

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN WATER SNAPSHOTS



EGYPT | Sustainable
Rural Sanitation
Services Program
for Results

CONTEXT

Improved sanitation is high on the priority list for rural Egypt, where less than 20% of households are covered by public sewers. The Sustainable Rural Sanitation Services Program for Results (SRSSP) is a results-based program aimed at improving sanitation services for more than 800,000 Egyptians in the Nile Delta. It is also part of the country's institutional reform program to support decentralization of service delivery in the sanitation sector by transferring planning, budget, and executive power to water and sanitation companies (WSC) in three governorates: Beheira, Dakahlia, and Sharkiya. Improved service delivery and giving greater voice to citizens can enhance governance and inclusion, two focus areas in the Country's Partnership Framework. The lending Program for Results (PforR) operation was combined with technical assistance (TA) and capacity building support provided by the Water and Sanitation Program to support operationalizing citizen engagement in the Program.

DESIGN STAGE - INCENTIVIZING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

At the outset, citizen engagement was envisioned as a key element of the Program. Learning from previous water and sanitation projects in Egypt that focused mainly on infrastructure, the Government, with support from the World Bank, prioritized decentralization and improved service delivery. Incentives for engaging citizens are embedded in the program design through the PforR's legal covenants, disbursement linked indicators (DLIs), and other documentation. Based on the Environmental and Social Assessment, citizens are foreseen to participate in planning and preparing rural sanitation projects as an important tool for mitigating social risks. The Program Appraisal Document (PAD) listed specific actions to improve citizen participation and accountability of front-line service providers: awareness campaigns, customers' complaints and grievance handling mechanisms (GRMs) and citizen report cards. Through the PforR loan, WSCs have been given financial incentives to engage with citizens throughout the Program cycle, including using beneficiary feedback to inform their planning and management. Progress made in citizen engagement is to be reviewed regularly through Annual Performance Assessments, and clearly stipulated in one of the disbursement linked indicators (DLIs).

This service delivery and citizen-centric approach is being piloted in three governorates, to be scaled up nationally if successful. A Program Management Unit (PMU) was created within the Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Communities (MHUUC) to provide guidance and support to WSCs that are responsible for program implementation, including efforts to engage citizens.

BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK/GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM (GRM)

One of the legal covenants required the establishment of a grievance redress mechanism for project-related complaints. The Program decided to adapt and enhance an existing GRM system for water and sanitation services, and provided additional staffing, training, procedures, and equipment to improve the current systems:

Uptake Mechanisms

Egypt's water and sanitation **hotline** number "125", widely known among consumers, was customized to capture project information. The hotline was initially only accessible from landline phones, but as the project preparation progressed, efforts were made to publicize mobile phone numbers. The Holding Company for Water and Wastewater (HCWW) is now searching for a way to allow calls from mobile devices. Customers can provide feedback or report problems online, by phone, in person (by visiting a branch), and – in the future – through a mobile application. The PMU drafted a project level GRM, and hotline guidelines were further adapted by WSCs on the basis of feedback received. The PMU disclosed information about the Program and its feedback channels through factsheets sent to WSCs, displays in branches and government offices, and on the Program website.

Processing

The HCWW created a new online **Complaints Management System** (CMS) to capture, track, and monitor responses and response times to complaints, as well as overall service quality. This made the system more accessible to management and staff on the ground. The CMS was installed in offices of HCWW, PMU, WSCs, Customer Service Centers (CSCs), and in most WSC/CSC branches in the three governorates.

Staffing and Capacity Building

The PMU and WSCs designated **social development specialists**, responsible for citizen engagement. A local World Bank consultant provides ongoing Program support and training, while local water and sanitation branches have appointed focal points for grievance redress and handling complaints. Building WSCs' capacity is an important and closely watched component of the Program. The PMU and the World Bank provide regular guidance and capacity building to support these efforts. A series of workshops and learning events were held on site and in Cairo, and more are planned in the future. At the local level, **community committees** have been established to facilitate two-way communication between residents of the pilot villages and the WSCs. They help inform communities about project-related updates and alert WSCs about potential concerns. To facilitate WSCs' engagement with local communities, **community engagement guidelines** have been developed in a participatory, inclusive way.



A community committee meeting in Dakahlia Governorate

Ministry-level Committee on Citizen Engagement

The Government of Egypt proposed the creation of a **ministerial committee on citizen engagement** to ensure adequate support to citizen engagement efforts. Functions of the committee include recommending policies and strategic initiatives related to Citizen Engagement, receiving and addressing unresolved complaints and grievances, and monitoring progress of grievance redress implementation.

TAKING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As the Program enters the implementation stage, the next steps on the citizen engagement agenda will focus on establishing a baseline for a citizen report card exercise and on further strengthening the GRM system. This will include expanding mechanisms for receiving beneficiary complaints and for sharing information about the Program, to ensure they are truly inclusive and available to all Program beneficiaries.

Sources and additional information:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/04/egypt-world-bank-sign-550-million-rural-sanitation-program>

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/179201468025466257/Egypt-Arab-Republic-of-Sustainable-Rural-Sanitation-Services-Program-for-Results-Project>

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Project Snapshot #2. March 2017
Water Global Practice

<http://www.worldbank.org/water>

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