SUSTAINING NEW INVESTMENTS IN WATER AND SANITATION FOR SMALL TOWNS

Through
CAPACITY BUILDING: THE NWSC-UGANDA EXPERIENCE

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Who Are We?

- NWSC is a Public Corporation wholly owned by the Government of Uganda, established in 1972 by decree No. 34.
- Its legal position was strengthened by the enactment of NWSC Statute No. 7 of 1995 and NWSC Act of 2000.
- Under the new legal framework, the powers and structure of NWSC were revised to enable the Corporation operate on a commercial and financially viable basis.
- The Corporation is mandated to manage water and sewerage services in Urban Areas.
- Urban population is about 15% of population of Uganda.
What is our Vision and Mission?

Corporate Vision

- The Vision of National Water and Sewerage Corporation is to be the Pride of the Water in Africa

Corporate Mission

- The Mission of the Corporation is to be a Customer Oriented Organization, providing Excellent Water and Sewerage Services in a cost effective manner.
Capacity Building Issues in Small Towns

For this presentation we consider “capacity” to mean the ability of the town to deliver good WSS services to the dwellers to promote their health and well-being. The most common underlying service delivery challenges are varied:

- Low economies of scale and hence low break-even capacity
- People’s low ability to pay
- Inability to attract competent managerial skills
- Poor infrastructure planning, which hampers expansion programmes due to informal settlements
- Poor information management systems
What has NWSC Done to Build Capacity in Small Towns?

Capacity building in NWSC, has involved putting in place mechanisms to manage challenges so as to improve service delivery in small towns, as follows:

• Building the financial capacity of the towns through initial cross-subsidies and growing them to break-even status
• Application of affordable consumption tariffs to improve access and in turn improved water sales
• Free new connection policy to grow the customer base
• Deliberate efforts to install management and financial systems through a number of IT programmes
What has NWSC Done to Build Capacity in Small Towns? Cont’d

• De-politicising WSS management through well structured performance contract with Government
• Strengthening managerial capacity of the towns using NWSC’s core management structures and innovative programmes
• Deliberate human resource capacity building programmes
  • Benchmarking trips to learn from peer utilities
  • Short-term training programmes on special skills
Positive Trends Registered

As a result of the multiplicity of capacity building programmes, the following positive trends have been registered in small towns:

• Revenue trends normally improve significantly
• Break-even on operating costs is easily obtained through deliberate efficiency improvement programmes (innovations)
• Customers easily see the difference in service provision as a result of service improvements and consequently become highly supportive
• Through deliberate human resource development programmes, it is possible to get quality staff, able to take on significant managerial challenges
• Political support is tenable once service improvements are registered and obligation are well outlined in the performance contracts
Lessons Learned

The capacity building efforts in NWSC small towns pauses the following key lessons:

- Improvements need to be centred on efficiency and cost-containment measures rather than initial tariff increases that might cause resentment among town dwellers.
- Political support is easily enlisted through “action”: creating a difference in service delivery.
- Human resource development is a key factor in performance enhancement programmes in small towns.
- Re-aligning staff working culture is key in small towns.
- WSS improvements can never be tenable without customer and community involvement.
In Conclusion

Capacity building in small towns is made of many elements and needs to be carried out in a holistic manner, on priority basis, to realise wholesome service delivery improvements.

THIS IS THE END..... THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!