

## Water

There is a growing consensus that although financial and technical issues matter, they do not constitute the only barrier to proper water provision across the world. In order to address challenges in service delivery in the water sector there is a need to focus on governance and accountability structures in the sector. Practitioners have increasingly explored social accountability mechanisms in order to address critical governance challenges in the sector (Ndwa, 2015). Social accountability approaches in the water sector have been implemented in a variety of ways, and include various dimensions. Most popularly, the establishment of water user committees, the compilation of citizen feedback, for example through score cards, and the establishment of joint mechanisms for monitoring have led to service delivery improvements in the water sector.

Feedback from users about the availability, functionality, quality and costs is crucial to advocate for better services. Citizens' feedback also helps set standards to monitor the provider's performance. Citizen score cards have been deployed to compile feedback and to facilitate dialogue among the stakeholders to implement reforms. For example, in Uganda, in 2008 and 2009 citizen report cards surveyed users on the quality and availability of water services, and shared these results with various stakeholders. As a result of these interventions, the number of users encountering difficulties in accessing water decreased significantly and service providers began to adjust their practices to improve services in response to public feedback (Sirker et al. 2010). Similarly, in Nepal, citizens' feedback on quality and accessibility of water and sanitation services was collected through citizen report cards, and the results were shared in an interface meeting with local stakeholders, and at a national workshop. As a result of these interventions, a water supply monitoring mechanism coordinated by a representative of the water users was established at least in one locality (Prasai, 2013).

In the same vein, in Nigeria, a community scorecards approach was used to identify gaps in service provision and to facilitate interaction among various stakeholders to collectively develop a plan of action. This process has led to improved management and delivery of water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) governance in participating communities (WSP, 2011a). A similar approach has been used in Ghana (WSP, 2011b). The Tajikistan Supply and Sanitation Project in Tajikistan – a project funded by the GPSA – has also used a similar approach. The project aims to increase citizens' participation in decision-making related to the water sector through the development of a citizen-based monitoring system and simplified indicators. It also plans to build capacities of service providers, local authorities and consumers in engaging with each other for better accountability. Recently, ICT has been used to provide more opportunities for citizens to directly engage with water service providers and to provide real time feedback, for example in Kenya's capital city through the program MajiVoice.

Community monitoring of water services is another popular approach. For example, in Kampala, Uganda the community identifies shortcomings in access to services and performs an audit to identify issues with service delivery and potential breaches of accountability. They present their findings at meetings and forums with the service providers (Jacobson et al., 2010). In order to improve capacities of citizens and users to monitor service delivery, a number of projects have also established and strengthened user committees. For example, in Nicaragua, water user committees were organized to liaise with the government officials and other stakeholders to improve local water infrastructure (e.g. boreholes). These committees play an important role in monitoring service delivery and providing quality and effective community-based water management (Kreimann, 2010).

## References

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