

**Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector
Pilot Demonstration Activity**

Activity Title: <u>Advocacy for Change: Multi Stakeholder Platform (MSP) for reforms of the Gwalior Urban Water Supply, Madhya Pradesh</u>	
Proposer (Name, Div/Dept): Dr. Jasveen Jairath, General Secretary Society for Participatory Development, Hyderabad, India	
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Implementing Organization Contact: Society for Participatory Development (SPD), F-1, Eden Banjara Aurora Colony, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, A.P., India. Tel. +91-40-55541838 / Fax. +91-40-55617985 capnet_southasia@spdindia.org , jasveenjairath@spdindia.org	
Consultant Identified? N.A.	If so, Consultant(s) Contact:
ADB Activity Officer - name, position, division, telephone and e-mail:	Alex Jorgensen, Principal Urban Specialist, INRM ajorgensen@adb.org (Supported by Gulfer Cezayirli, Senior Urban Development Specialist, SASS, gcezayirli@adb.org)

1. Short Description:

Most cities are currently *growing* cities in terms of their employment opportunities - that is attracting a large influx of population from a broad spectrum of income categories. This has placed sudden and huge demands on its infrastructure for basic amenities particularly on urban water supply as also on City Corporations that is the main public sector agency that handles water supply of the cities. Situation in Gwalior has assumed acute proportions with unaccounted for water (UFW) as high as 64% and only one hour of supply daily with an average of 93 lpcd consumption. Population covered by reticulation system is only 9%, only 62% households have a connection and 68% are secured by piped water supply. Urban water supply is primarily dependent on the surface water supplies from reservoirs in the rural areas that are fed by rivers and water flows in the catchment areas as well as ground water. The water source in rural areas is also under pressure from demands of local communities. Urban pollution of fresh water sources further reduces available supplies of fresh water – making the competition for resources more acute. This has led to considerable tension and the situation is vulnerable to political pressures. The consequential erratic and politicians driven processes of decision-making regarding water draws from rural and distribution to urban areas have precluded any systematic and long term planning of the strategic matching of increasing user demand with limited availability of natural water supply that has multiple demands. The total lack of transparency facilitates and creates the breeding ground for a nexus between corrupt agencies from within the delivery and consuming constituencies.

Further - lack of regulation in use of the water coupled with a politically expedient decision on strategies of water withdrawal from rural hinterland and ground water has aggravated the governance problems of water delivery in the city. Palliative measures in a piecemeal manner are undertaken to overcome severe shortages in an ad hoc manner and in response to political pressures. This has led to the classic “low equilibrium” situation of poor delivery at low cost.

Since this is clearly unsustainable - it is argued that a multi-stakeholder dialogue process can contribute significantly to the emergence of least contentious solutions to the mismatch between supply and

demand through suggestions that entail extensive (as opposed to intensive) use of water in both – rural and urban - constituencies. This needs to be encouraged by suitable policy framework and instituting measures like graduated water pricing for domestic users in urban areas, securing the essential livelihood water needs of the poor women and men as a priority, use of local rain water harvesting techniques, waste water recycling for relieving pressure on demand side etc. In particular the voice of the poor needs to be articulated with clarity and force. The establishment of the MSP is required for an objective assessment/diagnostics of the water malaise of the urban water utility for cities through participation of the whole range of stakeholders and also for evolving strategies of action. This will create synergies with Municipal Action Poverty Reduction (MAPP) initiative of the government through facilitating community and NGO involvement. It will constitute a mechanism for interactive planning between formal local government and citizen's groups from Gwalior representing local interests and enable decentralized planning.

This can be realized through mobilization of the institutional representatives of diverse categories of stakeholders – who have to be identified/established and brought together on a common platform – through advocacy for proceeding towards operationalizing the establishment of MSP.

2. Scope of Work/Description of Activities:

The major sets of stakeholders comprise the following- domestic consumers of differentiated income categories; commercial establishments; industrial establishments;

Government organizations; service organizations; public places, delivery of water service organizations, etc. that are spread out across the city. The activities will focus on:

- Area wise and categories wise consolidation of the data on stakeholders and their actual organization for representation of their voice at the MSP. This social mobilization will be done through series of public meetings – separately for homogenous groups of stakeholders - where an elaboration of the objectives and context of the MSP will be presented as also the expected role of the respective stakeholders in the entire process of mobilization for reforms of the Gwalior City Water Corporation.
- Activities to consolidate the existing Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) within the municipal limits of Gwalior City will be undertaken. Where none exist – new ones will be established through local communities – particularly in the slum/basti areas and other low-income localities. Gender balanced representation from such local organized groups of domestic users will be selected through an open transparent process for participation in the MSP dialogue.
- A common governance code will be established for their functioning in the context of a city-based federation- that will enable the institutionalized participation of the civil society representatives. This is necessary as these are the most scattered water consumers that need to be catered to and are most vulnerable with access to water supplies due to which they have to resort to more expensive and unreliable channels of water supply.
- Similarly, supply side stakeholders like the members of the Gwalior City Water Corporation, government representatives, Municipal Corporation of Gwalior City, minister, elected corporators, etc, will also be mobilized as members of the forum.
- Similar consolidation of representation of other consumer groups like the industry, commercial establishments, hospitals etc will be undertaken for their participation in the multi-stakeholder (MSP) forum.
- This forum will be constituted/launched through the public presentation of the water scan/audit of the Gwalior City Water Corporation and consultation on the technical, economic and managerial problems associated with the functioning of the Corporation.
- The recommendations for action plan will emerge out of the discussions of this collective of consumers and suppliers as an advocacy for recommended change.

3. Institutional Management Arrangements and Proponent Qualifications:

- Area and locality wise organizations of stakeholders will be constituted with simple governance norms that are agreed upon by the community. They will then be oriented towards the MSP concept, their role and contribution and motivated /guided/facilitated to carry out the local water scan/audit. Each locality will identify gender-balanced representatives for participation in the final MSP launch.
- Organization of the Multi-stakeholder platform will be undertaken through federation of scattered stakeholder organizations - RWAs, along with other consumer groups, supply side agencies, and representatives from surrounding rural habitations from where the surface water feeds into the urban requirements. To be done through resource persons and NGOs who are active in the localities.
- Organization of regional meetings within the city for awareness about the initiative for reforming Gwalior City Water Corporation through the MSP and their participation in the process- through SPD and local NGO resource persons
- Organization of the final public meeting for presentation of the viewpoints (comprising water, technology and management scans of water supply in their locality) of the various stakeholders to the government for follow up through MSP – to be done by SPD and local NGO resource persons.
- Process documentation of the exercise will be undertaken on an ongoing basis by separate set of resource persons for objectivity of observations.
- Preparation of the action plan for Gwalior City Water Corporation reforms through the MSP for submission to the government.

4. Expected Results (Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts):

Specific output:

- Federation of Network of RWAs in the city of Gwalior, water consumers structured according to their broad socio-economic category.
- Multi Stakeholder Platform for Urban Water Supply comprising the public sector, private sector and civil society will be put in place.
- Gender balanced representation in MSP and at local community level in RWAs.

General Outcome:

- Institutionalization and articulation of water voice of the urban poor
- Advocacy for urban water sector reforms with the decision makers
- Institutional platforms for slum/poor dwellers for their water management – supply and internal distribution.
- Greater awareness for the acceptance of the voice of the poor in the governance of urban water supply
- Public sensitization to open, transparent and democratic governance strategies for water management.

Creation of institutional structure of citizens committees that can be used for a wide range of public service delivery interface between the government and the citizens—eg., for sanitation, electricity, security etc.—for better overall governance and sustainability of the institutions created.

5. Measurable Performance Indicators:

- MSP in place
- Federated structure of RWAs in place
- Water, technology and managerial scans for Gwalior City Water Corporation