



# **USAID** | **SOUTH AFRICA**

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**GENERAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE CONTRACT (GMAC)**  
**Contract No: 674-C-00-01-00051-00**

**Bushbuckridge Retail Water Distribution Project**  
**Final Evaluation**

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## Acronyms

BBR	Bushbuckridge
BDM	Bohlabela District Municipality
BLM	Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
BWB	Bushbuckridge Water Board
CBO	Community Based Organization
COP	Chief of Party
DLGH	(Provincial) Department of Local Government and Housing
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MLM	Maruleng Local Municipality
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
RFP	Request for Proposals
RWDP	Retail Water Distribution Project
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TOR	Terms of Reference
WSA	Water Services Authority
WSDP	Water Services Development Plan
WSP	Water Services Provider
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## **Abstract**

### **1. The contract**

The contract was signed in September 2000 and ended in March 2005. It was structured in two phases. **Phase one** was designed to prepare WSAs and WSPs for facilities transfer: this phase was expected to take “approximately 25 months”.

**Phase Two** was intended to start when the transfer program had been agreed to, and some schemes had been transferred to the emerging WSPs. The focus of this phase was to shift to issues of operation and maintenance, and cost recovery. In the event, and for reasons over which the contractors had no control, the hand-over of assets did not take place during the life of the contract and therefore Phase Two did not take place.

### **2. Special factors**

Progress in implementing the contract was hampered by the special factors prevailing in the district. Most of these factors were identified at the mid-term review. These included:

#### **Lack of capacity**

The Bohlabela District Municipality (BDM) was particularly affected by the lack of capacity. This stemmed from the fact that the previous District Council (then the Northern, now Capricorn District Council) was split into four units. Even today, the BDM has not filled all its posts, and has not yet adopted its Human Resources Policy.

#### **Slow decision-making**

Decisions that, in the ordinary course of events might have taken months have taken years. Several reasons have been advanced to explain this, including:

- Lack of experience
- Political conflicts
- Lack of clarity on roles and functions<sup>1</sup>

The combined effect of these difficulties was effectively to stall progress on the project for about two years. The impact of the inexperience was compounded by a lack of leadership from the Province.

### **3. Evaluation of the project components**

#### **Assistance to local government in their new roles as WSAs**

Bohlabela was only appointed WSA in October 2002, just over two years after the beginning of the project. The effect of this delay on overall project achievement cannot be over-stated. After the mid-term review, however, movement on these issues was good. Substantial progress was made in terms of its role as a regulatory authority and in terms of appointing WSPs.

A MOU regarding the transfer was signed by the Minister and the Mayor in June 2004, and an agreement on the subject was finally signed by DWAF in mid March 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> It will be noted that under the constitution water is not a Provincial competency, yet the MEC for Local Government had the duty to assign powers to different arms of local government. This included the designation of Municipalities as Water Services Authorities (WSAs) and Water Services Providers (WSPs). This reluctance to take decisions was a factor at provincial and local level.

### **Assist WSAs in implementing decisions regarding water service provision**

In January 2002 the RWDP prepared a *Water Services Provider Options Study* which recommended that a new municipal entity should be formed by BDM, BLM and DWAF. The RWDP prepared a Business Plan for this activity, which went through several drafts, the latest of which was dated July 2003. Even though this concept had political support, the majority of the respondents in our interviews appeared to be working on the assumption that the BLM and MLM would be the WSPs within their respective areas. Meanwhile the project concentrated on strengthening the skills and administrative capacity of BLM, a decision which appeared to yield results, if only slowly.

### **Support the work of existing water services providers through technical assistance and training**

In June 2004, at the same time as signature of a Bulk Water Supply Agreement with the Water Board, the WSA finally appointed the de facto WSPs as such. In this context, the following activities were supported by the project:

#### **• Water supply**

The RWDP undertook a demonstration project in Dwarsloop to, in effect, demonstrate how fair water distribution was possible even in situations of scarcity. After the project staff withdrew, however, the situation reverted to its previous condition. The RWDP also conducted a pilot at Marite. As in Dwarsloop, when the project was coordinating this activity, all the parties were cooperating and agreed on the action plan. As soon as the project handed this to the Water Services Manager to coordinate, with assistance from the project team, very little was achieved. Another project, to formalize illegal connections at Calcutta, ran into early problems due to objections from traditional leaders. However, all 4,000 households have since been registered and the municipality is now beginning to install meters in the area.

#### **• Water management**

The RWDP undertook water conservation training with Ward Committees. The program was considered a success. The Project also undertook studies of the DWAF systems which effectively constituted an audit of their condition. This work was done with the assistance of project-funded consultants, and is of a very high quality.

#### **• Adopting tariffs**

Revised tariffs proposed by the RWDP were adopted and put into operation with the signature of the WSP MOU in 2004.

#### **• Cost recovery**

Assistance with this activity was proposed to be completed in December 2002, but, in fact, not much was done until mid 2004, when a private sector debt collector was appointed. Quite substantial funds were subsequently received by the BLM from large consumers and businesses, and it was planned to extend the scheme to private consumers within the near future.

#### **• Regulatory measures**

Draft bylaws were submitted to the MEC for Local Government in Limpopo in late 2002, but approval had not been received by the end of the contract. However, a search of the legislation has indicated that no such approval was required and that the only requirement was for the bylaws to be published in the Provincial Gazette – an act which the Gazette is duty bound to perform once it has been so requested by the municipality.

- **Customer care**

Workshops with Ward Committees, designed to improve customer relations and awareness of water conservation issues, were conducted in April 2004. Meanwhile the BLM opened 11 regional offices which were being used as service points for the municipality. Regarding the establishment of a 24 hour facility for receipt of fault reports, and systems to repair them, there was little progress.

**Develop new generation of managers**

Work with regard to this component at the WSA level showed some progress. Following the appointment of the Director of Technical Services, who worked closely with the Project team, a management team for the proposed WSP was established. However, the delays in forming the team limited the potential for technical assistance and training within the life of the contract.

**4. Focus Groups**

To obtain the perspective of consumers concerning the impact of the project, ten focus groups were convened by the evaluation team. The groups represented a variety of interests, including direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, men, women, business etc. Two major conclusions may be drawn from the focus groups:

- Most people were either unaware of the project, or if they were aware of it, considered that it had not met their expectations in improving the provision of water services.
- The insufficient bulk water supply (due to faulty pumps, or insufficient supplies from the Water Board), illegal connections and vandalism combined to result in a very low standard of provision for most consumers. All the focus groups expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that water was not available on a 24 hour a day basis.

Levels of information and communication about the project differed considerably between the settlements.

**5. Findings**

**The Contract**

The contract was well designed but probably established unrealistic objectives and performance targets. By being based on the expectation of certain institutional changes, it proved impossible to implement as planned.

**WSA**

After the slow start caused by the late designation of BDM as the WSA, the RWDP's work on developing the role of the WSA and its managerial capacity was generally undertaken successfully.

**Transfer**

The project made a very material impact on the transfer process, but the delays in the actual transfer effectively invalidated a substantial portion of the contract.

**WSPs**

Even though this was the "Retail Water Development Project", assistance in terms of retail water provision lagged behind the other work. Technical assistance in terms of water management and cost recovery was provided, but achievements were limited. While a lack of capacity within BLM was a constraint, more could have been done.

## **Community involvement**

It is clear that the limited number of project staff and the District's huge population meant that only a small proportion of communities could have received the degree of attention necessary to ensure full community involvement. However, this aspect of the work was not given sufficient attention and in general community involvement was not a strong point in the project. Project impact might have been enhanced if NGOs and/or local contractors had been used more.

## **6. 0 Quantitative results**

The planned target was for 58,000 households to receive new or improved water services during the life of the project. In the event, the project reported that a total of 28,520 households had benefited. Funds leveraged included capital and technical assistance funds from DWAF, Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Program funds from the DPLG, and funds from USAID's governance program. These amounted to R9,005,000. It is difficult to be sure whether USAID can truly claim attribution to the total amount, but there can be no doubt that the project facilitated much of this expenditure.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

### **Project design**

In future project design, to focus on a single district, as this project did, can be unduly restrictive, especially if there are doubts concerning the responsiveness of the target municipality. A better approach would be to combine a national program (which can represent the interests of local government at the national level) with direct assistance to a limited number of municipalities to address service delivery needs at the local level. Thus national systems and regulatory issues can be addressed together with direct assistance to the poor.

To enhance motivation, municipalities should be required to apply for acceptance by the project. We consider that capacity building should build on the concept of the sharing of experiences and skills among participating and non-participating municipalities. We also think that the project should be designed to run over a period of at least five years, and preferably more, because it is only by seeing a process through from start to finish that the true value of technical assistance can be realized.

### **Next steps**

In normal circumstances, the next step for the BDM over the next year or two would be to integrate the systems and the staff after transfer is made from DWAF. However, it appears more than likely that the BDM will be abolished after the next municipal election to be held before March 2006, and it is difficult to plan in the absence of certainty.

Meanwhile, the WSPs can concentrate on replicating the reforms piloted by the project such as improved customer awareness, reduction of illegal connections, and metering all individual connections. This should be supplemented by improved management of the cost recovery systems. Meanwhile, there remains a huge challenge in terms of the availability of water. The Water Board and the municipalities who will need to collaborate and rationalize systems if they are to supply water for 24 hours a day. A new mindset is required by managers, water system personnel and the users in order to work together, manage and operate the system in a new way, and no longer tolerate water theft and wastage.

# **Bushbuckridge Retail Water Distribution Project Final Evaluation**

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Focus of the evaluation**

The evaluation is intended to review the results, achievements, and impact of the program, highlighting areas of achievement in general as well as progress towards the following objectives assessed in the mid-term evaluation:

- Transfer retail water infrastructure and personnel to Local Authorities (Program Objective 1);
- Establish WSPs, based on models that the various stakeholders chose, which are efficiently managed and provide for regular and high quality services (Program Objective 2);
- Determine how water service authorities are functioning and describe the regulatory and monitoring oversight established under the current legislative and regulatory framework (Program Objective 3);
- Assist local government in developing policies and procedures for addressing their new role as water services authorities (Project Objective 1);
- Assist local government in implementing decisions made regarding water service provision (Project Objective 2);
- Support the work of existing water service providers and/or assist in establishing new water service providers through technical assistance and training (Project Objective 3);
- Assist the WSA in developing Water Service Development Plan (WSDP) required by the Water Services Act of 1997 (Project Objective 4);
- Establish baseline data and measure progress of indicators that measure the condition at project initiation and provide periodic updates (Indicator 1);
- Develop a new generation of managers and empower key actors with the capacity to conduct key Water Service Authority and Water Service Provider business activities without outside assistance (Indicator 2). Key business activities, as stipulated in the Bushbuckridge contract, are listed in 2.2.1. above;
- Provide an update on actions taken to achieve the program's objectives, based on recommendations in the mid-term evaluation and
- Review and comment on the quantitative data used to report on the program, which includes verifying total population figures for the area, the number of historically disadvantaged households, the final number of households that benefited from the program (28,520 households reported to USAID on September 30, 2004), funds leveraged, and revenue collected.

#### **1.2 Data collection methods**

Three methods were used to collect the information required.

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Documentary study

This report is structured in five parts.

The first is the background to the project, the second is an account of the data collected by interview; the third is the data collected through focus groups; the fourth is an assessment of the quality of the data reported by the project, and finally there are the findings and recommendations from the study.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Preliminary Activities**

The Government of South Africa (GoSA) through the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) has been working towards a transfer of water supply services to local authorities since the change in government in 1994. This policy was placed into law as part of the Water Services Act of 1997. As a result of this, the Bushbuckridge Water Board (now named “Bushbuckridge Water”) was established to oversee the operation and management of the bulk water supply to Bushbuckridge and Nsikazi North Areas.

The long-range plan was for a Water Service Authority (WSA) to be established to regulate how water supply (“Water Services Act of 1997”) and sanitation services (as discussed in the “White Paper on Basis Household Sanitation – September 2001”) would be provided in the District Municipality of Bohlabela. Water would be purchased from the Water Board through a service agreement with the WSA. Water Service Providers (WSPs) would carry out the provision of water to individual customers. The WSPs would operate the water systems, interact with customers, and ensure payments are made. Tariff structures would be set by the WSA at a price that reflected the true cost of providing service<sup>2</sup>. These are the activities were to be carried out under the Water Service Act of 1997.

### **2.2 USAID’s Bilateral Agreement**

In 1996, USAID established a bilateral agreement with the GoSA to support the development of institutional capacity for water supply in the Bushbuckridge/Nsikazi North area of South Africa. The bilateral agreement had three components:

- a. support for the establishment of a water board (for bulk supply),
- b. support for operations and maintenance (for both bulk and retail), and
- c. support for capacity building for water distribution (retail) managed by the local authority.

Under a. and c. above, USAID provided initial support to establish and improve the capacity of the Bushbuckridge Water Board. USAID also supported a pilot activity in 1999 and 2000 to increase the capacity of local councils. Both of these activities were channeled through Rand Water.

The Environmental Health Project (EHP), a USAID/Washington based initiative, provided assistance to the Bushbuckridge area between 1996 and the start of the current project in September 2000, within the framework of the bi-lateral agreement with DWAFF to support institutional development for water supply in the area. Bushbuckridge was selected as the location of a “Presidential Lead Project”. EHP conducted a broad-based study to assemble information related to water supply for the project area and developed an options paper for retail water supply. EHP also developed a project paper that described an institutional-building approach and strategy to establish water service providers. In addition EHP designed an assistance package for the Bushbuckridge Water Board, designing a communications strategy for the pilot phase program, implementing a lessons learned workshop for the pilot phase, a workshop which served as a link between the pilot phase and the long-term phase, and a workshop to provide input into the second year of the long-term phase.

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<sup>2</sup> How this is defined is a matter of debate. The above wording is reflective of the wording in the Water Services Act and the Municipal Systems Act. However, some municipalities use their government support grant (the “equitable share”) to subsidise the provision of services, and thereby reduce the tariffs. Under such an approach, the “cost” is reduced by the subsidy.

### **2.3 Coordinating and Decision Making Bodies**

In August 1998, the Nsikazi Bush Water Forum was established to serve as a planning and coordinating body for water supply in the project area. It was composed of local government representatives, Water Board members, DWAF and Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) representatives. USAID also participated in this forum. The forum coordinated project activities.

A separate Project Steering Committee (PSC) provided guidance to the project team.

### **2.4 AWARD Contract and Hand-over Workshop for Chemonics**

During 1999 and the first 10 months of 2000, USAID supported the Retail Water Distribution Project (RWDP) in the Bushbuckridge area through agreements with DWAF. Rand Water served as DWAF's fiscal agent and was provided project funds and consultants to support the Bushbuckridge Water Board (BWB) and the RWDP. A start-up phase project team was held in January 1999 using a combination of contracted individuals and a part time leader provided through an arrangement with Association for Water and Rural Development Cooperation (AWARD). EHP developed these start-up activities and the terms of reference for these in 1998. The program was to initiate the project, develop a basis of information, and prepare local authorities (in their roles as future Water Service Authorities—WSAs) to assume responsibilities for transfer of management and operation responsibility for retail water services and their designated Water Service Providers (WSPs) in accordance with the Water Services Act 108 of 1997.

In April 2000, USAID/Pretoria issued an RFP for the selection of a contractor to carry on the work initiated by the interim team for retail water distribution and meet a broad range of project objectives. The purpose of this contract was to provide technical assistance to local entities in the BWB service area as they prepare to assume responsibilities for retail water service in their communities. The project aimed to build local institutional capacity to manage reliable and sustainable water service for approximately one million people. This contract was awarded to Chemonics International Inc. in association with Argil Ltd., Institute for Public-Private Partnerships, Manyaka-Greiling-Meiring Ltd. and ValuAdd, (this group hereafter known as the "New Agent") in September 2000.

### **2.5 Contract objectives**

The overall objective set out initially for the BBR-RWDP was to assist local government efforts to act as responsible Water Service Authorities and to support their initiatives. Specifically, this required that the Project:

- Assist local government in developing procedures for addressing their new role as water service authorities;
- Assist the Water Services Authorities (WSAs) in developing Water Services Development Plans (WSDPs) required by the Water Services Act;
- Assist local government in a planning process that leads to decision-making regarding water service provision; and
- Support the work of existing water service providers or assist in establishing new water service providers through technical assistance and training.

The approach provided for a Project Steering Committee with full time advisory and secretariat support for the term of the project, placed water services advisors to support activities in each participating local government unit, and offered management and technical training through short courses, workshops, and on-the-job training. The Project concept was to develop a new generation of managers and empower key actors to carry forward without external assistance at the end of the Project. The development assistance methodology was intended to enable, empower, help and support individuals who would conduct the daily business of water distribution and serve on boards. Indicators for successful development assistance were to be “capacity to conduct key business activities as the Water Service Authority and Water Service Provider (WSP) without outside assistance.”

The contract was designed to be implemented in two phases.

**Phase one** was designed to prepare WSAs and WSPs for facilities transfer: this phase was expected to take “approximately 25 months”<sup>3</sup>. Activities which the contractor was supposed to undertake included the following<sup>4</sup>:

(a) Policy Planning and Transfer Process

- Assist in developing annual work plans for the WSA and WSPs
- Provide assistance and guidance to WSAs for choosing appropriate WSP structures
- Work with local authorities, DWAF and current water services providers to define a realistic transfer program.
- Help organize the formal acceptance of initial schemes for transfer.

(b) Management Systems (Institutional development)

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Establish policies, bylaws and operational guidelines for WSPs
- Develop interim organizational plan, staffing pattern and hiring process for WSPs
- Formulate administrative processes, procedures and record keeping requirements for WSPs.
- Create a financial management strategy including budget planning, billing and accounting, payroll requirements and other financial matters
- Negotiate and accept selected staff for secondment and eventual transfer to WSPs

(c) Customer Outreach and Education

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Review existing studies and conduct a baseline Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study regarding expectations and attitudes about water services, payments, water use and rectification of illegal connections
- Implement educational campaigns through community meetings, schools, poster campaigns and/or broader media.
- Pilot test outreach programs and evaluate resulting behavior change
- Evaluate the successes and limitations of Phase I education and outreach programs for incorporation into Phase II.

(d) Customer service, Billing and Collection (Cost Recovery)

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, as is shown in the details provided below, due to the fact that transfer did not take place during the life of the contract, Phase 2 was never started.

<sup>4</sup> These are summaries of the full text of the contract

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Assemble cost information from relevant organizations and establish a fee structure for cost recovery and identify subsidy requirements
- Establish tariff rates and structures and methods for customer payments
- Establish a billing and collection process, establish customer lists, read meters, local pay points, design a billing system, and pilot test it.

(e) Operation and Maintenance

Assist WSPs to

- Investigate on-going operation and maintenance programs being implemented by current water services providers
- Analyze current staffing and staff capabilities, and prepare for secondment and eventual transfer of selected staff to WSPs
- Develop realistic O & M budgets
- Plan and build O & M Management offices and workshops
- Develop work norms and standard operating procedures
- Establish inventory procedures

(f) Institutional Learning and Staff Development

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Design and conduct management development program for all supervisory staff
- Define a staff learning program; determine the skill needs required to meet performance standards, and set up mentoring relationships between team members and counterparts
- Develop performance targets for each major department within the WSA
- Conduct project review activities leading to lessons learned through on-going feedback programs.

**Phase Two** was intended to start when the transfer program had been agreed to, and some schemes had been transferred to emerging WSPs. The WSPs would use the processes, systems and procedures developed during Phase 1 to evaluate and improve operational performance. The focus of activity was to shift to operation and maintenance activities and cost recovery. The contract presents the activities under the same six categories, as follows:

(a) Policy Planning and Transfer Process

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Develop annual operational plans for WSAs and WSPs
- Evaluate progress towards fulfilling the requirement of the transfer plan
- Monitor subsequent transfer phases in order to monitor emerging issues
- Formalize on-going linkages between WSPs and other government agencies
- Formulate a strategy and procedures for providing retail water services to unserved areas

(b) Management Systems

Assist WSPs to

- Evaluate and refine administrative, financial, personnel and other policies and procedures to reflect the growing needs of the WSPs
- Establish a budget process

- Ensure that WSPs' staffing is in accordance with the needs and budgets

(c) Customer Outreach and Education

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Conduct a follow-up Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study in order to determine the effectiveness of Phase 1 programs
- Plan and implement follow-up education and media campaigns
- Outline a strategy for continued education and outreach after Project completion.

(d) Customer service, Billing and Collection

Assist WSPs to

- Bill customers for services rendered and accept payment
- Establish customer complaint function, and procedures for addressing complaints
- Evaluate progress towards cost recovery by monitoring costs and income etc
- Identify accounts, prepare billing for new customers
- Refine the billing and collections process.

(e) Operation and maintenance

Assist WSPs to

- Continue taking part in operation and maintenance programs
- Accept responsibility for O & M of water distribution schemes according to agreed transfer program
- Modify and refine work norms and procedures
- Hire and train additional O&M staff as budgets allow
- Establish a metering capability to respond to demands for individual connections
- Identify private companies which could assist the WSPs in implementing maintenance work
- Coordinate with Bushbuckridge Water Board and DWAF on establishment of monitoring systems.

(f) Institutional learning

Assist WSAs and WSPs to

- Continue conducting management development programs for WSAs and WSPs
- Augment staff learning programs and mentoring relationships
- Monitor performance targets
- Complete project review activities

Key business activities were:

- Annual work plans and long range strategic plan development for system rehabilitation and growth;
- Budget and financial management including collection of debts and payment of accounts;
- Satisfactory consumer relations including timely attention to requests for service, complaints, and educating consumers about responsible water use;
- Efficient and cost effective operation and maintenance of water systems including borehole supplies, water storage facilities, and distribution networks;

- Staff development and high performance and results management systems for staff; and
- Communication with key external agencies and sector institutions to address and resolve issues.

Skills and knowledge acquisition were to be demonstrated by successful performance at the individual and the organizational level. Key indicators for improved organizational performance were linked to successful staff performance in conducting business activities. The list of success indicators included:

- Percent of revenues collected,
- Cost per unit of water delivered,
- Percent of unaccounted for water in network distribution,
- Time required to respond to consumer complaints and requests for service,
- Staffing ratio (consumers accounts per staff member),
- Efficiency in operation of equipment and maintenance management,
- Staff satisfaction and performance, and
- Ability to achieve support for water improvement measures from political entities (i.e. DWAF, district and local government, bulk water providers, and local councilors).

It was considered that as Water Service Authorities improved their performance, water distribution services to the people should also improve.

Due to very substantial delays in the transfer process, Phase 2 could not be implemented in the form envisioned in the contract, although limited components were undertaken.

## 2.6 Contractual staffing, costs and level of effort

The contract was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2000. Total expenditure authorized was \$2,299,950. The proposal was based on the levels of effort shown in the second column below.:

The contract was amended in June 2002, and the level of effort changed as shown in the third column in the Table below.

Designation	Number of person months	
	Original contract	2002 modification
<b>Chief of Party</b>	42	42
<b>Long term local professionals/Chemonics</b>		
Institutional development		43
Training		35
<b>Short term professionals</b>		
Chemonics	18	15
Manyaka Greyling Meiring	12	10
Argil	18	14
ValuAdd	18.5	14
Institute for Public Private Partnerships	22	16
Chemonics short-term professional	1	8
<b>Non-technical Support Staff/Chemonics</b>		

Messenger/Driver	49	
Secretary/Receptionist	47	
Office assistant		35
Accountant/Administrator	48	43
Home office support	8.25	7.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>283.75</b>	<b>282.75</b>

EHP was asked to design and conduct a start-up workshop to hand over project activities to the New Agent and initiate the next phase of the project. This hand-over workshop was held in mid October 2000.

This Hand-Over Workshop provided the opportunity for the Implementing Agent's technical assistance team to work with the interim project assistance team, local government officials, and other local stakeholders in a collaborative environment conducive to team building and sharing of information and knowledge. Following the Hand-Over Workshop, the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) developed a work plan and initiated activities.

### **2.7 Project Review and Monitoring Workshop**

After Chemonics had completed 10 months of their contract, USAID asked EHP to provide further assistance to the RWDP by conducting a Project monitoring/review workshop designed to assist the USAID Mission, the Project Steering Committee, and key project participants in reviewing the results of project activity to date through a workshop process. The primary outcome was to determine, through input from project participants, project successes and continuing issues, and to advise on modifications or enhancement to project strategy, and specifically work plan development for the second year of the project.

### **2.8 The demarcation process, and new legislation**

On December 5, 2000, local government elections were held. This brought to an end the transitional phase of Local Government in the democratic area. The elections were the trigger for the bringing into force of three pieces of legislation: the Municipal Demarcation Act, which created completely new boundaries for all local government units, reducing their number from over 800 to 246, some of which straddled provincial boundaries in the interest of creating viable units; the Municipal Structures Act, which provided the rules for the elections and introduced alternative models for the conduct of council business, including the concept of executive mayors, a speaker for council meetings, code of conduct for councilors etc; and the Municipal Systems Act which provided for good governance in terms of planning, budgeting, service provision, public participation etc.

This legislation ended the constitutionally transitional phase under which local government had been operating since 1993. However, the process had its own transition. Until the end of the financial year (30 June 2001) the new municipalities operated within the budgets of the previous Transitional Local Councils (TLCs). The second phase was to prepare new budgets for the new local government municipalities, but without the supporting planning and consultation which is required under the legislation. The third phase, to be completed by 30 June 2003, was to prepare and adopt an Integrated Development Plan, on which budgeting would thereafter be based. Other targets had to be met in terms of preparing staffing organograms and job descriptions, preparing asset registers, etc.

While this process was difficult in areas where independent units were merged, and different policies and systems had to be reconciled, it was even harder in areas where completely new municipalities were established.

Bushbuckridge was in the former category – it was an amalgamation of three previous TLCs. The Eastern District Municipality, now re-named Bohlabela District Municipality (BDM), was in the latter category. It had to be started from scratch, with no staff, systems or policies. Moreover, it was a cross border municipality, and it took time for the two provinces concerned, Limpopo and Mpumalanga to agree which province should take responsibility for it. Most of the area had previously been administered by the Northern District Council – based in Polokwane – which had now been divided into many smaller units, and renamed Capricorn. It was unable to provide substantive assistance to the new Districts into which it had been divided.

The weakness of BDM was recognized by the President who declared it one of the areas for special support under the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy. However, this failed to result in any substantial increase in resources.

Meanwhile, the District Municipality's resource base – which was primarily the Regional Services Council levy – had taken time to develop, and is still far from being fully operational.

This is not the place in which to describe the difficulties faced in detail, but one indicator of the situation is that it was only in February 2002 that the Municipal Manager was appointed. Other senior staff members have since been appointed, but operating systems are not yet fully in place. For example the Municipality's Human Resources Policy – covering conditions of service such as leave, pensions, disciplinary procedures etc, has not yet been adopted.

Bushbuckridge was in a better position. They had the staff of the three former TLCs. Their staffing had included Town Clerks, Town Treasurers, Public Works Officers and their respective departments. Amalgamation of the three TLCs took time, but a basic level of skill and experience was available. Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (like its predecessor TLCs) also received government's constitutionally mandated subsidy – an "equitable share of national revenues". Furthermore, they were providing water and other services within the gazetted urban areas under their jurisdiction – the so-called R293 towns.

Another factor which made the transition difficult was that the majority of the area covered by Bohlabela District Municipality was in the former homelands of Lebowa and Gazankulu. Thus there was a further challenge in harmonizing administrative practices, political ambitions and popular expectations from a variety of backgrounds.

## **2.9 Transfer Policy**

At the same time as the boundaries and function of local government were being changed as described above, the water sector was undergoing a parallel restructuring whereby national government (in the form of DWAF) would no longer be involved in the development or management of water schemes, and would transfer all responsibilities and associated assets and staff to Local Government.

The magnitude of this undertaking cannot be underestimated. Each WSA municipality supposed to take transfer of these assets would have specific concerns and positions regarding the transfers, and central government was in a very weak position, constitutionally, to force them to accept the transfer.

Accordingly a massive transfer programme was started, with sweeteners in the form of supporting grants added. Local government resisted (fearing that the new schemes would be financial burdens), trades unions were quick to raise objections, and communities tended to favour the status quo. It therefore became evident that these transfers could not be achieved by a stroke of the pen, and projections regarding transfer dates (on which the contract was based) were soon proved optimistic.

Many municipalities had the skills and the experience to deal with these issues, and even though this did not result in swifter decisions, at least they had the experience to deal with them. BDM had neither the skills nor the experience, so the transfer process added significant new challenges which took time and patience to understand, let alone address.

### **2.10 Impact on the project**

The legislative and demarcation reforms described above had two impacts on the project.

The first was the delays caused by the factors outlined above, such as weak financial position, lack of staff etc. Most importantly, as is discussed below, this substantially delayed the start of direct technical assistance to retail water providers. Throughout the remainder of this report we refer to the impact of the delays caused by these factors on project implementation. It may be slight consolation to know that similar problems are affecting much of the local government system, especially in the rural areas: but having said that, it must be recognized that the situation in Bohlabela is worse than most. The project has been powerless to intervene in such matters, and support that they have given provided no more than symptomatic relief – the structural and systems difficulties remain. As such it must be clearly understood that the failure of the project to reach the targets set in terms of retail water provision are the direct result of the exogenous factors listed above.

The second impact has been in terms of the consequential delays in terms of meetings missed, decisions not taken etc by Councilors and officials of the municipalities. To ascribe these delays solely to lack of capacity is misleading: there is also acute mismanagement of time and a lack of respect for good management practice in terms of keeping to commitments etc. These are matters beyond the scope of this project, but their impact cannot be ignored.

The consequent delays meant that Phase Two of the project (post transfer of assets from DWAF to the WSA) which had been expected to start by 2002 did not take place during the contract time-scale.

### **2.11 The Mid-term Review**

At a workshop held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2002, the review team presented its findings. Arising out of these and debate at the workshop, the following was adopted by the workshop.

#### **2.11.1 Policy/Transfer – the WSA and WSP**

##### **Constraints identified by the Workshop**

- No alignment of draft transfer policy between DWAF and DM
- Lack of clarity on the transfer process
  - i. What to be transferred
  - ii. What are the implications

- iii. Financial implications/ different frameworks
- iv. Usability of the draft policy

**Proposals by the Workshop**

- Development of a budget for provision of water services
- Interdepartmental process of developing a single process of transfer which takes into consideration the financial requirements
- Draft proposal to get feed back within two months
- No policy promulgated by District municipality to guide the WSA to fulfill its role and responsibilities.
- Documentation has been prepared but not adopted by the Council
- No clear direction from the MEC
- Check if other DMs have submitted

**2.11.2 Capacity building**

Objective

Provision of personnel to enable the water services institutions to operate and manage sustainable service delivery.

**Constraints identified by the Workshop**

- Funds (for new services and maintenance)
- Under design
- Extensions of boundaries
- Lack of infrastructure- boreholes etc
- Billing system
- Skills lacking:
  - i. Technical
  - ii. Administrative
  - iii. Managerial
- Ineffective awareness programs
- Illegal connections

**Proposals by the Workshop**

- Undertake audit of existing and new systems
- Improve under-designed systems
- Audit training needs
- Establish mentors and institutional support
- Strengthen integrated development planning and get commitment from stakeholders

**2.11.3 Service provision and Implementation**

**Constraints identified by the workshop**

- Financial problems at municipalities
- Backlog in terms of infrastructure
- Lack of policy in how to deal with non-payers/defaulters
- RDP standard (shared taps) results in illegal connections
- Lack of co-ordination of activities by the different role players, i.e. DWAF, Local Municipalities, Amokhosi, etc
- Unplanned settlements

- Local municipalities under staffed
- DWAF over-staffed
- Unplanned power interruptions – lack of communication between Eskom, DWAF and LM
- Delays in repairs
- Confusion regarding responsibilities on maintenance issues
- Vandalism (e.g. taps and meters being stolen)

### **Proposals by the workshop**

#### **Policy**

- promulgation of by-laws and tariffs as soon as possible

#### **Coordination**

- resuscitation of the PSC for coordination purposes
- Review TOR for the PSC and make distinction between operational and policy issues

#### **Power interruption**

- Request Eskom to give 7 days notice before planned interruption of supply

#### **Lack of resources**

- Proper tariffs to be in place
- Water services to be reliable
- Proper (accurate and up to date) billing systems to be used

#### **RDP standard**

- Policy to be reviewed to allow mixed level of service

#### **Vandalism**

- Water policing through Ward Committees
- Replace copper meters with plastic ones
- Do away with brass taps, if possible.

### **2.11.4 Recommendations of the plenary**

1. Identify issues that can be achieved independent of the promulgation of the WSA/WSP policy.
2. Address financial issues
3. Identify personnel to undertake the tasks
4. Address the lack of delivery in terms of water services
5. Address the lack of designation of the roles and responsibilities
6. Bohlabela District Municipality should continue to act as the WSA, until instructed otherwise
7. SALGA, with the support of the MEC, should facilitate communication between the LM, DM, SALGA, DWAF, and DLGH (Provincial)

Specific measures were agreed to expedite the establishment of the WSP/WSPs as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
The Project should distribute the proposal for a WSP to all stakeholders	20 August
Comments to be received from stakeholders	End of first week in September
Meeting called to thrash out consensus on the WSP plan	About 14 <sup>th</sup> September
Partnership agreement(s) prepared	
Approval by WSA	

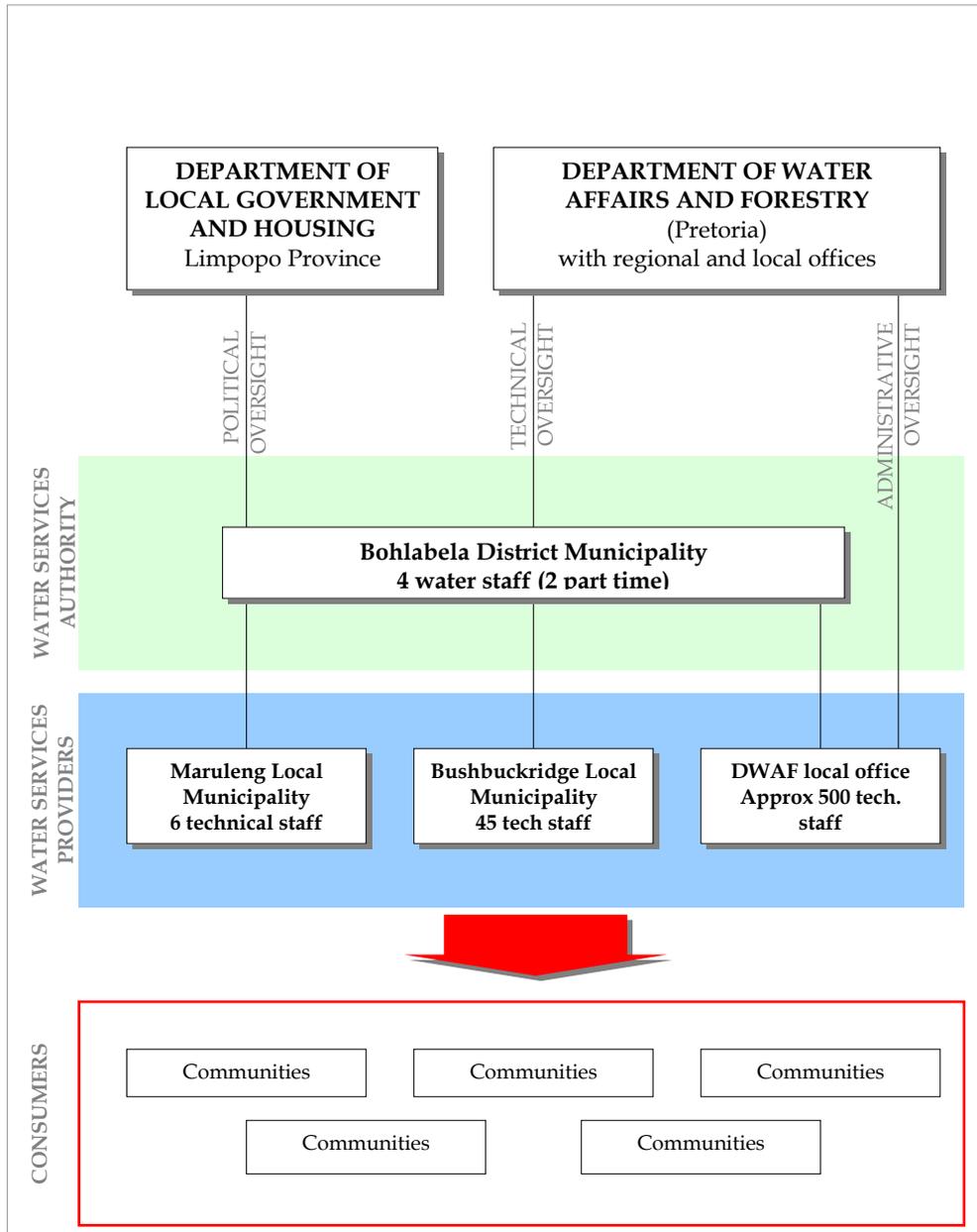
It was also noted that it has been difficult for the national office of DWAF to manage the project effectively. It was therefore agreed that it would be preferable for the project to be managed by the Regional office in Polokwane.

#### **2.11.5 Outstanding institutional issues**

The review team also expressed concern over the fact that the Water Board had not been paid for any water that it had supplied; that the apparent failure of the MEC to declare Bohlabela District Municipality was causing very damaging delays; and that the Municipality had a duty to perform the function of WSA until it was officially informed to the contrary; and that the strained relations between the three municipalities should not be allowed to continue.

#### **2.12 Institutional Framework**

The diagram on the next page has been prepared as an introduction to the relationships between the stakeholders.



The Water Board, the bulk water supplier for the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, employs approximately 150 technical people.

The interesting aspect of this diagram is that there are multiple reporting structures. For example, the WSA is responsible for implementation of the Water Services Act on 1997, and reports to DWA in that respect. Meanwhile, although water is not a Provincial competency, the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing has a constitutional duty to ensure that municipalities fulfill their executive obligations, which include water services provision.

Similarly, DWAF is a service provider under the control of the WSA. The WSA has the duty to approve tariffs and other aspects of the activities of the WSP, but DWAF staff, who manage the WSP, answer only to Pretoria.

Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM) receives a subsidy (the equitable share) from the National Treasury which it can use to meet the needs of service provision. Equally, DWAF, as a central government Department is reliant on the national budget for its funds. However, DWAF has no policy or history of cost recovery<sup>5</sup>; whereas BLM is under a statutory obligation (in terms of both the Water Services Act and the Municipal Systems Act) to recover costs for services supplied.

As noted above, BLM provided water within the urban areas (the so-called R293 towns) and had a limited number of technical staff to maintain the system as well as meter readers. All water services within the rural areas were the responsibility of DWAF.

### 2.13 The community served

When the project was designed, the expectation was that the District to be served would consist of the Bushbuckridge and Nsikazi North areas. Due to the re-demarcation of local government boundaries, and the fact that Bohlabela District Council (then known as the Eastern District Council) did not include the Nsikazi North area, but **did** include Maruleng Local Municipality, it was decided that the Project should cover the area for which Bohlabela District Municipality was responsible, i.e. Bushbuckridge and Maruleng municipalities.

Key data for the Municipalities concerned are as follows:

#### Population and household data: Bohlabela Municipality

Municipality	1996 census	2001 census
<b>Population</b>		
Bushbuckridge	540463	499697
Maruleng	91138	98038
Bohlabela	631601	597735
<b>Households</b>		
Bushbuckridge	111949	107923
Maruleng	18235	21183
Bohlabela	130184	129106
<b>Household size</b>		
Bushbuckridge	4.82	4.63
Maruleng	5.0	4.63
Bohlabela	4.85	4.63

Note: the population and household numbers for Bohlabela are the sum of Bushbuckridge and Maruleng

Source: *Stats SA, National Censuses (as presented by the Municipal Demarcation Board)*

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that there is no cost recovery in schemes developed by DWAF. In rural schemes DWAF has encouraged beneficiaries to collect fees which can be used to pay fuel costs for borehole pumps and similar maintenance tasks. These are essentially savings schemes by the users – the funds are not collected by DWAF. The distinction is that DWAF, per se, operates as a grant-giving agency, and does not expect to recover the costs of infrastructure it provides. It should be noted that with the introduction of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant these arrangements are coming to an end, as all funds will be channelled through local government.

**Bushbuckridge: Access to Water Services**  
(no of households)

	1996	2001
In the dwelling	15347	5340
Inside yard	18217	28070
Community stand	55738	14992
Community stand over 200m	-	31358
Borehole	12047	7624
Spring	7094	4712
Rain tank	1088	343
Dam/pool/stagnant water	-	2861
River/Stream	-	6013
Water vendor	-	438
Other	1737	6171

The symbol “-“ means that the question was not asked in 1996.

Source: *Stats SA, National Censuses (as presented by the Municipal Demarcation Board)*

It should be noted that definitional problems and poor interviewer training may account for the apparent drop in the number of households with a water supply in the house between 1996 and 2001.

## **2.14 Special factors**

Time and time again the subjects interviewed explained that progress had been hampered by the special factors prevailing in the district. Most of these factors were identified at the mid-term review. However, it is considered useful to re-state them here and attempt to assess their importance at the current time.

### **2.14.1 Lack of capacity**

The BDM has been particularly affected by the lack of capacity. As noted above, this stemmed from the fact that the previous District Council (then the Northern, now Capricorn District Council) was split into four units. Of these new councils BDM was the most remote, and although they did receive seconded staff from the Province, they inherited no permanent staff from the previous District Council. Even today, the BDM has not filled all its posts, and has not yet adopted its Human Resources Policy. Furthermore, there were massive demands on the Limpopo Provincial Department of Local Government and Tradition Affairs which prevented them from providing more than administrative support to Bohlabela pending appointment of permanent staff.

### **2.14.2 Slow decision-making**

Decisions that, in the ordinary course of events might have taken months have taken years. Several reasons have been advanced to explain this.

#### **Lack of experience**

The BDM had no corporate experience to bring to bear on the decisions it had to make. In most cases, the fact that all decisions were affected by the legislation which came into effect on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2000, meant that precedent could not be relied upon by individual officers. Also, the Councilors were facing an entirely new legislative and administrative environment. These factors therefore eroded the confidence of officers in advising the Council, and the Councilors were also slow to take decisions. Thus they generally avoided making mistakes but at the expense of speed.

### **Political conflicts**

It is no secret that relationships between the BDM and BLM have been strained at times. Two reasons have been given for this. The first is that there have been political tensions in the area for many years, which go back to jealousies between the previous homeland administrations and other intangible historical and ethnic tensions. The second is that, as long as the powers and functions of the District and Local Municipalities remained uncertain, there was obvious room for each party to compete for powers and functions. Such competition had the potential to result in bad human relations, political tensions and withholding of information.

### **Lack of clarity on roles and functions**

BDM represents one of the most difficult cases as far as this matter is concerned.

Under section 84(3) of the Municipal Structures Act, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2000, the Minister of Provincial and Local Government authorized (in effect) local municipalities to perform functions to the extent that they were performed by their predecessors. An interpretation of this was that the Local Municipalities should continue to be the Water Services Providers, and that Bohlabela District Municipality, as successor to the Northern District Council should be responsible for the bulk water supply and become the WSA. This would be directly in line with the provisions of the section 84 (b) of the Municipal Systems Amendment Act (2000) that "A district municipality has responsibility for potable water supply systems".

However political rivalry fuelled the uncertainty and both local and district municipalities took a "wait and see" stance on the matter. The issue was further complicated by the fact that Local Municipalities in Mpumalanga were designated WSAs, while in Limpopo the tendency was for District to perform this role. For a while it was uncertain which MEC (Mpumalanga or Limpopo) would take responsibility for Bohlabela, as a cross border municipality.

The combined effect of these difficulties was effectively to stall progress on the project for about two years.

#### **2.14.3 Lack of guidance**

The uncertainty was compounded by a lack of leadership from the Province. It will be noted that under the constitution water is not a Provincial competency, yet the MEC for Local Government has to designate Municipalities as WSPs.

#### **2.14.4 Water Board and DWAF**

Two other agencies are operating in the area, Bushbuckridge Water Board and DWAF. The former had been created shortly before the start of the project as the bulk water supplier for some of the area. However, the Water Board's jurisdiction was different from Bohlabela's which created some difficulties. Furthermore all the rural schemes within the area were operated by DWAF in a highly subsidized manner (effectively 100%). Before Bohlabela could effectively operate in its role as the WSA it had to establish a relationship with these two agencies. This also took time, and there were tensions around the question of the water board's charges, and DWAF's accountability.

#### **2.14.5 Summary**

In brief, there were many respects in which the business of retail water provision was being impeded by institutional conflicts, administrative uncertainty and a lack of

experience. The project therefore concentrated on clarifying the role of the WSA and strengthening its role in terms of the regulatory environment within which it operated and management skills. This was seen as a necessary first step in providing an environment within which retail water services could be provided efficiently and effectively.

The situation was complicated by a decision that was taken in principle in 1992 to form a new WSP for the Bushbuckridge municipal area, rather than recognize the local municipality as the WSPs. This required a three stage process – first designating the Local Municipalities and DWAF as the interim WSPs; secondly forming a joint team between the three agencies and BDM, and finally creating a new structure (a municipal entity as provided for in Chapter 8 of the Municipal Systems Act section). This created institutional uncertainty and a lack of motivation by the local municipalities to enhance efficiency in light of the fact that they were due to lose the power shortly.

To place the situation into context we conclude with a remark made at the workshop held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005 to review the initial findings of the evaluation:

*“I have studied each municipality in the country. There are huge challenges due to poverty levels and the hugeness of the organizations. Five years ago they didn’t exist. The pressure on local people in Municipalities is huge. They have little time left after meetings and workshops to do their job. It also takes time for them to learn and build up on the skills required to do their job. The project really is finishing before we achieve. Water Affairs has had a big change in the 5 years. In terms of lessons learnt, we can’t expect things to happen overnight. Province has said that Bohlabela is ahead of other municipalities, which shows they have done what they could, but more support is still needed”.*

Stewart Gibson

### **3. Evaluation of the project components**

In this section we consider the individual components of the project, as identified in the mid-term review (and re-stated in the terms of reference for this study). The findings below are based on interviews and documentary sources<sup>6</sup>.

#### **3.1 Assistance to local government in developing procedures for addressing their new roles as water service authorities**

The project was severely delayed by the lack of a decision on this matter. Bohlabela was appointed WSA in October 2002, just over two years after the beginning of the project<sup>7</sup>. The effect of this delay on overall project achievement cannot be overstated.

The BDM felt that little could be done with retail water provision, *per se*, until the MEC for Local Government in Limpopo had taken a decision on whether they or the local municipality were to be the WSA. USAID's CTO agreed with this decision. At the time there was tension between BDM and BLM over the operation of water services, as BLM felt that they had the capacity and de facto responsibility for water services within their urban areas and should be given recognition as such.

As a result of these hesitations concerning the appointment of a WSP, or the recognition of the de facto role of BLM, by the time of the mid-term review little had been achieved in this regard. However, while little progress was made with regard to putting in place the regulatory and managerial functions of a WSA, preparatory work could continue. This included matters such as drafting Bylaws, and preparing staffing structures, and deliberating on the form that WSP(s) would take. In addition, with funds from DWAF under the Masimbambane Program, the BDM commissioned a Water Services Development Plan.

It is also important to note that debates concerning the roles of the agencies acted as a useful educational tool: as a result the leadership of Bohlabela District Municipality, especially the Executive Mayor, is considered to be among the best informed in the country.

The mid-term review criticized the project for being preoccupied with the appointment of the WSA, while paying comparatively little attention to provision of retail water services. Whether this criticism was justified or not, it must be recognized that the RWDP's slow but sure approach to the BDM has meant that both politically and administratively it has an excellent grasp of its responsibilities as a WSA. This might not have been achieved without the patient coaching undertaken by the RWDP over the years.

Since the mid-term review, however, movement on these issues has been good. In its relationship with the Bohlabela District Municipality, the project had to tread a delicate path. On the one hand, project staff were more experienced and had more time available to deal with the issues than their political or staff colleagues. There was thus every temptation to run with issues, and make prescriptive proposals. On the other hand there was the need to respect the doubts, ignorance and hesitancy being felt by these people. This way required that decisions were made by the relevant persons within their own time, and though using information supplied by the RWDP, based on their own knowledge. The latter course of action created delays but

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<sup>6</sup> An important source of documentary information has been the quarterly reports. The last one available to the evaluation team was that of October - December 2004, and therefore some later material may not be reflected.

<sup>7</sup> And BLM was only officially designated WSP, within its urban areas, in June 2004.

ultimately resulted in more informed decision-making; and it is that approach that was adopted.

Among the issues which the WSA had to confront were the following:

Regulation:

- Adopt Bylaws
- Adopt tariff policy
- Declare tariffs

Water Services Providers:

- Appoint WSPs
- Negotiate transfers of assets and staff from DWAF
- Develop WSP partnership entity which had been adopted as the preferred option in 2002.

Substantial progress has been made in all these areas since the mid-term review, as described below.

In addition, the project has made major contributions in several different capacities to the process for the transfer of staff and assets from DWAF to the WSA.

- They participated in the Transfer Task Team, which was established to drive the process.
- They advised the BDM with regard to the steps that would be required to prepare them to receive the staff and assets
- They assisted the BDM in negotiations with regard to the terms and conditions under which transfers would be made
- They conducted a detailed audit of the DWAF infrastructure to show what work needed to be done to bring it up to full working order.

A MOU regarding the transfer was signed by the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Buyelwa Sonjica, and the Mayor in June 2004. However, several issues required further negotiation before a transfer agreement could be signed. These were mainly relating to the conditions of service of the transferred staff under the BDM, how many would be transferred, and how selection would be undertaken.

Even after the signature of the MOU, negotiations regarding the transfer were complex and protracted. There were four major issues.

- The value of the assets being transferred
- The subsidy that would be paid to the WSA to cover the cost of running the services
- The number and quality of staff to be transferred from DWAF to the WSA
- The possibility of secondment of DWAF staff to the WSA pending finalization of the Transfer agreement.

The project played an important role in these negotiations, especially by helping BDM present its case effectively and efficiently and thereby protecting its interests. We were told that, in that respect, BDM conducted the negotiations significantly more professionally than the majority of WSAs in Limpopo Region.

In the view of the Transfer Task Team these issues were resolved in December 2004, and the agreement was signed by the BDM in that month. It must be recalled

that DWAF is responsible for hundreds of such transfer agreements, and that each has its own peculiarities. In light of the scale of the problems and the lack of precedents, we cannot be surprised that finalizing agreements took time, even though, by their own program, DWAF has been running far behind schedule in this activity. The Transfer Agreement was finally signed by DWAF in mid March 2005, but difficult issues remain concerning conditions of service for the transferred staff. The situation has been complicated by the fact that SALGA is taking an active interest in this matter, and it is possible that resolution will not be achieved before the planned 1<sup>st</sup> July hand-over date.

Although the delays in reaching agreement seem to be excessive, BDM was the second WSA in Limpopo to sign a transfer agreement. However, it is clear that these delays, and the difficulties experienced in agreeing the conditions under which DWAF staff might be seconded to BDM, created severe difficulties and frustrations for the parties concerned. BDM therefore decided to create an interim Water Services Management Team (of four persons) which was to consist of staff from BDM, BLM and DWAF. The team was mandated with addressing maintenance issues for all schemes within BLM.

Even this modest concept took many months to materialize, including a delay of nine months caused by a lack of consensus on the appointment of the Manager. At the time of the evaluation BLM's representative was only participating spasmodically.

An ironic twist to this tale is that a decision appears to have been taken in principle that Bushbuckridge Local Municipality will be transferred to Mpumalanga immediately after the next Local Government elections, which must be held within 90 days of the expiry of the term of the Councils, which is 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005. If so, Bohlabela would have only a single local municipality under it, and would therefore most probably be amalgamated with another District. This will have major implications in terms of the WSA and its relationships to the WSPs under it.

### **3.2 Assist WSAs in implementing decisions regarding water service provision, and establish WSPs, based on models that the various stakeholders choose which are efficiently managed and provide for regular and high quality services.**

In January 2002 the RWDP prepared a *Water Services Provider Options Study* which recorded the decisions of a workshop conducted in November 2001 on the subject. This recommended that, as far as the WSP role was concerned in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, it should be played by a new municipal entity initially formed by BDM, BLM and DWAF. In due course, after assets and staff were transferred from DWAF to BDM, the new entity would absorb these and thus provide a single WSP for the whole BLM area. The co-coordinating committee approved this in the last quarter of 2002.

Since then the concept has been somewhat modified. The model is now for a formal WSP which would also be responsible for ensuring that Community Based Organizations are operating their isolated schemes effectively. A total of 64 water committees were identified throughout the district and proposals for their training were submitted to Masimbambane for funding. The project initiated this study and contracted the Mvula Trust to conduct the study for them. A plan has also been prepared for AWARD, another NGO, to conduct the training of the WCs. All this was initiated by the project, but the WSA considers that it cannot be acted upon until the transfer has taken place, as to do so would be undermining the role of DWAF in

those communities. To the evaluation team this would appear to be paying more attention to legal niceties than developmental needs.

Meanwhile the RWDP prepared a Business Plan for this activity, which went through several drafts, the latest of which is dated July 2003. A legal opinion on the process to set up the WSP was handed over to the Municipal Manager for consideration<sup>8</sup>.

Even though this concept has political support, the majority of the respondents in our interviews appeared to be working on the assumption that the BLM and MLM would be the WSPs within their respective areas. This has the attraction of (a) not requiring the formation of a new entity – a difficult enough procedure where only one agency is involved, but a comparatively slow, expensive and politically sensitive one in the Bohlabela case; and (b) building on existing functions and powers instead of removing them. None of the subjects interviewed in DWAF, BDM or BLM talked with enthusiasm about the prospect of forming a new entity. However, it is possible that when staff are transferred from DWAF to the WSA perceptions on this matter will change, and the political will and resources will be found to form a new entity.

Meanwhile the project has concentrated on strengthening the skills and administrative capacity of BLM, a decision which appears to be yielding results, if only slowly. As the focus groups have revealed, however, there is still a long way to go<sup>9</sup>.

### **3.3 Support the work of existing water services providers through technical assistance and training**

In June 2004, at the same time as signature of a Bulk Water Supply Agreement with the Water Board, the WSA finally appointed the de facto WSPs as such.

Meanwhile, knowing that the WSA intended to recognize the role of BLM as the interim WSP, the RWDP proceeded to address the operational issues of water delivery. As noted in the mid-term review these would include strengthening the following:

- Water Supply (continuous supply, good pressure)
- Water management (dealing with illegal connections etc)
- Adopting tariffs which allow for the free basic water policy and price water at sustainable levels
- Cost control (metering individual connections, meter reading and effective billing)
- Regulatory measures (bylaws concerning illegal connections, damage to meters etc)
- Customer care (pay points at convenient locations, open at convenient times)
- Good staff and supervisory management practices.

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<sup>8</sup> This process will of course be affected by possible changes in the provincial boundaries which will see Bushbuckridge Local Municipality going into Mpumalanga and Maruleng going into Limpopo after the next local government elections in about January 2006. The implications of this are that the WSA Bohlabela will have no constituency therefore may not exist or may exist in another form by incorporating another municipality in place of Bushbuckridge.

<sup>9</sup> It must be made clear that a substantial percentage of the BLM's population is served by DWAF, and thus does not fall within the direct control of the BLM itself. Many of the problems highlighted by the Focus Groups are concerned with DWAF schemes.

Below, we summaries the actions taken in respect of each of the above items:

### **3.3.1 Water supply**

In a situation where supply is insufficient to meet the demand, a measure of rationing is required so that consumers at the (topographically) higher end of a scheme receive water. This is a common problem in the BLM area. The improved distribution is usually achieved by closing valves overnight to allow reservoirs to fill up, and opening the valves when there is sufficient pressure for all consumers. Sometimes this will have to be done on an area basis, e.g. one area will be served in the morning, another in the afternoon, and a third in the evening. Otherwise it may operate on a part-time basis, e.g. for just part of the day for the whole scheme.

Although the RWDP prefers to assist partners in undertaking tasks, rather than doing the work itself, it undertook a demonstration project on these lines in Dwarsloop, just before the mid-term review in July 2002. This was an instant success, and brought credit to the project. Unfortunately after the withdrawal of the project management from the operations, the system has once more lapsed and is unreliable.

This is explained by a lack of commitment by local counterparts<sup>10</sup> and the fact that the operators brought together in the team all belong to different organizations. The RWDP feels that unless there is leadership that is prepared to push everybody in a certain direction, which the project provided at the initial meetings, as soon as the people are back in their organizations, they fall back into old routines.

This has been the case with the Marite Scheme. In February 2004, the RWDP was requested to coordinate implementation of procedures for addressing equitable distribution of water in the scheme, otherwise known as BBR06. The parties concerned were Bushbuckridge Water Board, BLM, DWAF and BDM. BBR06 was implemented as a pilot site and the processes were to be documented so that they could be replicated in other areas. The team to be assisted by RWDP comprised the Technical Director of Bohlabela, the Technical Services Director of the Water Board, the local DWAF Water Manager and the Technical Director BLM.

When the project was coordinating this activity, all the parties were cooperating and agreed on the action plan. As soon as the project handed this to the Water Services manager to coordinate, with assistance from the project team, very little was achieved. Added to the problem is Eskom's reluctance to replace cables stolen by communities in the area before they can get assurance from the communities that these will not be vandalized again. Councilors have failed to obtain such assurances from the community that satisfy Eskom.

Another project, to formalize illegal connections at Calcutta, ran into early problems due to objections from traditional leaders. However, all 4000 households have since been registered and the municipality is now beginning to install meters in the area. As soon as the meters are installed, the customers will be brought into the municipal billing system. This has been relatively successful and may be replicated to other areas. The project's input was mainly to assist in organizing the community to accept the formalization through interaction and registering the households. It did not fund the meter installation but rather facilitated the installation by the municipality

The RWDP maintains that one of their biggest challenges was in changing people's attitudes towards doing things differently. One of the reasons why the pilot tasks

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<sup>10</sup> This was stated by the Mayor of BDM at the project review workshop held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005

worked well during the period that the project team coordinated the activities was that during that period, they could ensure that the different organizations and individuals put their personal, historical, and political conflicts aside and focused their energies on the task at hand. The RWDP took the approach of always advocating working as a team between the municipalities, the Water Board, DWAF and civic organizations. However, as soon as the project team handed the coordination of these teams back to the local counterparts, the old conflicts arose and took the focus away from the task at hand. These tensions are deep rooted either in tribalism, politics or otherwise. Consequently people have tended to go back to their normal business. The principal of including DWAF, Water Board and BLM staff was intended to set a precedent for the days when all these people would be working together under the proposed municipal entity WSP. While this might have been justified from the theoretical point of view, in practice it diluted the sense of responsibility which should have been exerted by BLM, the de facto service provider in the area concerned.

Additionally the conditions of employment of DWAF staff and the municipality were a big issue. The maintenance teams work an 8 hour day. There is no provision for them to work in shifts or assurance that they will be paid overtime etc. Thus, when confronted with the need to work out of normal hours, (e.g. when opening the valves to ensure effective water distribution either early in the morning or late at night) they simply did not do so. The project felt itself powerless to change this situation. Until the Municipalities and DWAF view the water business as a 24/7 service the situation is unlikely to improve much.

Since the Water Services Management Team has been in operation, coordination between DWAF and BDM has improved. The BLM has also collaborated at the working level but there has been a tendency for it not to participate at the senior level. The team is also reported to suffer from a lack of effective leadership.

### **3.3.2 Water management**

As an add-on to Ward Committee training being conducted by an SO1 appointed training team, the RWDP undertook water conservation training. This dealt with issues such as maintenance of pipes and fittings to prevent water loss and illegal connections. The program was considered a success, and, so to speak, opened the eyes of the participants in this regard.

On an entirely different aspect, the Project has undertaken studies of the DWAF systems which effectively constitute an audit of their condition. This work was done with the assistance of project-funded consultants, and is of a very high quality. They confirm, however, the findings of the focus groups that the standard of water management is very low, and it will be an enormous task to bring the systems up to the standard where continuity of water provision is assured for the majority of the residents in the BLM.

These reports also provide the WSA with essential information on which to negotiate with DWAF regarding (a) the work to be undertaken before hand-over, and (b) the value of the assets to be transferred.

In addition, the work gives the future WSP a basis on which to plan improvements to the water management.

The RWDP commissioned studies of all schemes which lay down the fundamentals of water management that should be instituted for the areas concerned. We consider that these could be a useful starting point for training in the Organization and

Management of these schemes, an activity that the project would have undertaken if the transfer of the schemes to BDM had taken place during the project life span. In any case, the reports are a good start, although the studies appear to be unrealistic in terms of the duties proposed as routine maintenance, and further work might be required before they are adopted.

However, until the hand over of systems from DWAF has been undertaken, and the role of the WSP in relation to the WSA and the Water Management Team has been clarified, there is a reluctance by the BLM to adopt new systems. In the meanwhile, responsibility for implementing the procedures has been given to the Water Services Manager.

### **3.3.3 Adopting tariffs which allow for the free basic water policy and price water at sustainable levels**

The tariffs in operation at the time of the Mid-term review were far too low for meaningful cost recovery. For example, whereas the tariff in the urban areas of Bushbuckridge was 33c a kilolitre, the Water Board charged BLM R2,60 a kilolitre. Thus the BLM was incurring a loss of R2,27 on every kilolitre of water it sold to its consumers – a clearly unsustainable situation<sup>11</sup>. Revised tariffs have been proposed by the RWDP, and have since been adopted and put into operation with the signature of the WSP MOU in 2004.

### **3.3.4 Cost control (metering individual connections, meter reading and effective billing)**

Assistance with this activity was proposed to be completed in December 2002, but in fact not much was done until 2004. This was due to a lack of capacity at BLM, which was finally addressed by the appointment of a private sector company of debt collectors. The emphasis was initially on revenue from the large users such as government institutions and businesses, as agreed in the mid-term review workshop. Revenues received in the first three months were received as follows:

July 2004	August	September	Total
3,384,069.30	626,233.43	670,940.71	4,681,243.44

It should be noted that these receipts are for all charges, not water alone. The very large sum in July follows commitments by consumers to pay their arrears.

While these figures are very encouraging, it should be noted that there is a very long way to go before the system is fully operational. It is necessary to compile accurate data on all consumers, and to develop better reporting procedures. For example, in the context of this study, it has not been possible to determine how much of the amount billed has been paid, how much of the water supplied has been charged for etc.

Meanwhile, the RWDP undertook a pilot project at Calcutta aimed at eradication of illegal connections and installation of meters. These two measures, if replicated throughout the BLM urban areas will have a major impact on cost recovery. In the rural areas, where most people are served by shared standpipes the impact will be less on the cost recovery and more on the availability of water.

### **3.3.5 Regulatory measures (bylaws concerning illegal connections, damage to meters etc)**

<sup>11</sup> Which was addressed by not paying the Water Board, and thereby passing unsustainability to a different agency.

Draft bylaws were prepared in 2002, and had been widely workshopped by the time of the mid-term review. Before they can be legally adopted by BDM, it was thought by BDM (and the RWDP and, apparently, by the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing) however, that they must be approved by the MEC for Local Government in Limpopo Province. Although they were submitted in late 2002, approval had not been received by the time of writing. It is known that the bylaws were approved by the legal department in the Department of Local Government, but it is not clear why nothing was done subsequently. After the National elections in 2004 a new MEC was appointed, only to be replaced about six months later. It is understood that with the appointment of a new MEC, approval might be received shortly. An explanation given by the Municipal Manager of BDM was that a possible reason for the delays in approval was that the By-laws incorporated water tariffs. Approval of cost increases is never a popular task for politicians, and it is possible that this was the reason for the delays.

The bylaws were re-submitted recently together with proposals for increases in tariffs. However, in the opinion of the evaluation team, tariffs should not be part of by-laws, but should be adopted as part of the budget process on an annual basis<sup>12</sup>.

Until bylaws have been approved, both BDM and BLM lack the legal power to penalize, for example, those responsible for illegal connections. This emasculates the system, and severely limits the scope of the WSP with regard to enforcement of regulations and cost recovery.

The question to be addressed here is whether the contractor could have been more effective in pushing for the Bylaws to be adopted (and, by inference, to expedite decision on the appointment of the WSA). It is clear that from the tactical point of view they were not in a strong position to do so in their own capacity – that would have been construed as external interference and could have led to even greater delays. From the point of view of facilitating meetings and/or presenting a case more effectively, it is considered that they did all that could reasonably have been expected of them.

However, a much more fundamental point has arisen, which raises the question as to whether the contractor advised the municipality properly. According to our search of the legislation, no approval was required, and the municipality had a right to adopt its own bylaws without reference to the Province. The only possible reason for consulting with the Province could be that their lawyers could advise whether there was any conflict between the bylaws and any other law (which would, clearly, and as stated in the constitution (s 156 (3)) make that by-law invalid).<sup>13</sup> They could therefore have proceeded to adopt the bylaws in 2002 and start enforcing them as soon as they were gazetted.

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<sup>12</sup> S. 24 (2) of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003: "An annual budget (a) must be approved before the start of the budget year . . . (c) must be approved together with the adoption of resolutions as may be necessary – (i) imposing any municipal tax for the budget year; (ii) setting any municipal tariffs for the budget year;"

<sup>13</sup> The constitution states "A municipality may make and administer by-laws for the effective administration of the matters which it must administer" (s156.(1) (a); section 162 continues "(1) A municipal by-law may be enforced only after it has been published in the official gazette of the relevant province. (2) A provincial official gazette must publish a municipal by-law upon request by a municipality." A search of the Constitution, the Municipal Structures Act and its amendments, the Municipal Systems Acts and its amendments, and the Municipal Finance Management Act have not disclosed any right of a Province to approve or control the making of bylaws by a municipality.

### **3.3.6 Customer care (pay points at convenient locations, open at convenient times), and communications**

As noted above, workshops with Ward Committees, designed to improve customer relations and awareness of water conservation issues were conducted in April 2004.

The RWDP assisted in the developing a communication strategy and workshopped it with the stakeholders in January 2003. The process was participatory and the stakeholders outlined the issues that they saw as critical for communication. At this workshop, the municipality agreed to implement as a matter of urgency, 3 of the 8 tasks. The main reasons for the delays in implementing the strategy was that there was no custodian of this strategy at the WSA. As soon as the commercial manager was appointed in April 2004, he requested assistance with implementing some of the activities. Currently the RWDP is assisting him setting up the interim fault reporting system, which is one of the tasks that were identified in the strategy.

As was revealed in the focus groups, perceptions regarding institutional responsibilities for water provision and a general appreciation of the workings of water systems were very weak. This is evidence of poor communications between the service providers and the public. From the point of view of the evaluation, this has been a weak point. The communications strategy referred to above was too limited in concept and too narrow in focus to address the wider issues highlighted by the focus groups – namely that the majority of consumers understand little about the working of the water services and feel little responsibility for their condition.

When this point was discussed at the Workshop and subsequent reviews of the evaluation, the point was made that it is difficult to generate positive attitudes to a system that seldom works. To be more specific, if there is no water in the pipes the vandalism is most probably an expression of frustration rather than thoughtless vandalism.

In both cases, it is felt that the project could have supported measures to increase consumer understanding and involvement. In this instance staff capacity did not need to be an issue: it is the type of work best implemented by NGOs such as AWARD.

Meanwhile the BLM has opened 11 regional offices and these are being used as service points for the municipality. The coverage of these areas is very good as they cover the entire municipal area. They are open from 8 to 16:30 which is probably adequate considering the rural nature of the area and the comparatively high proportion of households who have adults who are not in full-time employment.

Regarding the establishment of a 24 hour facility for receipt of fault reports, and systems to repair them, there has been little progress.

### **3.3.7 Good staff and supervisory management practices**

A baseline management systems audit for the WSP was undertaken in 2001. A second audit was planned for June 2004, in preparation for the transfer of DWAF assets and staff. The intention was to determine the degree to which a complete realignment of the system would take place, or whether it would be possible to achieve a satisfactory system through realignment. However, since the transfer date was deferred, the audit has not taken place.

## **3.4 Develop new generation of managers and empower key actors with the capacity to undertake key WSA and WSP business activities without outside assistance**

Work with regard to this component at the WSA level has shown progress. A Director of Technical Services has been appointed, and he has worked closely with the Project team. Since his appointment, the Management team for the proposed WSP has also been established. This consists of four persons, and is located at the RWDP offices, which were rented by the BDM and provided to the project after the lease ended on their previous offices. It is concentrating on improving the performance of the rural schemes in collaboration with DWAF and BLM.

This team is being used to address problems throughout the BLM area and is being operated on a learning by doing basis with project support. It is unfortunate that the cut-off date for the project prevented further training of the staff.

The team is using the two current pilot projects at Marite and Calcutta as models for future engagement in these issues. In particular, the work at Calcutta – eliminating illegal connections and installing meters is an important model which, after a slow start, seems to be working well and to be replicable throughout the BLM area.

However, proposals to attach staff from the BLM to the team, and thereby enhance their capacity, have not been working according to plan. This may be due to tensions between the Manager and BLM, or a lack of commitment to the concept of the Team.

The formation of this team is being viewed as an important step in the handover of assets from DWAF to the WSA. However, as with most components of the project, the delays in transfer (on the one hand) and BDM's delay in establishing human resources policies (on the other) have combined to weaken this aspect of the project.

Symptomatic of the problems facing BDM was the difficulty they faced in trying to recruit the Manager of the Water Services Team. The project advised the BDM to recruit a person from outside the area who could approach the job without the baggage of past affiliations and loyalties. Unfortunately the inability of the Municipality to attract such skills resulted in them appointing a compromise candidate for the post. He is an ex-DWAF employee from the area. Whilst this would have been a positive due to his knowledge of the area, it is proving a negative since the old tensions are resurfacing thereby hampering implementation.

This is, in a way, a microcosm of the problems which the transfer of staff from DWAF might present. There is sense in the BDM that DWAF will retain its best people and only offer for transfer those which are less experienced, productive and effective. Similarly, the DWAF staff who are expecting to be transferred are reluctant, feeling that service in the local government environment might offer less job security and poorer conditions of service. For example, while DWAF and the BDM agreed in principle that DWAF staff should be seconded to the BDM as a transitional arrangement until all the final details had been thrashed out, hesitations over taking the step triumphed and nothing was done.

### **3.5 Assist the WSA in developing the WSDP**

This activity was undertaken before the mid-term review. A review was undertaken about a year later.

### **3.6 Timings**

In order to illustrate the problems faced by the project in completing tasks as programmed, we have tabulated the planned and actual completion dates of activities, as indicated in quarterly reports.

Key: activity completed 

Task No			2002					2003										
			July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
1	WSP & bulk Agreements	Mar-02			1 <sup>st</sup> rev													
	Sign MOU on transfer	Nov-02																
	Set WSP partnership	Jan-03																
	Recruit Mgt team for WSP	Jul-01																
	Update WSDP	Jan-03																
	Transfer of assets	Jul-03																
2	WSP mgmt systems audit	Aug-01																
	Improvement to extg systems	Dec-02																
3	Establish accounts	Jul-02																
	Institute billing procedure	Sep-02																
4	KAP survey	Jan-01																
	Identify Public Awareness progs	Oct-02																
5	WSP systems audit	Dec-01																
	Record dwgs water, sewerage	Apr-03																
	Illegal connection strategy	Jul-03																
6	Skills audit for WSA	Dec-02																
	Skills audit for WSP	Dec-02																
	Training program designed	Jan-03																
	Training program implemented	Jun-03																

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Task No			2003		2004												
			Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
1	WSP & bulk Agreements	Mar-02					4th Rev										
	Sign MOU on transfer	Nov-02															1st Rev
	Set WSP partnership	Jan-03															
	Recruit Mgt team for WSP	Jul-01		4th Rev													
	Update WSDP	Jan-03															
	Transfer of assets	Jul-03															1st Rev
2	WSP mgmt systems audit	Aug-01	3rd Rev							4th Rev							
	Improvement to extg systems	Dec-02		1st Rev						2nd Rev							3rd Rev
3	Establish accounts	Jul-02							4th Rev								
	Institute billing procedure	Sep-02				2nd Rev				3rd Rev							4th Rev
4	KAP survey	Jan-01															
	Identify Public Awareness progs	Oct-02															3rd Rev
5	WSP systems audit	Dec-01															
	Record dwgs water, sewerage	Apr-03								1st Rev							2nd Rev
	Illegal connection strategy	Jul-03									1st Rev						
6	Skills audit for WSA	Dec-02															
	Skills audit for WSP	Dec-02															
	Training program designed	Jan-03		1st Rev			2nd Rev					3rd Rev					4th Rev
	Training program implemented	Jun-03				1st Rev											

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Task No

		2005											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	WSP & bulk Agreements	Mar-02											
	Sign MOU on transfer	Nov-02											
	Set WSP partnership	Jan-03											
	Recruit Mgt team for WSP	Jul-01											
	Update WSDP	Jan-03											
	Transfer of assets	Jul-03											2nd Rev
2	WSP mgmt systems audit	Aug-01											
	Improvement to extg systems	Dec-02											
3	Establish accounts	Jul-02											
	Institute billing procedure	Sep-02											
4	KAP survey	Jan-01											
	Identify Public Awareness progs	Oct-02											
5	WSP systems audit	Dec-01											
	Record dwgs water, sewerage	Apr-03											
	Illegal connection strategy	Jul-03											2nd Rev
6	Skills audit for WSA	Dec-02											
	Skills audit for WSP	Dec-02											
	Training program designed	Jan-03											
	Training program implemented	Jun-03											

## **4. Focus Groups**

### **4.1 Objectives of the focus group interviews**

The overall objective of the focus group interviews was to assess community perspectives regarding the program.

### **4.2 Findings**

A detailed report on the focus groups is included in Annex 4. Two major conclusions may be drawn from them.

- Most people were either unaware of the project, or if they were aware of it considered that it had not met their expectations in improving the provision of water services.
- The insufficient bulk water supply (due to faulty pumps, or insufficient supplies from the Water Board), illegal connections and vandalism combine to result in a very low standard of provision for most consumers.

Levels of information and communication about the project differed considerably between the settlements. In areas that were identified as pilot sites, especially the urban and peri-urban areas, there appeared to be a general knowledge of the existence of the project. Some residents remember community meetings where the project was introduced. What is not clear is the communication content of the meetings. Residents cannot distinguish between the project's objectives and the various components of the broader USAID program whose objectives were:

- To support the establishment of a water board (for bulk supply),
- To support operations and maintenance (for both bulk and retail), and
- To support capacity building for water distribution (retail) managed by local government authority.

All the above activities are seen as one project *“that has been around for over five years but has not delivered water”*. Moreover, even the objective of supporting capacity building for retail water is still confused with the delivery of water infrastructure by the municipality.

A major problem from a community perspective was that there was no clear understanding of the critical importance of institutional strengthening as a prerequisite of all other components of service delivery such infrastructural development, customer care and water conservation. The partners involved in the project developed a communication strategy dated November 2002 the purpose of which was to develop mechanisms to disseminate information among the people and the relevant institutions. This document attempted to explain the vision and objectives for improving water services in Bohlabela. The communication strategy was also meant to help stakeholder institutions involved in the Bohlabela water program to bring about the required changes in policies, operational procedures and behaviors of the people, so as to make the program a success. Furthermore, the strategy placed emphasis on two elements which are:

- determining and clarifying institutional responsibilities: and
- reducing water losses to help ensure availability to as many people as possible.

There is evidence of some communication effort on the part of the RWDP and its partners, even in localities as far as Hluvukani which was not one of the pilot sites, but is part of the Bohlabela Water Services jurisdiction. In this area Councilors were fully aware of the project, but ordinary residents did not have any information about the project or the institutions responsible for the project. There is a strong possibility that councilors do not disseminate information to the broader community. In the pilot project site of Calcutta, where project consultants have recently been active, residents were aware of the project, mainly because of the communication effort, and the visibility of the project activities. Regular meetings had been held to discuss issues such as the formalization of illegal connections and the metering thereof.

#### **4.3 Performance in terms of expected outcomes (community benefits)**

Project benefits reported by the community included awareness about water management, conservation and issues of scarcity. Residents of Dwaarsloop, especially councilors, reported on workshops that had been held to explain the line functions of a WSA and WSP, and the role of supporting institutions and inter-governmental relations.

No participation was reported by the community and no capacity building at the local level was reported.

The tables on the following pages summarize the findings of the focus groups.

It must be noted here that the views of the focus groups cannot be used as a criterion by which to measure the effectiveness of the contractor, as Chemonics had no direct control over the actual water provision. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to note that the project had comparatively little impact as measured by improvements in the water supply for the ordinary resident.

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
<p>Dwaarsloop</p> <p>Mixed group of men and women urban and peri-urban. (RWDP beneficiaries)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot site – system stabilization and equitable distribution of water</li> <li>• The main problem identified by the project was reliability of service to an extent that residents would go without water for days and even weeks. The water treatment plants were inadequate. The distribution of water was inequitable. Some portions of the area would have enough water to a point of wastage while some would not have any water at all.</li> <li>• The main intervention was the upgrading of the water scheme and the rationing of water, so that one area could be provided with water for a specific number of hours.</li> <li>• This required a management program that involved the closing of valves at specific for specific periods to allow the equitable distribution of water. RWDP employed members of the community to close and open valves at appropriate times. This worked well in bringing about equity in provision, together with some stability to the system.</li> <li>• The Ward Council received project supported water management training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was awareness of the project by all members of the focus group</li> <li>• Communication strategy implemented. There has been communication about the project, but not adequate</li> <li>• Awareness was mainly about the existence of the project, and its objectives.</li> <li>• There was no awareness of the implementation plan and why certain tasks were undertaken</li> <li>• Capacity building workshops for councilors was very successful</li> <li>• Illegal connections remain a problem, but will not be eliminated unless there is reasonable service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but dissatisfaction remains</li> <li>• Service remains unreliable, stability of the system has deteriorated. Not enough done on system upgrade</li> <li>• Problems arose when the management responsibility was handed over to municipality. Operators were not prepared to work after hours as this was not included in their conditions of work. Payment of community members (by municipality) to perform the same task was not possible due to budgetary and internal policy constraints.</li> </ul>

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
<p>Marite</p> <p>All women and children at standpipe, peri-urban</p> <p>RWDP beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot site – system stabilization and equitable distribution of water; upgrading of boreholes, pumps and reservoirs: introduction of diesel pumps</li> </ul> <p>The main problem identified by the project was unreliable service, resulting in unavailability of water for extended periods.</p> <p>The project pilot intervention was the upgrading of the water schemes including boreholes, pumps and storage tanks, so as to address equitable distribution of water in the Marite scheme. It was hoped that the tasks would be implemented as a pilot so that the process could be documented and implemented elsewhere.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variable project awareness</li> <li>No participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited. Even though this was a pilot site the water supply was reported to be unreliable</li> <li>Similar to the problems experienced in Dwaarsloop, as soon as the project handed over management to local institutions, the process collapsed, and very little was achieved.</li> <li>Illegal connections, especially by water vendors, undermine the service</li> <li>When water is available, water pressure is low resulting in long queues at standpipes</li> </ul>
<p>Marite RWDP pilot site (beneficiaries of the project)</p> <p>Mixed group of men and women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variable awareness</li> <li>No participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited. Even though this was a pilot site the water supply was reported to be unreliable</li> <li>The problem of cable theft and illegal connections has not been solved</li> <li>Residents are ready to pay for water via metering</li> </ul>

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
Calcutta RWDP pilot site (beneficiaries of the project) Men only, peri urban to rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot site - pilot cost recovery.</li> <li>• Formalization of illegal connections</li> <li>• Initially the pilot ran into problems because traditional leaders expressed their objections to the project. It was noted that the main problems was inadequate consultation, and lack of clarity on the roles of the various institutions.</li> <li>• The project developed a strategy to develop mechanisms to disseminate information among the people and the relevant institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is relatively higher awareness of the project, especially the formalization of illegal connections as a component of system stabilization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, as this is a recent pilot site, the impact is clear in terms of improved regularization – formalization of illegal connections.</li> <li>• Residents prepared to pay for water</li> <li>• After a series of consultations, there has been an improvement in the support given to the pilot. 4000 potential users have been registered and will soon be included in the municipal billing system once municipal meters have been installed.</li> </ul>
Thulamahashe RWDP pilot site (beneficiaries of the project) men only, urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot site – Cost recovery, resident registration for billing communication strategy, ward councilor training, system stabilization.</li> <li>• Thulamahashe is a densely populated township where the offices of the District Municipality and those of a number of provincial and central government departments are located. Thus Thulamahashe can be considered the administrative centre of BDM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is limited project awareness</li> <li>• Unable to differentiate between project activities and routine activities of municipality and DWAF</li> <li>• No participation</li> <li>• Inadequate cost recovery reportedly due to unreliable service</li> <li>• Public seemed unaware of Ward Committee training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, in terms of improved systems for cost recovery.</li> <li>• No impact in terms of improved service delivery due to inadequate treatment capacity</li> </ul>

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
<p>Bushbuckridge CBD</p> <p>Businesses operating in the CBD (all male)</p> <p>Focus of RWDP cost recovery campaign (beneficiaries of the project)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not described as a pilot, but a lot of targeted activity in the area.</li> <li>• Consultations about service delivery and cost recovery with businesses and key institutions</li> <li>• In an attempt to develop a sustainable tariff, the project investigated and reported on the impacts of the prevailing tariff which was way below the tariff of bulk water.</li> <li>• Businesses (many of which are in BBR CBD) and key institutions including government departments targeted.</li> <li>• Revised tariffs are in operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although cost recovery has started in this area the businesses claim it is not equitable as most residences are not paying</li> <li>• There is clarity on institutional roles</li> <li>• No effective consultation with users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes in terms of cost recovery, but dissatisfaction remains due to lack of reliability of water supply</li> </ul>
<p>Hluvukani</p> <p>Mixed group of men and women, deep rural</p> <p>No direct benefits from RWDP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non pilot site, deep rural.</li> <li>• No direct project activity</li> <li>• Information meetings were held during the early stages of implementation.</li> <li>• The local municipality has established a regional office that operates as a service point for the municipality (one of eleven in operation in BLM).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness resides mainly with Councilors and officials. No general community awareness.</li> <li>• No participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> <li>• Boreholes remain dysfunctional because of broken pumps and unavailability of diesel.</li> <li>• No proper fault reporting mechanism and fault response time is very long</li> </ul>

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
<p>Allandale (all women and children at standpipe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not direct beneficiaries of the RWDP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-pilot site, rural</li> <li>• There are RDP standard community taps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No awareness of the project</li> </ul> <p>No participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> <li>• There is an extensive network of illegal connections</li> <li>• Service is unreliable</li> <li>• Although there are many standpipes, most of them do not have water. Residents still have to walk long distances.</li> <li>• Water pressure is a problem</li> <li>• Water losses due to unattended running taps</li> </ul>

Settlement/ Focus group	Group profile and project intervention	Reported participation, awareness	Impact
<p>Rolle</p> <p>non- project site mixed group of men and women, rural but close to Thulamahashe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not direct beneficiaries of RWDP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-pilot site</li> <li>• Close proximity to Thulamahashe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No awareness of the project</li> <li>• No participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> <li>• Unreliable service</li> <li>• Purification plants inadequate</li> <li>• Residents go for up to six weeks without water</li> <li>• Many illegal connections</li> <li>• Diesel pumps unsatisfactory and must be replaced with electrical pumps</li> </ul>
<p>Amashangana Tribal Authority (men only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part RWDP site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts across settlements, some of which are within pilot areas while some are not.</li> <li>• Consultations on illegal connections and other community problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is awareness of the project</li> <li>• No participation reported. They have to deal with community problems including lack of water, but municipality excludes them in planning and implementation of projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None, even though part of the area was a project site.</li> <li>• Dissatisfied with reliability of service</li> </ul>

## 5. Reporting

### 5.1 Indicators

The contract required that Chemonics should establish base-line data and measure progress of indicators that measure the condition at project initiation and provide periodic updates.

The indicator against which the project was required to report was as follows: "*Number of low-income communities applying sustainable environment management practices.*"

In 2002 the contractor requested an explanation from USAID on this indicator noting the complexity of this. The explanation received was:

**Indicator Description:** Communities as defined by municipality, disaggregated by municipality and agreed with USAID.

**Sustainable** – activities that can continue without substantial donor or other external support. Number of communities with running water systems which **serve over half of the population and where costs are being recovered and used to maintain or improve system.** New Agent defines degree and footnotes it. Also, there must be ways to limit water loss.

Substantial progress has been made on this item since the mid-term review, and in response to changes in reporting requirements by USAID.

In brief, a detailed table has been compiled which includes population data for each "community", aggregated into schemes. For each community the table shows the population covered, and reliability of the water system, stated in percentage terms. The data is further qualified by an estimation of sustainability.

We must note that the definition of sustainability is creates difficulties, in that funding is reliant on the very "external support" which is excluded in this definition of sustainability. Virtually no cost recovery has taken place, and given the government's Free Basic Water policy, it is unlikely that most people will ever be expected to pay. The project uses the BLM's budget figures for water services as an indication of the financial provisions being made for the cost of the service. These, in turn, are primarily sourced from the grant provided by central government (the "equitable share").

The reporting does not clearly distinguish between the schemes operated by DWAF and those operated by the BLM. The DWAF schemes are grant funded through a different system, and a grant will be paid to BDM for three years to cover the immediate maintenance costs. It is hoped by all parties that the equitable share will be increased after the date of transfer, but there can be no guarantee regarding the amount. In other words there are questions regarding the long-term sustainability of the present grant funding, given DWAF's stated intention to withdraw all subsidies within five years.

The data lacks precision in many respects, and while the raw data appears impressive, manipulation is necessary in order to compile reporting. For example, for each given community, figures of reliability are applied. Thus, if a figure of 50% reliability is used, only half the population is counted as receiving a water supply. In fact, all of them may be receiving a water supply, albeit for half the time. With this caveat, and recognizing the substantial costs that would be required to obtain more

accurate figures, we consider that the reporting regarding “the number of households receiving new or improved services” is as accurate as can be expected in the circumstances.

Given that the numbers reflect only the “households receiving . . . improved services”, and not, for example, a 24 hour water service, it is clear that they do not necessarily indicate the number of households who are satisfied with the service received. There is therefore no factual conflict between (a) the fact that many households received improved services and (b) the frustrations reported by the focus groups regarding the fact that the water supply was unreliable, even though they may appear to present a different picture.

In theory any marginal improvement in a service (such as the repair of a burst pipe) could have been reported as “improved services”. However, the project only counted households benefiting from capital expenditure, such as replacing diesel pumps with electric, the complete rehabilitation of a water scheme, etc.

## **5.2 Data**

### **5.2.1 Population and number of households**

When the data were reported to USAID, the population calculations (derived as described above) were converted into households on the basis of 6 persons per household. In fact, under the Census 2001, the average household size in Bohlabela was 4.63. We therefore think that the data reported could have been an understatement in that respect. The most likely explanation for the discrepancy is that the figure of 6 used by DWAF refers to the number of consumers per plot, thus making about 1.3 households per plot which is fairly typical. However, it seems that the number of households quoted by the project in its reporting – 123,776 – is relatively close to the correct number of 129,108 (Census 2001).

However, if we calculate the population, as the project did, by multiplying the number of households by the figure of 6 persons/household, then serious differences emerge. The total population calculated by that method comes to 779,790 rather than the 2001 Census figure of 597,735.

### **5.2.2 Results for central and local government**

Within this context it is also important to note that although the focus of the RWDP was primarily on local government’s role, any improvement in the standard of water services within the jurisdiction of the BDM was reported as an improved result. We consider this legitimate in that the BDM, after being appointed the WSA had the task of improving the delivery of water services through all WSPs, including DWAF. Thus when additional households were served, and/or water supply became more reliable through the upgrading of the system (such as replacing a pump) all households benefiting from that development were counted as receiving improved services.

### **5.2.3 Funds leveraged**

The other matter reported on is the funds leveraged. In this category, the project has included the Masimbambane program (a central government funded technical assistance program for weaker municipalities), Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Program funds for additional water meters, and refurbishment programs being undertaken by DWAF in preparation for the transfer of assets. There is no way to demonstrate that these funds would not have been available without the support of the project. The project could claim that the funds were leveraged as they assisted the parties in applying for these grants. We are thus confronted with a definitional issue: on balance we would consider these claims to be legitimate.

### **5.3 Results**

#### **5.3.1 Number of households receiving new or improved water services**

The project reported that a total of 28,520 households received new or improved water services during the life of the project. Attribution in such cases poses difficulties, but it is fair to claim that the project facilitated these developments and can claim to have played a part in them, even if only an advisory one. The planned target was 58,000 households.

#### **5.3.2 Funds leveraged**

As noted above, substantial capital investments were made during the life of the project within the BDM. These included capital and technical assistance funds from DWAF, Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Program funds from the DPLG, and funds from USAID's governance program. These amounted to R9,005,000. In addition there were contributions in kind from all the municipalities, which provided office space, furniture and other support. No attempt was made to attach a value to these in-kind contributions in the reporting.

## 6. Findings

The most important points to have arisen from the work to date are as follows:

### 6.1 The Contract

This evaluation concerns the performance of a contract. It must be recognized that the program was designed before the current local government demarcations were in effect, and there were many uncertainties about the roles and responsibilities of the new municipalities to be established in December 2000.

By any standards the program was well designed and the contract is remarkable for the degree of detail and understanding of the operating environment. This is, of course, a reflection of the fact that USAID had been actively supporting activities within the area for about three years – as described in section 2.2 above.

The question which must be addressed here is whether the contract established appropriate objectives and realistic targets.

#### 6.1.1 The objectives

The objectives were spelt out in detail in the contract, and with very few exceptions have been implemented to some extent.

They included institutional and service delivery components. However, the operating assumption was that if capacity were built, there would be an improvement in water service delivery. A balance had to be struck between the need to develop institutional capacity<sup>14</sup>, and on-the-ground improvements to the provision of water services. There is little doubt that the institutional aspects of the project, although very slow, were successful. At the evaluation review workshop held in mid-March, the Mayor of Bohlabela indicated that he felt that as an institution, they had been capacitated “*We have reasonable capacity in Local Government. However, we haven’t succeeded in forcing people to do things at an operational level*”. However, he admitted that this institutional capacity has not resulted in the improvements in service delivery capacity that was hoped for. He said “*Once support is withdrawn, problems occur, which says that capacity hasn’t been translated into the transfer of skills*”.

A criticism of the contract is that it did not recognize the resource constraints of the contractor in terms of LOE. Our view is that the objectives of Phase 1 were realizable, but they might, even in a situation where the institutional constraints of the BLM and BDM did not exist, have required more effort (in terms of person months) than was provided for them in the contract. However, while, in pre-contract exchanges, the contractor expressed concern about the limited LOE available within the contract, by signature of the contract it implicitly accepted that the objectives could be realized.

#### 6.1.2 What could the project control?

It is easy to blame a contractor for not succeeding if outputs are not as planned. However, in so doing a clear distinction must be made between outputs that were within the control of the contractor and those which were not.

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<sup>14</sup> This included the development of bylaws, identification and approval of tariffs, appointment of WSPs at the Water Board and Local municipalities, clarification of roles and responsibilities in Bohlabela, DWAF being appointed to provide water in rural areas, billing systems in place to bill consumers and collect revenue, as well as providing assistance when needed, etc

In this project there was an assumption that the project would result in an improvement in service delivery standards. For example, the indicators included:

- Percent of revenues collected,
- Cost per unit of water delivered,
- Percent of unaccounted for water in network distribution,
- Time required to respond to consumer complaints and requests for service,
- Staffing ratio (consumer accounts per staff member).

The contractor's position is that it did what was required to facilitate such improvements in service delivery, and demonstrated management practices which would result in improved services on several occasions, but that if the will to implement such changes did not exist, the contractor was powerless to do more.

As noted above, the Chief of Party stated that the reason why the systems lapsed after the project withdrew was the lack of commitment from the local counterparts. The approach of the RWDP had always been to advocate working as a team, which had to include the municipalities, the Water Board, DWAF and civic organizations. However, as soon as the project team handed the coordination of these activities back to the local counterparts, staff reverted to their old ways. He felt that unless the leadership pushed everybody in a certain direction, things would not change.

The evaluation team accepts this point, but considers that an earlier start on such matters would have allowed the project to try alternative systems of achieving change. It was perhaps natural that, in light of the dominance of technical people in the project, that management matters were not a focus of their work. A wider-ranging management focus might have enabled them to diagnose why there was an apparent lack of commitment to service, and try to focus on more managerial innovation.

### **6.1.3 A distinction between service provided by DWAF and BLM (DWAF not a focus as all services would be transferred)**

The focus of the project has been the WSA (BDM) and the main WSP, BLM. It is not clear at this stage how the division of responsibility will fall when the DWAF infrastructure is transferred<sup>15</sup>. However, it is clear that the intent of the contract was to strengthen the WSPs, which, for the purposes of this contract are the two municipalities of Bushbuckridge and Maruleng.

The main area of concern for the project is the fact that after so many years of support and so much input (financial and otherwise); there is evidence of poor service to an extent that many residents do not have access to water. A number of reasons have been advanced explaining why and how this has happened, which have been discussed in more detail above.

Of importance in connection with community perceptions, however, is that when the BLM and DWAF were appointed as WSPs, neither had the necessary capacity to function at the level expected by the user communities. Firstly, DWAF is not geared for a WSP function, and does not have the necessary systems such

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<sup>15</sup> The plan to form a single WSP in which BDM and BLM are essentially partners, administered through a new Municipal Entity has not advanced to the stage where it is ready to start operations at the date of transfer.

as billing and customer care. DWAF has been carrying out this task (sub-optimally though) because of the backlogs and the absence of any other service provider, especially in the rural area. In the absence of proper systems, there has not been any cost recovery, and in the process operations and maintenance suffered because of lack of appropriate budgets.

BBR Local Municipality had been providing a service, but this was also sub-optimal, mainly because of inadequate capacity (human resources and systems). There has however, been an improvement in cost recovery, implying that there will be some budget for operations and maintenance.

In the mid-term report, one of the recommendations was that the project, though not geared for service delivery, should support the Local Municipalities in specific areas of service delivery in pilot sites. This was implemented with varying levels of success. However, in spite of an emphasis on team work, the popular perception is that institutional responsibilities have not been clearly defined. This has resulted in a fragmented water services provision environment. The workshop noted that there must be a formalized collaboration structure along the lines of the Masimbambane Sector Support Program, where all role players can plan, budget, implement, monitor and report together within a unified environment.

Having been appointed as a WSP, DWAF had the duty to provide service delivery in the specified areas, and therefore had to gear up accordingly. DWAF reported that a WSP budget and necessary subsidies have been identified.

The transfer of operations and maintenance personnel from DWAF was delayed for a number of years, and this is probably one of the reasons why there is so much dissatisfaction about performance in maintenance.

## **6.2 WSA**

The work on developing the role and the capacity of the WSA has generally been undertaken successfully, and after the slow start caused by the late designation of BDM as such, its role as the WSA has been effectively supported by the project.

The RWDP's role in developing an appreciation of the issues concerning water, the regulatory environment, and matters of management concerning water provision had been widely recognized and applauded. It has left a legacy of well informed people at both the political and management levels.

The RWDP also played an important role in facilitating decisions around the nature of the future WSP, establishing the interim Water Services Management Team, and assisting the coordination of the four players in the water services sector.

## **6.3 Transfer**

The project has made a very material impact on the transfer process, by providing technical assistance relative to the question of:

- Costs to the WSA of absorbing the staff
- The right of the WSA to decide who should be transferred
- The need for DWAF either to bring the schemes into full working condition, or for them to compensate the WSA financially so that they can do so.

- Setting up a management structure to absorb the new staff.

This work is, we understand, the first of its kind in Limpopo Province. The fact that the transfer agreement was signed on 11<sup>th</sup> March is important, as it means that transfers can take place on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005.

However, doubts remain whether the WSA will be ready for such a transfer, especially in light of the fact that the RWDP will not be there to assist them.

#### 6.4 WSPs

In spite of the name of the project, assistance in terms of retail water provision continues to lag behind the other work. Technical assistance in terms of water management and cost recovery has been provided, but achievements to date have been limited. While a lack of capacity within BLM has been a constraint, this is an area where it is considered more could have been done.

The lack of a reliable water supply to the majority of the residents is a major concern. The complexity of the situation has been fully dealt with in earlier sections of this report. However, we consider that it would have been possible to strengthen this aspect of the project if it had received attention at an earlier stage. This was certainly envisaged in the Terms of Reference of the contract.

For example, pilot projects such as were undertaken at Dwarsloop and Marite could have been started at an earlier stage in the project. These were not dependent on the appointment of a WSA, and concern day-to-day water management issues. Lessons learned from such projects could then have been used to refine and improve the model. The current view, expressed by several people at the final workshop was that without RWDP support piloted systems will not work. However at the same workshop, the BDM Mayor emphasized his commitment and determination to capitalizing on the work of the project and not allowing the gains they have made to be lost.

#### 6.5 Community involvement

In general community involvement has not been a strong point in the project. It is clear that the limited number of project staff and the huge population covered mean that only a limited impact would have been possible.

In this context, it is of interest to record the findings of the evaluation review workshop held in mid-March 2005, most of which are connected with the question of community involvement.

Areas of concern	Implications for the project	Proposed actions
The institutional support benefits have not cascaded to the beneficiary communities	Negative attitude of the consumers and perceptions of failure towards the project	Capacitate the WSP to fast track the development of physical infrastructure and service delivery
The demand by consumers for not only better services which they cannot always afford, but also provision of these services within a short	This implies that more effort needs to be directed towards informing consumers and involving them in planning and operations	Ensure consumer representation in planning and implementation. Inform communities accordingly

period of time.		
Unclear institutional responsibilities and inadequate collaboration	Consumer confusion over who is supposed to provide the service or perform specific tasks	Clarify the role of the BBR as a WSP and fast track the transfer process.  Establish a collaborative structure for water services provision
The absence of a clear strategy for operations and maintenance of water schemes	Inadequate service provision and haphazard maintenance and query response	Develop a strategy and implementation plan/s for the WSP  Fast track the transfer process
Lack of participation in decision-making and operations.	Continuing dissatisfaction by community members with their perceived exclusion	Involve representative structures.
Over reliance (by local institutions) on the support provided by the project	Local sustainability is questionable after project withdrawal	Provide institutional capacity building support to the WSP

This is perhaps evidence that although a communication strategy was developed by the project, it was either not pursued with sufficient vigor, or was inappropriate. Once more, we consider that if this had been made a focus of the project earlier, results might have been better.

As is well known, community involvement is a major factor in the matters of maintenance and cost recovery. The evidence from focus groups and other sources<sup>16</sup> is of extensive theft of components and vandalization of installations. This is combined with a culture of illegal connections – sponsored, we are led to believe, by staff of the water services providers. We believe that an aggressive program of community involvement possibly led by local consultants and municipal staff could have made a substantial difference.

DWAF has long practiced community participation at the project design and implementation level. However, the on-site staff were not equipped for this type of work: their job was technical – to keep the installations running. For them community consultation would therefore not have been their strong point.

Similarly, community consultation in this form had not been practiced previously by BLM. They were therefore strong neither in theory or practice in this field and

<sup>16</sup> For example, the report undertaken for the project on *The Identification of Immediate Improvements to the Village Water Supply Systems in the Sub-Region BBR06*, Africon Engineering (undated)

may have felt that it was not their job. A community development officer was appointed in 2003, and could have participated in such activities, but of course could not have done the work alone.

In brief, instilling a culture of participation and involvement in the three agencies concerned would have been a major task, and it can be seen in hindsight how this was relegated to the status of an optional extra.

To be fair to the contractor, the language of the contract speaks of consumer outreach and education – a rather top down approach. The contractor undertook the initial Knowledge Attitudes and Practices survey required, but did not allocate much of their effort to it subsequently.

Community involvement is a skill which is not always recognized as such. In view of the large number of rural schemes within the WSA's jurisdiction, and the fact that the communities are, de facto WSPs, this is an area which should also have been given priority in terms of capacity building and training in the staff of the BLM.

As noted above the proposal for a formal WSP which would also be responsible for ensuring that Community Based Organizations are operating their isolated schemes effectively. A total of 64 water committees were identified throughout the district and proposals for their training were submitted to Masimbambane for funding. The project initiated this study and contracted the Mvula Trust to conduct the study for them. A plan has also been prepared for AWARD, another NGO, to conduct the training of the WCs. All this was initiated by the project, but it was decided not to initiate this work until transfer had taken place.

## **7 Lessons Learned from the project**

### **7.1 Timing**

The project started too early for the objectives it was meant to achieve, e.g. the entities that the Project was meant to work with only started two years after the project was started. The contract established very demanding targets which might have been achievable within a perfect world, but within the very weak and uncertain institutional environment in which the project operated, the targets were simply unachievable.

There are possibly two lessons to be learned from this aspect. The first is that the contract should have recognised the possibility that these regulatory and institutional matters could take time to resolve and should have provided objectives to be achieved in the absence of such decisions.

The second is that, even if the contract did not make provision for such eventualities, the contractor and other stakeholders should have used their skills and time to think out of the box, and address the bread and butter issues of water services delivery while the higher-order regulatory and administrative matters were being resolved.

### **7.2 Institutional Framework**

The delays in terms of the transfer of staff and assets to BDM severely delayed implementation of the project. Delays in the approval of the bylaws also created important difficulties. However, it must be recognized that some of the key indicators in terms of the institutional framework were not within the manageable interest of the project.

The lack of a project driver within the DWAF was also a contributory factor to the limited success of the project. This might have been achieved if one of the Chief Directors at DWAF had this project as an element in his/her performance assessment. Similarly, a lack of commitment by the Provincial Department responsible for Local Government appears to have been a cause of delay, and it is unfortunate that they were not more actively involved.

### **7.3 Regulatory change versus service provision**

The contractors were primarily appointed to provide technical assistance in terms of water services provision. Their attention was diverted to issues over which they had comparatively little control – e.g. decisions to be taken by Provincial political leaders. While their support in these matters was very useful it possibly was less effective in terms of water services delivery than other work which they were better equipped to affect: e.g. the operation of water services, metering, cost recovery, maintenance etc. The good work done during the last six months of the project demonstrates clearly what an impact might have been made if that work had started from the beginning.

### **7.4 Community involvement**

The focus groups showed the lack of support and understanding at the community level regarding water services. Strong community involvement could have made an important contribution in regard to issues such as illegal connections, water wastage, vandalism, maintenance and cost recovery. There is no doubt that, if implemented in conjunction with the technical assistance and support given in the pilot projects, community involvement could have been increased substantially with positive results.

Furthermore, even as a stand-alone activity, community involvement in the rural areas would have been an important contributor to improvement of the management and performance of the schemes.

### **7.5 Dissemination**

The COP made presentations to workshops and conferences, but we consider that there were very useful lessons to be learned from the project which would have benefited a wider audience. One of these was the methodology used in relation to transfer which might be a very useful model. Another was the bylaws which they developed for the WSA. There is also a great need for case studies that can be used by practitioners and academics alike.

However, this was not specifically required by the contract, and the above comments should not be construed as a criticism of the contractor's performance.

### **7.6 Future programming**

This project fell between two stools in that it was neither an institutional development project, nor a down-to-earth technical project.

It is possible that direct technical assistance to DWAF in order to facilitate transfer agreements, and train the staff of recipient municipalities, might have been more appropriate.

It was unfortunate that, on many occasions, the participating agencies – mainly the Water Board, BDM and BLM – showed a lack of commitment to working with the project. A situation in which municipalities had to bid for support under the project, and thereby demonstrate their suitability as recipients of assistance, for it would have generated more positive relationships.

### **7.7. Skills supplied by the project**

The nature of the contract was such that technical people dominated the staffing. In practice, a wider-ranging management focus might have enabled them to diagnose why there was an apparent lack of commitment to service, and allowed them to remove the apparent obstacles in the adoption of the systems proposed in the pilots. It might also have generated innovations in management practice to overcome the shortcomings of the present systems.

Similarly, staff with a better understanding of the dynamics of community involvement and how to achieve greater community support and mobilization might have been able to address the apparent degree of community apathy or even alienation as reported by the focus groups

## **8. Recommendations for future programming**

### **8.1 Falling between two stools**

The contract – at least in its style of implementation – fell between the stools of macro and micro targets: the macro targets relating to the role of the WSA and its policies; and the transfer of assets from DWAF to the WSA; the micro related to improvements in the water supply and associated administrative and technical management issues. One could characterize this as the alternative of policy and plumbing.

In some ways the policy issues are more important, but they were severely impacted matters over which the nominal client, the WSA, had no control. These include the speed and style of the negotiations with DWAF over transfer of assets; the designation of the roles of the District and Local municipalities, etc.

On the other hand the plumbing issues inevitably have a parochial feel to them, and substantial investment by USAID could only be justified if it led to meaningful improvements in practice beyond the borders of BDM.

Our view is that the plumbing issues were susceptible to greater influence by a project such as the RWDP than the policy ones. The pilot projects undertaken by the project show that there are many related issues on which practice could have been improved with exponential improvements in the delivery of water if followed through systematically. For example greater community involvement and support could be an important factor in reducing illegal connections and managing water resources more prudently; this, in turn would have generated more support for cost recovery by those receiving individual connections as well as improving the standard of service; this in turn would have enabled the WSP to improve its standard of maintenance, and thereby increase its cost recovery, etc etc. Increases in metering, improved registration and billing, better fault processing systems and more customer-friendly offices could have been important by-products.

If such a result were achieved, exciting lessons from the experience could have been disseminated throughout the very many poor rural municipalities in South Africa which have been struggling with similar problems.

All of these were tried by the project, but it was too little and too late for the full value of the impact to take place.

### **8.2 Is it appropriate for international aid to be used for plumbing?**

If the conclusions of the above section are accepted, we should then ask whether, in hindsight, the contract should have focused on the WSP level; and by extension, whether USAID should, in future, fund the contracts to improve the delivery of services at the micro level.

When expressed in this way, one must conclude that although the RWDP contract could have made greater impact if it had concentrated on the plumbing issues, this would not necessarily have justified the expenditure of the funds. This is because the expenditure would not have made an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries, and even though it could have made an impact at a wider level, the type of contract would not have fostered putting the practices into effect in many other municipalities.

### **8.3 Looking for wider impact**

That there are substantial challenges in the water sector goes without saying. In our experience these do not lie in a shortage of funds for new infrastructure, but weaknesses in management and operations. These weaknesses are partly due to a lack of experience, and partly due to a lack of good management practices at the local government level as a whole.

These challenges are evident throughout all sectors: roads, power, water, social services and health. The challenge is the breadth versus depth argument: should one try and look at the country as a whole, or take specific sectors; and within sectors, should one address all local government, one or two provinces, or a few municipalities? The arguments are clear: results are more likely to be positive the more focused the assistance is, but the impact may be lesser.

The RWDP project of course chose the latter option, and concentrated comparatively high levels of resources on three municipalities. The opposite extreme would have been to fund advisers in crucial Departments to address issues of national impact.

### **8.4 The question of need and commitment**

Another factor which is troubling in the context of the RWDP has been the apparent lack of commitment by BLM to the project, which might, in turn have been caused by political and other tensions that are a feature of the area. The fact that the project was established before the municipalities in their present form may have been an additional factor. Whatever the cause, the RWDP might have had more impact if the beneficiaries had actively sought the assistance, rather than being presented with it as a fait accompli.

Projects are more likely to succeed where the beneficiaries actively apply for participation, and demonstrate that they have the wherewithal to make good use of project support. It is therefore desirable to build such factors into the project design, and thereby ensure, as far as possible, that project beneficiaries are committed to and need the resources of the project.

### **8.5 Centralized/decentralized technical assistance**

Restricting ourselves, in the present context, to the water sector; and establishing that future project beneficiaries should be self selecting on the basis of interest and aptitude, we are led to suggest that projects that provide technical assistance to selected municipalities, but which also develop the links which facilitate improved performance, are likely to have greater impact and to be better value for money.

These links are of two kinds: the first is links between the national and local level: those which effectively stalled the RWDP for so long. By providing TA at a national level more attention would be paid to improving the national/local relationship and thereby expediting decisions and making systems more effective. The second kind is to link participating municipalities: the concept of transfer of knowledge between peers has been demonstrated to be among the most effective forms of capacity building.

### **8.6 Continuous versus part-time technical assistance**

The SA government funds many technical assistance projects. The standard model is for the TA to be provided by consultants who only engage sporadically with the beneficiary municipality. The impact of such assistance is usually limited to short-term gains in performance, instead of systematic improvements in output.

The beneficiaries of the RWDP praised it for the fact that the staff were available on a full-time basis, and only criticized it for the fact that the staff were sitting in their own offices rather than that of the municipalities.

We agree with this view: modest gains on a sustainable level are preferable to short-term fireworks which fade from view only too quickly. A project which therefore generates real changes at a slow but sure pace seems to yield better results than the high profile, high pressure, short-term intervention.

### **8.7 Skills**

The RWDP was dominated by technical skills, but the problems they faced included managerial, administrative and social issues. Although they could call upon short-term specialist advisers, they were not strong in these issues either. We consider that the nature of local government is such that future projects should be able to supply a wider range of skills.

### **8.8 Expatriate versus local staffing**

South Africa's record in local governance is quite patchy. There has never been a local government training college which would prepare staff for their duties and give them a thorough understanding of the legislative environment in which they will work. University courses exist, but they tend to be focused on more rarified matters than the humdrum tasks of administration. In brief there is a lack of experienced and skilled manpower, a lack which was exacerbated by a substantial loss of manpower during the two local government transformations of 1996 and 2000.

There is need therefore for staff development. The major focus of this could be on developing a cadre of people who, while providing services to municipalities are themselves learning through a collegiate transfer of skills and experience under the project, aided by guidance and vision from highly experienced expatriates.

Thus the project fosters the exchange of experience between municipalities and between those providing the TA so as to generate critical mass and maximize on the demonstration effect – an aspect conspicuously lacking in the RWDP.

### **8.9 Conclusions**

There is real value in improving services at the local level. This is a direct way of assisting the poor and disadvantaged which has tangible results which everyone can applaud.

However, to focus on a single district is unduly restrictive, especially if there are doubts concerning the interest of the beneficiary municipalities in the assistance offered. There is great merit in combining a national program (which can represent the interests of local government at the national level) combined with direct assistance to a limited number of municipalities.

Municipalities need to be actively looking for support and to be open to new ideas and the potential of developing improved ways of working. This can be encouraged by a well designed system whereby municipalities apply for acceptance by the project.

But the true value in such projects is not to the individual municipality and its residents, but to the broader community, and very substantial value can be added by incorporating systems which encourage the sharing of experiences and skills among participating and non-participating municipalities. This value can be

further enhanced by actively training and encouraging all staff working on the project at the local level.

All this takes time, and another lesson must be that while designing the project to avoid the crippling delays caused by institutional road-blocks which the RWDP faced, it should also be designed to run over a period of at least five years, and preferably more. It is only by seeing a process through from start to finish that the true value of technical assistance can be realized.

#### **8.10 BDM and BLM: The future**

It appears more than likely that the BDM will be abolished after the next municipal election to be held before March 2006, so the future remains uncertain. Indeed we consider that it is possible that the transfer may be delayed until after the election for this reason. In other circumstances there would be little doubt that the attention of the BDM in the next year or two should be on integrating the systems and the staff after transfer had been made from DWAF. This would have posed difficulties in terms of management, but would probably not have had a major impact on water services per se.

For the WSPs, particularly BLM, the issues will be different: will the proposed new municipal entity be formed, and if so what will the consequences be for their existing staff, incomes and relationship with the public? If BLM remains the WSP – which we think is greatly preferable – then it can concentrate on increasing the coverage of the reforms piloted by the project in terms of improved customer awareness, reduction of illegal connections and metering all individual connections. This should be supplemented by improved management of the cost recovery systems.

There also remains a huge challenge in terms of the availability of water. This must be addressed jointly by the Water Board and all the municipalities who will need to collaborate and rationalize systems if they are to supply water for 24 hours a day. A new mindset is required by managers, water system personnel and the users in order to work together, manage and operate the system in a new way, and no longer tolerate water theft and wastage.

## Annexes

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Acknowledgements  
Documents consulted  
Survey instruments  
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## **Annex 1**

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Maruleng Local Municipality	Liz de Beer – Municipal Manager Sam Modiba – Previous Technical Manager
Bushbuckridge Water Board	Patience Nyakane – Chairperson Gibson Nkune - CEO
Retail Water Project	Robert Mbwana Thabo Molewa Stewart Gibson

## **Annex 2**

### **Documents consulted**

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Africon Engineering International: The identification of Immediate Improvements to the Village Water Supply Systems, Task 2, Operating Procedure, undated

Chemonics:

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1 January – 31 March 2003

1 April 2003 – 31 June 2003

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Vumbani Development Enterprises cc: Formalisation of Water Supply Systems in Calcutta, December 2004.

Vumbani Development Enterprises cc: Strengthening and Enhancing Collaborative Mechanisms – Municipalities and Traditional Authorities in the BDM area, February 2005.

## **Annex 3 Survey Instruments**

### **Interviews**

The interviews were structured around the following themes:

#### **Powers functions and staffing following the demarcation in 2000**

Is there clarity on the role of the District and Local Municipalities?  
Is the role of MEC for Local Government in Limpopo Province in relationship to Mpumalanga clear?  
Are all municipalities now fully staffed?

#### **Establishment of the WSA**

Is there any ambiguity about the Bohlabela DC's role as a WSA, in terms of its powers and functions?  
Does it have the capacity to perform its functions?  
What difficulties have been experienced?  
What are its achievements?

#### **Transfer of infrastructure and personnel from DWAF to the WSA**

What has been achieved?  
What remains to be achieved?  
What have been the difficulties?  
What has been the role of the BBR RWDP in this?

#### **Establishment of the WSPs**

What has been achieved since the Mid-term Review?  
What remains to be achieved?  
What have been the difficulties?

#### **Operation of water services**

What has been the contribution of the BBR RWDP to this aspect?  
Which institutions has BBR RWDP been working with?  
Has the operation of water services improved since the mid-term review?  
What has been the role of the BBR RWDP in this?  
What project activities have taken place in the field of:

- Consumer education – water costs, illegal connections, etc
- Training of staff to operate customer care systems
- Maintenance – establishment of maintenance teams, stores systems, effective supervision
- Repair and replacement of faulty water meters
- Use of pre-paid meters
- Establishment of improved billing and collection systems
- Establishment of indigent policy and free basic water tariffs
- Establishment of regulatory and administrative framework to deal with non-payment, illegal connections, removal/vandalisation of meters etc.

#### **Sanitation**

Has the WSA established a sanitation policy?  
What activities have been undertaken by the BBR RWDP in this connection?

#### **Management information**

What data has the BBR RWDP collected in terms of base-line data and performance indicators since the mid-term review?

### **Capacity building and training**

What activities have been undertaken by the BBR RWDP in this connection?  
How were activities selected for project support?  
Who have been the beneficiaries?  
What have been the results?  
How were the results measured?

### **Technical assistance and support**

What activities have been undertaken by the BBR RWDP in this connection?  
How were activities selected for project support?  
Who have been the beneficiaries?  
What have been the results?  
How were the results measured?

### **Management of the Project**

How has the management of the project evolved since the mid-term review?  
What have been the successes and difficulties in this regard?

## **Focus Groups**

Each focus group comprised 10 participants, selected to represent some larger population or group of community water users. Each session was about two hours in length, with all participants encouraged to actively and creatively express their views in response to the questions asked. Sessions were recorded on a flip chart and on a lap top computer.

The questions were structured firstly, with respect to the terms of reference which refer to (i) information about the project, (ii) community participation; and (iii) benefits to the community. Secondly, the questions were structured with respect to improved access to water services by local populations described as:

- Provision of potable water
- Reliability of service
- Customer service / relationship / cost recovery
- Maintenance and response to community needs
- Preventing water losses

## **Structured questions on information and community understanding**

1. Are you aware of the BBR RWDP?
2. When did the project start?
3. Were you informed by the authorities that such a project was planned?
4. Do you remember any form of communication relating to the initiation of the project?
5. What can be improved in the future?
6. Who is the owner / custodian / manager of the project (an institution)?
7. What was the project meant to achieve?

## **Structured questions on community participation**

1. Were you involved in the needs analysis leading to the initiation of the project?
2. Were you involved in the planning of the project?

3. What information was solicited from you in order to design the project?
4. What information did you provide?
5. Do you know of anybody who was consulted during the planning of the project?
6. Do you know community members who participated in the implementation of the project?
7. In which components of the project did community members participate in if any?

#### **Structured questions on community benefits**

1. Describe how the community has benefited from the project since inception (directly or indirectly)
2. Did you have access to water prior to the project?
3. Do you have access to clean water (potable)?
4. Describe the pre-project and post-project water delivery and access
5. Do you experience any problems with regard to the availability of water now?
6. What is the current source of water?
7. Are you satisfied with the current level of service?
8. Are you satisfied with your current mode of water delivery?
9. What should be improved in the current levels of service?
10. Do you believe that the project has changed your quality of life?

#### **Structured questions on customer care and cost recovery**

1. Do you receive the free basic water supply of 6kl/month?
2. Do you pay for water?
3. Where are you paying, is the pay point accessible?
4. Do you receive your accounts regularly and timeously?
5. Do you agree with the stipulated accounts?
6. Have you ever received an account that you believe is incorrect?
7. What is the procedure for correcting accounts?
8. Where and how do you submit queries and enquiries?
9. Do you know how to read your account?
10. Do you have a water meter?

#### **Questions on maintenance and customer care**

1. Do you ever experience water shortages?
2. Where and how do you report water shortages and other problems?
3. Describe experiences of responses from the authorities when there are problems (both positive and negative)?
4. Does your area ever have water leaks?
5. What is the procedure for reporting leaks?
6. What is the general response of the authorities when leaks are reported?
7. Compare the pre-project and post-project response to problems of water leaks and pipe bursts and illegal connections?
8. Have you been exposed to training programs on water conservation?

## **Annex 4**

### **Focus Groups**

#### **1. Objectives of the focus group interviews**

The overall objective of the focus group interviews was to assess community perspectives regarding the program and make recommendations, based on community understanding of the project and the resultant expectations.

In this regard, the following issues were critically evaluated:

- (i) Community understanding of the project objectives and *modus operandi*.
- (ii) Implications of the institutional development and support in relation to service provision
- (iii) Community representation and participation in the various components of the project
- (iv) Effectiveness and strategic impact of the project as a whole
- (v) Achievement of the expected outputs and progress in meeting strategic objectives, which included:
  - An assessment of the institutional collaboration (including community structures and support)
  - An assessment of service delivery (provision of potable water and reliable service including maintenance)
  - An assessment of management services including customer care and cost recovery
  - An assessment of maintenance and responses to faults
  - An assessment of the crosscutting issues such as prevention of water losses

#### **2. Methodology and approach**

The study was structured to reach a diverse set of key stakeholders and make effective use of the time frame for conducting the interviews and preparing the report.

The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of participants' views and experiences, their feelings, perceptions, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes. These data are most useful for identifying priorities for and barriers to service delivery; identifying local perceptions and attitudes about the project; and identifying local aspirations. These data are important for developing recommendations for future program strategies.

In generating and selecting the interview guide, the level of structure had to be based upon the goals of the evaluation. Topics and questions were generated from issues raised in the mid-term evaluation, the terms of reference and knowledge of the common challenges of water services in South Africa.

#### **Conducting the Focus Groups**

Each focus group comprised 10 participants, selected to represent some larger population or group of community water users. Each session was about two hours in length, with all participants encouraged to actively and creatively express their views in response to the questions asked. Sessions were recorded on a flip chart and on a lap top computer. The questions were structured firstly, with respect to the terms of reference which refer to (i) information about the project, (ii) community participation; and (iii) benefits to the community. Secondly, the questions were structured with respect to improved access to water services by local populations described as:

- Provision of potable water
- Reliability of service
- Customer service / relationship / cost recovery
- Maintenance and response to community needs
- Preventing water losses

### **Localities and Participants**

Participants were drawn from a broad range of community institutions and individuals. These included politicians (Councilors), Civic organizations, youth and women's groups, business people and Tribal Authorities. To include a taste of direct experience, one focus group meeting was conducted with participants organized on the spot from a public tap in Marite (project pilot site).

The study identified a number of categories of participants, mainly based on gender, urban/rural, groups with Councilors, groups with Tribal Authorities. The geographical area covered by the project is large, covering more than 100 villages. The BBR-RWDP has concentrated its efforts on some localities and not others. When choosing localities for focus group interviews, this matter was taken into consideration.

The following was the ultimate choice of localities;

- Localities that were targeted by the project as pilot sites, which include Dwarsloop, Thulamahashe, Marite, and Calcutta (mainly urban and peri-urban)
- Localities that are part of the Bohlabela District Municipality but are located further away from the Bushbuckridge town which formed the nucleus of project activity. These included Rolle, Allandale and Hluvukani which are mainly rural.
- Stakeholders in BBR CBD targeting mainly businesses operating in the area.
- Amashangana Tribal Authority

### **3. Findings**

A table giving a description of focus group profiles and summary of key issues is included in the main text

#### **3.1 Information and communication**

Levels of information and communication about the project differed considerably between the settlements. In areas that were identified as pilot sites, especially the urban and peri-urban areas, there appeared to be a general knowledge of the existence of the project. Some residents remember community meetings where the project was introduced. What is not clear is the communication content of the meetings. Residents cannot distinguish between the project's objectives and the various components of the broader USAID program whose objectives were:

- To support the establishment of a water board (for bulk supply),
- To support operations and maintenance (for both bulk and retail), and
- To support capacity building for water distribution (retail) managed by local government authority.

All the above activities are seen as one project *“that has been around for over five years but has not delivered water”*. Moreover, even the objective of supporting capacity building for retail water is still confused with the delivery of water infrastructure by the municipality.

A major problem from a community perspective was that there was no clear understanding of the critical importance of institutional strengthening as a

prerequisite of all other components of service delivery such infrastructural development, customer care and water conservation. The partners involved in the project developed a communication strategy dated November 2002 the purpose of which was to develop mechanisms to disseminate information among the people and the relevant institutions. This document attempted to explain the vision and objectives for improving water services in Bohlabela. The communication strategy was also meant to help stakeholder institutions involved in the Bohlabela water program to bring about the required changes in policies, operational procedures and behaviors of the people, so as to make the program a success. Furthermore, the strategy placed emphasis on two elements which are:

- determining and clarifying institutional responsibilities: and
- reducing water losses to help ensure availability to as many people as possible.

There is evidence of some communication effort on the part of the RWDP and its partners, even in localities as far as Hluvukani which was not one of the pilot sites, but is part of the Bohlabela Water Services jurisdiction. In this area Councilors were fully aware of the project, but ordinary residents did not have any information about the project or the institutions responsible for the project. There is a strong possibility that councilors do not disseminate information to the broader community. In the pilot project site of Calcutta, where project consultants have recently been active, residents were aware of the project, mainly because of the communication effort, and the visibility of the project activities. Regular meetings had been held to discuss issues such as the formalization of illegal connections and the metering thereof.

### **3.2 Organizational arrangements**

The management of the program deals with the issues surrounding the responsibilities of the players that are tasked to deliver on the water services in Bohlabela. These tasks were designed to achieve very particular objectives.

The evaluation mission considers that the project design was logical and correct, but underestimated. The client and the implementation team had a clear understanding of the main and secondary objectives of the project.

The findings of the focus groups suggest that the difficulties of trying to target institutional issues (management capacity) within an environment of service backlogs and the resultant water crisis, was not clearly communicated to the beneficiary communities, nor understood by them. Their view was that more emphasis should have been placed on infrastructure than on institutional development. The project had supported infrastructure improvements in certain pilot sites, but this was found to be inadequate by the communities. Consequently the communities developed negative attitudes towards the project and perceptions of failure. Thus community perspectives in this report are about water delivery rather than institutional capacity building which became a major objective of the project.

Benefits of the institutional capacity building effort in the WSA have not translated into improved water delivery to residents. There are obvious gaps between the institutional support activities (WSA) and the level and quality of services provided. Many of the problems described are about poor service delivery, including inadequate provision, unreliable supply and poor maintenance. Although some residents are not sure who should be providing the service, it is clear that the main problems are in the water services arena.

The name of the project “Retail Water Distribution Project” also created some confusion on the part of the communities. It gives an impression that the implementing agency is going to act as a **Water Services Provider**, dealing with issues of reticulation, distribution and general service delivery. In the meantime this is the responsibility of the Municipality and other institutions. The attainment of these issues would not be as a result of the direct inputs of the project but rather as a result of the **local counterparts having acquired new skills** (noting that the project design was such that RWDP should not directly do the work for them but rather built their capacity). This point was raised in the mid-term review, but obviously was not properly communicated to stakeholders.

### **3.3 Efficiency of Institutional Arrangement for Project Implementation**

While there was a coordinating mechanism in the form of a Steering Committee, comprising the RWDP, Water Board, Municipalities etc., institutional responsibility has never been clarified to the public. This means that the user community does not know who their service provider is. They do not understand the inter-institutional relations and how the institutions support one another.

### **3.4 Community participation**

Provision was made in the planning documents for the design and implementation of the projects to follow a participatory and consultative approach. In this way, it was believed that communities would buy into the projects thus further strengthening program sustainability.

The evidence from the focus groups in the rural areas, especially non-project pilot sites was that community participation was reported as minimal or almost non-existent in the project. The main community-based development structure was the Community Development Forum (CDF). The CDF dealt with a broad range of community development issues including water. Except in a few localities, there were no water committees which could form a forum for articulating community needs and priorities, and thereby make a meaningful input to the water services program.

A more participatory and consultative approach would have helped the project managers to understand communities’ priorities with regard to water supply. This form of participative planning and subsequent feeling of ownership would also have helped when developing programs to eradicate illegal connections.

### **3.5 Assessment of project effectiveness (Impact)**

#### **3.5.1 Performance in terms of expected outcomes (community benefits)**

Project benefits reported by the community included awareness about water management, conservation and issues of scarcity. Residents of Dwaarsloop, especially councilors, reported on workshops that had been held to explain the line functions of a WSA and WSP, and the role of supporting institutions and inter-governmental relations.

However, a major weakness of the capacity building effort was reported to be the lack of broader involvement of the community representatives in the project. This would have helped articulate community needs and thereby provided an opportunity for the project objectives and activities to be aligned to community needs. There is a strong belief that while the institutional capacity building objective of the project was relevant to the needs of the municipality, the project pushed this objective over and above community needs for access to water.

Residents stressed the point that they understood the principle of institutional strengthening, but also indicated that this should have been accompanied by measures to provide access to water even if it was not full scale provision. With these observations, residents believed that the project was selective in attending to the needs of the municipality, which is indicative of an externally driven agenda. They believed that had the communities been properly consulted during conceptualization or inception, some of the resources would have been allocated to delivery on the ground.

A suggestion made was that RWDP should not disengage from its activities, but should continue for a while to help both the District and the Local Municipalities to implement some of the strategies, bylaws, customer care etc. which the project helped develop. Regardless of how successful the project has been in developing and supporting the WSA, until such time that water has been delivered, the project will be deemed a failure in the eyes of the user communities.

### **3.5.2 Provision of potable water**

Communities report a huge backlog in the provision of water. Some villages go without water for up to two months. In areas where there is no bulk piped water supply, users rely on boreholes for water provision. Residents interviewed in Marite, which is one of the project pilot areas, reported that the boreholes are inadequate, and in many cases dysfunctional. The main problems emanate from broken pumps, no electricity, insufficient diesel, stolen cables, vandalism and poor maintenance.

Pumps fail as a result of both ageing and vandalism. Regrettably there is no proper reporting mechanism, resulting in poor response from the service provider. Furthermore, it was reported that some of the infrastructure belongs to DWAF while some belongs to BBR Municipality. In one area we were told that the borehole infrastructure belongs to Mvula Trust. When a pump is broken or dysfunctional, the community reports to the Ward Councilor who in turn reports to the Municipality. More often than not, DWAF operators will fix their own infrastructure first and then only fix infrastructure belonging to other institutions if there is time or equipment. There are reports of DWAF staff indicating to residents that they are just doing a favor by fixing infrastructure that does not belong to the Department. This has created negative attitudes on the part of the water users whose interest lies in water availability rather than institutional responsibility.

Theft and vandalism were said to emanate from the community as many residents believe that the culprits do not travel far to steal equipment including electricity cables. There are also reports of stolen JoJo tanks, especially when they are empty and easier to carry. These problems have been reported to the Community Policing Forum (CPF) and to the South African Police; however, there does not seem to be any progress in solving the problem. Marite was singled out as a high crime area where the community has to come together to solve the problem.

On the issue of diesel, it was not clear to the participants who should provide it, and where the money should come from. After some debates, it was agreed that the Municipality must begin to replace diesel pumps with electric pumps which are believed to be more reliable. Where diesel pumps are still in use, the Municipality must be responsible for providing diesel. A suggestion by some community members to make diesel provision the responsibility of the users was rejected on the basis of the fact that access to water still remains inequitable, therefore it would be unfair for people to contribute equally while some have easier access to water. An example of this problem is in Boikhutso, where residents closest to the source do not have access to water, while residents closest to the reservoir do have access.

### **3.5.3 Reliability of service**

Unreliability was noted as a major problem affecting service delivery. This problem was mentioned by all the groups interviewed. Residents in Thulamahashe, which is the largest settlement, reported problems of water unavailability for periods of over 24 hrs. This was particularly serious for Section C. Though the problem still persists, there have been improvements since the upgrading of the water mains and some form of reticulation.

A focus group interview conducted at a standpipe in Marite provided an insight into the types of problems experienced by residents, especially women and children who are carriers of water. The first observation that the evaluation team made was a row of buckets and other containers waiting to be filled at the standpipe. The pressure was very low and the water was coming out in dribs and drabs. The residents were waiting their turn while sitting under a tree. Many of the people at the standpipe were children, some as young as eight. We were told they had been waiting for over two hours. While some residents complained about the unreliability of the standpipes, and advocated house connections, some believed that house connections that do not produce any water will not help. Residents showed us a number of tanks and reservoirs, and confirmed the problem of illegal connections as a cause of service failure.

### **3.5.4 Maintenance and responses to complaints**

The communities complained about the poor maintenance of the infrastructure accompanied by lack of response when faults are reported. The problem is complicated by the multiplicity of service providers. In the area of Hluvukani, for instance, residents identified infrastructure belonging to the municipality, DWAF and the Mvula Trust. There are reports of DWAF employees refusing to service boreholes that belong to the municipality. There are reports of several dysfunctional boreholes at any given time as a result of lack of diesel, or broken engines due to lack of spare parts and vandalism.

In all cases, the lack of maintenance is stated to be a huge problem. Reasons advanced for this are the dispersion and difficult access which make it costly for service providers to travel and provide maintenance; secondly, the municipality does not seem to have well-developed maintenance structures and cultures. Finally, there appears to be no delegation to the communities or to the private sector. Private participation is extremely limited, possibly due to the remoteness and poverty of the concerned population.

Operations and maintenance have to be given priority. There is a need to establish dedicated O& M teams and train staff accordingly. There was a strong proposal for a reporting system with proper logging of queries and responses that could be used for monitoring the performance of maintenance personnel throughout the district.

### **3.5.5 Customer service, relationship and cost recovery**

Issues of cost recovery and customer care seem to be important to the residents closest to the main urban centre of BBR which are Thulamahashe, Dwaarsloop and the BBR CBD. Residents believe that the current cost recovery mechanism, including metering, bill preparation, and the general debt management is at best inadequate, and at worst dysfunctional. Residents believe that the municipality does not know who their customers and debtors are, and how much money is owed to municipality. If such monies could be collected properly many of the operations and maintenance problems would be overcome. A case was raised of the information that came from the "proof of residence" process initiated as a result of FICA, whereby residents were

asked by their banks to provide proof of residence through their municipal bills. Many residents had to go and present themselves at the municipality to request copies of their recent bills. It became clear that the number of debtors and the monies owed were much higher than previously thought.

### **3.5.6 Preventing water losses**

The problem of illegal connections, burst pipes and dripping standpipes was mentioned in all interviews.

The problem of illegal connections is the most complex, as it is caused by a number of factors. Residents believe that the problem could be solved or alleviated by the reticulation to individual homesteads. It is believed that some residents get involved in illegal connections simply because they do not want to queue at the standpipe, while some resort to the practice because standpipes nearest to their stands do not have water. On the other hand, in the more urbanized areas where there is stand reticulation, certain residents use illegal connections to avoid paying for water supplied via their meters. There are also reports of water vendors who, having obtained water via illegal connections, sell it at exorbitant prices to residents. Residents believe that employees of the municipality and DWAF are the worst culprits in respect of illegal connections, as they have the skills and the tools to carry out these connections. These employees do not only connect illegally for their own consumption, but also charge other residents for the service.

Circumstances leading to illegal connections are many and varied, and the problem requires a multi-pronged strategy supported by all institutions and the user community. Everyone agreed that illegal connections cannot be stopped until delivery and reliability reach a certain level acceptable to the community.

Water losses from dripping standpipes result from a combination of poor infrastructure, lack of maintenance, irresponsible usage by the community and vandalism in the form of theft of pipes. Residents related incidents where the tap was left to run overnight because residents had been queuing for water at the specific tap. The water was coming through in dribs and drabs; hence the tap was left open. When the water pressure was restored or normalized, the water was left to run attended for the entire night. While residents were all in agreement that this behavior is unacceptable, they expressed frustration with the waiting and the long queues at the standpipes.

Burst pipes are caused mainly by lack of maintenance and on a few occasions shoddy workmanship due to illegal connections. In the absence of a proper reporting mechanism, the response is slow and sometimes not forthcoming. There are instances where residents take advantage of burst pipes and use them as water sources for the day.

## **3.6 Recommendations for the way forward**

Residents are still not convinced that the project did the correct thing by placing more emphasis on institutional strengthening than on water provision. Recommendations emanating from the community interviews are therefore mainly on issues of water provision, although there are a few on institutional collaboration and roles and responsibilities.

### **3.6.1 Water provision (availability, reliability and conservation)**

**Provide extensive reticulation throughout the District:** this was put forward as a main recommendation from the community. Since research has been conducted on the sources of water for bulk supply i.e. Inyaka Dam, it is time to ensure that those

water sources provide bulk water for municipal services. It was felt that there must be fast tracking of Phase 2 and 3 of Inyaka Dam project which will see the completion of the water treatment plant and associated reticulation.

**Upgrade existing purification plants.** This should be an interim measure while awaiting water access from Inyaka Dam. Since there has been an investment in the existing plants, this infrastructure must be maintained and operated in such a way that there is an improvement in access.

**Diesel pumps must be replaced with electrical pumps:** It has been noted that the major problem with boreholes may not be drought, but the poor equipment being used to pump water. It is recommended that borehole equipment be upgraded, especially in those areas where there is currently no bulk supply or reticulation. The boreholes still serve a purpose and if functioning properly they can augment provision in remote areas. The pumps should also be provided with ample security to avoid theft and vandalism.

**Jojo tanks must be replaced with concrete reservoirs** which are bigger and cannot be stolen. Jojo tanks have proved to be inadequate especially where communities are growing.

**Individual house connections should be considered** in areas where metering is possible and where there is a potential for payment.

There seems to be a lot of emphasis on the provision of potable water for human consumption. In the meantime there are areas in Thulamahashe and Dwaarsloop where there is water borne sewerage. **Water for sewerage has to be given priority** in these areas, as the shortage of water will be a recipe for disease.

### **3.6.2 Maintenance and responses to reporting of faults**

**Establish a reporting system that can log in faults and queries and develop a charter for responses.** Having established the roles and responsibilities of role players, this must be followed up with a reporting system and an associated charter. Without this there is a tendency for the responsible institutions to remain accountable to themselves rather than to the users. The reporting system must indicate structures that communities report to, which should keep records of complaints and responses, and provide feedback on corrective action.

**The institution responsible for operations and maintenance, in this case the WSP must be responsible for the training of operators.** Moreover, the WSP must set up suitable stores system for effective supply of parts needed in emergencies. At this stage the supply of parts comes from the stores in Thulamahashe. The problems of broken equipment, dysfunctional infrastructure and low pressure can only be solved if there is a proper maintenance structure with effective supervision and reporting mechanism.

### **3.6.3 Community participation**

**There is need for the creation of mechanisms to promote community participation.** As mentioned earlier, community participation is important in rural water supply and maintenance. This practice recognizes that communities constitute a great asset, and one that needs to be tapped; whether by involving them in the design of the program, by asking for their participation in kind, or by asking them to supervise work that is contracted out. It can also serve as the basis for greater accountability in public investment. Successful rural water schemes are community

based, and focus on what users want and are able to sustain. This takes time, and requires community members to be involved in the design process.

Technical assistance and training should be provided to the communities until they are capable of maintaining water points or piped systems, administer the water scheme in a financially responsible way, and handle routine operations and maintenance. A new generation of pumps has been designed for village-level operation and maintenance, designed for low cost, ease of maintenance, and resistance to abuse and vandalism.

**A focus on institutional development should continue for sustainability:** This support should extend to all stakeholder institutions including water committees.

**Develop local technical capacity** so as to ensure that communities do not rely solely on help coming from the main centers such as BBR and Thulamahashe. Given the scarcity of resources, there is a need to ensure expenditure efficiency. This could be improved by developing local capacity for planning and managing infrastructure

#### **3.6.4 Institutional roles and responsibilities**

**Clarify roles and responsibilities and communicate this to users** so that they know which institution to contact for a variety of services. This activity should also determine points of accountability. Role clarification will also solve the problem of ownership of equipment and its maintenance.

**Establish and strengthen village water committees.** The existence of a formal organization to manage the water system and training of household members is a significant factor in ensuring water system sustainability. In many case-studies positive correlations are found between water system sustainability and the level of training received by the water committee in operations and maintenance. The Village Water Committees should work through the CDF and represent the various communities on IDP the Forum, and in the preparation of a Water Services Development Plan (WSDP).

**Involve NGOs, CBOs and Tribal Authorities** as all these institutions have a role to play in representing the various sectors of the community. Inter-institutional collaboration will also reduce the burden on officials and councilors who more often than not are over-burdened with a variety of community development issues.

**Consider private sector participation** and initiate contacts with a number of private sector entities with a view to engaging them in development co-operation.

#### **3.6.5 Cost recovery**

**Determine the proper number of legally connected customers and develop a database for billing and payment.** This will go a long way towards attaining financial sustainability. Payment will be encouraged by an improved level of service and reliability. Faulty meters must be repaired as they are a source of conflict between users and the municipality. The municipality should also develop and implement an effective system for penalizing non-payers. This process can slowly be extended to other parts of the municipality which are currently not connected.

**Formalize and legalize illegal connections via metering** so as to correct poor workmanship and leakages. Where illegal connections are in un-connectable areas, the municipality has to get rid of such connections and educate the community on water use, costs of water, and the problems of illegal connections.

**Water vendors must be discouraged** because they access municipal water free of charge through illegal connections, but sell it at exorbitant prices. Water vendors should rather be formalized and transformed into water services providers. In this way water vendors will pay for bulk water, the municipality will be able to control prices and monitor the service provided.

### **3.6.6 Communication**

This aspect of the project and the broader Bohlabela Water Services Program can be greatly strengthened, and it is recommended that **the communication strategy be implemented aggressively**. Community structures must be involved in marketing the strategy and dissemination of information on the various components of the water program. Emphasis must be placed on training of Water Committees, Ward Councilors and system operators. This will impart a sense of ownership to the beneficiaries, and result in improved co-ordination between government, NGOs, communities, the private sector and other role players.

## **3.7 Conclusions**

### **Key findings**

Presentation of the results comprises a summary of discussions emanating from the focus group interviews. The focus groups revealed the communities' perceptions of their water supply needs and of the various attempts to meet these needs. Although data from these groups cannot be relied upon as being representative of the total population of Bushbuckridge, the opinions obtained provide an indication of the issues most relevant to the user communities. This can be used as a useful guide in the design of future schemes.

Overall, the focus groups were well received by the participants. Many participants expressed their appreciation of having the opportunity to hear more about the RWDP and the general water issues in Bohlabela. They also were glad to be able to express their opinion on this subject where they have been assured that their opinions will be documented and reported as part of a final evaluation report.

A capacitated and skilled WSA must not be negated by system faults such as an unreliable water supply. However, there were many comments regarding the lack of institutional co-ordination in terms of operations and maintenance, and there was very limited evidence of any effort to involve community structures in the planning and implementation of projects. The institutional capacity building benefits as experienced by the WSA have not cascaded to the beneficiary communities. A lot still has to be done to capacitate the WSP and supporting institutions, to create a unified water services environment.

On the other hand these findings indicate that there is a willingness by local communities to become involved in activities that would better their situation. This enthusiasm should be embraced, and active participation by members of the community should be encouraged in future projects. The community's involvement is critical to the success of this Bohlabela Water Supply Program because these are the people who can best determine what motivates them and what would help them to lead a better life.

The project's success was influenced by many external factors and institutions. It is imperative that the activities of such institutions must be managed in such a manner that they are supportive of the project objectives. Secondly, communities must take ownership of the projects and be encouraged to protect the infrastructure, and to pay for services. A communication strategy has been developed, and it needs to be implemented aggressively to facilitate information flow among stakeholders.

The areas of concern for the project are:

- The negative attitude of the consumers towards the project
- The demand by consumers for not only better services which they cannot always afford, but also provision of these services within a short period of time. This implies that more effort needs to be directed towards educating the consumers.
- Unclear institutional responsibilities
- The absence of a clear strategy for operations and maintenance of water schemes
- Continuing dissatisfaction by community members with their lack of participation in decision-making and operations.

## **Annex 5 CVs of evaluators**

### **RICHARD JULLION MARTIN**

#### **CURRICULUM VITAE**

##### **Personal**

Name	Richard Jullion Martin
Citizenship	British
Languages	English, French
Marital Status	Married with three children (born 1969, 1976, 1979)

##### **Skills and experience**

Mr Martin has undertaken many program reviews and evaluations, and has written and taught on the subject. He has worked with the legislative, administrative and developmental aspects of water provision in South Africa over many years. He has in-depth experience in local government and worked with many NGOs over a period of four years. He has considerable experience in conducting workshops and facilitating community participation.

He was the Team Leader of a Mid-Term Review of the Bushbuckridge Retail Water Project for USAID (other team member was Mankone Tsaba), conducted in August 2002. He was also responsible for the evaluation of Rand Water Board's USAID grant-funded support program for the Bushbuckridge Water Board. These two assignments have given him in-depth understanding of the conditions under which the Retail Water Project has operated.

He was a member of a joint UNDP/USAID evaluation of the People's Housing Process, which involved detailed review of the administrative and financial arrangements, the experience in the field, interaction with stakeholders such as Provincial Departments, and community groups, and an evaluation of the outputs in terms of quality and quantity.

He was a team member of a USAID evaluation of the results of six USAID funded training for local government officials conducted in South Africa. This involved postal questionnaires to the participants and their supervisors which enabled objective evaluation of the personal and institutional improvements in performance as a result of the training. This was supplemented by telephone contacts and in-depth interviews with the training bodies concerned.

He was team leader of an evaluation of the USAID grant to the South African Black Contractors (SABCAP), and was responsible for making recommendation for the use of remaining funds. This work was supplemented by detailed work for SABCAP to program their future activities. It involved in depth consultations with members of the construction industry, beneficiaries of SABCAP, the Department of Public Works and similar stakeholders.

He was team leader of the evaluation of USAID's First Urban Project in Botswana. This was a wide-ranging project to develop the local capacity to develop low -income housing and associated infrastructure, as well as land reform matters.

He taught on the subject of monitoring and evaluation of urban projects at the

Bouwcentrum International Education, and has published on the subject. In addition, as Deputy Director of the \$40 million World Bank Lusaka Squatter and Upgrading Project, he established a monitoring unit, and was an active participant in establishing the methodology for the longitudinal (2 year) evaluation of that project (funded by IDRC and the World Bank).

He has a detailed knowledge of the legislative and administrative framework for water services. Until May 2002 he was Program Co-coordinator of the European Union program "Strengthening Local Government in Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces". This provided funds for the provision of infrastructure and capacity building for infrastructure in selected local authorities. It involved detailed assessment of the administrative and financial capacity of municipalities in delivering services to the poor. He is also a program manager of studies in the matter of cost recovery in relation to water projects for the Water Research Commission. He was also actively involved in establishing the first community-based Water Board in South Africa for the Olifants River Catchment area.

He and his firm are undertaking research work in the field of water. Three studies are of particular relevance here: Examples of successful Cost Recovery, for the Water Research Commission, 2002; Cost recovery experience in the amalgamated Municipalities, 2004, for the Water Research Commission, and Cost of Water for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2004. Under Sigodi Marah Martin's contract with DWAF he is also participating in a three year assignment to develop the regulatory system for water services in South Africa.

Mr Martin has conducted workshops with a wide variety of clients. These include community groups (in the preparation of LDOs for the Eastern Gauteng Regional Services Council, Hlogotlo and Koedoesrand TLCs, and the design of a community center at Cyferkuil), Local Government groups, such as the Eastern District Council, North West Province, Local Government stakeholders in Mpumalanga and the Limpopo Provinces, interest groups for the Olifants River Water Board, Lusaka City Council. Mr Martin was involved in many training and workshop activities in Kenya while working of the USAID Small Towns Project. He taught and conducted workshop for senior professionals at the Bouwcentrum International Education, in Tanzania, Indonesia and Thailand. Previously, in Lusaka, the project referred to above pioneered the use of community-based development and engaging stakeholders through interactive workshops.

## **Education**

1997	Higher National Diploma, Association of Arbitrators
1986	LLB (Intermediate) London University
1966	Andrew Grant Research Fellow, Edinburgh College of Art
1965	Dip TP (Town and Country Planning) Edinburgh College of Art
1963	DA (Architecture) Edinburgh College of Art
1960	MA (Architecture)

Cambridge University

**Professional Qualifications and Associations**

- 1965 Member, Royal Institute of British Architects
- 1967 Member, Royal Town Planning Institute
- 1967 Member, Zambia Institute of Architects  
President 1976-1978
- 1972 Member, Zambia Institute of Planners  
Vice-President 1974-1976
- 1993 Member, Institute of Housing of Southern Africa  
Vice Chairman, Gauteng Branch, 1996-1999
- 1994 Member, Association of Chartered Town Planners of South Africa  
Chairman, 1997 - 1998.
- 1995 Fellow, Association of Arbitrators of Southern Africa
- 1996 Member, Institute of South African Architects.
- 1997 Fellow, Association of Arbitrators of Southern Africa
- 1997-1999 Committee Member, Gauteng Institute for Architecture
- 1998 Chairman, Association of Chartered Town Planners in South Africa

**Official Appointments**

- Member, Town and Country Planning Appeals Tribunal, Zambia

Member, Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board,  
Zambia

### **Academic Appointments**

External examiner, MSc Development Studies, McGill University 1977  
External examiner, Newcastle University, M Phil, Housing, 1980  
External examiner, University of the Witwatersrand, BSc (Town and  
Regional Planning)  
External Examiner, University of the Witwatersrand, MSc (Housing).

### **Employment**

#### **1996 – present      Director, Sigodi Marah Martin**

Providing consultancy services in the fields of housing, urban development, local governance, planning and development and the management of water services.

He managed the firm's studies undertaken for the Water Research Commission in 2000, 2003 and 2004, on cost recovery. He also participated in the study for DWAF on the cost of water. He is a lead consultant in the current study on the regulation of water services in South Africa.

He has undertaken evaluations and program reviews in a number of different fields, including the People's Housing Process, The South African Black Contractors Association, six of USAID's Local Government training programs. He has also participated in the establishment of a community based Water Board for the Olifants River catchment area.

He has undertaken substantial work concerning governance in the delivery of infrastructural services. He contributed to the World Bank/USAID study of Fiscal Decentralization in Africa being conducted by NALAD, acting as an advisor to the NALAD team in respect of the Zambia study, and team leader of the process in the case of Ghana and Zimbabwe. He prepared an overview of the process and lessons learned for the World Bank (2000). He assisted in the development of Strategic Plans for Lusaka (1999) and Ndola (2001).

Projects also include planning overview and policy review for the Eastern Gauteng Services Council and planning studies and support for the Lekoa Vaal Transitional Metropolitan Council. He has conducted a study for the Banking Council of South Africa regarding cost recovery problems in respect of mortgages and Local Government rates and services charges, and evaluations of the USAID Black Contractors' assistance program, the USAID Local Government training programs, and the UNDP/USAID People's Housing Process. Recent work includes a Water Research Commission study of successful cost recovery experiences, and an analysis of, and proposals for a rental housing policy in South Africa, for USAID.

Mr Martin is also a Trustee, and Chairperson of the Technical Committee of the Libuyile Community Development Trust, which has capital of \$350,000. It administers a revolving project preparation loan fund and assists communities to prepare and develop housing projects.

#### **1999 – 2002      Program Coordinator: European Union Program**

Heading a team of management consultants appointed by the European Union to strengthen local government in two Provinces of South Africa, working in the national Department of Provincial and Local Government. Funds are divided between infrastructure development and capacity building and training. Beneficiaries include provincial, district and local administrations. The program is planned to take four

years, and has a budget of about \$15 million. It has looked at the powers and functions of different agencies in government and the legislative and administrative framework for the delivery of water services.

**1993-1996 Chief of Party, Community and Urban Services Support Project**

Leading a team of 28 professionals and 14 support staff working from offices in Johannesburg, Durban, East London and Cape Town to develop housing projects. The project interacted with 72 communities with plans to develop about 100 000 houses. Projects supported by CUSSP and already in progress included the presidential projects of Cato Manor, Durban, Duncan Village, East London, and the Serviced Land Project in Cape Town: about 25 000 houses are being developed from these and other CUSSP supported communities. Projects were in nine of the eleven Provinces, and range from those serving the very poor to those in the lower middle income groups. The project included continuous training and capacity building of South African staff in issues regarding housing and community development.

CUSSP was requested to and engaged many consultants to advise the Government and private sector on matters concerning housing and housing finance, and worked closely with the Department of Housing (who seconded a staff member to CUSSP), and Provincial and Local arms of Government. It prepared extensive guidelines in the management and support of low income housing, and documentation of the lessons learned from CUSSP's extensive involvement with the sector. It also commissioned work regarding the assessment of environmental impact of residential development, with special reference to Knysna, and environmental guidelines for use by community facilitators.

In addition to administering the \$18 million CUSSP project Mr Martin served on a number of committees, including the Housing Support Center Task Team in Gauteng; the Black Construction Industry Task Team, and the Water Research Commission's Steering Committee for the On-Site Sanitation Evaluation project.

**1981-1992 Regional Technical Advisor, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Nairobi, Kenya**

A member of a small team of specialist advisers contributing to project development, project management, technical assistance and training in the fields of urban development and housing in East and Southern Africa, within the Regional Office of Housing and Urban Development. The work covered most countries in the region, with particular emphasis on Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Emphasis was on urban management, infrastructure standards, planning and project management systems, cost recovery and affordability.

**1978-1981 Workshop Coordinator, Bouwcentrum International Education Foundation, Rotterdam, The Netherlands**

Conducted and coordinated courses for middle and senior staff from developing countries on housing building and planning, with special emphasis on squatter upgrading and site and service projects. Also prepared and organized or contributed to courses in Bandung (Indonesia), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Bangkok (Thailand). The courses were for 5 months in Rotterdam, and 1 - 3 months elsewhere. Assisted and participated in conferences in Bandung and Arusha.

**1974-1978 Deputy Director, Housing Project Unit, Lusaka City Council**

Responsible for the execution of a \$40 million World Bank funded project, reporting to the Project Director. Staff of about 350 people, serving settlements with a total population of about 100,000; improving a total of about 17,000 houses, building 11,000 new units of self help housing, constructing community facilities and off-site infrastructure.

**1971-1974 Senior, later Chief Architect/Town Planner, National Housing Authority, Zambia**

Responsible to the Chief Executive for all architectural and town planning work of the Authority. Work included preparation of the project proposal for squatter upgrading and site and service to the World Bank, and representing Zambia at the subsequent negotiations; preparation of physical development plans for Kite (pop 240,000) and Kabwe (pop 85,000), housing layouts for site and service schemes (about 24,000 plots in six urban centers), preparing plans for and advising Local Authorities on squatter upgrading projects, appraisal of housing schemes submitted by Local Authorities for Local Sanction, research into aspects of low cost housing and site and service schemes, preparing publicity material and exhibitions to further understanding of, and interest in site and service projects by the public. Directing two films on the subject.

**1971 Assistant Architect/Town Planner, Zambia Housing Board**

Responsible for contract administration, final account, exhibitions and publicizing site and service schemes.

**1970-1971 Junior Partner, Montgomerie Oldfield Kirby and Partners**

Responsible for opening a new office for the practice in Lilongwe, Malawi, and design of Trades Training Institutes, schools and private houses.

**1967-1969 Assistant Architect/Town Planner, Zambia Housing Board**

Responsible for the supervision of several major housing projects, preparation of a master plan for a new town to serve a remote coal mine, designing many small housing scheme throughout Zambia, and research into plot use in low cost housing.

**Before 1967 Architect in offices in Edinburgh and London; Town Planner with Edinburgh Corporation.**

END

# CURRICULUM VITAE

## Mankone Ntsaba

### Personal information

Surname	Ntsaba
Other names	Mankone, Mabataung
Sex	Female
Date of birth	24 November, 1960
Place of birth	Waalmansthal, RSA.
Nationality	South African
ID.	601124 0997 081
Postal address	P. O. Box 66628 Woodhill, 0076 South Africa.
Tel (W)	(012) 800 4292
Fax	(012) 993 0903
Cell	082 773 3426
e-mail	Mankone@mweb.co.za

### Education

1990	MSc.,	Rhodes University
1987	BSc Hons.,	Rhodes University
1983	BSc., (Applied Environmental Science)	National University of Lesotho
1978	Certificate in Basic Draughting	Technician Training School of Lesotho
1977	Matric (COSC)	Lesotho High School

### Other training

"	Proposal selling and performance management for enhanced customer satisfaction	BMI Insight
"	Sensitising for service awareness	BMI Insight
"	Mobilising for service delivery	BMI Insight
"	Empowerment of first line supervisors	Groman Consulting
"	Advanced Leadership Program, CSIR	Groman Consulting /
"	Total Quality Management (TQM)	Groman Consulting
"	Theory of Constraints Institute	Avraham Y Goldraat
"	Management Skills Institute	Avraham Y Goldraat
"	Critical Chain Project Management Training	Avraham Y Goldraat Institute
"	MBA in a nutshell,	New York Institute of Finance
"	Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) Criteria overview,	Groman Consulting
"	Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), examiners course,	Groman Consulting
"	Executive Course in Technology and Development,	Wits University.

## Work Experience

Dates 1999 to date

Institution Tsinde Development Consultants

Position Director

### Duties

- Key Account Management and customer relationships
- Preparation of proposals and tender documents
- Project management

Date 1997 to 1999

Institution Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR),  
Division of Water, Environment and Forest Technology  
(Environmentek)

Position Program Manager; Technology for Development and Capacity  
Building

Main duties Member of the Management Team responsible for;

- the overall management and coordination of activities with a community development component
- planning and coordinating technology development and transfer to poor rural and urban communities
- marketing CSIR technologies to funding and implementing agencies
- ensuring acceptable financial results and performance targets in the area of technology for Development, and other projects operating in areas of high market failure
- designing and coordinating programs of human resources development and training
- Implementing government's human resources development policies in relation to technology transfer

Other tasks Member of the Transformation Task Team, supporting the HR Management Department with recruitment and mentoring as a component of the Employment Equity and Affirmative Action strategy

Member of the broader CSIR Technology for Development Forum, and part of a team facilitating the process of collaboration and integration between the CSIR and the University of Pretoria.

Date 1996 to 1997

Institution CSIR, Environmentek

Position Program Manager; Water Supply and Sanitation

Main duties Overall strategic leadership and direction for the Program, including;

- Management and coordination of projects in water supply, sanitation, waste water treatment, water quality management and water health.
- Budgeting and financial management, including responsibility for financial results and maintenance of performance standards.
- Introduction and management of Quality Projects
- Responsible for career development and performance management of staff
- Key account management and customer relationships
- Marketing and product management
- Managing investment in product development

Other tasks Member of the Strategic Human Resources Management Committee

Date 1993 to 1996

Institution CSIR, Division of Forestry Science and Technology (Forestek)

Position Project Leader

Main duties Part of a team of researchers in the field of Natural Resources Management, and responsible for;

- Proposal generation and execution of projects
- Applied research into the use of natural resources in community development.
- Training and capacity building in natural resources management.

Date 1991 to 1993

Institution University of Transkei

Position Lecturer in Physical Geography

Duties Preparation and delivery of lectures in Geomorphology and Climatology  
 Conducting practicals and field research for students  
 supervising students' projects

Date 1989 to 1993

Institution University of Zululand

Position Lecturer in Physical Geography

Duties Preparation and delivery of lectures in Geomorphology and Climatology  
 Conducting practicals, field research and supervising students' projects

Date 1984 to 1985

Institution Goronyane High School, Thaba-Nchu

Position Teacher

Duties Teaching Geography and Biology

**Languages:** Sesotho, iSiXhosa, iSiZulu and English

**Key projects, publications and presentations (involved as an individual or as a member of a team)**

**2004 Strategy for National Water Quality monitoring and Assessment, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**

**2003 Public Transport plan for the Southern District Municipality, Department of Transport, North West Province**

**2002 Minimum requirements for public participation in the transformation of Irrigation Boards, into Water user Associations Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**

**2002 National Sanitation Program Management Contract, Department of Water Affairs Forestry.**

**2002 Strategic and business planning support, Policy and Legislation Department of Public Transport Roads and Works**

2002 National Coordination of the Masibambane Water Sector Capacity Building Program, Department of Water Affairs / EU and other funders.

2002 Mid-term evaluation of the Bushbuckridge Retail Water Distribution Project, USAID

2001 Assessment of Water Demand Management Technologies in Southern Africa, IUCN

2001 Diagnostic study of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit

2001 Diagnostic study of the Kgalagadi District Municipality, Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit

2001 Monitoring and Assessment Information Strategy, Department of Water Affairs

2001 Evaluation of the Nelspruit Water and Sanitation Concession, Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

2001 Evaluation of Water Conservation and Demand Management technologies in Southern Africa, IUCN

2000 Integrated Water Resources Management, mapping of needs in South Africa, Global Water Partnerships

1999: Capacity Building in the Power Sector of South Africa, report to AFREPREN, Nairobi.

1999: Public participation and scoping, module for EIA training course, National Department of Health

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1997: Social Impact Assessment module for an EIA training course prepared for the Greater Johannesburg Metro.

1995: Community Participation Module. Part of the IDT Consolidation Coordinators course, Work Inc, Cape Town.

1995: Facilitator for a strategic planning workshops for Mzingisi Development Trust, Port Elizabeth.

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