

GTZ Development of the water sector

Program description

Title: Reform of Urban Water and Sanitation Sector Program (RUWASS)
Client: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country: Uganda
Lead executing agency: Ministry of Water and Environment
Overall term: 2002 to 2014

Context

Only about half the population of Uganda's towns and cities has access to drinking water, and a mere eight per cent are connected to a sewerage system. In particular, the poorer residents of the rapidly expanding urban peripheries have inadequate access to clean and reliable drinking water or sanitation services. The reasons for this are the aging infrastructure, the inability of poorer citizens to pay for services, the enormous rate of population growth in the cities and urban peripheral areas, inadequate institutional and regulatory capacities, a lack of business and management skills and uncertainty of the impacts of climate change on the availability of safe drinking water.

Since the end of the 1990s, significant improvements have been achieved, in terms of both sector policy and management of operations. This is a good basis for finding solutions to the core problem of Uganda's urban water sector as defined in the objectives of German development cooperation and the joint strategy of the donors.

Objective

The poor urban population increasingly has access to clean drinking water and sewerage systems.

Approach

The program strengthens institutional, regulatory and business competences, efficiency of the partner institutions, supports the implementation of the Ugandan Government's reform of the urban water sector and cooperates to strengthen the water sector to adapt to climate change. The significance and acceptance of the Ugandan-German program remain high. This reflects the years of expertise in the sector and the prioritizing of urban water supply and sanitation in the context of donor coordination.

The potential for sustainability is high because coverage of the operating costs has consistently improved in the towns run by the state-owned National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC). The NWSC is increasingly being consulted on its experience by the service providers in smaller towns.

The following measures are being carried out:

- Advisory services for the Ministry of Water and Environment, and the Directorate of Water Development
- Support for the National Water and Sewerage Corporation
- Improvement of the drinking water and sanitation systems in small towns.
- Support to the Directorate of Water Resource Management and the Department for Meteorology.

The technical advice provided by GTZ, the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), the German Development Service (DED) and Inwent, Capacity Building International, is coordinated as a network of interventions alongside the financial investments undertaken by KfW Entwicklungsbank (Development Bank). The German development cooperation contributions are harmonized with those of other donors and Ugandan non-governmental organizations through the work of the Water and Sanitation Sector Working Group. In a sector-wide approach (SWAP) with other international donors, the program is involved in various sector forums.

Results achieved so far

The water supply in Uganda's towns rose from 51 percent coverage in 2005, to 66 percent in 2009. In the 23 largest towns, which are operated by the NWSC, coverage was as high as 73 percent (2009), in the small towns coverage, operated by private water operators supply 51 percent of the population (2009). However, both the NWSC and the private operators are struggling with a high population growth rate (3.2 percent in 2008), pronounced rural–urban migration, and a fall in investment in infrastructure on the part of the state.

Basic sanitation coverage in the towns reached 73 percent in 2009. However, the rates of coverage vary greatly, and in many of the slums in the capital city only one person in two has access to anything like acceptable sanitation. In a close partnership with the private sector (public-private partnership, PPP) the program has achieved some initial successes in the slums of Kampala. As rent-paying tenants in their corrugated-iron shacks residents can, for the first time, use their own latrines and toilets. This was made possible by adapting the range of models to the needs of the poor, by using modern marketing campaigns and through stricter adherence to the law.

Some milestones have been achieved in the reform process. After many years of intensive advice, early in 2009 the Ministry of Water and Environment decided jointly with the most important stakeholders in the water sector to set up a separate regulatory body with wide-ranging powers, to be based in the Ministry. The unit is operational and take active responsibility for the performance contracts with NWSC and the Small Town Private Water Operators (finalized end 2009), the improvement of transparency and accountability in the sector, strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms, advancement on consumer participation and increased service delivery for the poor.

The NWSC , the commercially-operated state-owned enterprise, opened-up the management of town water authorities to the private sector. This represents the fulfillment in the larger towns of one of the core requirements of the reform: the large-scale involvement of the private sector. At the same time, the NWSC offers special discounted rates which make it possible for especially poor citizens to access small quantities of water at an affordable price. Connection costs have been considerably reduced or even removed, while public water points in the slums provide water at a rate of EUR 0.50 per cubic meter, considerably cheaper than the household tariff.

The support to Directorate of Water Resource Management and the Department for Meteorology for climate change adaptation has recently started; the progress on enhanced data collection and processing, reservoir regulation, flood prevention and awareness raising will soon be communicated.