



## Code of conduct: an ethnical perspective on community

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CODE OF CONDUCT on Community Management is the product of case studies from seven countries including India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, Regional Meeting for Asia, International Secretariat for Water; and meetings held by the Collaborative Council's Working Group on Community Management and Partnerships with Civil Society in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The code is developed for agencies participating in drinking water supply and sanitation schemes as facilitators, donors and for partner communities. The code promotes rules for fair and true partnerships between community members and agencies with two complementary concerns: **sustainability** and **ownership** of the system.

This code of conduct is a statement of principles and ethics designed as a reference document for all stakeholders in the Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) sector to encourage qualitative improvements and safeguard the interest of partner communities.

The Code is part of the redefinition of interveners' role in the sector:

- the role of the state remains indispensable to provide an enabling legal and regulatory environment and foster access to safe water and sanitation to all citizens;
- the partnership between the community and the other actors is based on clear roles and responsibilities of each partner and fair rules of the game;
- community involvement is a gradual learning process which must be envisaged with a long-term perspective.

Principles stated in the Code are in line with the Montreal Charter on Drinking Water and Sanitation. If these principles are met, communities will be in a better position to manage WATSAN schemes and pay for services.

### General objective

To get all stakeholders to agree upon and honour the following principles based on equal and gender balanced partnership.

### Specific objectives

- To contribute to on-going efforts by practitioners of the WATSAN sector towards greater self-reliance, self-respect and commitment to the user of water resources.
- To encourage CBOs/NGOs to develop a collective capacity for advocacy, so as to articulate the felt needs of the constituencies they serve.

- To serve as a guide for improving the partnership between communities, CBOs and other stakeholders by setting out modalities aimed at minimizing the present patterns of money-dominated relationships as quickly as possible.
- To foster a genuine commitment on the part of all stakeholders to recognize the importance of a locally-driven approach to the challenges faced in the WATSAN sector, and to focus their attention on the needs of partner communities.
- To encourage dialogue among stakeholders on potential WATSAN related-conflicts.

### The principles

- Partner communities will be consulted before any WATSAN schemes are formulated.
- When undertaking WATSAN schemes, the stakeholders will put an emphasis on a process rather than on a project oriented approach.
- Sanitation will receive equal importance and made integral part of WATSAN schemes.
- Women must be involved in all stages of WATSAN schemes to ensure effective management.
- Community organizations will get a legal status within an enabling environment allowing them to operate in security, own the assets or control the source.
- All stakeholders particularly partner communities will have access and right to all information concerning the scheme to achieve an equal and transparent relationship in WATSAN scheme.
- Indigenous leadership wherever available will be strongly encouraged and supported in all stages of WATSAN schemes.
- the stakeholders will incorporate traditional/local knowledge, skills and socio-cultural practices available within the community to maximize the effectiveness of WATSAN schemes.
- The stakeholders will strongly take into consideration the views of partner communities in choosing the most appropriate WATSAN technology and level of services.
- Water pricing and tariffs based on equitable and non discriminatory water consumption partners between users will ensure sustainability of community WATSAN schemes.
- The assets created will be owned and maintained by the partner community.
- The stakeholders will respect the WATSAN needs of the rural communities first before exploiting water re-

sources for urban, agribusiness and industrial purposes.

- The stakeholders will actively promote the protection and conservation of natural resources when undertaking WATSAN schemes.

We the stakeholders agree to abide and honour the above mentioned principles and ethics.

### **Code of conduct: Glossary**

#### *Stakeholders*

All interveners providing assistance and support on water and sanitation services for communities: the local, regional and national level of government and their technical agencies, external support agencies (multi/bilateral agencies, NGOs...), national NGOs, CBOs and the private sector.

#### *Partner communities*

They include rural and urban communities.

#### *Practitioners*

Professionals, technicians, local volunteers and leaders, animators involved in WATSAN implementation in the field.

#### *CBOs*

Community-based organizations are distinct from communities in their effort to group, defend and promote common interests of dwellers, households and/or producers.

#### *WATSAN schemes*

Water and Sanitation schemes refer to projects, programs and systems introduced in the community.

#### *Process*

Refers to methods and means by which people, communities and their organizations participate to the various stages of decision-making of a community-based water and sanitation scheme.

#### *Stages*

The various stages of WATSAN schemes range from early planning, feasibility, design to construction, operation and maintenance, monitoring and evaluation.

#### *Exploitation*

It includes the harnessing, transportation, thermal use and processing of water resources for agricultural, industrial and energy purposes.

#### *Community*

Grouping of citizens sharing a same space, forming structures of production, power, wealth, influence and of symbolic meaning systems, and linked together by a delicate tissue of social relations.

#### *Indigenous systems*

They include:

- community-based institutions consisting of the group of people that uses water and related resources;
- bodies of local knowledge generated and transformed through a systematic process of classification, of empirical observation and experimentation about water and local environment;
- systems of self-management that govern resource use.

Traditional Water Management systems are not only utilized by indigenous peoples, but also by a larger number of people in the world who maintain a traditional way of livelihood that depends on those systems.

### **Reference:**

FINAL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP on *Community Management and Partnerships with Civil Society*. Working Group, Water Supply Sanitation, Collaborative Council and Task Manager, The International Secretariat of Water. Presented to the Fourth Global Forum, Manila/ Philippines, November 1997.

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