



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND FORESTRY

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION POLICY

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
Private Bag 13193
WINDHOEK
Namibia

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBM	Community Based Management
DRWS	Directorate of Rural Water Supply
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MAWF	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
MHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MRLGHRD	Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development
NamWater	Namibia Water Corporation Ltd
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
WASP	Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Policy (1993)
WSASP	Water Supply and Sanitation Policy (2008)
WDM	Water Demand Management
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation

1. INTRODUCTION

The first Water Supply and Sanitation Policy (**WASP**) was adopted in 1993. Since then, several developments necessitated a review. As recommended in the **WASP** the Namibian Water Corporation Limited (NamWater) a State Owned Enterprise was established as the major bulk water supplier. Also, as recommended in the **WASP**, the Directorate of Rural Water Supply (DRWS) was established in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development to improve access to safe water for communities in rural, communal areas. The establishment of DRWS laid the foundation for the successful implementation of a dynamic strategy, known as Community Based Management (CBM). This strategy involved extensive user participation in water supply and management in the form of Water Point Associations, their representative Water Point Committees and Local Water Associations with Local Water Point Committees. At the same time, sanitation has not improved and the magnitude of the sanitation backlog, in communal rural areas and informal urban settlements, is increasing and deserves serious attention. Overall water supply and sanitation (WSS) sector coordination, lack of an equitable tariff policy and a water regulator, limited human resource capacity and limited cost recovery for water supply, key components for the WSS sector, remain a challenge.

This Water Supply and Sanitation Policy (**WSASP**) of 2008 replaces the policy of 1993. Its principles are in line with Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) including a strong focus on Water Demand Management (WDM). The scope of services expected to be rendered within the sector is defined and responsibilities are allocated to the various actors and beneficiaries involved. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the **WSASP** by all stakeholders represents only a foundation from which to work. The productivity and growth of the WSS sector will, to a large extent, depend on political will at all levels, the provision of adequate funding, the continuous development of adequate human resources, community participation and the dedicated implementation of the identified strategies by all role players to achieve the objectives of the policy.

2. THE WASSP PRINCIPLES

2.1 General

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) will remain responsible for the overall management and regulation of the water cycle and water resources in the country with the prime objective of ensuring that they will be properly investigated and used on a sustainable basis to cater for the needs of people and to sustain their environment. It is recommended that the function for rural sanitation be transferred from the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MHSS) to the Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry. An institution similar to the DRWS dedicated to sanitation within the WSS sector seems to be an appropriate solution to deal with the identified challenges in the sector.

It is therefore proposed that the Directorate of Rural Water Supply be transformed into a 'Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination' in the MAWF and made responsible for the overall coordination of WSS services in the country. An additional prime objective of this institution would be to ensure that sanitation meets the requirements for health and hygiene for the whole population in an acceptable, affordable and sustainable manner. The proposed Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination will therefore coordinate both: the water supply and sanitation services. Similarly, all the water service providers will, therefore, also be responsible for the water supply and sanitation services.

The institution responsible for rural services within the Regional Councils will continue to implement and support communal rural water supply while fully integrating rural sanitation within its functions. Their capacity should be extended to ensure that the development goals for basic sanitation are met at household level in rural areas.

Local Authorities and Regional Councils will be responsible for implementation of water supply and sanitation in the urbanised areas and rural settlements (proclaimed and un-proclaimed) where demand is continually increasing and a growing backlog exists.

The central government should allocate capital resources wherever the Regional Council or Local Authority is not able to provide sanitation to the poor and marginalised, but strict criteria and standards should be applied by the Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination.

Regulations to control and oversee activities of the WSS service providers will be accommodated within the Water Resources Management Act.

2.2 Overall sectoral policy statement

The Constitution advocates equity as a fundamental principle to ensure equitable access to services and equitable economic opportunities for all Namibians. The process of rectifying disparities within the water supply and sanitation sector will take time. Namibia's Vision 2030, the Millennium Development Goals and the National Development Plans provide targets for coverage. It is anticipated that economic growth and the financial performance of the WSS sector will, to a certain extent, determine the pace of national development.

In the national development context, the WSS sector, responsible for water and sanitation as public goods affecting all, will be expected to contribute towards social development and to provide the necessary environmentally sound infrastructure for economic development.

Taking the complexity of the situation into consideration and appreciating the immense task lying ahead, it is believed that the objectives will only be achieved by committed involvement and by effecting very close cooperation between all parties concerned.

By interpreting the achievements and shortcomings of the WSS sector in the national development context, the following four components of an overall long term policy are formulated as follows:

1. Essential water supply and sanitation services should become available to all Namibians, and should be acceptable and accessible at a cost which is affordable to the country as a whole.
2. This equitable improvement of water and sanitation services should be achieved by the combined efforts of the government and the beneficiaries, based on community involvement and participation, the acceptance of a mutual responsibility and by outsourcing services where necessary and appropriate, under the control and supervision of government.
3. Communities should have the right, with due regard for environmental needs and the resources and information available, to determine which water and sanitation solutions and service levels are acceptable to them within the boundaries of the national guidelines. Beneficiaries should contribute towards the cost of the water and sanitation services they desire at increasing rates for standards of living exceeding the levels required for providing basic needs.
4. Environmentally sustainable development and efficient utilisation of the water resources of the country and environmentally sustainable development of sanitation services should be pursued in addressing the various needs, and should be strongly supported by information campaigns and continuous educational interventions at all levels.

2.3 Overall sectoral objectives

In keeping with the above general overall policy statement and observing the shortfalls and constraints, the following broad sector objectives were formulated:

2.3.1 Water supply

To improve the provision of water supply in order to:

- Contribute to improved public health;
- Reduce the burden of collecting water;
- Promote community based social development taking the role of women into special account;
- Support basic water needs;
- Stimulate economic development; and
- Promote water conservation.

The operative strategy would be to develop reliable and accessible sources of safe water with sufficient capacity on a sustainable basis to serve all in Namibia at an affordable cost.

Regarding drinking water, *safe water* means water complying with drinking water quality standards/guidelines.

2.3.2 Sanitation

To improve the provision of sanitation services in order to:

- Contribute towards improved health and quality of life;
- Ensure an hygienic environment;
- Protect water sources from pollution;
- Promote conservation of water; and
- Stimulate economic development.

The operative strategy would be to guarantee safe and affordable sanitation, encouraging decentralised sanitation systems where appropriate. The strategy should also promote recycling through safe and hygienic recovery and use of nutrients, organics, trace elements, water and energy or the safe disposal of all human and other wastes, including sewage and industrial effluent, in an environmentally sustainable fashion.

Clear sanitation targets exist but special emphasis should be placed on coordination by allocating adequate capital funds and making appropriate institutional arrangements to effect rapid implementation.

2.4 Sector strategy and plans

The WSS sector policy and objectives should be seen as setting out the intentions of government. Based on the policy and objectives, the sector agencies responsible for water supply and sanitation, both rural and urban, will prepare:

- the WSS strategies which will set out how the policy should be implemented; and
- the WSS action plans which will quantify the strategies in terms of resources, utilisation, manpower, time and costs. Such plans should follow the principles of integrated water resources planning and development.

2.5 Overall principles

2.5.1 Water supply priorities

The supply of water from surface and groundwater resources to competing demands in areas with water shortages will become increasingly difficult in the future. The priority ranking in this regard should be as follows:

Priority 1

This is the provision of water for domestic use.

Priority 2

This is the provision of water for economic activities.

Priorities for the allocation of water for economic activities will, in each individual case, have to be determined by their respective value including economic multiplier effects by local value addition and social benefits in relation to the overall development objectives and plans of the country. In determining priorities, the cost to provide water, as well as the economic value added from the water used, should be carefully calculated and considered.

While giving priority to the rural communal areas, it is equally essential to maintain and improve the present water and sanitation coverage levels in urban areas to address the current and future accelerated urban population growth. The exceptionally rapid influx of people to the urban centres will require accelerated expenditure on water supply and sanitation infrastructure development to provide essential services and to prevent spread of disease in

high density urban areas. With the growing lower income urban target group in mind, efforts should also be aimed at making low cost solutions for urban sanitation more attractive, along with the augmentation of existing sewerage capacities for those who can afford it.

It is important to promote the benefits of the provision of sanitation as a public good to communities in rural and urban areas. These benefits include, *inter alia*, improved health and the prevention of water pollution as well as energy generation through bio-reactors and treated water for food production. The development of local skills and stimulation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to participate in the implementation of such decentralised sanitation schemes is essential.

2.5.2 Stakeholder Participation

The provision of WSS services is seen as a continuum where the authorities and beneficiaries have mutual responsibilities. Individuals and communities are encouraged to improve their living conditions and to contribute to the development of the country. The WSS interventions by government should be regarded as an opportunity to achieve this objective.

Where possible, it should be left to the community itself to decide on internal priorities and the division of responsibilities. Community ownership and management of facilities should be adopted as the strategy of choice for the WSS sector in general.

Government support services should be seen as a medium for self-sufficiency and not be extended free of charge. In order to adhere to the cost recovery principle, rising block tariffs, rebates and cross subsidisation within the sector may be implemented. In accordance with the National Water Policy, clear costing, tariff and credit control policies are required to achieve cost recovery without sacrificing equitable access to the poor and marginalised.

The allocation of responsibilities refers to the eventual goal to be pursued. In some cases where responsibilities are to be transferred to the rural consumer representatives the transfer of these functions will have to take place over a transitional period to allow for training of those involved. This has already been done for rural water supply and can be emulated for sanitation services.

The Regional Councils should ensure physical planning for proclaimed and un-proclaimed settlements at an early stage, to ensure the orderly development thereof and to establish the most appropriate level(s) of affordable service. This should be achieved by the combined efforts of the government and the beneficiaries, based on community involvement, community participation and the acceptance of a mutual responsibility. Outsourcing should be considered where

necessary and appropriate, but should be done under the control and supervision of those funding and requiring the service.

Cost recovery for WSS service delivery, 'duty to care' and the 'polluter pays principle' for water and waste water management are essential considerations in the overall strategy and are strongly recommended to improve WSS services.

Water use efficiency, water demand management practices and the use of unconventional sources should be evaluated and quantified as part of the planning process for the development and planning of any water supply augmentation scheme or any new sanitation scheme.

2.5.3 Cost recovery

The basic premise of cost recovery is that water is an economic good with a social responsibility to make water available to the poor. It is accepted that the overall sustainability of the WSS sector will depend on its ability to become self sufficient. Without the necessary revenue, the service providers will be unable to continue providing the expected water supply and sanitation services. In all instances it will be essential to recover the full financial cost or, in low income rural and urban areas, at least the operational and maintenance costs with support from government subsidies or cross-subsidies amongst consumers. As stated in the National Water Policy, the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry will determine tariff policies in consultation with the service providers and the public, taking the tariff policy principles indicated below into consideration.

The following general principles should be applied with the development of such a policy within all the sectors:

1. Money generated through domestic water use or sanitation should not be used to subsidise water to any other economic activity;
2. Any industrial, commercial or mining activity should pay the full cost recovery tariff taking the scarcity of water and the cost of future water supply augmentation into account.

Full cost recovery and prevention of debt as part of the principle of water as an economic good should be promoted and implemented, based on equitable tariffs to improve access by poor and marginalised communities. This consolidated national tariff policy for water supply and sanitation provision including appropriate credit control measures should be compiled.

The Water Regulator, to be established, should harmonize the expectations of the consumers and policy makers without compromising the financial sustainability of the service providers. It is essential to control the increase in

tariffs by service providers, to assess the performance of service providers through performance indicators and to evaluate their service plans.

Mechanisms for transparent subsidies and/or cross-subsidization by means of rebates for those who are unable to pay for WSS services should be created. It is important that the consumer should know the amount of the subsidy, why the consumer is subsidized and by whom.

The income generated by water supply and sanitation services should be used to maintain and improve the coverage of WSS services and should not be used to cover the cost of other services, except where an exemption is approved by the relevant minister.

2.6 Guiding principles

With the constitutional provision of State ownership of all water resources in the country, it is appropriate that the present status regarding government's responsibility as the guardian over these resources be maintained. In this regard NamWater provides bulk water on a commercialised basis, but remains under the auspices of the government as the resource manager.

2.6.1 Communal Rural Areas water supply

Ownership and management

The communities in communal rural areas mainly consist of farmers and their families living on the land. They should therefore be supported as such to become better farmers and to develop associated industries. The water supply support envisaged provides for an opportunity to contribute to the achievement of this objective. With throyected global food showHT6COapkLCDLce ba5 s jeRHULOjpB6CD

The WSS should ensure that manpower is developed to suit continuing and new requirements such that:

1. Proficient standards of professionalism and capacity are pursued through professionalised training leading to diplomas and degrees; and
2. New priority areas are adequately catered for through additional or, where possible, redeployed staff.

Although constraints are placed on expansion of the public service, these objectives may not be attained without selected additional establishments. Moreover, the sector management must strive to offer attractive terms of service which will assist in maintaining a stable and motivated work force.

Technical capacity and human resource development, as well as arrangements for suitable technical support services, must be strongly promoted within Regional Councils and Local Authorities for implementation of water supply and sanitation services. Smart partnerships involving public-private and/or non-governmental organization (NGO) institutions and SMEs should be advocated for addressing many of the short-comings of water supply and sanitation provision when government, Local Authority or Regional Council in-house capacity is limited.

Mentorships are considered particularly important to provide decentralised support for technical staff of Local Authorities and Regional Councils in WSS services. Mentorship arrangements could be made with experienced government departments, NGOs or the private sector.

Extension services

The development of an adequate extension service qualified to a diploma level, spanning the entire range from community management skills through technical training to public hygiene and health education, is essential for success in the priority areas of water supply and sanitation. The community ownership and responsibility policy has to be built on an improved local skills basis.

Training at community level should primarily be conducted by the rural water extension officers of the Division of Rural Services. They will have to be well informed in and have capacity to address integrated WSS services.

Training within the Public Sector

A large scale educational and training programme will have to be organised and embarked upon to provide the required facilities, material and educational staff to consult, explain, motivate and train all involved. This training must also focus on the administrative, management and all decision making levels.

Sanitation will be added to the priority assigned to development of integrated water supply in the rural communal regions as well as urban situations. In-service courses and seminars should be conducted with a view to convey understanding of community management, implementation procedures and the framework for decision making with respect to water supply and sanitation. In-service courses and seminars should address the various sanitation options including eco-sanitation using wet or dry systems. The ensuing internal professional staff development would facilitate introduction of new tasks, enhanced communication skills and improved sensitivity to community needs.

Information and education campaign

A comprehensive information campaign to inform all concerned in Namibia about the limitations and opportunities of the WSS sector and the adopted future government policy in this regard should be embarked upon. An information campaign is considered crucial for the understanding of the realities of the sector which in turn determine the standard of living and prospects for development in Namibia.

The management of WSS services and waste water management, including information about alternative sanitation systems, their benefits and management, in terms of the policy and legislation must be explained, described and clarified. This should be in the form of publications and other outreach media accessible to the stakeholders at all levels.

3. SUMMARY

This **WSASP** provides a set of policy guidelines to be followed by the WSS sector in carrying out its responsibilities with a view to achieving sector's objectives. It reflects the magnitude and complexity of the various aspects of the WSS sector and highlights the particular need for adequate coordination and integration. It allocates responsibilities which require commitment for implementation by the different role players and provides the basis for development of the sector.

The coordination of sectoral activities for strategic planning purposes will be elaborated in the more detailed implementation strategies and plans provided for by the proposed Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation Coordination.

An increased awareness of the scarcity of the water resources of the country, recognition of the importance of the various types of sanitation, a more prominent water demand management approach and the continued emphasis on participation from all role players are essential.

A uniform approach towards accountability for water supply and an associated comprehensive water and waste water tariff structure policy including credit control principles is essential.

The proposed Water Regulator is required to ensure the implementation of equitable tariffs, improved efficiency and service delivery by service providers for sustainable provision of water and sanitation services. The Water Regulator is a key factor in ensuring debt reduction.

There is a compelling requirement for adequate capital funding from government to provide the basic infrastructure for water supply and sanitation, both critical public goods for the development of the nation.

The implementation strategies, followed by development implementation plans, will lead to the achievement of the objectives of the **WSASP**. Both should be completed and being implemented within one year of Cabinet approval of the policy.

4. CONCLUSION

The acceptance of the **WSASP** principles by all stakeholders represents the foundation from which to work in order to achieve development goals for water supply and sanitation services. The productivity and growth of the WSS sector will, to a large extent, depend on political will, the provision of adequate funding, the continuous development of adequate human resources, community participation and the dedicated implementation and coordination of the identified strategies and plans to achieve the objectives of the policy.