

**Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations
related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation**

**‘GOOD PRACTICES’ RELATED TO ACCESS TO
SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION**



Questionnaire

**February, 2010
Geneva**

Introduction

The Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, has been mandated by the Human Rights Council in 2008 to:

- Further clarify the content of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation;
- Make recommendations that could help the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and particularly of the Goal 7;
- Prepare a compendium of good practices related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

While the work of human rights bodies has often focused on the violations of human rights, the Independent Expert welcomes the opportunity to identify good practices that address the question of how human rights obligations related to sanitation and water can be implemented.

Methodology of the Good Practices consultation process

In a first step, the Independent Expert undertook to determine criteria for identifying ‘good practices’. As ‘good’ is a subjective notion, it seemed critical to first elaborate criteria against which to judge a practice from a human rights perspective, and then apply the same criteria to all practices under consideration. Such criteria for the identification of good practices were discussed with various stakeholders at a workshop convened by the Independent Expert in Lisbon in October 2009. The outcome was the definition of 10 criteria, 5 of which are normative criteria (*availability, accessibility, quality/safety, affordability, acceptability*), and 5 are cross-cutting ones (*non-discrimination, participation, accountability, impact, sustainability*). The Independent Expert and the stakeholders started testing the criteria, but believe that the process of criteria testing is an ongoing one: the criteria should prove their relevance as stakeholders suggest examples of good practices.

After this consultation and the consolidation of the criteria, the Independent Expert wants to use these to identify good practices across all levels and sectors of society. To that end, she will organize stakeholder consultations with governments, civil society organisations, national human rights institutions, development cooperation agencies, the private sector, UN agencies, and perhaps others. By bringing people from the same sector together to talk about good practices related to human rights, water and sanitation, she hopes to facilitate exchange of these good practices. In order to prepare the consultations through the identification of potential good practices, the present questionnaire has been elaborated. The consultations will be held in 2010 and 2011. Based on the answers to this questionnaire, and the stakeholder consultations, the Independent Expert will prepare a report on good practices, to be presented to the Human Rights Council in 2011.

The Good Practices Questionnaire

The questionnaire is structured following the normative and cross-cutting criteria, mentioned above; hence the Independent Expert is looking for good practices in the fields of sanitation and water **from a human rights perspective**. Therefore, the proposed practices do not only have to be judged ‘good’ in light of at least one normative criterion depending on their relevance to the practice in question (*availability, accessibility, quality/safety, affordability, acceptability*), but also in view of all the cross-cutting criteria (*non-discrimination,*

participation, accountability, impact, sustainability). At a minimum, the practice should not undermine or contradict any of the criteria.

Explanatory note: Criteria

Criteria 1-5: Normative criteria (availability, accessibility, quality/safety, affordability, acceptability). All these criteria have to be met for the full realization of the human rights to sanitation and water, but a good practice can be a specific measure focussing on one of the normative criterion, and not necessarily a comprehensive approach aiming at the full realization of the human rights. Hence, not all the criteria are always important for a given practice. E.g., a pro-poor tariff structure can be judged very good in terms of the affordability criterion, whilst the quality-criterion would be less relevant in the context of determining whether that measure should be considered a good practice.

Criteria 6-10: Cross-cutting criteria (non-discrimination, participation, accountability, impact, sustainability). In order to be a good practice from a human rights perspective, all of these five criteria have to be met to some degree, and at the very least, the practice must not undermine or contradict these criteria. E.g., a substantial effort to extend access to water to an entire population, but which perpetuates prohibited forms of discrimination by providing separate taps for the majority population and for a marginalized or excluded group, could not be considered a good practice from a human rights perspective.

Actors

In order to compile the most critical and interesting examples of good practices in the field of sanitation and water from a human rights perspective, the Independent Expert would like to take into consideration practices carried out by a **wide field of actors**, such as *States, regional and municipal authorities, public and private providers, regulators, civil society organisations, the private sector, national human rights institutions, bilateral development agencies, and international organisations.*

Practices

The Independent Expert has a broad understanding of the term “practice”, encompassing both policy and implementation: Good practice can thus cover **diverse practices** as, e.g., *legislation (international, regional, national and sub-national), policies, objectives, strategies, institutional frameworks, projects, programmes, campaigns, planning and coordination procedures, forms of cooperation, subsidies, financing mechanisms, tariff structures, regulation, operators’ contracts, etc.* Any activity that enhances people’s enjoyment of human rights in the fields of sanitation and water or understanding of the rights and obligations (without compromising the basic human rights principles) can be considered a good practice.

The Independent Expert is interested to learn about practices which advance the realization of human rights as they relate to safe drinking water and sanitation. She has explicitly decided to focus on “good” practices rather than “best” practices, in order to appreciate the fact that ensuring full enjoyment of human rights can be a process of taking steps, always in a positive direction. The practices submitted in response to this questionnaire may not yet have reached their ideal goal of universal access to safe, affordable and acceptable sanitation and drinking water, but sharing the steps in the process towards various aspects of that goal is an important contribution to the Independent Expert’s work.

Please describe a good practice **from a human rights perspective** that you know well in the field of

- drinking water; and/or
- sanitation

Please relate the described practice to the ten defined criteria. An explanatory note is provided for each of the criteria.

Description of the practice:

Name of the practice:

Improved Access to Water Services East Zone of Metro Manila - Manila Water Supply (MWC)

Aim of the practice:

This project seeks to provide affordable piped potable water to poor households within the East Zone which covers the eastern portion of the National Capital Region (“NCR”) and most of the Province of Rizal through the Tubig Para Sa Barangay (“TPSB”) or Water for the Community program administered by the Manila Water Company (MWC). MWC is a Philippine company which provides water supply and sewerage and sanitation services to approximately five million people in the East Zone of Metro Manila, under the terms of a 25-year Concession Agreement started in 1997.

Local Government agencies and the Manila Water Company estimate that almost all households within the project’s target communities would not be able to afford the connection fees, but could afford to pay for the required meter and guarantee deposits. GPOBA, therefore, fully subsidizes the connection fee for eligible households.

At effectiveness, the total project costs (including associated investments financed by MWC) was approximately USD 17m, with MWC investing some USD 14m in new water supply infrastructure in these areas, a customers total contribution of USD 769,500 and GPOBA subsidy funding for about USD 2.8 m. This GPOBA funding will be contributed by IFC in its entirety.

Activity Type: Subsidy Funding

GPOBA's role: GPOBA has previously provided support to design the OBA scheme and is currently working towards providing subsidy funding for new connections.

OBA Approach: GPOBA subsidizes the "installation of water connections" (about 80%), while MWC pre-funds the "after-the-meter pipeworks" that will be repayed by the customers with 36 monthly installments.

Target group(s):

GPOBA’s grant funding will help bring new water services to approximately 20,000 poor households (benefiting approximately 96,416 people).

Process and criteria for Selecting Communities

An important feature of the project is that it targets small pockets of households/communities that are located within larger service areas of Manila Water that are already being served or will be shortly, and that subsidies are targeted to reach households predominantly below the poverty line for the Metro Manila area (National Capital Region – NCR). Official poverty statistics peg the 2007 annual per capita poverty line at PhP19,345 (USD 430), or PhP8,061 (USD 179) per month for a family of five with a single income earner (out of which PhP4,805 (USD 106) would be to cover basic food needs).

Manila Water has adopted three approaches to assess/confirm low income community eligibility:

(i) surveying potential communities, leveraging its expertise accumulated through its TPSB program. Surveys have been conducted on a small number of representative, unconnected communities, with average household incomes below the poverty line, and average monthly expenditure for water supply is in the range of PhP700-1,100 (\$ 15.5- 24.4). Manila Water has committed to undertake similar community surveys throughout the implementation of the proposed project, for non-objection by GPOBA.

(ii) Manila Water will obtain certification from the barangay of the “indigence” (poverty level) of each community included in the OBA scheme. This assessment by the barangay is based on a survey by local governments, used (in various modification) in large parts of the Philippines by local governments for allocation of social welfare support, in the absence of an institutionalized and robust individual means test mechanism. The surveys, rather than using household income/expenditure figures, are based on a limited number of “most basic needs (MBN) indicators” each of which is a proxy indicator for income, enabling a scoring of households. Only the lowest 25 or 30% typically qualify as indigent. The World Bank has previously relied on this targeting approach (e.g. PhilHealth, the National Health Insurance Corporation, extends support to indigent households for medical insurance based on CBIS-MBN surveys, conducted by the local government Social Welfare Development Office).

(iii) Manila Water will automatically include the communities under socialized housing projects.

The identification of grant beneficiaries will undergo a three-level selection process. The households will be nominated and prioritized by the Manila Water Business Group, endorsed by the Local Government Unit (“LGU”), and confirmed by the Output Auditor. (see Annex 1: OBA Scheme Implementation Process).

Partners involved:

Manila Water Company: Grant Recipient / implementing agency

Duration of practice:

Date of Approval: A Grant Agreement was signed on October 19, 2007.

Date of Project Effectiveness: 01/18/2008

Estimated closing date: 06/30/2011

The closing date of the project is June 30, 2011. However, MWCI will request for a one-year extension of the project to June 2012.

Financing (short/medium/long term):

The grant was originally envisaged to be disbursed over a period of four years using output-based.

MWC will pre-finance the entire cost of the project and will claim reimbursement from the Bank for the agreed subsidy on connection fee for every qualified household connection completed in accordance with the conditions/criteria described under output and targeting in the grant agreement.

Brief outline of the practice:

Project Components

Manila Water envisages two components to its TPSB program (*Tubig Para sa Barangay Program* - TPSB or "Water for the Community") with GPOBA:

- Provision of water supply services which will comprise the installation of water meters and faucets in the households;
- Provision of basic sanitation. To make a complete sustainable development package available to the communities, Manila Water will also address basic sanitation needs through the construction of an individual household (hh) WC (water closet).

The project will be implemented in two scheme options:

- Option 1.a. Installation of hh water service connection
 - 1.b. "after-the-meter" pipework
- Option 2.a. Installation of water service connection
 - 2.b. "after-the-meter" pipework
 - 2.c. Construction of WC.

For Option 1, meters will be clustered and strategically located in places that are accessible to meter readers. This should also prevent illegal connections and meter tampering. Pipe connections from the water meters going to the house and two faucets inside the house will also be installed ("after-the-meter").

For Option 2, a WC will be constructed in addition to the installation of water service connection and after-the-meter pipework.

The GPOBA subsidy only applies to the Options 1.a and 2.a components of Manila Water's scheme options. The other options (1.b., 2.b., and 2.c.) will be pre-funded by Manila Water as part of its ongoing TPSB program, with the customer repaying actual costs through a 36-month installment scheme. The water service connection component, which will benefit from GPOBA subsidy, is embedded in a larger network expansion program by Manila Water as stipulated in its five year investment plan as approved by the MWSS-RO. In the target communities Manila Water will be installing booster pumps, reservoirs, infiltration galleries/wells, and secondary/tertiary distribution pipelines, with an estimated total project cost of PhP 793,321,074 (approximately US\$17.6m).

	Amount per water service connection	Number of water service connection	Total amount (PhP)	Total amount (\$US)	Percentage to the project
MWC	29,600	Various areas within the East Zone	632,693,574	14,060,000	80%
Customer	1,620	≈20,000	34,627,500	769,500	4%
GPOBA	5,911.73	20,000	126,000,000	2,800,000	16%

The OBA scheme is structured around a single output – the provision of a working household connection that has delivered acceptable service for a period of 3 months.

The outputs of the project upon which GPOBA subsidies will be disbursed are:

- Verified working connections meeting specifications set by the concession agreements and MWSS-RO, and
- Sustainable service delivery – monthly volume of water delivered, at pressure levels compliant with regulatory requirements, for a continuous period of three months after installment of connection

1. How does the practice meet the criterion of availability?

Explanatory note: Availability

Availability refers to sufficient quantities, reliability and the continuity of supply. Water must be continuously available in a sufficient quantity for meeting personal and domestic requirements of drinking and personal hygiene as well as further personal and domestic uses such as cooking and food preparation, dish and laundry washing and cleaning. Individual requirements for water consumption vary, for instance due to level of activity, personal and health conditions or climatic and geographic conditions. There must also exist sufficient number of sanitation facilities (with associated services) within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, health or educational institution, public institution and place, and the workplace. There must be a sufficient number of sanitation facilities to ensure that waiting times are not unreasonably long.

Answer:

The output for this OBA scheme is sustainable access to modern water services, as evidenced by:

- Working connection to Manila Water network
- Three months of satisfactory service provision

Connections eligible for subsidy payments would be only individual household connections in the standard as prescribed in the concession agreement and as amended by the MWSS-RO.

Manila Water's standard household connection covers the pipework from the main water line to the meter and the meter itself. In order to improve scheme sustainability, Manila Water will pre-fund the cost of providing "after – the – meter" pipework including two faucets, one for the sink and one for the WC. The household will repay Manila Water for the provision of these facilities in 36 equal monthly installments. Standard costs per linear meter will be used for the pipework. Customers will be billed according to the actual work done, and this shall also be reflected in their water bill.

Manila Water will also offer to pre-fund the provision of a WC. This element is outside the scope of the OBA scheme, but shall be made available to beneficiary households as long as they have an existing septic tank or will construct one. The same with the water supply OBA scheme, the cost of this TPSB component will be repaid by the eligible customer over a 36 month period (on the same cost basis) through the Manila Water billings.

2. How does the practice meet the criterion of accessibility?

Explanatory note: Accessibility

Sanitation and water facilities must be physically accessible for everyone within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, health or educational institution, public institution and the workplace. The distance to the water source has been found to have a strong impact on the quantity of water collected. The amount of water collected will vary depending on the terrain, the capacity of the person collecting the water (children, older people, and persons with disabilities may take longer), and other factors. There must be a sufficient number of sanitation and water facilities with associated services to ensure that collection and waiting times are not unreasonably long. Physical accessibility to sanitation facilities must be reliable at day and night, ideally within the home, including for people with special needs. The location of public sanitation and water facilities must ensure minimal risks to the physical security of users.

Answer:

The project targets the urban and peri-urban areas of East Zone of Manila Metro and household connections are being installed.

3. How does the practice meet the criterion of affordability?

Explanatory note: Affordability

Access to sanitation and water facilities and services must be accessible at a price that is affordable for all people. Paying for services, including construction, cleaning, emptying and maintenance of facilities, as well as treatment and disposal of faecal matter, must not limit people's capacity to acquire other basic goods and services, including food, housing, health and education guaranteed by other human rights. Accordingly, affordability can be estimated by considering the financial means that have to be reserved for the fulfilment of other basic needs and purposes and the means that are available to pay for water and sanitation services.

Charges for services can vary according to type of connection and household income as long as they are affordable. Only for those who are genuinely unable to pay for sanitation and water through their own means, the State is obliged to ensure the provision of services free of charge (e.g. through social tariffs or cross-subsidies). When water disconnections due to inability to pay are carried out, it must be ensured that individuals still have at least access to minimum essential levels of water. Likewise, when water-borne sanitation is used, water disconnections must not result in denying access to sanitation.

Answer:

Under the proposed OBA scheme, the household would contribute PhP 1,620 (USD 36) towards the connection charge and GPOBA provide a subsidy for the remainder (PhP 5,911.73 or USD 131).

This unit subsidy will be subject to annual indexation as specified in the terms of the concession contract. In order to make the household contribution more affordable, MWC is proposing an installment scheme over 12 months. The GPOBA subsidy would be paid directly to MWC as a single payment, conditional on the independent verification of 6 months satisfactory service delivery.

The subsidy amount is 78% (\$131) of unit costs (\$167). The subsidy amount covering the connection charge appears reasonable. The HHs are required to provide the meter deposit and guarantee fee totaling \$36. This is a significant amount for their income level and for which MWC is considering offering financing to reduce the financial burden. [MWC has undertaken community surveys in representative low income communities and concluded that PhP 1,620 (USD 36) is close to the affordability limits in such communities.]

4. How does the practice meet the criterion of quality/safety?

Explanatory note: Quality/Safety

Sanitation facilities must be hygienically safe to use, which means that they must effectively prevent human, animal and insect contact with human excreta. They must also be technically safe and take into account the safety needs of peoples with disabilities, as well as of children. Sanitation facilities must further ensure access to safe water and soap for hand-washing. They must allow for anal and genital cleansing as well as menstrual hygiene, and provide mechanisms for the hygienic disposal of sanitary towels, tampons and other menstrual products. Regular maintenance and cleaning (such as emptying of pits or other places that collect human excreta) are essential for ensuring the sustainability of sanitation facilities and continued access. Manual emptying of pit latrines is considered to be unsafe and should be avoided.

Water must be of such a quality that it does not pose a threat to human health. Transmission of water-borne diseases via contaminated water must be avoided.

Answer:

Through the independent verification process.

The verification of outputs will be undertaken by the Output Auditor to be procured by Manila Water - to be selected in accordance with World Bank procurement policies and appointed subject to a no-objection by the World Bank/GPOBA. The household signs a „Beneficiary Acknowledgement of Installed Water Service Connection“. The respective local governments (Barangay) will also participate in the authentication process.

The Output Auditor visually verifies that each connection meets the relevant specifications and obtains signature from head of household

The Output Auditor visits the beneficiary household for inspection: 4 criteria, which relate to service provision over the preceding 3 month period, should be met to pass the inspection:

- installed water meter
- 24-hour water supply (beneficiary confirmation)
- water pressure of at least 5 psi (from Manila Water operational records)
- water bill delivered evidencing consumption/service delivery (confirmed by beneficiary and Manila Water billing records).

5. How does the practice meet the criterion of acceptability?

Explanatory note: Acceptability

Water and sanitation facilities and services must be culturally and socially acceptable. Depending on the culture, acceptability can often require privacy, as well as separate facilities for women and men in public places, and for girls and boys in schools. Facilities will need to accommodate common hygiene practices in specific cultures, such as for anal and genital cleansing. And women’s toilets need to accommodate menstruation needs.

In regard to water, apart from safety, water should also be of an acceptable colour, odour and taste. These features indirectly link to water safety as they encourage the consumption from safe sources instead of sources that might provide water that is of a more acceptable taste or colour, but of unsafe quality.

Answer:

6. How does the practice ensure non-discrimination?

Explanatory note: Non-discrimination

Non-discrimination is central to human rights. Discrimination on prohibited grounds including race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, physical or mental disability, health status or any other civil, political, social or other status must be avoided, both in law and in practice.

In order to address existing discrimination, positive targeted measures may have to be adopted. In this regard, human rights require a focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination. Individuals and groups that have been identified as potentially vulnerable or marginalized include: women, children, inhabitants of (remote) rural and deprived urban areas as well as other people living in poverty, refugees and IDPs, minority groups, indigenous groups, nomadic and traveller communities, elderly people, persons living with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS or affected by other health conditions, people living in water scarce-regions and sanitation workers amongst others.

Answer:

A precise targeting on the poor is one of the main pillars of the OBA approach. The OBA subsidy relates to the statutory connection fees charged by MWC to customers – which the poor households cannot afford.

(see previous answer on “Target group”)

7. How does the practice ensure active, free and meaningful participation?

Explanatory note: Participation

Processes related to planning, design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of sanitation and water services should be participatory. This requires a genuine opportunity to freely express demands and concerns and influence decisions. Also, it is crucial to include representatives of all concerned individuals, groups and communities in participatory processes.

To allow for participation in that sense, transparency and access to information is essential. To reach people and actually provide accessible information, multiple channels of information have to be used. Moreover, capacity development and training may be required – because only when existing legislation and policies are understood, can they be utilised, challenged or transformed.

Answer:

Besides the above mentioned surveys conducted during the design phase, there is an aspect of participation also at the monitoring stage, as both the Independent Verification Agent & the household must sign off to verify that a connection was made, which is a condition to trigger the subsidy payment to the implementing agency. (see Annex 1 of Operational Manual).

Additionally, MWC has established strong partnership with the local government units and People’s Organization who will help organize the beneficiaries

8. How does the practice ensure accountability?

Explanatory note: Accountability

The realization of human rights requires responsive and accountable institutions, a clear designation of responsibilities and coordination between different entities involved. As for the participation of rights-holders, capacity development and training is essential for institutions. Furthermore, while the State has the primary obligation to guarantee human rights, the numerous other actors in the water and sanitation sector also should have accountability mechanisms. In addition to participation and access to information mentioned above, communities should be able to participate in monitoring and evaluation as part of ensuring accountability.

In cases of violations – be it by States or non-State actors –, States have to provide accessible and effective judicial or other appropriate remedies at both national and international levels. Victims of violations should be entitled to adequate reparation, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction and/or guarantees of non-repetition.

Human rights also serve as a valuable advocacy tool in using more informal accountability mechanisms, be it lobbying, advocacy, public campaigns and political mobilization, also by using the press and other media.

Answer:

The verification of actual outputs for certification and subsidy disbursement will be undertaken by the independent auditor procured by MWC - to be selected in accordance with World Bank procurement policies and appointed subject to a no-objection by the World Bank/GPOBA. The auditor will authenticate signed household certificates that certify service quality, which would be collected from households by MWC. The respective local governments (Barangay) will also participate in the authentication process.

Output Auditor (Verifier)

Manila Water shall select, through a competitive process, a reputable technical or financial audit firm or other reputable organization to act as Output Auditor. The terms of reference to procure the services of this Output Auditor, as well as the actual firm selected, will be subject to no objection by the Bank. The issuance of a no objection letter is considered a condition of disbursement of the project. These costs will be reimbursed by GPOBA, subject to the maximum amounts specified in the Grant Agreement.

Output Verification Steps

Verification of Output for Option 1.a and 2.a:

1. An excel file containing the list of beneficiaries, name and Customer Account Number shall be given to the vendor (accredited contractor)
2. The vendor shall input the water meter number installed to each household and obtain the beneficiaries' signatures using the Beneficiary Acknowledgement of Installed Water Service Connection (Annex 6)
3. The acknowledgement and community folder (Annex 7) shall be forwarded to the Output Auditor for inspection three months after the installation
 - i). The Output Auditor visually verifies that each connection meets the relevant specifications and obtains signature from head of household
 - ii). Output Auditor visits the beneficiary household for inspection: 4 outputs, which relate to service provision over the preceding 3 month period, should be met to pass the inspection:
 - installed water meter
 - 24-hour water supply (beneficiary confirmation)
 - water pressure of at least 5 psi (from Manila Water operational records)
 - water bill delivered evidencing consumption/service delivery (confirmed by beneficiary and Manila Water billing records).
4. A report on the Output Auditor inspection (Output Verification Report) shall be submitted to Manila Water.
5. Manila Water submits an invoice accompanied by the Output Verification Report to GPOBA/World Bank. Manila Water keeps the original connection/output confirmation forms on file for a period of at least two years.

9. What is the impact of the practice?

Explanatory note: Impact

Good practices – e.g. laws, policies, programmes, campaigns and/or subsidies - should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact. It is therefore relevant to examine the degree to which practices result in better enjoyment of human rights, empowerment of rights-holders and accountability of duty bearers. This criterion aims at capturing the impact of practices and the progress achieved in the fulfilment of human rights obligations related to sanitation and water.

Answer:

The project is still ongoing and no ad-hoc impact evaluation has been planned for this project. Nevertheless, below are the expected wellbeing effects for the recipients of the project.

- > Reduction of Incidence of water borne diseases (morbidity rate) (e.g amoebiasis)
- > Women and children save an average 2hrs/day and do more productive activities
- > Improved cleanliness /personal hygiene within the community

10. Is the practice sustainable?

Explanatory note: Sustainability

The human rights obligations related to water and sanitation have to be met in a sustainable manner. This means good practices have to be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. The achieved impact must be continuous and long-lasting. For instance, accessibility has to be ensured on a continuous basis by adequate maintenance of facilities. Likewise, financing has to be sustainable. In particular, when third parties such as NGOs or development agencies provide funding for initial investments, ongoing financing needs for operation and maintenance have to be met for instance by communities or local governments. Furthermore, it is important to take into account the impact of interventions on the enjoyment of other human rights. Moreover, water quality and availability have to be ensured in a sustainable manner by avoiding water contamination and over-abstraction of water resources. Adaptability may be key to ensure that policies, legislation and implementation withstand the impacts of climate change and changing water availability.

Answer:

OBA schemes generally put great emphasis on ensuring sustainability, starting from the very design of the project. One recurring aspect that is relevant to sustainability is the choice to subsidize connection. This is based on the assumption that the biggest obstacle for poor people is to pay for the initial investment necessary to obtain a connection to the infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity). In general monthly consumption costs are more manageable for poor households. Additionally, financing a one-off subsidy is also more feasible and less politically controversial from the point of view of the donors.

It is of great importance to GPOBA to monitor and document sustainability and impact of the project even beyond the disbursement period of the project. To this extent, Manila Water will gather information, and prepare annual reports over the period of the Grant and / or a period of at least three years, for use by GPOBA.

A further aspect that is always considered in the design of an OBA scheme is determining whether the tariffs cover O&M costs. Tariffs should at least cover O&M costs - ideally also cover investment costs - this was never an issue for MW since it is a profitable listed company operating in a sensible regulatory environment.

Environment - there are still issues around wastewater - what happens to the used water from the new connections - this is currently being addressed in discussions on the next stage of funding for the MWC grant. Regulation is a related issue on financial sustainability.

Final remarks, challenges, lessons learnt

The project is still in an implementation status.

One mid-term challenge that was registered is related to in-house plumbing, and is currently being discussed with MWC. What has happened in the poorest households is that the OBA tap is at the front of the property (outside the house) and so these hh have not changed their consumption patterns from when they had no connection - they put tap water into the same containers for cooking, washing etc that they used before the connection was made. As a result the major health and social benefits of increased consumption of clean water are not being generated. Since these very poor hh cannot afford the costs of internal plumbing (eg to kitchen sink and a shower) we are now considering extending the scope of the OBA scheme to include such internal plumbing. It should be noted that MWC had offered staged payment arrangements for the internal plumbing as part of the original GPOBA scheme, but even such arrangements still proved unattractive to the poor.

Submissions

In order to enable the Independent Expert to consider submissions for discussion in the stakeholder consultations foreseen in 2010 and 2011, all stakeholders are encouraged to submit the answers to the questionnaire at their earliest convenience and no later than 30th of June 2010.

Questionnaires can be transmitted electronically to iewater@ohchr.org (encouraged) or be addressed to

Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
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Please include in your submissions the name of the organization submitting the practice, as well as contact details in case follow up information is sought.

Your contact details

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The Independent Expert would like to thank you for your efforts!

For more information on the mandate of the Independent Expert, please visit

Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation
Good Practices Questionnaire - iewater@ohchr.org

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/lexpert/index.htm>