

Together is Better

Philippine Water Supply Sector Roadmap

GTZ promotes the roadmap process to facilitate strategic collaboration for sustainable water sector development.



Water supply stakeholders undergo the laborious but rewarding exercise of consensus building as an essential element of the roadmap process.

The roadmap process recognizes the importance of having common goals and united development objectives that contribute to sustainable sector reforms.

Managing Change

What was once a sector characterized by fragmented planning and implementation, by overlapping agency mandates, by inadequate coordination, and by poor leadership and accountability is now on its way to becoming a reformed and re-energized sector, ready for more positive changes.

One good indication is that major agencies in the water supply sector, led by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), are beginning to jointly act according to an institutional roadmap to meet the demands of the water supply sector.

This transformation began in 2005, when the NWRB started meeting with stakeholders to discuss and address regulation issues affecting the way they perform their work. The discussions took a life of their own and soon snowballed into sector-wide concerns that eventually led to what may have been the first consensus ever arrived at by sector stakeholders—that there is a need to rally efforts together to achieve significant results in water supply sector reform.

The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) recognized this genuine interest for change among key players as an opportunity to achieve tangible results through greater and more sustainable collaboration within the sector. Hence, the Philippine Water Supply Sector Roadmap Project was conceived to facilitate the collaboration between and among national and local executive and legislative bodies, other government agencies and non-government organizations in addressing the barriers to achieving water sector targets articulated in the MTPDP 2004-2010 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Jointly implemented by NEDA and NWRB, with technical assistance from GTZ, the roadmap process, which is an output in itself, is expected to yield a sector-wide and sector-owned plan that would guide national government agencies, financing institutions, local government units,



water service providers (water districts, cooperatives, associations) and other development organizations in the implementation of sector initiatives within the period 2008 to 2010.

The Journey is the Destination

The roadmap process espoused consensus building and participatory decision-making among collaborators. This opened the gates to genuine ownership of the initiative by those involved. Below are the project milestones so far:

- ◆ **Strategic Collaborative Planning Workshop for Water Supply Sector Coordination.** Held last January 2007, and participated in by NWRB and other stakeholders, the workshop yielded four important elements: a) guiding principles for the development of the roadmap; b) working draft of the water supply sector roadmap; c) agreement on the sector development outcomes and the strategies to achieve it; and d) implementing plan and 2007 calendar of activities.

Specifically, the collaborators committed to uphold the following principles: a) access to water is a human right, hence government is a major duty-holder; b) water is a social and economic good, thus there should be equitable access to domestic water, especially among marginalized communities; c) **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)** is the guiding framework for the roadmap process; d) participation of women and other marginalized groups in sector development must be ensured.

- ◆ **First Inter-Agency Steering (IASC) Committee Meeting.** In April 2007, the IASC approved the roadmap design and timelines and the composition of TWGs (formally convened in May 2007). The committee is currently composed of representatives from NEDA, NWRB, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Hydraulics Research Center, and National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC).
- ◆ **Second IASC Meeting.** Last July 2007, the committee agreed on the integration of wastewater

management in the roadmap. Hence starting in August 2007, the TWGs organized a series of discussions and workshops for this purpose.

- ◆ **Mid-Term Review.** In September 2007, collaborators sat together and assessed how far have they gone and what else they need to do vis-a-vis the development of the roadmap plan.

Moving Forward

The next phase of the roadmap process will be the joint implementation of institutional strengthening, capacity development, and strategic alliance building programs among the major water supply sector agencies, LGUs, NGOs, and water service providers.

One challenge then is sustaining the energy and enthusiasm of the participants of the roadmap process as they continue to discuss and debate pressing sector issues, and even as they gear up for the actual implementation of the plan.

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