

SOUTH ASIAN WATER UTILITIES NETWORK (SAWUN)

DRAFT PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES 2007-2008

The following is a draft program of activities for SAWUN in 2007-2008 (12 consecutive months from May 2007). Each activity will require to be supported by a concept paper (one page) that will evolve into a project document (5 pages) with (i) background and rationale, (ii) objectives, scope, and benefits (iii) costs and financing plan, and (iv) implementation arrangements (including monitoring and evaluation).

Performance Benchmarking

A benchmarking exercise will be designed and conducted that will determine performance levels in core areas of water utility operations including service levels and quality, operational efficiency, and financial management. The exercise will be supported by workshops to agree on a set of performance indicators, explain the benchmarking process, and ensure consistency in the data collected. Workshops to share the results, identify best practices, and eventually develop strategies for continuous improvement will also be organized. As with all benchmarking exercises, it will be conducted regularly (i.e. every 2 years).

Basic utility data will be collected, analyzed, and compared across members within countries, the region, and across regions eventually. Improvements in performance parameters can subsequently be monitored and evaluated at periodic intervals. The benchmarking exercise will enable utility managers, owners, governments, and consumers to look more closely at problem areas and identify solutions in partnership with members.

ADB will support the design and implementation of this exercise in consultation with members. A broad range of utilities reflecting size, structure, service area, and coverage profile will be covered. Experience gained in undertaking a similar exercise with the Southeast Asia Water Utilities Network will be factored into the design.

Water Operators Partnerships Program (Twinning)

Three twinning projects are proposed to be started with the participation of the following utilities that have demonstrated efficiencies in their operations: Singapore PUB, Manila Water Company, Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority. Possible areas to be covered by the twinning include NRW reduction, water quality improvements, customer care, planning and implementing capital expansion programs, improved financial management, and enabling access of the urban poor to the water services network. A performance audit of the utility being assisted will be conducted by the assisting utility from which an performance improvement program will be developed. The activities may include secondment of expert staff, training programs for managerial and technical personnel, on-site demonstration, and exchange visits.

Training Programs (organized by SAWUN for its general membership)

The following core training areas are proposed to be developed over time:

- (i) NRW reduction,

- (ii) water demand management and conservation,
- (iii) asset management,
- (iv) full cost recovery,
- (v) enabling water services delivery for the urban poor
- (vi) risk management,
- (vii) regulation,
- (viii) financial management,
- (ix) water quality management, and
- (x) customer relations.

In the initial phase, however, the following three programs will be developed. They will incorporate workshops, study tours, and replicable pilot work. A modular concept will be applied so that participants can acquire skills and methodologies at different stages based on their current competence levels

- (i) NRW reduction,
- (ii) water demand management and conservation, and
- (iii) asset management

Workshops and Seminars

Two workshops/seminars each are planned to be developed and offered as follows:

- (i) Financing Expansion of Water Supply Systems
- (ii) Results-based strategies for Wastewater Management

A panel of specialists drawn from the best utilities in Asia will be engaged to design and offer the workshops/seminars. Participants will be invited from those member utilities that stand most to gain from exposure to these subjects.

Knowledge Development

Three monographs are proposed to be commissioned from among the following subjects:

- (i) Tariff Structures – The True Costs of Urban Water Supply in South Asia
- (ii) Sanitation Strategies – Bringing Sanitation Center Stage
- (iii) The Urban Poor – Efficiencies in Providing Full Access
- (iv) 24-hour Water Supply – The Case For High Quality Service
- (v) Water Quality – Improved Public Health in South Asia
- (vi) Managing Customer Relations – A Performance Enhancer