the handbook has provided readers with practical information for establishing such projects.

Throughout this handbook the role of village residents as key decision-making partners has been emphasised. This has positive consequences for village residents: increasing confidence in their own capabilities, and maintaining a process that is resulting in increased sustainability in their own communities. Equally, the role of municipalities is central in establishing the project, setting up user-friendly systems and procedures, and providing continued support.

Just as the farmer is always thinking about what can be done to maintain his/her crop to then get the highest yield, this handbook has also impressed upon readers the value of taking lessons learnt and feeding these into current and future projects.

Striving to maintain high productivity and yield, through environmentally and economically sustainable farming, has many positive results. In the same way, in villages there are many advantages to developing programmes such as locally managed water provision that has a long-term vision and is sustainable and cost-efficient.

For women, the installation of a more effective water provision scheme will mean that they know that when they need water it will always be there for them and their households. In addition, the time that may have been spent collecting water from far-off sources can now be used more productively. Municipalities should use these opportunities to meet local economic development goals and boost economic growth in local villages.

For people with HIV and AIDS and their caregivers, the regular water supply and better sanitation increases chances of prolonging the productive life of those who are HIV-positive. It also enables caregivers to offer better, more hygienic care for those who are chronically ill.

For small-scale farmers, there is the reassurance of being able to plan, to plant and know that irrigation will be possible, and that there is a plan should the water provision fail.

It is hoped that this handbook will serve as a useful and practical tool as municipalities embark on the journey towards community-managed water service provision in every household and village.

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Appendix A:

Employment Legislation

Listed below are the relevant 'employment laws':

- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997);
- The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995);
- The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998);
- The Unemployment Insurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 63 of 2001);
- The Unemployment Insurance Contributions Act, 2002 (Act No. 4 of 2002);
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993);
- The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993);
- The Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998);
- The Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999); and
- The Income Tax Act, 1962 (Act No. 58 of 1962);

Copies of these Acts may be obtained from the Department of Labour and the Department of Finance (South African Revenue Services).

Appendix B:

Table of Contents from DWAF Model Contract

This Table of Contents will provide WSAs with an overview of what is included in the model contract.

Section A: Introduction
Definitions, preamble and commencement and duration of contract.

Section B: Training and Capacity Building Phase
Transitional arrangements, obligations of the CBO during the Training and Capacity Building Phase and obligations of the WSA during the Training and Capacity Building Phase.

Section C: Appointment of the CBO WSP
Appointment and scope of water services provided by CBO.

Section D: Responsibilities and rights of the CBO WSP
Provision of Water Services, management of the water services system including: operations, access to assets, procurement of goods and services, record-keeping, reporting, meetings with the WSA. Revenue and customer services, which includes: revenue collection, meter reading, billing / prepaid tokens / flat rate, and customer care and relations. Financial management: budget, financial report, bank account tariffs, equitable share, reimbursement of direct costs incurred by the WSA, income and expenses, losses and shortfalls, and insurance.

Section E: Responsibilities and Rights of the WSA
This section includes by-laws and policies, permits, licenses, exemptions, permission and/or approvals as well as financial responsibilities including: tariffs, grant funding, equitable share allocations, insurance, and recovery of costs from the CBO WSP. Here monitoring and meetings with the CBO WSP, information collection and Water Services Development Plan, and support services to the CBO WSP are also discussed.

Section F: Breach, Termination And Vis Major
The conditions under which a contract is terminated are discussed in this section.

Section G: General
This includes warranties, sub-contracting, dispute resolution, *domicilium citandi et executandi* (the physical location from where the provision is managed), whole agreement, no amendment and counterparts.

Making Water Work for Villages

Since 1994, water provision to all households in rural and urban areas has been one of the main developmental strategies of the democratic government.

This important and increasingly urgent task of quality water provision is now the mandate of municipalities. In rural communities where the villages in a single local authority are often spread out over a large geographic area, local governments face the significant challenge of carrying out this mandate efficiently and effectively.

This workbook is designed to assist municipalities to explore ways of managing these challenges. The one option is through developing community-level systems that will operate and maintain water schemes. The facets of community-managed schemes are explored in this guide, which is divided into two sections:

Part 1 -   **Introducing community-managed water schemes** which examines the contribution that community-based water service providers can make to improve the functioning of water service provision; and

Part 2 -   **How to establish and support community-managed water schemes** which focuses on the practicalities of establishing community- based operations and maintenance of water provision in villages.