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**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTISECTORAL APPROACHES**

**Implementing the PAWS model of capacity building
in South Africa**

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Partners for Water and Sanitation (PAWS) is a tri-sector capacity building programme that supports the development of capacity for improved water and sanitation services in three African countries. The PAWS programme in South Africa, started in 2004, has supported a number of in-country partners at local, provincial and national spheres of government in areas including water quality laboratory accreditation, water demand management, contract management and customer services.

Experience of working with a range of municipalities and government agencies has identified lessons relevant to the future of the PAWS programme, which are also relevant to other such capacity building initiatives operating in similar countries.

Background

Partners for Water and Sanitation (PAWS) was launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, as a capacity building initiative of the UK government, supporting attainment of Target 11 of Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals. PAWS is a Type 2 WSSD partnership, requiring that the three sectors of business, government and civil society work together. To that end, UK-based expertise from these sectors is mobilized from a network of over 40 business, government and non-government organisation partners to advise in-country water and sanitation programmes and projects in South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

The programme is demand-driven, requiring that in-country partners define and express their capacity building needs. Capacity building expertise is offered *pro bono* by the UK partners, in response to the specific capacity needs identified by in-country partners in their delivery of water and sanitation services, with an emphasis on secondary towns and peri-urban areas. In 2004 PAWS signed its first Memorandum of Understanding with the South African national Departments of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWA) and Provincial and Local Government (dplg) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

The South African context

1994 ushered in a change in South Africa from apartheid to a democratic governance system. Principles of equity and equitable access form the cornerstone of the new dispensation. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) protects the dignity of all citizens and confers their right to sufficient water and an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being. Box 1 shows the minimum standard for basic water and sanitation required in terms of regulations of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997).

Since 1994, much progress has been made in extending water and sanitation services to the previously disadvantaged communities. In 1994, 15.9 million people, or 59% of a total population of 38.9 million, did not have access to basic levels of water. 86% of the population of 48 million had access to safe water supply in 2007 (DWA, 2008). 10 million more people were provided with sanitation in the same period, increasing the percentage of people with access to 71% (ibid). These figures, however, do not take into consideration the approximately 15% of households located in informal settlements.

Box 1: Regulations relating to compulsory national standards and measures to conserve water

The minimum standard for basic water supply services includes:

- a minimum quantity of potable water of 25 litres per person per day or 6 kilolitres per household per month, at a minimum flow rate of not less than 10 litres per minute, within 200 metres of a household; and such that no consumer is without a supply for more than 7 full days in any year.

The minimum standard for basic sanitation services is -

- the provision of appropriate health and hygiene education: and
- a toilet which is safe, reliable, environmentally sound, easy to keep clean, provides privacy and protection against the weather, well ventilated, keeps smells to a minimum and prevents the entry and exit of flies and other disease-carrying pests.

National government played a major role in addressing the backlogs; however, the Strategic Framework for Water Services (DWAF, 2003) now places the responsibility for water and sanitation service delivery on municipalities. As with its counterparts in the national and provincial spheres, local government has had to undergo major institutional transformation since 1994. South Africa is comprised of wall to wall municipalities, with six Metropolitan Municipalities (MMs) and the remainder of the country demarcated into District Municipalities (DMs). All DMs are further made up of individual Local Municipalities (LMs).

The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry has authorised Water Services Authorities (WSAs) to ensure access, to plan and to regulate water provision in its area of jurisdiction. A WSA can either provide the services where it has the capacity, or contract a Water Service Provider (WSP) to do so. Typically, WSAs are District Municipalities and WSPs are District or Local Municipalities, or Water Boards with the infrastructure and appropriate resources to provide services. The water and sanitation delivery function is one of 38 local government service delivery areas that the local government sphere is constitutionally responsible for. Municipal transformation has meant many internal and external challenges associated with its new roles and responsibilities, not least of which are re-alignment with current political priorities of addressing poverty and under-development, and compliance with a myriad of recently introduced legal and fiscal requirements.

Municipalities are not ideally capacitated to fulfil their new roles and responsibilities for water and sanitation service delivery. Posts for civil engineers in local government have reduced to one seventh the number employed in 1990. Despite this, local government has vacancies for 1400 engineering professionals, 3000 plant operators and for a wide range of artisans.

Gains made with the accelerated programme to extend water and sanitation services have been marred by limited concern about sustainability. In an audit undertaken by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), it was found that only 2.6% of household water projects and 20.7% of bulk water projects complied with national policy objectives and construction standards. 32% of street and yard taps were either broken or damaged, 35% of pumps were not working and 57% of diesel pumps did not have sufficient fuel (DWAF, 2008). Other challenges that the South African water sector faces are the deteriorating state of its rivers due to limited capacity and poor maintenance of new and established wastewater treatment works (ibid). The South African water and sanitation sector therefore requires support to build competency in various technical and management areas, including human resource development, asset management and water quality management. PAWS' UK partners are working with several South African in-country partners in national, regional, district and local government to advise and accelerate coverage and improve sustainability of water and sanitation services to underserved communities.

The PAWS approach in South Africa

Initially, the PAWS approach emphasised direct support to municipalities identified through a local Steering Committee made up of representatives of DWAF, **dplg**, SALGA and municipalities receiving PAWS support. This included municipalities that were struggling financially and those that were poorly staffed. PAWS was also accessible to any municipality approaching it directly for assistance. The PAWS Secretariat would work with a municipality, to determine the water and sanitation needs and draw up terms of reference for PAWS UK partner assistance.

In 2007, PAWS reviewed its strategy with South African stakeholders and resolved to take a more programmatic approach to capacity building, by aligning with capacity building initiatives operating at the national and provincial spheres of government. This allows PAWS to support national and provincial mechanisms that determine priority needs and appropriate municipalities to provide support to. Employment of a full time Country Manager since August 2008 has enabled PAWS to work closely with the national authority leading capacity building in the water and sanitation sector. This has been further facilitated by DWAF hosting the PAWS country office.

Case studies

PAWS has been supporting in-country partners in areas such as water quality, human resource development, water demand management, institutional development, contract management and customer care. The following case studies cover support provided to a national government department, a rural district municipality and an urban local municipality.

These case studies provide some valuable lessons for capacity building in South Africa, which may be applicable in other developing country settings or countries in transition.

Department of Provincial and Local Government

The Department of Provincial and Local Government (**dplg**) is responsible for regulating and supporting provincial and local government. A PAWS UK partner that is a legal firm trained 30 **dplg** officials on aspects of municipal services partnerships and contract management. These officials will in turn capacitate municipal officials. Follow up work has helped to resolve a dispute over model contracts entered into by water boards and municipalities.

dplg has requested additional support with contract management capacity building once necessary funding to cover in-country training costs is available.

Zululand District Municipality

Zululand District Municipality (ZDM) is located in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province, with 83% of households classified as rural (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2008a). The 2001 Census reported backlogs of 47% and 80% respectively in RDP standards of water and sanitation (ibid). The administration has been commended for its good capacity and its fine working relations with its political committees.

ZDM established what can be described as a "Twinning Arrangement" with the UK's Yorkshire Water (YW). The two organizations worked together to motivate staff to prepare a long term strategic plan, which was broken down into annual objectives. ZDM has progressed in an number of management and technical areas, with strategic inputs provided by YW at specific points as deemed necessary by ZDM. YW has supported ZDM in advancing:

- Change Management
- A Customer Care Strategic Framework
- The "People Development" approach to human resource development
- Its Water Quality Strategy
- Municipal Services Partnerships

ZDM has since requested assistance in additional areas of Asset Management (with a focus on operations and maintenance) and monitoring of its Water Service Providers, while future support areas are likely to include the development of a Metering Strategic Framework.

Mogale City Local Municipality

Mogale City Local Municipality is located within the West Rand District Municipality of Gauteng Province. According to the 2001 Census, 60% of rural households and 32% of urban households of the district are located in this local municipality (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2008b). 2% and 22% of households do not have access to basic levels of water and sanitation respectively (ibid).

A UK PAWS partner has supported Mogale City LM to develop a Water Demand Management Action Plan, which the municipality was able to use to access funding for its implementation. While the plan was partially implemented, work halted due to limited staffing and other priorities taking precedence, including that the wastewater treatment works was a major priority requiring immediate intervention.

Water Demand Management is regarded a priority in the Gauteng Province and PAWS is working with the authorities to align with the provincial support programme to municipalities, including Mogale City. PAWS is also working with the Gauteng authority to support its wastewater treatment compliance programme.

Lessons learnt

Key lessons learnt from these case studies and from broader PAWS experience in South Africa are:

- The pre-requisite that sufficient initial capacity exists within the in-country partner organisation to absorb the support being provided. This capacity refers to the appropriate human resources, funding and programmes already in place which would benefit from advice and mentoring. This 'absorptive capacity' results in a sustainable output long after the PAWS partner has completed direct support.
- There are significant advantages to aligning capacity building with existing in-country initiatives, particularly with strategic programmes which address sector priorities and themselves have a focus on capacity building. PAWS can then add value to national programmes that have identified priority areas for intervention and that select priority municipalities to work with. Being aligned with national interventions also raises the credibility of the PAWS programme.
- Partner funders are needed to complement or supplement a capacity building initiative such as PAWS. This can lead to better co-ordination and mutually beneficial support programmes.

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