

## COUNTRY LEVEL COLLABORATION : ZIMBABWE'S EXPERIENCE

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1981/82 the United Nations declared an International Decade for Water and Sanitation Development (IWSSD) which highlighted the importance of clean water and adequate sanitation facilities to all mankind. In Zimbabwe the decade provided a good framework for developing a national sector strategy for rural water supply and sanitation, within which specific programmes and projects could be developed.

One of the first activities to be undertaken was the preparation of a master plan on rural water supply and sanitation which was completed in 1985. This master plan focussed its implementation on an integrated approach in which all possible actors in the sector were given well defined roles and responsibilities. Apart from the implementers, the role for External Support Agencies (ESAS) was found to be indispensable. Thus possible actors on the Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (IRWSSP) were identified as:-

- Government Agencies
- External Support Agencies
- The Private Sector and
- Beneficiary Communities

With such a diverse array of partners on the IRWSSP it became clear that coordinated collaboration was vital in order to maximise the benefits of the water and sanitation programme in Zimbabwe. As a result coordinating structures were quickly set up to enhance dialogue among interested parties and to promote awareness of and support for the programme.

In order to maintain consistency with previous presentations on Zimbabwe's experience at similar fora, collaboration will be taken to refer to the overall interaction between agencies involved in either supporting or operationalising the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) sector, and coordination will be used to refer to some of the principle mechanisms for effecting collaboration within the sector. In Zimbabwe Country Level Collaboration (CLC) in the RWSS sector is a

complex but necessary process of exchange and negotiation between key actors. The process is time consuming, often difficult to manage but has been fully accepted as vital to the development and long-term sustainability of the sector.

## **2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY LEVEL COLLABORATION**

### **2.1 Interministerial Collaboration**

As stated before, the National Water Master Plan's (NMWP) implementation revolved around the concept of Integrated Approach in sector planning and implementation with community participation as a key strategy in implementation. Other issues to be addressed were those of sector coordination at national and sub-national levels, appropriate technology choice and the development of a sustainable operation and maintenance systems.

As a response to the IDWSSD a skeletal NAC had been formed by 1982. When the NMWP was formally adopted in 1986/87 this weak NAC was strengthened to its present effective state. The new look NAC had its chairmanship changed to to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development whose major role is that of sector coordination.

A vital addition was the establishment of a full time secretariat, the National Coordination Unit (NCU), with minimum beauraucracy to carryout the day-to-day programme monitoring and management. Subcommittees were established at national level to deliberate on crucial issues such as planning, budgeting, technology, information management, research, gender issues and human resources development. At sub-national levels, subcommittees of the NAC were set up to facilitate smooth flow of information vertically and horizontally, and for better and coordinated management of the field activities.

The terms of reference for each Committee, subcommittee or unit of the NAC were clearly defined to minimise duplications, conflicts and gaps. Appropriate operational level and consistent representation was encouraged for all NAC committees. The NCU and active subcommittees ensured a regular and reliable flow of information which facilitated informed decisions by the NAC. Collaboration and commitment, to the sector by implementing ministries, were enhanced by the provision of project resources.

## **2.2 Government - ESA Collaboration**

The establishment of the NAC and its secretariat, NCU, assisted in defining a clear entry point for External Support Agencies. Project proposals can be speedily prepared and dissemination of information on sector guidelines to ESAs is consistent. This enhances dialogue and collaboration with ESAs and the NCU is appropriately placed to cultivate and promote ESA interest in the sector. Interactions between ESAs and the NCU, although informal, assists in capturing useful ideas that may be incorporated in sector policy and implementation strategies.

More formal collaboration between ESAs and the Government of Zimbabwe is achieved through Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding and annual consultations through the Ministry of Finance or Department of Social Welfare. This assists informal assessment of Country to Country partnership and in improvement of the cooperation between governments. Others forms of formal collaboration are through official quarterly, half yearly and annual reports. Scheduled workshops and meetings such as annual reviews, bilateral consultations, mid terms reviews and disbursement (funds) meetings also enhance collaboration with ESAs.

## **3.0 SUCCESS AND CONSTRAINTS OF CLC**

### **3.1 Successes of CLC in Zimbabwe**

The fundamental measure of success of CLC in Zimbabwe is the presence of a dynamic and successful water and sanitation sector which operates with a high degree of support and liaison between agencies. In addition Zimbabwe has created an environment where:

- water and sanitation development is guided by national consensus,
- there is a clear set of policies and guidelines,
- the donor community supports the policy framework,
- there has been the development of a successful integrated approach,
- there is mobilisation of considerable donors support and financial resources,
- there is a recognition of shortcomings of the coordination system and
- the strength of NAC has been recognised at all levels.

### 3.2 Constraints or Problems of CLC

Problems not addressed by CLC and some which may have resulted from CLC process are:

- sector guidelines are often taken by implementers as prescriptive and rigid,
- the continued duplication although now at a reduced scale as a result of CLC,
- the weak coordination of NGOs although concerted efforts are underway to improve on this issue,
- NACs focus on IRWSS projects which has been taken as competition with other non-integrated WSS activities. The NAC has acknowledged this shortcoming and has lately started to report on all primary water supply and sanitation activities in all rural local authority areas.
- failure of the NAC to represent the whole sector.

### 4.0 CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE CLC

In Zimbabwe, some of the critical requirements identified for effective CLC are:

- The existence of a fully operational NAC with adequately resourced secretariat,
- Consistent participation of all relevant sector agencies in the NAC represented by senior level officers with operational experience in the sector,
- Clear division of responsibilities fully agreed upon by participatory agencies,
- High level commitment of all stakeholders to cooperation based on mutual interests,
- Adequate resources to support joint action.
- Continuous attention to both vertical and horizontal coordination.

- Need for all sector agencies to have a sense of ownership of the process,
- Operationally the NAC should provide a framework for coordination, but not control.

By giving due consideration to these requirements (above) and many, more related to Government/ESA partnership, CLC stands a good chance of flourishing.

## **5.0 EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CLC**

### **5.1 Background**

In September 1993 a Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council meeting was held in Rabat, Morocco at which the CLC working group presented its findings and recommendations. A case study on CLC in Zimbabwe was presented by Mr C.W.E. Matumbike and it noted that there were a number of positive developments on CLC in Zimbabwe. Consequently a regional workshop was recommended for the East and Southern African Region Countries to be held in Mutare, Zimbabwe in 1994.

### **5.2 Proceedings of Mutare Workshop 14-18 July 1994**

#### **5.2.1 Country Case Studies on CLC**

Nine Eastern and Southern African states were represented at this workshop. These are Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe. A tenth country, Ghana was represented on an observer status. A draft report of the proceedings has just been compiled and I would like to briefly summarise the report.

The meeting started with a presentation on the background to the process of CLC outlining its benefits and disadvantages. The benefits were classified into 3 groups and potential disadvantages identified from group work. These were summarised as shown in Table 1.

All the nine participating countries presented case studies of their experiences in CLC. The major observations made in these presentations were:

- that there is great need for more efforts to be made in improving CLC among implementing agencies, ESAs and beneficiary communities or Local Authorities,
- that is need for information dissemination among all interested parties
- that clear guidelines and policies need to be formulated and disseminated to enhance CLC,
- that the private sector needs to be involved especially in technical aspects of implementation and Operations and Maintenance,
- that there was a need for the greater involvement of Local Authorities in order to enhance sustainability,
- that a constitutional or legal framework may assist in the process of building up CLC.

An analysis of the country case studies resulted in the identification of factors affecting the development of effective CLC mechanisms which are in Table II.

### 5.2.2 **Presentation on the WSSC and CLC**

The presentation started with a historical account of the WSSC and the formation of the CLC Working Group in Oslo, Norway, in 1991. In the last meeting of the working group 9 key findings were identified and listed in Section 1.6.3 of the draft Mutare Workshop Report.

### 5.2.3 **Field Visit to the Provincial Offices and Districts**

The delegates formed 2 groups for the purposes of field visits to assess the extent of CLC at sub-national levels and the concepts of sustainability. One group visited the Provincial Water Supply and Sanitation Subcommittee and then went to a district where the project had been completed. The other groups went to an implementing district where the process of decentralisation of the programme is under a pilot study. Details are included in the draft report. I will however, briefly present the Country sector plan for Zimbabwe.

#### 5.2.4. Zimbabwe Action Plan for Enhancing CLC

In Zimbabwe the 2 most critical issues to be addressed in order to enhance CLC revolve around the concepts of Decentralisation and Sustainability of the the RWSS Programme.

##### 5.2.4.1 Decentralisation

The overall objective of decentralisation is to improve efficiency and sustainability on the RWSS Programme through the transfer of responsibilities from line ministries to the local authorities. This transfer will be in phases with the earlier transfer being of those responsibilities in which local authorities have developed and capacity are more efficiently undertaken at local level. A capacity building exercise will be established to improve the capacity of local authorities to take up more complex responsibilities.

The mechanism for addressing this issue of decentralisation is through Facilitators or Decentralisation Officers who will be attached to local authorities for this capacity building programme. As this is a pilot project this action plan will initially be carried out in 5 RWSS Pilot Districts and the following steps will be followed.

##### **Step 1 : Definition of Decentralisation**

This will be achieved through the development of guidelines for decentralisation of the RWSS Programme. This will include the roles of all actors with special focus on the local authorities and their subcommittees on the programme. This stage is expected to take a duration of 6 months. TOR for the Decentralisation Officers will be compiled.

##### **Step 2 : The Capacity Building Phase**

This phase will start with the recruitment of decentralisation facilitators/officers whose overall task is to improve the capacity of the local authorities to manage matters on decentralisation on the RWSS projects. The facilitators will deal with all aspects of human resources development, plant, equipment, and all other logistics to improve the performance of the local authorities. This phase is expected to take up to 2 years.

### **Step 3 : Evaluation**

An evaluation will be immediately undertaken towards the end of step 2 as this will enable the NAC to assess how replicable this pilot study could be. Those aspects which will be found to be easily replicable will be included in a plan for possible replication in other districts. The evaluation should be undertaken in a period of 6 months.

### **Step 4 : Replication**

Experiences from the pilot districts will be put to test on a much wider scale.

#### **5.2.4.2 Sustainability**

The overall objective in pursuing issues related to sustainability in order to come up with a Water and Sanitation Programme which is self sustaining.

This is more of a Central Government issue as the strategies for sustainability have far reaching implications politically. Consequently there is a need to first make policy changes so as to facilitate complete management at community levels. This issue will be tackled in 5 steps as detailed below.

#### **Step 1**

Preparation of policy recommendations by the NAC on all issues relating to sustainability on the programme. This is expected to take 3 months.

#### **Step 2**

Present recommendations to Government and, hopefully, get a clear policy on sustainability. It is difficult to state any time limits for this step as politicians need more time to debate such issues.

#### **Step 3**

Preparation of guidelines for sustainability which will take about 3 months.

#### **Step 4**

Dissemination of guidelines which should be completed in 6 months.



### **Step 5**

Implementation of the programme in line with new policies and guidelines on sustainability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, although Zimbabwe has made significant strides on Collaboration issues on the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme there are still a lot of issues to be addressed and more room for improvement. I hope you will wish us a good luck as we try to resolve problems ahead.

Thanks Mr Chairman.

**TABLE 1. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF COUNTRY LEVEL COLLABORATION**

<b>POTENTIAL BENEFITS</b>
<p><u>Planning Related Benefits</u>            Standardization of technology and approach;            Project design and implementation/coordinated;            Harmonization of policies;</p> <p><u>Output Related Benefits</u>            Enhanced sustainability (ownership);            Enhanced sector image (speak with one voice);            Information sharing;            Enhanced accountability and <u>transparency</u>;</p> <p><u>Process Related Benefits</u>            Better identification of needs leading to better management;            Increased resource mobilisation;            Effective utilisation and more equitable distribution of resources and services;            Resolution of conflicts;            Consensus building;            Helps include all stakeholders in the programme.</p>
<b>POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES</b>
<p>Guidelines could be constraints when taken like rules during implementation;            Collaboration increases bureaucracy hence time consuming and <u>costly</u>;            Increased inter-agency conflict;            Too many trade offs;            Work load on personnel increases;            Less opportunistic;            Less consultation vertically with alienation of senior decision makers;            Expensive in time and resources.</p>

TABLE 11

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE CLC MECHANISMS

FACTORS FOR:	FACTORS AGAINST:
1. Setting of realistic goals	1. Lack of clearly defined goals
2. Political will	2. Power struggle among members
3. Selecting the right collaborative mechanisms	3. Vested interests of bilateral and multilateral donors (Tied Aid)
4. Collaborative mechanism set at the right level	4. Corruption
5. Strong institutional capacity	5. Fear of losing power
6. Self sustaining Secretariat for propagating CLC ideals	6. Opposite of positive factors
7. ESA commitment	7. Negative political influence at all levels
8. Broad consensus on objectives	8. Tendency of donors to drive the process through conditionalities
9. Will and need of sector agencies	9. Benefits of CLC are of long term nature
10. Financial resources	10. NGOs resistance to regulation
11. Stable political environment	
12. Non-partisan type of lead agency	
13. Willingness to achieve transparency and accountability	
14. Community involvement, participation and acceptance of the collaboration strategy	
15. Willingness to learn from past experiences and mistakes in particular	