

## Water supply and management of wastewater

Sweden recognises the human right to water and sanitation and supports provision of water and wastewater services in many countries. Sida acknowledges that technically appropriate and affordable solutions are necessary but not sufficient. It is important that technological solutions are accompanied by institutional, administrative and financial reforms. Sida's support aims at promoting reforms in partner countries to build more democratic and efficient institutions.

Access to safe water contributes to enhanced human wellbeing, is vital for people's health, and helps to create conditions for economic and social development. Yet, water supply and wastewater treatment systems in developing countries are often characterised by intermittent, inefficient, unsustainable and costly services. Generally, poor segments of society receive the lowest quality services, and it is often women and girls who have to walk long distances to fetch water for the family use. Improved services for all, particularly for poor women and men are a priority for Sweden. This brief provides a general overview of Sida's engagement in the area of water supply and wastewater management, and highlights a few examples relevant to the theme.

### MAJOR CHALLENGES

In 2010 the world met the MDG of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water. Yet, another 750 million people still lack access to water. Lack of financial resources and institutional capacity for operation and maintenance are major bottlenecks often contributing to malfunctioning services. In some countries the low quality services are accompanied by a tradition of non-payment. Water and wastewater utilities in developing countries face a complex and sometimes rapidly changing

context. Population growth, high urbanisation rates and increasing economic activities contribute to higher demand for the services. Current challenges, such as unsustainable use and pollution of the water resources, are expected to increase with climate change.

### SWEDEN'S ENGAGEMENT

As a response to these challenges, Sweden provides support through both multilateral and bilateral channels to promote efficient, sustainable and equitable use of the water resources as well as affordable technology options. Capacity strengthening at all levels is a priority. Sweden applies a pro-poor and rights-based approach, with a special focus on the role of women in development. Sida sees water supply, sanitation and hygiene as interlinked and mutually enforcing.



*Improving wastewater treatment in Serbia through construction of a new plant. Photo: Victor Brott/Sida*

At a global level, Sida supports knowledge management and international policy development. Sida's bilateral support focuses on assisting partner countries in their efforts to improve water supply and wastewater services, by reforming and decentralising the sector and through selective infrastructure investments. Support is provided through different financial instruments, such as grants, credits or guarantees.

## Examples of Swedish support related to water supply and wastewater

### UPSCALING INVESTMENTS IN EUROPE

Sida and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has joined forces in the Environment and Climate Programme in Eastern Europe, to promote sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment as part of the EU-integration process. The cornerstone is a trust fund used for technical cooperation and investment grants combined with EBRD loans for the financing of municipal environment and climate projects. The objectives – high quality and reliable municipal services, decreased pollution and increased energy efficiency – are achieved through institutional improvements (such as appropriate tariff systems, water metering, efficient billing/collection, and cost recovery reforms) and selective investments in rehabilitation and replacement of deteriorated water supply, solid waste and district heating systems. By combining forces with EBRD, and with other IFIs, Sida is able to make interventions on a scale that otherwise would not have been possible.

### BREAKING THE SILENCE AND TABOOS

Widespread ignorance of menstrual hygiene negatively impacts the well-being of adolescent girls and women, and contributes to their marginalization. Sida supports the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) whose mission is to achieve sustainable water supply, sanitation and hygiene for all people in the world. In India WSSCC has worked hard to break the silence and taboos around menstruation, and have managed to get recognition of the importance of menstrual hygiene management in the new governmental sanitation policy.

### SEWAGE TREATMENT IN GAZA

In Gaza, access to clean water is one of many challenging problems. Lack of sewage plants is polluting ground water, lakes and the Mediterranean Sea which is a threat to people's health and to the environment. Sida has in cooperation with the WB and EU, supported the Northern Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment (NGEST) project. The immediate objective of this important project has been to mitigate the health and environmental safety threats to communities surrounding the effluent lake which to date has been largely achieved. The aim is also to provide a satisfactory long-term solution to the treatment of wastewater for the population of Northern Gaza. The project has been delayed over the years due to the political situation and difficulties to bring equipment and construction material into Gaza. Nevertheless the effluent

sewage lake at Beit Lahia has been drained and most effluent is being pumped to new infiltration ponds. The new sewage treatment plant has been under construction since December 2011 and completion is estimated by the end of 2014.

### INNOVATIVE FINANCING IN KENYA

Kenya recognises water and sanitation as a human right and the government is committed to ensure progressive, sustainable access to safe, reliable and affordable water supply and sanitation services for its population. However, the rapid population growth and accelerating urbanisation present growing challenges to the water sector in meeting national and international development targets, and Kenya is one of the 10 countries in the world with the largest un-served populations. Sida is about to support an innovative World Bank coordinated program that will help water service providers to access commercial credits to expand water and sanitation services to poor urban areas. Payment is based on performance, and as services are functional and reach the target group, the water service provider receives a payment that allows it to repay 60% of the commercial loan. Sida's contribution reduces the connection fee and hence increases access to water and sanitation for poor urban households.

### IMPROVING WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION GLOBALLY

The Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) is a multi-donor partnership program by the World Bank and co-funded by Sweden and other international donors. WSP's mission is to support poor people in obtaining affordable, safe and sustainable access to water and sanitation services. WSP works directly with client governments to scale up improved water supply and sanitation services and hygiene programs in rural and urban areas. WSP is orienting its efforts to support poor-inclusive sector reform and creating sustainable services through domestic private sector participation. In addition, WSP contributes to capacity strengthening in fragile states and to mainstream climate smart water supply and sanitation planning.

#### Policy direction – water and sanitation

Sweden promotes efficient, fair and sustainable management of water and sanitation. Sida's interventions are directed by results strategies at country, regional and global levels.