

SOUTH ASIAN WATER UTILITIES NETWORK (SAWUN)

CHARTER

A. Background

1. The initiative to establish SAWUN derives from the Hashimoto Action Plan of March 2006 that calls, inter alia, for water operators' partnerships to be established globally for the purpose of enhanced performance in the delivery of water supply and sanitation services. An initial meeting of invited water utilities in South Asia in New Delhi on 7-8 December 2006 concluded unanimously that SAWUN should be established soonest, and a program of mutually supporting activities developed. A subsequent meeting in Islamabad on 23-24 April 2007 formally established SAWUN with its vision, mission, strategies, structure and operational guidelines as follows:

B. Vision

2. SAWUN members, drawn initially from the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, measurably improve their performance in the delivery of water supply and sanitation services to meet Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

C. Mission

3. SAWUN becomes a capable, self-sustaining organization that is proactive to its members needs, demonstrating excellence and relevance in the delivery of its programs and practices in fulfilling its vision.

D. Key Strategies

4. SAWUN will realize its mission through the following key strategies:

- (i) the establishment and maintenance of a small office with an Executive Director and two program assistants.
- (ii) The development and implementation of an annual and long-term plan, approved by the Steering Committee, the coverage of which shall include:
 - (a) key issues to be addressed
 - (b) description of regional and cross-border projects
 - (c) financial plan and
 - (d) fund-raising activities to sustain the organization;
- (iii) development and maintenance of a shared information database, including a website;
- (iv) development of and oversight of the WOPs (twinning agreements) program;

- (v) implementation of a benchmarking activity as a tool towards the development of continuous improvement programs for member utilities;
- (vi) conducting knowledge development and dissemination activities including organizing meetings, conferences and exhibitions, publishing reports, papers and periodicals in both hard and electronic form;
- (vii) co-operating with other bodies with similar objectives including, specifically, other national water and wastewater associations, UN-Habitat, SEAWUN, and IWA and;
- (viii) monitoring and reporting on its program performance and achievement of its mission and vision. .

E. Membership

5. Membership of SAWUN is open to any public or private water and/or wastewater utility, Conditions for membership of national water and wastewater associations, and small scale service providers from participating countries shall be determined by the SSC. These countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. SAWUN has initially been founded by 6 countries who were present at the Islamabad meeting of April 2007.

6. An annual membership fee as determined by the SAWUN Steering Committee (SSC) will be applicable for all members. Applications for membership shall be made to the SSC with prospective members indicating (i) what they believe they will be able to contribute to SAWUN in technical terms, (ii) the benefits they see for themselves, and (iii) a statement of their operational and financial capabilities. The SSC shall determine any conditions of membership that it deems fit, including but not limited to periods, amount, continuity and rights.

F. Organisation

7. The organizational structure of SAWUN shall comprise (i) a Steering Committee (with a Chairperson) and (ii) an Executive Director with a small office, and (iii) members.

8. SAWUN Steering Committee (SSC). A SAWUN Steering Committee shall be established taking into consideration the number of potential member utilities in each country. The SSC shall consist of the following representatives from each of the participating countries:

Bangladesh – 2 representatives
 Bhutan – 1 representative
 India – 3 representatives
 Maldives – 1 representative
 Nepal – 1 representative
 Pakistan – 2 representatives
 Sri Lanka – 1 representative

9. Representation to the SSC shall be endorsed by a majority of member utilities from each of the participating countries. The SSC shall prepare guidelines for selection of SSC representatives at the country level as appropriate.

10. SSC Chairperson. The Chairperson of SAWUN shall be elected by a simple majority vote of all representatives to the SSC. The Chairperson shall serve for a two year term. Chairmanship of the SSC shall be by rotation such that that all participating countries will be represented. The Chairperson shall be the principal officer and spokesperson of SAWUN, and shall promote the attainment of its vision and mission.

11. SSC Representatives. The term of each SC representative is two years. No SSC representative shall serve more than two consecutive two-year terms. The SSC may explore a different term for SSC representatives from countries with a limited number of utilities. The SSC shall consider the possibility of introducing staggered terms for representatives for better continuity in the SSC.

12. Given the participatory and inclusive nature of the objectives and programs of SAWUN, all work of the SSC, defined below, shall be based on consensus.

13. The SSC's principal tasks shall be:

- (i) strategic management of the affairs of SAWUN in accordance with the Charter including ensuring that annual and long term business and financial plans are prepared and approved by the SSC;
- (ii) monitor the implementation of the annual and long-term business and financial plans, including all key programs;
- (iii) determine membership conditions including rights, benefits and fees;
- (iv) consider and approve applications for membership;
- (v) promote SAWUN and participate in its programs, events, publications, projects and activities;
- (vi) publish a comprehensive annual report detailing the activities of SAWUN and results achieved; the report will also contain a copy of the audited accounts.
- (vi) establish the terms and conditions of the Executive Director position, approve any appointment to that position and annually review the job holders performance.
- (vii) consider and enter into agreements with aid and donor organizations to secure finance and conduct programs;
- (viii) develop and approve internal rules and procedures;
- (vii) appoint auditors for the organization and determine their remuneration.

14. SSC Meetings. The SSC shall meet annually. If additional meetings are needed, the Chair may call for them electronically.

15. Secretariat. The SSC will decide the location of the Secretariat however the SSC will review the effectiveness of this arrangement after three (3) years of operations. The Secretariat shall comprise of an Executive Director, and two program/administrative assistants. The

Executive Director shall be responsible for the day to day technical and financial management of SAWUN in accordance with agreed programs and activities.

16. The books of accounts shall be maintained in accordance with internationally recognized accounting principles and practices.

G. Financing Arrangements

17. SAWUN is expected to incur two types of costs, (i) those needed to maintain its core capacity, including its organization, location and communications and (ii) program costs relating to specific outputs and outcomes.

18. Core capacity costs will initially be secured from external assistance organizations including the Asian Development Bank (ADB). For the subsequent period, core capacity funding will be generated from membership fees, and consultancy commissions and fees.

19. Program costs will be recouped on a user pays concept but for an agreed plan period, be sourced fully or in part from funds to be provided by ADB and other international agencies i.e. DFID, WSP, USAID, based on the sponsorship concept for individual programs, projects and activities. Income will also be secured from website advertisements, conferences and exhibitions and used to defray operating expenses.

H. SAWUN Activities

20. The principal programs, projects and activities of SAWUN will be described in detail in the annual and long-term plans. They will be centered around the following but not be limited to them:

- (i) technical project activities designed around utilities' key performance enhancing elements (e.g. benchmarking, full-scope technical and/or financial performance audits to determine base performance parameters and areas for enhancement; reduction of non-revenue water; introduction of metering; enhanced billing and collection systems; improved water quality monitoring; introduction of internal control systems; improved procurement practices; outsourcing of utility tasks; specialized skills development; introduction of efficient tariff regimes; facilitating connections by the poor; and reduction in operating costs); these activities can be undertaken on a variety of bases including the WOPs Program (twinning arrangements between interested utilities, stand-alone training programs, exchange visits, study tours, individual or group secondments, etc.
- (ii) project activities undertaken with bilateral and multilateral institutions desirous of working with SAWUN in areas of common interest;
- (iii) specialized conferences/workshops/symposia/seminars that are relevant to performance improving factors – these could cover single subjects in water, wastewater, and water quality management as well as institutional and governance issues and can be organized in a member country within the context of the annual and long-term plans; these may be organized in joint sponsorship, or collaboratively, with partner institutions, including those in the private sector;

- (iv) proactively identify consulting opportunities for members, and develop and support a program of consultancy and technical advice (outside of the twinning arrangement indicated above);
- (v) knowledge development, including commissioning of technical papers and monographs from among members, their production and dissemination, the publication of newsletters and the development of a learning portal; and
- (vi) design and implement a program of recognition such as honors and awards to provide incentives to high performing individual professionals, or to utilities based on agreed criteria and selection systems.

H. Amendment of Charter

21. A proposal to amend the Charter may emanate either from the SSC or from the general membership. In either case, it must be carried by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the SSC, for presentation to the general membership where it will need to be approved by a majority vote. The SSC however, shall endeavor to work on a consensus basis (as for any other business). The SSC shall determine the rules for voting, i.e. quorum and proxies.

22. In the event of a proposal mooted to dissolve SAWUN, such proposal should be considered in the same manner as an amendment to the Charter (above).