

Effective Stakeholder Consultations:

Approach followed in Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation,
Ministry of Rural Development for preparation of
Strategic Plan 2010-2022

Concept

The Department drew up an Action Plan to prepare the Strategic Plan with the intention of laying down a medium-term perspective plan for rural water supply and rural sanitation sector. The idea was to prepare a plan that would guide the Department in the rural drinking water and rural sanitation sector in the two years of the current plan, the 12th and 13th Plan periods i.e. next 12 years upto 2022. This would enable the Department to work towards an aspirational goal for the sector in the rural areas.



Shri Arun Misra, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation

The aspiration was to move up the water ladder in the rural areas: from providing water through hand pumps and borewells, open wells to provide piped water supply schemes through public taps and then to household connections and metering. In the sanitation sector, the aspiration was to move up from providing toilet in every household and ensure its use to enable a sustainable system for solid and liquid waste management for clean environment in the villages. With these aspirations in mind it was decided to prepare a plan for 12

years rather than for 5 years as required by the Cabinet Secretariat (PM).

Inputs to the Process

The Department had conducted a Round Table of national experts, State Governments, NGOs, academicians on 21.10.2009 to discuss the status and further roadmap for the sector.

Position Papers

Position Papers, one on rural drinking water and another on rural sanitation, were prepared based on inputs from this Round Table consultation, the existing NRDWP and TSC Guidelines, 11th Plan document, decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees, the recommendations of the Technical Expert Group (TEG) (set-up by the Department to go into the functioning of the Department), Parliamentary Standing Committee reports, evaluation studies, reports prepared by UN organisations, World Bank, NGOs etc. These background notes were discussed in meetings of the Working Groups, one set-up for rural water supply and another for rural sanitation. The Notes as amended based on the discussions in these Working Groups were circulated to all the State Governments and various stakeholders.

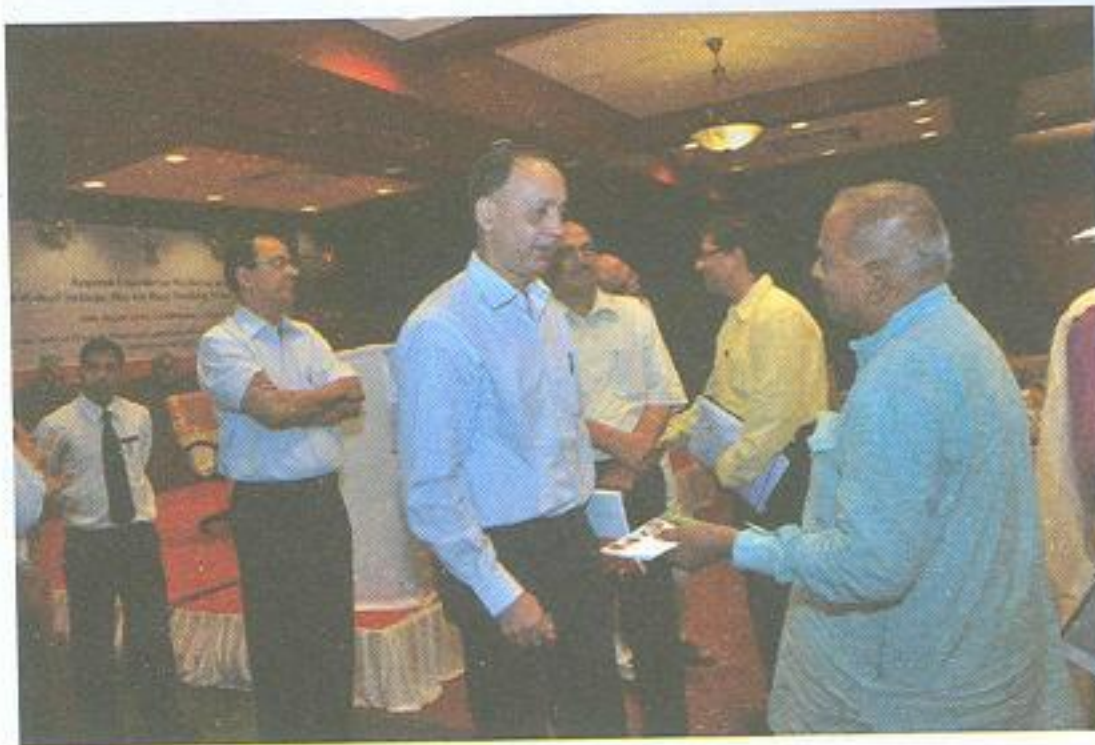
E-community

In order to involve the civil society organization, assistance of the UN Solution Exchange and WESNET was taken. UN Solution Exchange posted three queries each on rural water supply and rural sanitation. The first query was the aspiration and goals, second on the status of the sector and the present challenges and the third on strategy and implementation plan. The response was very enthusiastic, the inputs provided by the UN Solution Exchange were valuable in refining our strategy.

Consultative Workshops

The Department decided to go in for wide consultations with various stakeholders in preparing the strategic paper. For this purpose, it held four regional consultative workshops: (i) Chandigarh (June, 2010) for Northern States, (ii) Bangalore (July, 2010) for Southern States, (iii) Guwahati (August, 2010) for Eastern and North-Eastern States and (iv) Ahmedabad (August, 2010) for Western and Central States.

In all the four workshops, the Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, JS (Water), JS (Sanitation), DDWS, GoI, attended. Principal Secretaries, Chief Engineers and other senior officers of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Departments from participating States attended. They also brought representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), NGOs, Resource institutions and Village Water and Sanitation Committee members to the workshop. Representatives from World Bank, UNICEF, Water-aid participated in all the workshops. A total of about 100 to 140 delegates attended each of the workshops.



Structure of Workshops

The structure of the workshops was as follows:

The concerned State Minister incharge of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation or the Chief Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary from the host State participated in the workshop lending their commitment to the process. This would be followed by a brief introduction by Secretary (DDWS), GoI to set the tone for the workshop. Thereafter the participants split into two groups: one on Drinking Water and another on Sanitation and the workshop sessions continued simultaneously in separate halls. Short presentations on rural water supply and sanitation from the concerned Joint Secretary (Water) and JS (Sanitation), DDWS, GoI laid the agenda for the workshops. Eminent NGOs, experts from the region were also invited to speak. The first group work session was held in the fore-noon on the Aspirations and Status. Each Sub-Group elected its own chair and presenter and was facilitated by officers of DDWS, Experts and Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) - World Bank. This was followed by group presentations. In the afternoon session there were presentations on best practices in the region from some of the States in between. This was followed by group work on Strategies and Implementation plan and presentations by the groups. After presentations of the group reports, there would be a Wrap up Session for discussions on the recommendations and other issues chaired by Secretary (DDWS), GoI before the workshop concluded.