**BRONG AHAFO REGIONAL LEARNING ALLIANCE PLATFORM**

**Report on 2nd Regional Learning Alliance Meeting, November 20, 2013**

*Agenda: Sharing of findings from two rounds of survey on functionality and service levels of water facilities in the Sunyani West District*

The meeting was chaired by the CWSA Regional Director, Mr. E.F. Boateng, and was attended by 26 participants. In his opening remarks, he acknowledged the importance of the agenda for the meeting. He remarked that, the functionality tracking and service monitoring exercise which was being piloted under the CWSA/Triple-S Project came at a time when focus on the rural water sub-sector is beginning to shift from infrastructure provision, towards levels of services provided. According to him, results from the two rounds of surveys undertaken on service monitoring have already generated interesting discussions, for example, on what forms of post-construction support are urgently required. He reiterated the motive behind the learning platform and encouraged participating organisations to come forth and share things of interest with the wider sector stakeholders in the region.

The day’s presentations were delivered in two parts: the first one, delivered by Ben Agbemor of the CWSA/Triple-S Project, focused on the service monitoring framework developed by the CWSA. The presentation discussed the major indicators which were measured during the survey, including functionality of water facilities; service levels; performance of service authorities as well as service providers. This background presentation sought to enable participants appreciate findings from the surveys. The second presentation discussed actual results from the two rounds of data collection on functionality and service monitoring, and was facilitated by Mr. Daniel Nnebeni, an Assistant Planning Officer with the Sunyani West District. He summarized the major findings from the study as follows:

* 43% of the handpumps were fully functional in round 2, compared with 59% in the baseline.
* Non-functional boreholes also reduced from 20% to 12% between the baseline survey and the repeat data collection periods;
* In round 2, the overall performance of WSMTs (SC) on service provider indicators was unsatisfactory, with poorer scores on financial management, composition of WSMTs (SC) and reporting and accountability compared with the baseline;
* As it was in the baseline survey, piped schemes in the district performed better on service level indicators than boreholes in round 2; and
* Like in the baseline, the service authority (DWST/District Assembly) failed to provide adequate support to WSMTs.

He outlined some follow-up actions emanating from the two rounds of data collection as: a) Preparation and revision of district level Annual Action Plan to address some issues identified by the survey; b) Increased budgetary allocation under the District Development Fund and the District Assemblies’ Common Fund to enhance service delivery; c) Sponsorship letters to NGOs to complement erratic and insufficient central government transfers to the district. He mentioned that, through the service monitoring surveys, the district is able to know the state of its water infrastructure (whether working, broken down, being properly managed or abandoned), and has initiated plans to improve service levels of existing facilities.

At plenary, the platform agreed that, subsequent learning meetings, especially those involving Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) should be attended not only by technocrats, but political officer holders as well. This is because, political will at the MMDA level is critical to the implementation of lessons and best experiences gathered during the learning events. Considering the number of privately-owned limited mechanized schemes which were used for commercial purpose in the district, the platform encouraged the district (Sunyani West) to take seriously the issue of water quality monitoring, and also consider involving the Ghana Standards Authority. It was also mentioned that, the DA ought to do more in ensuring that individuals or private organisations that sunk boreholes for public use adopt appropriate management systems. This could help in reducing the burden of frequent request for assistance from the district assembly for breakdown maintenance.

The NGOs/CSOs lamented about the challenges they sometimes face when dealing with district assemblies (not peculiar with Sunyani West). It came out that, some district assemblies keep changing focal/contact persons for projects which are being implemented by NGOs. Thus, in the process of avoiding the frustrations of dealing with different people (some of whom demand money) anytime they visit the districts, they find it more convenient dealing with the communities directly. It was thus agreed that the districts ought to improve the way they relate to their development partners.

Recommendations were made for institutional needs assessment to be conducted for the District Works Department to ascertain why they were not able to perform satisfactorily the roles expected of them. Finally, the role of caretakers in undertaking preventive maintenance was highlighted as a sine qua non in improving the reliability of handpumps. In this regard, the district was implored to invest substantially in training and equipping caretakers in areas/communities where they are not available.

*Compiled by Benjamin Agbemor*