

# **NATIONAL POLICY**

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## **Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Sector**

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# **National Policy for**

## **Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Government of Sri Lanka has acknowledged the importance of health and well being of its people for social and economic development and has set a goal of providing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation to all citizens by the year 2010. Water and sanitation are basic human needs for sustaining life. Fresh water is a renewable but a scarce natural resource that could be easily polluted. The demands on the natural sources of water are ever increasing due to high competition among users for domestic, agricultural, services and commercial purposes making water a social good as well as an economic good.

The policy for the rural water supply and sanitation sector has recognized the value of water, and the need for institutional arrangement for the efficient management of facilities with community participation and the stakeholders.

### **2.0 Principles of the Policy**

- (i) Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource essential to sustain life and ecosystems.
- (ii) Water is a basic human need which warrants for equitable allocation.
- (iii) Water has an economic value and should therefore be recognized as an economic good.
- (iv) Provision of Water Supply and Sanitation services should be people centered and demand driven.
- (v) Provision of Water Supply and Sanitation together with hygiene education should be considered as integral components in all sector projects/ programmes.
- (vi) Sector activities should be based on participatory approach involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels.
- (vii) The roles of the Government, Provincial Council and the Local Government Authorities should be to regulate and facilitate in the implementation of the sector activities while the Community Based Organization (CBOs), Private

Sector and NGOs should be the providers of services. Local Authorities also may provide services when required.

- (viii) Users should be encouraged to own and manage the facilities and assets.
- (ix) Users should be encouraged to share the capital investment incurred in creating the facilities.
- (x) Users should bear the full responsibility of sustainable operation and maintenance of the facilities.
- (xi) Women should play a central role in decision making process of the sector.
- (xii) Private sector participation in the provision, operation and maintenance of facilities and services should be encouraged.
- (xiii) All sector activities should be in harmony with the environment.

### **3.0 Scope of the Rural Water Supply & Sanitation (RWSS)**

#### **3.1 Rural Areas**

A Rural Area for this purpose is defined as any Grama Niladaree (GN) Division within a Pradeshiya Sabbha (PS) area. However any GN Division in the former Town Council areas that has a population over 6000 should not be considered as a rural area.

#### **3.2 Access to Basic Level of Water Supply**

The Government of Sri Lanka supports all activities leading to provide access to potable water to all citizens. The Guidelines described below are the minimum requirements needed to ensure health and the levels of services. This does not limit the demand for higher standards by the users. Where the users demand for higher standards, they should contribute to the incremental capital cost.

- 3.2.1 Quantity of Water - The minimum requirement of water for direct consumption, preparation of food and personnel hygiene is considered to be 40 liters per person per day.
- 3.2.2 Haulage Distance - The maximum haul of water to the dwelling of any user should not exceed 200m. In steep terrain this should be reduced with consideration to the effort for hauling water.

- 3.2.3 Adequacy of the Source - The minimum daily rate of extraction of water should not be less than 10 liters per minute per capita at the source. This supply should be available for 90% of the time.
- 3.2.4 Equity - A supply system should provide water security to all members of the community. The operation and maintenance of the facilities should be effective and ensure that the total interruptions per year do not exceed 10 days.
- 3.2.5 Quality - The quality of water supplied, as a basic service should conform to the currently accepted minimum standards with respect to health related microbiological and chemical contaminants.
- 3.2.6 Flexibility to Upgrade - The basic facilities provided should be sufficiently flexible to enable upgrading if and when desired by the users. The users should bear the entire cost of additional facilities for improved services over and above the basic facilities provided.
- 3.2.7 Safe Water Supply Systems - Following systems will be the accepted methods of providing safe drinking water, however, under epidemic or other risk situations, special treatment may be required.
- a) Piped Water Supply Systems with Adequate Treatment
  - b) Deep/Shallow Wells with Hand Pumps
  - c) Protected Springs
  - d) Protected Dug Wells
  - e) Protected Rainwater Catchments Systems

### **3.3 Basic Sanitation**

The Government of Sri Lanka promotes all activities leading to provision of access to basic sanitation to all citizens. In the day life of the community, domestic water and sanitation are closely and inextricably linked to each other. However, traditionally sanitation has been given lower priority as a basic need in comparison to drinking water. Sanitation is a personal matter that requires the commitment of each individual as well as the community at large to prevent health hazards arising from shortfalls in the disposal of waste.

Basic Sanitation should ensure protection to both surface and ground water from pollution and the users from water borne diseases and other health hazards. In conformity with this requirement the basic facility for sanitation should be the Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine. Access to this basic facility depends on the site

conditions of the location, the perceptions and affordability of the users. Simple technologies manageable at the household and community level should be developed and prompted as a cost effective means of encouraging improved sanitation.

Other acceptable options are as follows.

- (i) Piped Sewer systems with treatment which meets recognized standards.
- (ii) Septic Tanks with Soakage Pits
- (iii) Water Sealed Latrines with Disposal Pits
- (iv) Any other technology acceptable to the health authorities

### **3.4 Hygiene Education**

Hygiene education will initiate behavioral changes and promote better hygiene practices among user communities through effective awareness creation. It also motivates communities to involve in all aspects of water supply and sanitation leading to long term sustainability of facilities provided.

The combined effect of sound hygiene behavior together with adequate sanitation and clean water is the only way to achieve the overall objectives of the government. Therefore the government will assist the promotion of the hygiene education as an integral part of the RWSS Sector development.

### **4.0 Sector Partners and the Responsibilities**

Government, Local Authorities, NGOs and CBOs are currently engaged in the rural water supply and sanitation sector development activities. Water and Sanitation being closely related to the community life requires the participation of the communities at all stages of development and management. This necessitates an institutional framework which encompasses the respective roles, mandates and responsibilities, authority, legal provisions, systems and procedures of all the stakeholders of the sector.

Success of the implementation of the sector development activities will mainly depend on the effectiveness of the institutions involved in the sector.

The respective roles of the institutions involved in regulating, facilitating, providing and managing the water supply and sanitation sector services should be as follows.

#### **4.1 Government**

The primary role shall be to,

- a) Ensure all citizens have access to potable water and sanitation facilities.
- b) Formulate necessary policies and legislation for the sector and
- c) Regulate sector development and management activities.

In this context the functions of the Government will include the following.

- Formulate and update the national policy to cater to the emerging needs of the sub- sector. Establish guidelines to ensure efficient use, equity, transparency and accountability.
- Facilitate to secure external financing for sector development and co-ordinate with such external financiers.
- Monitor the sub-sector development activities and the involvement of all stakeholders via decentralized decision making.
- Regulate, determine water entitlement and allocation for the sub-sector.
- Facilitate the regulation on water quality by establishing standards.
- Formulate a tariff structure allowing adequate discretion to local level implementing authorities.
- Facilitate sector development particularly in technical expertise to sector partners, training and capacity building.
- Establish institutional mechanisms to mediate / resolve inter – provincial sector disputes.
- Promote research and studies for the development of sub sector.

- Provide legislation for the legal recognition of Community Based Organizations/User Groups to build, own and manage facilities and sustain the same adopting cost recovery systems.

#### **4.2 Provincial Councils**

The primary role of Provincial Councils within the national policy framework shall be to:

- a) ensure equitable allocation of resources and
- b) quality and standards of services,

In this context the Provincial Councils will perform the following functions in conformity with guidelines issued by the government within the province.

- Facilitate resource mobilization, technical support, training and capacity building and other related activities for provision of services.
- Co-ordinate planning and implementation of the sector activities.
- Monitor the sub sector development activities and procure issues that have to be solved by the government.
- Promote investment, development and sustainable management of the sector activities.
- Ensure adherence to the principles of the policy in implementation.
- Recognize the private sector as a useful partner and provide necessary protection and encouragement for investment.
- Develop mechanism for decision making on resource allocation and optimizing the resources.
- Establish a mechanism for conflict resolution and settlement of disputes.
- Ensure environmental harmony in all sector development activities giving due consideration on the conservation of water resources.

#### **4.3 Local Authorities**

The primary role of the Local Authorities within the national and provincial policy framework shall be to:



- a) ensure quality and standards of services,
- b) determine tariff and
- c) equitable allocation of resources.

Under the authority and powers vested from the relevant ordinances, acts and regulations, the local authorities will perform the relevant functions pertaining to the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector. In addition, they should perform the following functions as well within their respective areas of authority.

- Facilitate the strengthening of capacity for provision of services.
- Co-ordinate planning and implementation of the sector activities.
- Promote investment, development and sustainable management of the sector activities.
- Ensure quality and standards of services.
- Determine tariff in accordance with tariff structure formulated by government.
- Creation of conducive environment for external agencies to participate in sector development activities and promote them for sustainable operation and maintenance of the facilities.
- Recognize the private sector as a useful partner and provide necessary protection and encouragement for investment.
- Facilitate the CBOs in implementing and managing the sector development activities.
- Ensure adherence to the principles of the policy in implementation.
- Ensure environmental harmony in all sector development activities giving due consideration on the conservation of water resources.
- Act as a provider of services if required.

#### **4.4 Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

CBOs are groups formed or rural community organization capable for the provision and sustainable management of water supply and sanitation facilities to their membership.

The CBOs involved in the sector activities may be registered as a, Trust, Development Society, NGO or as a Company under the Companies Act. They

will be recognized as authorized institutions to take part in the development of the sector. Their authority includes raising funds, obtaining loans, receiving grants, developing services, levying tariffs and management of facilities.

The CBOs will be accountable to the beneficiary community. Functions of CBOs. Shall be subject to the regulations imposed and standards set by the Government, Provincial Council and the Local Authorities.

The functions of CBOs will be to,

- (i) Assess the needs, the demand and the aspirations of the communities for water supply, sanitation facilities and services.
- (ii) Assess the technical feasibility and economic viability of different options for providing water supply and sanitation facilities.
- (iii) Arrange internal funding.
- (iv) Play the key role in planning, designing, preparing proposals, implementing and managing the facilities and assets.
- (v) Ensure the participation of user community and other partners at all stages of the process.
- (vi) Manage the facilities and services in a sustainable manner and to the satisfaction of the user community.
- (vii) Conserve the environment with emphasis on water sources and watershed areas.

#### **4.5 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

NGOs are non-profit making institutions registered with appropriate authority and engaged in providing services to the communities.

Their scope extends to a variety of functions including provision of water and sanitation facilities together with hygiene education.

As facilitator, the sector development activities initiated by NGOs should conform to overall development plans of the Government, Provincial Councils, and the Local authorities. It is the responsibility of the NGO concerned to obtain clearance of the appropriate authorities prior to commencement of any sector development activity.

Subject to the regulations imposed and standards set by the Government, Provincial Council and the Local Authorities, the functions of NGOs will be to:

- (i) Facilitate sector development activities with the concurrence of the local authorities.
- (ii) Assess the needs, demand and the aspirations of the community for water supply and sanitation facilities and services.
- (iii) Assess the technical feasibility, economic viability of different options for providing water supply and sanitation facilities.
- (iv) Arrange internal funding.
- (v) Provide facilities under special arrangements with the approval of the relevant Local Authority.
- (vi) Ensure participation of the user community and other partners at all stages of the process.
- (vii) Plan, Design, Implement and Manage the assets and facilities with the Community.
- (viii) Conserve the environment with emphasis on water sources and watersheds areas.

#### **4.6 Private Sector**

The private sector includes individuals and corporate bodies registered under the appropriate authority in Sri Lanka. They should function as providers of facilities and services subject to terms and conditions specified by the relevant regulatory institutions. They will be accountable to the community that they serve and to the regulatory institutions.

They should be encouraged to make use of the favourable environment created by the Government for the sector development. For this purpose the private sector should use the prevailing institutional mechanisms and financial instruments. It is imperative that the private sector entrepreneurs will function in a socially responsible manner.

Subject to the regulations imposed and standards set by the Government, Provincial Council and the Local Authorities, the functions of private sector developers and service providers will be to:

- (i) Assess the needs, demand and the aspirations of the community for water supply and sanitation facilities and services.
- (ii) Assess the technical feasibility, economic viability of different options for providing water supply and sanitation facilities.
- (iii) Arrange funding.
- (iv) Ensure participation of the user community and other partners at all stages of the process.
- (v) Plan, Design, Implement and Manage the assets and facilities with the Community.
- (vi) Manage the facilities and services to the satisfaction of the user community.

#### **4.7 International Donors**

The international donors may provide funds and technical support for sector development activities.

Any donor assistance should conform to the national policy and regulations.

### **5.0 Legislative Support**

#### **5.1 Legal Framework**

The Government will provide the legal framework to support and guide the sector institutions in the performance of roles and functions of the institutions. Such legal framework will enable the respective institutions to meet their responsibilities.

The legal authority vested in the respective institutions for the provision, ownership, and management of facilities should be duly recognized and accepted by the stakeholders.

## **5.2 Regulation**

The Government will facilitate the formulation of an appropriate legal framework and necessary provisions within which the Provincial Council and the Local Authorities may enact, statutes and bylaws.

Rural Water Supply will be regulated in order to ensure efficiency, reliability and quality of supplies and services. For this purpose suitable regulations will be enacted by Provincial Councils and Local Authorities.

The scope of such regulation should include the following.

- (i) Extraction of water from natural sources to ensure equity and sustainability.
- (ii) Allocation of water for different purposes among users.
- (iii) Water entitlements
- (iv) Conservation of water resources and watersheds including proper drainage and prevention of pollution.
- (v) Standards of the quality and the level of services of both potable water and sanitation.
- (vi) Implementation of tariff structure.
- (vii) Conflict resolution among stakeholders.
- (viii) Protection of user rights.