

Update on DFID's work in water and sanitation since the Water Action Plan

The challenge

Water is essential for life. Around 1.2 billion people do not have access to safe water and 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation. So providing clean water and sanitation should be a priority for all of us. Water and sanitation also help ensure that more people live longer, healthier and more productive lives.

Without clean water and sanitation people are vulnerable to blindness, worms, dengue, diarrhoea and cholera. Each year 1.7 million children die from diarrhoea associated with inadequate water supplies, sanitation and hygiene. Providing sanitation alone could save up to 600,000 of these children each year.¹

Women and girls bear much of the burden of collecting and managing water in the home. Better water supplies can immediately reduce this burden and help more girls to go to school. For example, in Bangladesh, a school sanitation and hygiene education programme increased girls' attendance rates by 11%.² Women's health also benefits from not having to carry heavy water containers over long distances. It also allows women more time to earn money and to look after their families. Having a water point or a latrine close to the home means women and girls are less likely to be attacked or raped.

Water and sanitation: facts

- Water-related diseases cost the Indian economy 73 million working days each year.
- The return on \$1 investment in sanitation and hygiene in low income countries is in the range \$3 to \$34.³
- At any one time one half the population of the developing world is suffering from a water-related illness.⁴

In 2000, the world signed up to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and in 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

¹ Cairncross S, O'Neill D, McCoy A, Sethi D (2003) Health, Environment and The Burden of Disease: a Guidance Note , DFID

² Sen, D. (2000), *School Sanitation and Hygiene Education*, in 26th WEDC Conference proceedings, WEDC, Loughborough University

³ Hutton, Guy and Laurence Haller. 2004. *Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Water and Sanitation Improvements at a Global Level*. Water, Sanitation and Health Protection of the Human Environment. WHO, Geneva.

http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/en/wsh0404.pdf Pg 9-14.

⁴ MDG Task Force Report on Water and Sanitation, 2005

At current rates of progress, the water target will not be achieved in sub-Saharan Africa. The sanitation target will be missed in both Africa and Asia by almost a billion people.

The reasons for this include:

- In national development plans and budgets water and sanitation are often not treated as the priority they are for poor people.
- Often no single government ministry has the overall responsibility for delivering water and sanitation services.
- Different donors and development agencies too often take an individual approach within a given country.
- The most needy areas are not always targeted.
- Demand for sanitation is not always clearly expressed.
- For sanitation, the infrastructure and access to services must be combined with hygiene promotion programmes.

Moving forward – what DFID is doing to help

Despite the importance and benefits, delivering clean water and safe sanitation is difficult. DFID has responded by focusing greater attention on water and sanitation over the last year.

In March 2004 DFID published an [action plan](#). This plan covered what we intended to do directly in developing countries, our work at a regional level and our work with the international community. It focused on:

- Ensuring that clean water and sanitation are central to our discussions with developing country governments.
- Providing evidence to support the argument that by improving sanitation and clean water all aspects of life for the world's poorest will improve.
- Supporting a small number of international partnerships, particularly those that can improve coordination in the water sector.

Progress is being made in some countries but a great deal more needs to be done in order to reach the MDG target. DFID believes that efforts are most effective when they support the plans of developing country governments. This is why we work with other partners and country governments to make progress and support the setting up of donor groups to coordinate this work.

DFID's overall expenditure on the water sector in 2004-05 was an estimated £200 million. Of this, DFID contributed an estimated £25 million to the World Bank and £17.5 million to the European Commission for water programmes. DFID's contribution to the African Development Bank's water sector budget is expected to increase rapidly from £3.5 million in 2004-05 to £18.5 million by

2007-08. DFID also funds NGOs such as WaterAid, international research organisations, and international partnerships such as the Global Water Partnership, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, the Water and Sanitation Programme managed by the World Bank⁵ and the Joint Monitoring Programme which is implemented by WHO and UNICEF.

On World Water Day, 22 March 2005, the Secretary of State for International Development made a commitment that DFID would double its funding for water and sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa from £47.5 million to £95 million per year by 2007-08. He also committed that DFID would push others, including the EU and the World Bank, to make faster progress.

In particular, the Secretary of State pledged on 22 March that, in DFID partner countries in Africa where the water MDG target is off-track, we would:⁶

- Make sure that there was a core donor group working on water and sanitation (and take the lead if we need to).
- Map what donors and the government were doing, and what more needed to be done.
- Make water and sanitation a central focus of our discussions with the government.

In the four African countries which are most off-track against the water and sanitation MDGs, he pledged also to:

- Second people in to boost capacity in the government.
- Find quick ways of boosting spending on water and sanitation.

We have already reviewed what's happening in these countries and identified next steps to improve delivery. The table on the following page shows how we've acted on the pledges in 12 African partner countries since 22 March:

⁵ The Water and Sanitation Programme is funded separately to the core World Bank water projects.

⁶ 11 countries were originally stated - DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Sierra Leone is also now included in this list bringing the total to 12.

Four most off-track countries in Africa

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

There is a core donor / government group led by the European Community of which DFID is a member. DRC is developing its first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) although water is not comprehensively covered in the existing draft. The government has recognised that it needs a better plan and DFID has offered consultancy support to help put this together. A good plan will provide a basis for increased international funding to deliver water and sanitation to the poor.

Meanwhile, we are co-funding an application to the EU Water Facility to improve water in Mbuji-Mayi, the country's third largest city. We are also considering support to a national rural water and sanitation health programme.

Ethiopia

There is a core donor group. The government has published a water and sanitation strategy and is increasing its emphasis on the sector. In Ethiopia, DFID provides funding to the government through budget support. We will use our strong position in the budget support donor group to push for essential increased allocations to water and sanitation. DFID has offered a consultant to support Italy as lead coordinator for the EU Water Initiative to be in post by October 2005. We are also planning to second an expert to the Ministry of Water in early 2006. If additional direct funding is required, we will assess options to provide selective support to WaterAid, the World Bank or the African Development Bank.

Nigeria

Donor coordination has been weak but is improving, led by UNICEF and the World Bank. Nigeria allocates 10 per cent of its national budget to water but there is still a huge funding gap; debt relief and better coordination provide important opportunities to close the gap. More focus is also needed on sanitation. DFID provides funding and has seconded a specialist to support UNICEF as the lead donor on rural water and sanitation. DFID also provides funding to WaterAid, a small towns project and to UNICEF's girls' education project which has a strong sanitation component. We are also planning work with the World Bank focusing on urban water and sanitation.

Sudan

A donor group is planned but not yet established. Access to water and sanitation is extremely low in southern Sudan where government capacity and coordination is weak. In the north, the situation is better, but greater government commitment is needed. A huge increase in spending on water and sanitation is required. DFID and other donors have provided short-term access to water as part of the humanitarian effort. DFID has also seconded staff to UNICEF to boost its capacity in Darfur and further support is planned. We will develop an integrated service delivery programme in the south (£20 million over two years) covering water and sanitation as well as primary health and basic education. A Multi-Donor Trust Fund is being established which provides an opportunity for increased action on water and sanitation.

Eight other off-track countries in Africa

Ghana

The World Bank is the lead donor in the urban sector and Canada in the rural sector. Policies on water and sanitation exist but remain weak and funding is inadequate. Sanitation in particular is poorly implemented. To support the government's water plan, DFID is providing £7.7 million for urban water and sanitation projects. The joint-donor projects will use appropriate engineering techniques to bring water to urban areas where wells and boreholes are unsuitable and to supply clean water to remote areas where guinea worm is endemic.

Malawi

DFID sits on the government/donor group but there is no lead donor. The new Malawi Economic Growth and Development Strategy gives water and sanitation a much higher priority but investment needs to be increased. DFID is lobbying to improve coordination and government capacity and water will be included in the new Country Assistance Plan. Water and sanitation is included in the school construction programme which DFID supports.

Mozambique

A core donor group is chaired by the Netherlands. DFID is increasing its engagement with donors and the government to ensure that the National Water Strategy is taken forward in the new Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). In Zambezia Province, DFID and UNICEF are spending £3.7 million over four years on a rural water supply and sanitation project. DFID will monitor the need for new and additional funding for the sector while working to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of current spending. Funding is an issue but supply chain and capacity issues are more of a problem.

Rwanda

The World Bank has taken steps to form a donor group. DFID will be a member when it becomes operational. Rwanda adopted a new water and sanitation policy in 2004. Capacity and spending needs to be increased with a greater focus on sanitation. DFID's funding is through poverty reduction budget support. We expect increased emphasis on water and sanitation in the next PRS as part of an overall increased budget.

Sierra Leone

The Development Partnership Committee has been coordinating activities in this area and DFID is becoming more active. Water and sanitation is explicitly stated as a priority in the PRSP although all policy has been set back by a decade of civil war. National water and sanitation policy is being developed but implementation remains weak. Some donors, for example the World Bank, the African Development Bank and UNICEF, play a key role. DFID has recently recruited an infrastructure adviser to its office in Sierra Leone to strengthen capacity in this area.

Tanzania

DFID is a member of the Development Partners' Group on Water which coordinates donor activities. There is a strong policy framework and the second PRSP identifies targets for water and sanitation. The main challenge now lies in securing greater coordination in the sector and ensuring that funding is given to low-cost rural supply projects as a priority. DFID provides funding through budget support and WaterAid. DFID is advocating greater harmonisation among donors and a government-led coordination process.

Uganda

Uganda is generally well endowed with water resources, apart from the drought-prone north, with over 60 per cent of people having access to safe water. The government has a Water Sector Strategic Investment plan which has a ring-fenced budget and its expenditure is planned to increase. Denmark, Sweden and Germany are the lead donors and DFID supports the sector through the National Water and Sanitation Support programme. Just under £5 million has been allocated to this programme. DFID is also considering ways to support the government's increased budget commitment in this area.

Zambia

An informal donor group is led by Ireland; DFID will participate in this group. The Government of Zambia is currently working on a National Development Plan which will include water. DFID is keen to support a single strategy to address the government's priorities with other donors.

Alongside these new efforts, existing work has been delivering benefits to the poor, for example:

- In Bangladesh, we are working with WaterAid to develop 'Community Led Total Sanitation' to villages. This means giving local communities the head start to take action without waiting for government subsidies. By completely eliminating open defecation, the programme has reduced diarrhoea, increased incomes and raised self-respect. This is an innovative demand-led approach which is now being replicated in India, Indonesia, Uganda and Zambia.
- In Malawi, we have helped to improve the design of good water and sanitation facilities in schools over the last three years. At the request of girls, latrines for boys and girls are now at opposite ends of the school and handwashing facilities have been incorporated to help with hygiene. This year, shared girls' urinals have been introduced which are cheaper to build, easily supervised and reduce the time girls spend queuing. These sorts of measures have a significant effect on improving the numbers of girls coming to school.
- DFID is providing £15 million of funding over five years to the Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF to support water and sanitation plans being developed by communities themselves. Since 2004, over 250,000 people in local communities have benefited from new

handpump-operated boreholes and 70 boreholes in schools and 1,200 latrines have been built. The aim is that the community-led planning process will be replicated elsewhere. The EU has recently agreed to provide €40 million to widen the programme to six more states.

- DFID also recently funded a study, carried out by the Overseas Development Institute and WaterAid, which confirms that even where water and sanitation are addressed in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), it rarely translates to sufficient funds being allocated. Now WaterAid is preparing country papers on the work and funding needed for countries to meet the targets, which will provide better information to governments and so influence funding.

DFID's support at regional level

We think we can achieve more if we work effectively with other donors and agencies, including by seconding staff, rather than just on our own. We will put our money through organisations most likely to deliver results on the ground, for example the African Development Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative, that aims to increase coverage in rural areas to 66 per cent by 2010 and 80 per cent by 2015, and the EU Water Facility that recently approved a second stage of funding worth €250 million. Proposals for the EU Water Facility are being evaluated, with the first approvals expected by October 2005. Examples of progress at a regional level include:

- Under the UK's Presidency, G8 leaders committed to implement the G8 Africa water action plan agreed at Evian in 2003, by increasing aid in the sector. They also agreed to better coordinate aid to improve its impact.
- DFID leads the EU Water Initiative Finance Working Group providing advice to regions on financing water and sanitation projects. The Africa Water Supply and Sanitation Working Group is setting up discussions on policy and implementation in ten pilot countries each led by an EU member state. This will focus on ways to improve the efficiency of EU aid and how to leverage other forms of finance. In Ethiopia, DFID is supporting the Italians who lead the donor group there.
- We have seconded a specialist to the European Commission to support the EU Water Initiative and we will second a financial specialist to the African Water Facility later this year.
- We are increasing our support for the Nile Basin Initiative – an African-led example of regional cooperation and good governance of a shared water source. We are providing more specialist help, encouraging countries to share experiences and learn from each other, and making sure local community groups are involved in decisions about the use of water.
- We have produced an Asia Water Plan, which we will take forward with the Asian Development Bank and other partners, to tackle specific problems in the region. 60 million people across the region are at risk

from water supplies polluted with arsenic. Fluoride also contaminates water in parts of India and China. Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan have the greatest challenges in terms of increasing access to safe water and sanitation. DFID's plan for Asia highlights exactly where and how we will work to improve water supply, water quality and sanitation.

DFID's support at international level

DFID supports a small number of international partnerships in the water sector:

- We provide both core funding and money for specific initiatives of the Water and Sanitation Programme, of which we are the largest donor.
- We support recent efforts by the World Bank to increase spending in the sector and the quality of its activities. The World Bank has increased its spending on water to the poorest countries in Africa from \$117 million in 2001 to \$258 million in 2004. This trend is set to continue with expenditure in Africa on water to poor countries estimated to reach over \$350 million by 2007.
- We continue to be a major contributor to the other leading international water organisations, UN agencies and international NGOs.

Future updates

DFID will prepare a further update on progress against the World Water Day commitments early in 2006. The update will set out how DFID will continue to make water and sanitation a priority in order to meet the challenge of achieving the water and sanitation targets in the developing world.

DFID
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