

## Fact Sheet

This fact sheet describes the Direct WSDB Management Model. *This is the most widely applied Water Management Model for small towns with a population ranging between 2,000 and 50,000 in Ghana.* In addition to a general description of the model, the factsheet presents the cases of Abokobi and Pantang, where the model is applied. Finally, the factsheet deals with the main challenges related to the application of the management model.

### Introduction

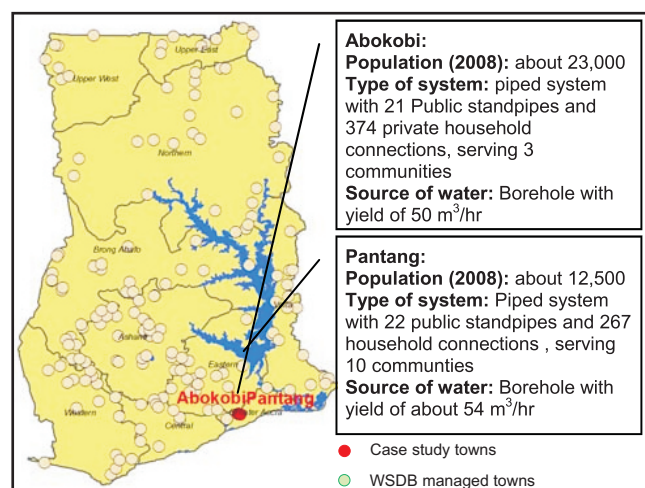
In the late 1980s, Ghana was facing major problems with her supply driven, centrally managed water services. Inspired by international events, including the 1981-1990 Water and Sanitation Decade on Sustainable Rural Water Supply, a series of consultations and meetings was held in Ghana, with the aim of reforming the water sector. In line with the sector restructuring, the National Community Water and Sanitation Programme was launched in 1994. It adopted the Community Ownership and Management (COM) as the Management Model for service delivery to rural water supply within a decentralized governance framework.

Within the general Community Ownership and Management model, various management models for small town and rural point sources have been defined and applied in the Ghana Community Water Sector. The direct Water and Sanitation Development Board (WSDB) management model is one of the most prominent ones in small towns in Ghana.

### The Model

The model consists of an elected WSDB drawn from Watsan Committees, with permanent employed staff responsible for operation and maintenance of the water system. The WATSAN Committees should have 5 members, with at least, two female representatives. Each WATSAN Committee operates a bank account, while the WSDB operates 2 bank accounts: an Operational Account and a Maintenance Account. Signatories to the accounts are the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer of the WSDB.

The WSDB and its hired permanent staff operate and maintain the water supply system entirely by itself. The



main responsibility for the operation is in the hands of a System Manager (SM), appointed by the WSDB to act on its behalf. The SM oversees the operational staff, including the water vendors.

WATSAN Committees are responsible for logistics and maintenance of standpipes within their jurisdiction. Vendors submit revenues to the WATSAN Treasurer of the community in which the standpipe is located on a daily basis. Exercise books are used to record daily meter readings and sales at standpipe. Vendors are paid a commission of 20% of the monthly sales. Deficits are deducted from the commission. The WATSAN Treasurer deposits the collected revenues into the WATSAN Account. The WATSAN Committee transfers monthly revenue to the WSDB account. The WSDB releases 5% of the amount transferred by the WATSAN Committee back to the WATSAN Committee for hygiene and sanitation activities.

Pumping records (time of pumping, water pumped and energy used) are recorded and kept by the pump attendant. Water bills are prepared and submitted to private subscribers on a monthly basis. Monthly financial reports are prepared and submitted to WSDB and copied to the Municipal Assembly (MA) and Municipal Water and Sanitation Team (MWST). The MA, through the MWST, supervises and monitors the WSDB's activities and approves tariffs. The MA carries out auditing of WSDB accounts annually.

### The Pantang and the Abokobi cases

Both Abokobi and Pantang have faced serious water problems owing to the permanent breakdown of boreholes constructed in the late 1980s. After a 4-year period (2002-2006) of planning, and construction, small town water

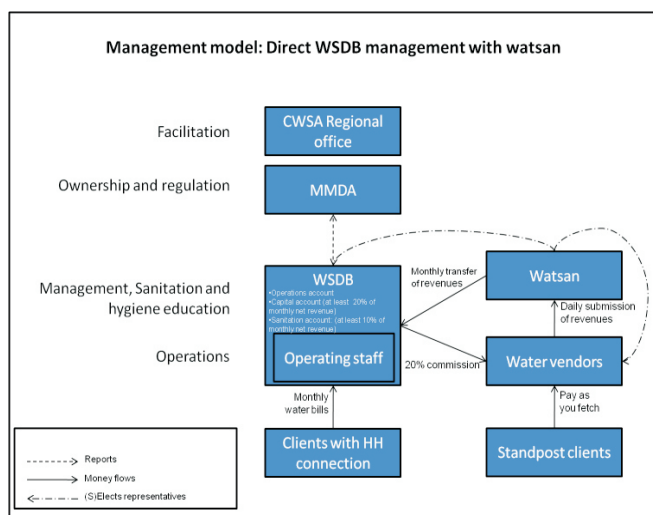


Figure 1: Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders



Figure 2: Oyarifa Community Leaders at a meeting

systems became operational in both cases in 2006. In line with the sector policy, a software consultant facilitated the selection of management models to manage the new water systems by the communities. In both cases, the communities adopted the Direct WSDB management model.

The system in Abokobi covers three communities (Abokobi, Oyarifa and Teiman), has three WATSANS and governed by a WSDB with 13 members. The system in Pantang, which covers 10 communities, has 9 WATSAN Committees and a 15 member WSDB. The representation of women on the WSDBs is 40%. The operational staff consists of System Manager (SM), an account officer, 2 pump attendants, 2 plumbers, water vendors (21 for Abokobi and 22 for Pantang) and 3 security staff.

### Challenges

The use of WATSAN Committees in revenue collection has proved a challenge. It has led to revenue losses because of delays on the part of the WATSAN Treasurer in releasing money to the WSDB and connivance between Vendor and WATSAN Treasurer.

Under this management model, WSDBs have been assigned an important role in the sustainable delivery of water and sanitation services. However, WSDB members are ordinary community members, who lack technical knowledge and skills in the area of water management. This is compounded by the voluntary nature of their work. WSDB members are not paid for the work they do, but

receive only meager allowances. This tends to affect morale of the members.

Operating staff does receive a salary. In the two case studies, however, there is growing discontent among operating staff over the salary, as the salary has remained static over the past two years. Allowing salary adjustments would lead to an upward adjustment in tariff, which will be difficult to accept by the community.

Lack of provision for replacement cost and expansion under this model, undermines the future sustainability of the system.

The WSDB's withdrawal of money from the bank without documentation and knowledge of operational staff, present transparency and accountability concerns.

There is lack of clarity of the role of WSDB and the SM. This creates tension and confusion among members of the WSDB and the SM.

The WSDBs operate as semi-autonomous entities, which manage water on behalf of the MAs. The WSDBs are by this arrangement, not legal entities and have no signed constitutions to guide their work. Therefore they cannot own assets and are liable to manipulation by the MAs.

MAs are required to play an important role in the operations of the model. However, they are yet to fully assume critical roles as auditing, approval of tariffs and monitoring and supervision of the WSDBs.

### Applicability of the Model

This type of management model is applicable to the management of small town water systems with either only standposts, or a combination of standposts and household connections. The Small Towns Sector Policy (O&M Guidelines) recommends this type of management model for settlements with populations between 2,000 and 5,000. Populations of both case study towns have exceeded the threshold.

There is the need for periodic re-training of WSDB members every four years. This should coincide with the election of new WSDB members, in order to equip them with relevant hands-on skills, to enable them to respond to practical challenges in the operation of the system. The critical monitoring role of the MAs over the WSDB has to be guaranteed for the model to work efficiently.

**Key Reference:** The factsheet is based on a case study, written by Philip Francis Ampadu, under the TPP project. The full report can be found on [www.ghana.watsan.net/page/777](http://www.ghana.watsan.net/page/777).

This Fact Sheet has been produced under the Tripartite Partnership (TPP) Project, in collaboration with the RCN Ghana Secretariat. The Resource Centre Network (RCN) Ghana is an institutional partnership of organizations who have committed themselves to improve WASH sector learning, through knowledge development, knowledge management and information sharing/dissemination. For more information, please visit [www.ghana.watsan.net](http://www.ghana.watsan.net). The TPP project seeks to tackle the core problems of weak sector capacity for planning and delivery of WASH services in poor urban areas, through the demonstration of new approaches to pro-poor WASH service delivery in three pilot areas, involving Tripartite Partnerships of NGO, Public and Private sectors. For more information, please visit <http://www.ghana.watsan.net/page/687>