



## Watsan delivery — private sector involvement

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THE GOVERNMENT OF Ghana launched a national water and sanitation programme in 1994. A major objective of the strategy is the attainment of sustainable water and sanitation facilities by shifting away from dependency on government towards greater self-reliance by user communities. A key element of the strategy is the intimate involvement of the private sector. The use of the private sector has become necessary because of the dismal performance (in the past) of traditional government agencies such as the Department of Community Development and the Environmental Health Division of the Ministry of Health.

The sector is understood to have the greatest potential and flexibility to respond to community needs for extension, design and construction services and operation and maintenance support. Private sector participation is therefore expected to improve service delivery and provide the needed sustainability.

Private sector participants in the Programme include Partner Organizations (POs), Hand Dug Well and borehole contractors, Parts Suppliers, Pump Mechanics and Latrine Artisans. This paper focuses on only Partner Organizations.

POs are typically small NGOs or commercial sector organizations who are contracted to provide one or more locally based two-three person teams to work in between 10-20 communities per year.

### Scope of service

POs serve as a link between communities and the Programme. Their scope of services include:

- strengthening community organizational capacity (formation of WATSAN Committees, promote leadership, organizational development and obtain women's participation in planning and implementation);
- leading the planning and design process;
- implementing hygiene education (training WATSAN and volunteers on basic hygiene messages and);
- establishing operation and maintenance capability.

### Conditions for enlistment as partner organization

To qualify for enlistment as a PO, a firm must satisfy the following conditions:

- Legal existence through registration with the Registrar-General's Department;
- physical presence in relevant district;

- mix of skills including coordination and management, community management and organization, hygiene education and water supply and sanitation technologies;
- gender mix;
- operation of a credible bank account;
- general experience in the fields of assignment.

### Status of existing POs

This discussion focuses on six POs in the Northern, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions.

These are:

#### Northern (2)

Neighbours in Need (Nenfound) and Partners for Participatory Development (PAPADEV)

#### Brong Ahafo (2)

Asunafo Grassroots Development Network (AGRADNET) and Wenchi Village Water Project (VWP)

#### Ashanti (4)

Odukro Youth Association (OYA); Maso Atwedie Youth Association (MAYONET); Water Sanitation and Health Team (WASHT) and Environment and Development Consultancy Ltd (IFMED).

Fifty percent of the organizations were newly created to participate in the programme. In line with programme requirements all the POs are registered as companies limited by guarantee. The table overleaf indicates the quality and mix of PO staff. From the table, it is observed that over half (55.6 per cent) of staff had specialist training, including training from the school of hygiene (for hygiene related persons) and community development (for community organization and management persons). Only three persons, all managers, had tertiary education.

Regarding experience, over three quarters, (77.8 per cent) of the staff had between four and ten years work experience. Close to a third (27.8 per cent), and mostly Community organization and management persons had experience spanning over ten years.

In spite of the obvious role of women in water and sanitation delivery, a disturbing feature of the staffing is male dominance - only 22 per cent of the staff are female. Women are mainly represented in the areas of community organization and management and hygiene education, but even in these areas men predominate. Coordination and management as well as technical functions are completely dominated by men. (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Capacity analysis of partner organisation**

Key Personnel	No.	Educational level				Relevant experience (Year)				Gender mix	
		Sec	Post Sec	Tertiary	Special	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	Male	Female
Coordination and management	8	-	2	3	3	1	1	2	1	8	-
Community organisation and management	11	-	3	-	5	2	4	-	5	7	4
Hygiene education	12	3	2	-	7	2	7	3	3	8	4
Technical	5	3	-	-	5	3	1	-	1	5	-
Total	36	6	7	3	20	8	13	5	10	28	8
Per cent	100	16.7	19.4	8.3	55.6	22.2	36.1	13.9	27.8	77.8	22.2

Ownership of logistics/ equipment vary depending on the age of the PO. For the relatively newer POs, they lack basic logistics such as means of transport and office machinery. The CWSD is yet to provide POs in the Northern region with the necessary operational kit. This is hindering scheduled implementation. Older POs such as VWP have some amount of logistics most of which they acquired through earlier collaboration with some donor agencies and NGOs in support of community development.

### PO performance to date

All the POs except those in the Northern region have recorded some achievements albeit at varying degrees. Generally, POs in Brong Ahafo and Ashanti have been able to impart relevant messages to the people in the communities and thus whipped up demand for water and sanitation services. They have since 1995 also supervised the construction of over 150 household latrines and 50 hand dug wells.

### Comments and observations

Comments and observations regarding the performance of PO operations to date include but not limited to the following:

- Low morale due to untimely provision of relevant logistics by CWSD. This has tended to hinder takeoff in the Northern Region and effective implementation in the other two regions. Where logistics constraints is likely to delay PO activity, the possibility of hiring such logistics should be pursued.
- Contract award process is cumbersome and delays delivery. Prompt approval at regional and donor level will ensure timely recruitment and payment of POs. This will enhance boost for effective performance.
- Inability of POs to attract and retain technical staff. Absence of full time technical persons in some of the POs affect technical operations. There is need to provide recruitment and training support to POs. POs should be encouraged to broaden their scope beyond

water supply and sanitation. Community based organizations should also be encouraged to do PO work.

- Internal conflicts in some communities create uncondusive operational environment. Encourage the use of existing conflict resolution mechanisms . POs should however avoid any intervention in local conflicts.
- Disharmony within POs also tend to affect progress of implementation. Agradnet for instance has two managers which hampers smooth PO administration. There is need to include conflict resolution in PO training .
- There seems to be confusion or lack of adequate project information in communities before PO entry. This could be overcome through improvement in initial information by Assemblymen, Regional Water and Sanitation Team, District Water Supply Teams, etc.
- There is usually a lack of hydrogeological information before technology choice. POs should be provided with the relevant information before they enter the communities. There is poor timing of PO visits to communities.
- There is need to improve personal and organizational planning.
- Serious effort should be made to attain gender balance in PO staffing
- Even though most of the staff have long periods of work experience most of this experience is not in a project environment. Regular training of the staff is therefore required to update their skills for efficient and effective performance.

### Conclusion

The relevance of POs to the success of the community water and sanitation programme cannot be overemphasized. They should therefore be given the necessary assistance and support to effectively carry out their mandated assignments. Current constraints are teething and typical of emerging structures. It is expected that these constraints will be overcome overtime.