

## Users becoming managers of water supply in Gandhinagar district

Gujarat

# COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY

## Community Water *plus*

### Three interesting features of this case

- High-level strategic support by the State Government in formation of WASMO
- Water scarcity across the State meant communities are highly motivated to address water issues
- WASMO's structured support through 3 different cycles, whereby cycle 1 and 2 cover capital investments and cycle 3 refers to support to service delivery.

### Key data on the Gujarat context

All India data for reference in parenthesis

Water supply coverage: 97% (96%)

GDP per capita: \$6,094 (\$4,243)

HDI: 0.527 (0.467)

Devolution Index rank: 10 out of 24

Community Water Plus, a research project, has investigated twenty case studies of successful community managed rural water supply programmes across 17 states in India. Through these case studies, the research has gained insight into the type and amount of support to community organisations that is needed, and the resources implications of this 'plus' – in terms of money, staffing, and other factors. This is a case study on the Water and Sanitation Management Organization (WASMO), the entity dedicated to rural water supply in Gujarat, illustrated by its experiences in Gandhinagar district.

Villages in Gandhinagar district in Gujarat have long faced water scarcity and salinity issues. WASMO is a special purpose vehicle established to develop community-managed rural drinking water supply throughout the State of Gujarat. It takes up the responsibility of empowering communities to manage local water sources and village drinking water supply services by adopting the role and strategy of a facilitator rather than a provider, which is in line with State Government's principle of subsidiarity and decentralised governance. It creates Pani Samitis (formal Water Committees), supports in creating and implementing village action plans and trains the Pani Samitis in taking charge of water service delivery and its operation and maintenance (O&M). This case investigates the extent and type of support provided by WASMO

Photo: All Women Pani Samiti



## The enabling support environment

The support institutions include those at state level and district level.

- At the state level two institutions are providing hardware support. Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board (GWSSB) identifies finances and develops water resources in village where there is no water source available and ensures potable quality and water supply. Gujarat Water Infrastructure Limited supplies water from inter-district Narmada Canal Water in bulk.
- WASMO is responsible for hardware implementation within the village by developing the distribution system of village water schemes. In addition it provides software support in three cycles. The first cycle is characterised by numerous field visits by technical and social personnel, formation of Pani Samitis and preparation of village action plans. The second cycle focuses on the execution of village action plans. Third cycle is more of handholding support involving training and capacity building of committee members, exposure visits, continuous monitoring and auditing. Training is provided in collecting tariff for annual O&M, water testing and sensitizing members on various operational manual and guidelines.
- The District Water and Sanitation Unit (DWSU) implements the water programme. DWSU works with a District Water and Sanitation Committee (DWSC), chaired by the District Collector who approves the village action plan.

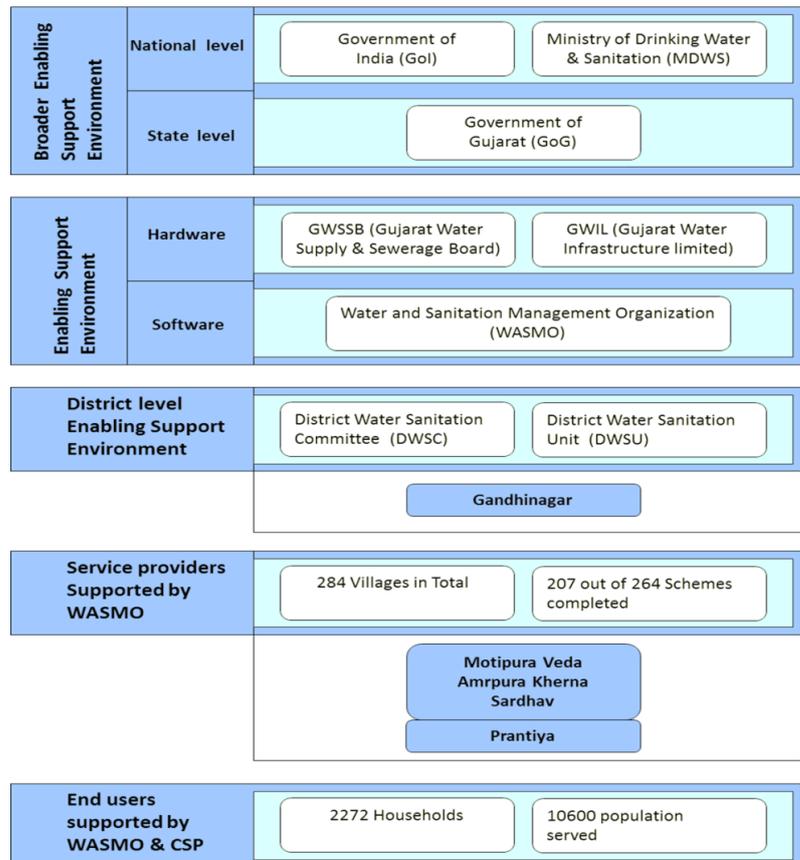


Figure 1: Institutional set-up for service delivery in Gandhinagar district, Gujarat

## Community service provider

The Pani Samiti is a democratically elected body and a standing sub-committee the under Gram Panchayat. It has 10-12 members with the Sarpanch or Deputy Sarpanch as the Chairperson and Talati as Secretary.

The Samiti is responsible to plan, design and implement village water supply schemes and take over responsibility of its O&M, fix and arrange collection of water tariff for sustenance of system and services. It opens and maintains a separate bank account for funds flow takes decision that non-payment of water tariff will lead to cutting off of household connection. The Pani Samiti makes optimal use of the existing GP resources (clerks and talati). It carries out water testing twice a month with help of kits provided by WASMO.

WASMO has stressed the importance of women in water management and made it mandatory to have at least 33% of women in the Samiti. In one village, Samiti consists of all-women brigade with uniform saris.

## Service received by households

Water supply is provided through a combination of piped water supply – coming in bulk from Narmada River to the villages – and local water sources. With support of WASMO, existing regional water supply systems have been strengthened and new water distribution and storage systems have been developed.

Village infrastructure is in good physical condition, with 100% coverage through household connections. Only in terms of continuity and reliability, the service level is not high, as there not yet a 24x7 service.

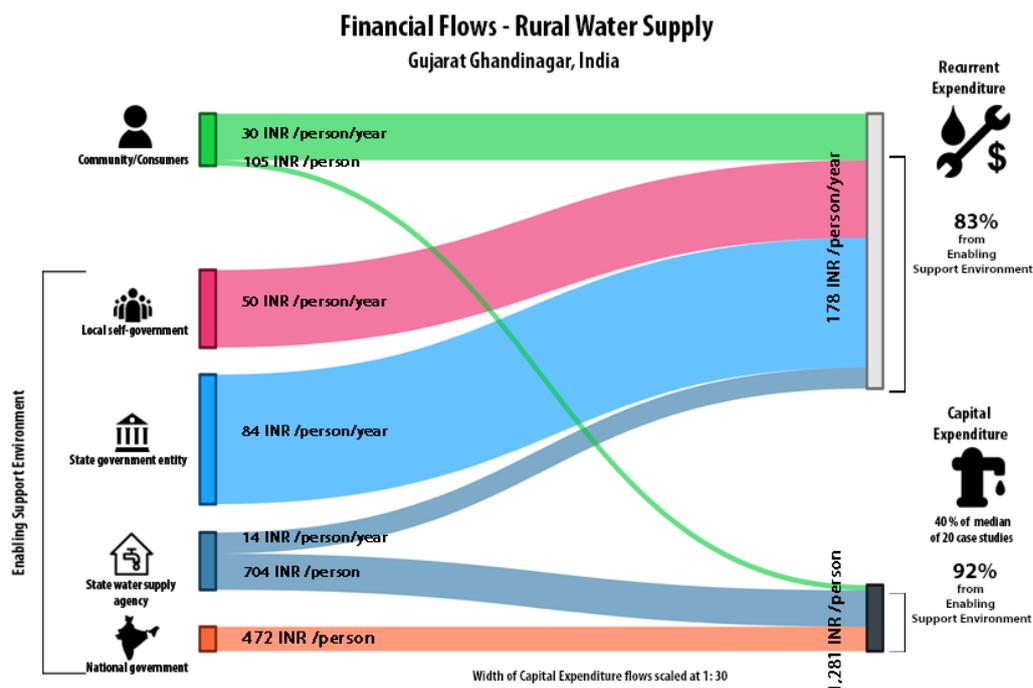
**Table 1: Household service levels**

	Quantity	Accessibility	Water Quality	Continuity	Reliability
High	100%	100%	100%	0%	2%
Improved	0%	0%	0%	33%	66%
Basic	0%	0%	0%	67%	32%
Sub-standard	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No service	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

WASMO has focused on equity by adopting a decentralised, demand-driven approach which has won the trust and support of communities. As a result, service levels are more or less equal within and across the village.

## The costs

The capital costs are mainly coming from WASMO and from national government funds. Communities contribute almost 10% to the capital costs, in line with prevailing demand-responsive approaches. Recurrent costs are shared between users, local government, WASMO and the State government. User contributions are supposed to be for minor operation and maintenance costs. Local government (panchayats) provide contributions to the operational costs, for example by assigning a clerk to the pani samite. They also cover some of the capital maintenance works. WASMO provides ongoing monitoring and technical support and contributes to capital maintenance. There is also a major cost to the State in the form of the bulk water supply from Narmada.



**Figure 2: Costs and financial flow for capital and recurrent costs**

## Conclusion

WASMO, is a professional support organisation, providing comprehensive support in a demand-responsive manner. It focuses on community involvement across the project cycles, though it is limited during the service delivery phase, as pani samitis have large autonomy, but remains accessible on request.

The model can be classified as community managed model with direct support from WASMO, and administratively and financially supported by the Gram Panchayat. Professionalization at community level is low, as the model is based on volunteerism, and only few staff (borehole operator) is hired. In spite of that, the pani samitis perform well in information sharing and accountability, record keeping and tariff collection and basic O&M.

Through this model, 100% coverage with household connections is achieved, with high levels of service. Still continuity and reliability could be improved.

This model also implies a large contribution from the government, both to capital and recurrent costs. Though tariffs cover most of the operation and minor maintenance costs, local government contributes to operational costs by assigning a clerk to the pani samiti and paying some of the maintenance costs. Also a big share of the bulk supply costs are covered by the government.

## About this note

This is a summary of a full case study as part of the Community Water Plus project. The original case study was written by Srinivas Chary Vedala, Shaili Jasthi and Swapna Uddaraju. The summary has been prepared by Ruchika Shiva. The full case study can be downloaded <http://www.ircwash.org/projects/india-community-water-plus-project>.

The project has investigated successful community-managed rural water supply programmes and approaches across India, and drawn out lessons on the support needed to make community-management successful. The project is funded by Australian Aid and is being implemented by a consortium of partners, including: the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), the Centre of Excellence for Change (CEC), Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) and IRC with overall project coordination provided by Cranfield University.



*The research has been funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Development Awards Research Scheme under an award titled Community Management of Rural water Supply Systems in India. The views expressed in this summary sheet are those of the project and not necessarily those of the Australian Government. The Australian Government accepts no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury, resulting from reliance on any of the information or views contained in this summary sheet.*

