

PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL ON THE PROVISION OF SAFE DRINKING WATER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most rural communities and small towns in Ghana still depend on water from rain, streams and rivers for drinking and other domestic and agricultural purposes. These sources have proven to be unsafe. The problem of unsafe water was highlighted when the UN General Assembly declared 1981-1990 as the International Drinking Water decade throughout the world.

2. In 1991 the Government of Ghana sought assistance of foreign donor nations and formulated a safe water delivery strategy. International Development Agency (IDA), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), KFW, Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have supported government to provide safe water through the construction of boreholes, hand dug wells, spring systems and water treatment plants in the last two decades.

3. To facilitate and coordinate this effort, in 1998 the Community Water and Sanitation Agency, CWSA Act (Act 564) was passed. The CWSA was established to:

- ❖ Provide potable water and improved sanitation services to all Rural Communities and Small Towns that would contribute 5% towards capital cost and pay the full operations, maintenance and repair cost of their facilities;

- ❖ Ensure sustainability of the facilities through Community Ownership and Management (COM); and
- ❖ Maximize health benefits by integrating water, sanitation and hygiene promotion/ education interventions.

4. In the last ten years, US\$500 million has been invested in the provision of potable water to the rural communities. Some achievements have been made in capacity building and CWSA is established in all, but the newly established District Assemblies. Furthermore, 46.4% of small towns and villages nationwide have been provided with safe water.

5. Despite the investment made, we found during the audit that many children and women walk long distances, through bush paths looking for water. Available data also show that some of these communities suffer from water related diseases like guinea worm and bilharzias which have negative effects on productivity and increase poverty levels.

6. In areas where safe water has been provided by CWSA, some high numbers of guinea worm infections are still recorded.

7. We also found that efforts made by CWSA to provide borehole and hand dug wells in some areas have been genuinely impossible as ground water is either unavailable or saline; and also the Hydro Technical Consultants were fully paid for drilling that never produced water as a result of the reasons stated.

8. Tradition, beliefs and attitudes of some communities are also hampering the realization of the objectives of providing safe drinking water to rural communities. Some communities are unable to contribute 5% of capital cost of the facilities.

9. We found that CWSA and some NGOs that provide potable water to the rural communities and small towns have different post delivery operation objectives, such as maintenance and training operators.

Sustaining and improving upon achievements

10. To sustain and improve upon the achievements made in increasing safe drinking water, we recommend that CWSA:

- ❖ Establishes offices as early as possible in the newly created districts;
- ❖ Continues the good work of setting up and training Water Boards and Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSAN) in the newly created districts; and
- ❖ Continues to upgrade the skills and knowledge of their staff through training.

Finding alternatives to ground water

11. In areas where ground water is either non existent or saline, we recommend that CWSA seeks alternative source of water, by:

- ❖ Strengthening their partnership with Ghana Water Company to expand for example, their facilities at Ada Kasseh to serve the communities around;

- ❖ Pursuing the proposal to install a water treatment plant at Aveyime to serve the western and northern part of Dangme East and part of North Tongu Districts;
- ❖ Pursuing the proposal to tap water from River Oti to serve communities on the northern part of Nkwanta District;
- ❖ Calling interested water providers meeting to solicit funds in support of the project; and
- ❖ Paying Hydro-Technical consultants a third of their fee claim for any dry borehole drilled as a disincentive for poor work.

Improve upon community contribution of 5% to capital cost of water facilities

12. To improve upon community contribution to capital cost of facilities, we recommend that CWSA:

- ❖ Structures payment terms such as not to tie provision of the facility to full payments of capital investment by the beneficiary communities;
- ❖ Arranges with the Banks, in consultation with the communities, to make any outstanding payments as the facilities become operational;
- ❖ Makes District Assemblies guarantee for their communities who are unable to raise the 5% contribution required for the provision of the facility; and
- ❖ Considers charging a flat rate of the cost of the facility in any given community.

Controlling Guinea Worm infestation

13. To improve upon the control of guinea worm infestations, we recommend that CWSA:

- ❖ Collaborates with the District Health Directorates to intensify educational campaign on preventive measures through the focal person concept;
- ❖ Draws on the experience from areas which have been successful eradicating guinea worms; (see paragraph 68) and
- ❖ Takes advantage of the many FM stations to promote education campaign in the local dialects which should include information on how to avoid getting guinea worm, how to manage guinea worm infections and how to prevent other diarrhoea diseases.

Improving cooperation with other NGOs

14. To improve upon conformity to standards, we recommend that CWSA:

- ❖ Convenes a forum under the auspices of the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, of all NGOs interested in providing water to the rural folk and the Ministry of Local Government, to sensitise them on the need for conformity to standards;
- ❖ District Assemblies, should ensure that providers of portable water to their communities keep their services within the standards set by CWSA; and

- ❖ Set up systems that allow NGOs to tell them when they are siting boreholes so that monitoring and testing systems can be established.

Managing tradition, beliefs and attitudes

15. Finding a balance between modernism and tradition is essential for coexistence and therefore to promote understanding and enhance cooperation, we recommend CWSA to:

- ❖ Approach with caution and respect tradition and beliefs no matter how primitive they may appear;
- ❖ Involve traditional and opinion leaders in educational campaign on the hazards of polluted water to their health; and
- ❖ Consider drama, for example, plays on the need to change attitudes.