



June 5th 2008

**5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum – Theme 4: “Governance and management”  
Topic 4.3: “Ethics, transparency and empowerment of stakeholders”**

**Project for a session on “Public participation and empowerment of stakeholders”**

**1. RATIONALE**

Access to basic services such as potable safe drinking water and proper sanitation is essential is an essential element for the life of a community (health, food, education...) in all countries and particularly in developing countries where access to water is still a challenge.

Worldwide, the demand for water is growing rapidly, and in many countries the cost of developing new supplies is becoming prohibitive. Simultaneously, increased water pollution is worsening the imbalance between water supply and demand. For these reasons, water resources development and irrigation are of critical importance in efforts to improve food security and sustainable agricultural production.

In many countries the efforts for providing universal access to basic services have been through huge investments in a large number of national and sub-national and/or local programs. However, despite large investments in various government programs, a large population in developing countries, particularly in the rural areas, continues to remain deprived of these basic services. **Delivering services is, therefore, more than finance, infrastructure and technology; it is also about empowerment of people and communities.**

**In every country, performance, transparency, democratic control, user participation and a regulatory framework form the basis of good management of public water and sanitation services.**

Participation initiatives vary in every country. Arguably, most of the initiatives consider common procedures about:

- how to identify stakeholders and users,
- how to organize and protect participation,
- how to fund participation,
- How to assure that participating stakeholders and users have an impact in the decision process,
- how to decide upon conflicting stakeholders’ and users’ interests,
- how to redress decisions deemed unfair by the parties.

Nevertheless, the previous procedures are not enough for a successful experience. Transplanting experiences and legal frameworks without a precise understanding of the local political, legal, and economic dynamics, may lead to a failure. To help prepare a strong foundation for a sustainable water and sanitation Program we have to ensure that the involvement starts with the following:

- start by communicating with the community to understand the situation and current behaviors in using water and dealing with human waste,
- create awareness of the linkages between water, sanitation, and disease to create demand for a project; understand behaviors up front and provide health and hygiene education early on—even before a building project gets underway,
- involve the whole community (men and women), including the poorest, in identifying needs, considering solutions, and designing a project,
- integrate the aspects needed to create a clean environment: water, sanitation, wastewater, and hygiene,
- ensure that the community understands the cost to be shared.

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## 2. KEY QUESTIONS OF THE ISSUE

**One of the key questions which WWF-5 in Istanbul should address is the relevance of governance and public participation in workplace for improving leadership and performance in the water education, water supply and sanitation sector and promoting a new water use in the world.**

**What does "participation of users" really mean at the different geographic levels of water resources and water services management? What are the different models of user participation** (elected water commissioners, water user boards, river basin councils, etc.) and what are the different conditions for their effectiveness? How to empower the village council for water governance at grass-root level? What are the good practices (mediation...)?

**How to empower the poor to improve their access to water and sanitation?** What are the success stories? Can the micro-credit play a role to empower poor people?

**How to ensure the participation of all members of the community, especially the women and the young people?** What are the good practices to share (Water management committees, Youth water parliaments...)? Women's role in water management is crucial because they are most often the collectors, users and managers of water in the household as well as farmers of irrigated and rainfed crops. But they are not participating at the measure of their knowledge about water resources, including quality, reliability, restrictions and acceptable storage methods.

**How to choose an external mediator between the communities and the operators when you plan to connect suburban districts to the network? How identify user's needs and expectations and give them the information on the levels of service and prices at various stages of the planning?**

**How to involve the civil society in the water management? What sort of guidelines can we define to promote an efficient and positive dialogue?**

**What are the international guidelines, international standards which promote public participation as a toll for improving the performance of water services?** Water supply and sanitation are local specific and the institutional, organizational arrangements are quite different and the socio-economic conditions are also varying, so, how can international guidelines serve as models based on which local/national standards can be developed?

**Is the local level a suitable level for responsibility to organize the water and sanitation services to be as close as possible to the resource and users?** Are local authorities well placed to organize and monitor water and sanitation services?

**What could be the role of regulation to improve information, efficiency and fairness for good governance and public participation?** How accelerate assessment and analysis of water and sanitation service governance at international level as it was formulated several years ago, especially by the worldwide panel "Financing water for all?"

**What role could play international donors and development banks to facilitate the participation of users to the decision and the management in order to operate sustainable and socially reliable investments?**

To progress on the subject, these recommendations must be put into practice. Examples of actions exist. To gain maximum value from them, their effectiveness must be assessed.

## 3. EXPECTED RESULTS

**The speakers will present their own experiences and the relevant strategies as to engage stakeholders in the decision process of water and sanitation management.**

The purpose of this session is to share among the various stakeholders of different regions in the world (including demanding populations) their experiences, analysis, good practices, and the concrete actions to be taken.

For each cluster of questions, the session objectives are to:

- determine a diagnosis of the situation and perspectives,
- establish bases to improve users participation of water and sanitation services at different levels (basin, national and local),
- examine good practices for a governance adapted to the political, social and ethical context
- propose new solutions, concrete actions and next steps.

The session will be organized scheduled with a presentation of the issue (key-note speech) a roundtable with around 6 speakers and a debate with the audience.

**To make the side-event more attractive, dynamic and interactive, we wish to turn the usual way of presentations and questions into a debate between the panelists and the audience, according to the problem defined by the key-notes speaker.** A moderator will set the tone of the debate.

#### **4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS AND MEETINGS**

**The session 2.2-1 coordination group** is composed of the French Water Partnership (coordinator), UCLG (United Citizens and Local Governance), Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-Turkey)

**The task group set up for the last meeting in Istanbul (2<sup>nd</sup> thematic and regional coordinators meeting) is asked to share the preparation of this session** (IFBPW Is ve Meslek Sahibi Kadinlar Dernegi, WWF-Turkey, IDRC Canada (Egypt), Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration, Japan-MLIT, CTI-Engineering - Japan, UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science, Turkish Irrigation Cooperatives Central Union, Wageningen University.

**The preparation of this session issue needs to involve more key organizations and new actors** as UNDP, UNEP, UN Habitat, WEC, CIID, National Governments, World Bank, AFDB, ADB, CARE, Watchdogs, river basin authorities, local authorities, water operators, NGOs and local civil society. The session will be set up with the coordination group and the enlarged group and with other stakeholders willing to participate.

**We would pay a specific attention to the necessity of an expression of the population needs and look for the involvement of NGOs and local civil society.**

**A consultation of the various stakeholders about the session draft project will be held in June/July before a specific meeting** to be organized by the French Water Partnership during the Stockholm International Water Week next august.

**The preparation of this session will benefit of conclusions of international or regional conferences.** For example, during the French EU presidency, the October 29<sup>th</sup>, a ministerial meeting on water in the **Euro-Mediterranean region will take place in Jordania and a European Union meeting on “local governance” is to be organized by EC in November.** The recommendations of these regional conferences regarding water and public participation will be utilized for the session.

**5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum**  
**Theme 4: “Governance and Management”**  
**Topic 4.3: “Ethics, Transparency and Empowerment of Stakeholders”**

**Project for a session**  
**“Hey, What are You doing There!?”: On Transparency and Accountability in The Water Sector”**

## 5. RATIONALE

We know already that water is life. We know already that we are organised in societies to enhance our human conditions. We know already that elected governments and members of parliament are here to help societies to achieve their ultimate goal. We know already that civil society and private sector can team up with governments to deliver those goals. Nevertheless, in many cases societies are not fully aware how successful are governments, civil society, and private sector in delivering their promises.

Societies want to know how promises and political mandates are fulfilled. Certainly, societies want to know if promises are kept, but they want to know how their own very existence is secured. As water is essential for life, then information becomes essential.

Despite the general acceptance of transparency as a key element of water governance, still the exact content is not fully developed. Transparency usually is connected to the availability of government information. However, there are calls to make available not only that information, but the one held by those entities that collaborate with governments to deliver water services and manage water resources.

## 6. KEY QUESTIONS OF THE ISSUE

**Is there a limit to transparency in the water sector?** Information is expensive, not to mention that it may belong to third parties. What is the necessary information to be on the public domain to achieve specific aims in the water sector?

**Are there standards for the quality of information provided to stakeholders?** Information can be very difficult to process and to understand by stakeholders, thus defeating the aim of transparency. Are these standards the same for services and resource management?

**Are ‘regulatory accounts’ a good way to provide for benchmark between water providers?** Contrasting data from different actors in the water sector can help to clarify who is doing best. This help to follow the good examples, and to question bad performance. This approach is used in the utilities industry. Can this be used in resources management?

**Does transparency refers only to government information or is it extensive to information held by entities that collaborate with governments to deliver water services and manage water resources?** Usually, the concept of transparency is applied to the information held by governments; but, what happens when governments team up with the private sector (i.e. public-private partnership)? If a private party delivers a water service or manages water as resource on governmental delegate powers, will this mean that the information held by the private is covered by the concept of transparency.

**Costing and pricing water services: what priority measures to increase transparency? Should international standard(s) be designed to improve the situation?** Costing and pricing for water services is a difficult task even for the expert. Notwithstanding, efforts can be made to clarify the essential information needed to have a clear picture about prices.

**What transparency measures should countries adopt to make the regulatory process of water management and water services more responsive to democratic control?** Stakeholders want to understand how the regulatory process is managed by authorities. Clear information may empower stakeholders, may enhance the decision-making process, and may combat corruption.

**Do stakeholders or particular groups of users need particular remedies to challenge decisions adopted by authorities or utilities?** Information can empower stakeholders only if they have effective legal actions against the

regulatory authorities to redress bad decisions. Are there successful experiences on this regard? Can they be transplanted from one country to another?

## **7. EXPECTED RESULTS**

Stakeholders from the government, civil society, and the private sector will present their solutions to the proposed questions. Other participants will take part of the debate by having the opportunity to pose questions to the speakers.

By the end of the session, participants will have a clear view about practical solutions to the governance problem of transparency. Possibly, the solution will be of such detail that possibly their implementation across countries will be possible. If this is not possible, the answers will provide a clear line of discussion and research for future solutions.

## **8. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS AND MEETINGS**

This session will be steered by the Japanese Government (Japan-MLIT) in conjunction with the UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (University of Dundee, UK).

We will use the Virtual Meeting Place to invite all stakeholders to express their interest to take part at the session.

Taking advantage of the Stockholm Water Week, we will try to convene a new meeting to invite stakeholders to express their views.

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**Project for a session on “building an ethical water sector: integrity, accountability and preventing corruption”**

## **9. RATIONALE**

A lack of integrity in decision making and poor accountability between consumers, service providers and regulators are weak links in the governance of the water and environmental sanitation<sup>1</sup> sector in many countries, opening the door to corruption. Available research suggests that a large proportion of investments are lost through corruption, which is a scourge of the construction sector in general, and that dishonesty and a failure to follow good practice regularly lead to selection of inappropriate technologies, higher costs or reduced sustainability. Conditions of scarcity (lack of access to services), monopoly (a limited number of providers), and institutional complexity in a fragmented sector, present ideal opportunities for corruption to proliferate. Although data itself is scarce, corruption may regularly account for a loss of as much as a third of investments, and is a major constraint to reaching the Millennium Development Goals in water and sanitation. Problems span public and private institutions and large and small projects at international and local levels. Building stronger systems of ethics and integrity are the key to preventing corruption, and also to improving local water governance and delivering better services.

## **10. KEY QUESTIONS OF THE ISSUE**

**How serious is corruption in water?** Measurement of levels of corruption is notoriously difficult. The session will share views on the latest available research and indirect evidence or proxies that can be used to infer levels of corruption in the water sector.

**How can corruption be prevented?** Prevention is likely to be the focus of most sector initiated actions. Understanding where corruption may occur is the key to design of successful programmes to prevent it. Corruption risk mapping and other methods offer potential. Different types of corruption will be unpacked and key definitions and concepts discussed.

**How is the enabling environment for sector initiatives changing?** The session will consider international and national conventions, legislation and institutions that provide the context for effective actions to improve ethics, integrity and accountability within the water sector.

**How can the water sector take sector-focused action?** The session will share strategies and tools to improve ethics, integrity and accountability including Integrity Pacts in procurement processes, and Citizens Reports Cards for social accountability. The strengths and weaknesses of tools for use in different situations will be discussed based upon the presentation of real examples.

**How to best target the poor within corruption prevention programmes?** This session will discuss specific methods to target the poor, and approaches to mitigate potentially harmful impacts of anti-corruption initiatives on the most vulnerable users of water services.

## **11. EXPECTED RESULTS**

During the session speakers with practical experiences of actions to improve ethical behaviour in water will present cases and introduce tools and strategies that have the potential for wider replication.

The session will combine a keynote presentation, with short presentations of cases from at least three different regions and an audience discussion chaired by an experience moderator focused by the suggested questions and the overarching governance focused questions of the forum.

## **12. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS AND MEETINGS**

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<sup>1</sup> The session will focus on water-related development issues in their broadest sense including water supply, environmental sanitation, water resources management, hydropower, and irrigation, and ethical issues all along the water development chain from the global level down to consumers.

The session will be led by Transparency International (with local chapters in 90 countries) and will involve the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Stockholm International Water Institute, the World-Bank supported Water and Sanitation Programme, UNICEF, AQUAFED, Swedish Water House, the International Initiative on Corruption and Governance-Asia, and the Water Integrity Network.

The topic 4.3 task group set up at the last meeting in Istanbul (2<sup>nd</sup> thematic and regional coordinators meeting) is asked to contribute to the preparation of this session.

Consultations and preparations for this session will include a session at the Stockholm Water Week organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, and electronic discussions using links to available platforms such as the Water Integrity Network. A series of events in the Americas, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia linked to the publication of the Global Corruption Report 2008 by Transparency International – which focused on water – would also be used to prepare recommendations and involve a wider group of stakeholders in the forum.