

NATIONAL DRINKING WATER POLICY

A. Preamble

1. The National Drinking Water Policy provides a framework for addressing the key issues and challenges facing Pakistan in the provision of safe drinking water to the people. Drinking water is the constitutional responsibility of the provincial governments and the specific provision function has been devolved to specially created agencies in cities and Town and Tehsil Municipal Administrations under the Local Government Ordinance 2001. Therefore, this policy framework is intended to guide and support the provincial and district governments in discharging their responsibility in this regard. It is expected that the Federal, Provincial, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas Governments will devise their own strategies, plans and programmes in pursuit of this policy.

B. Goal

2. The overall goal of the national drinking water policy is the following;
- a) To ensure safe drinking water to the entire population at an affordable cost in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner.
 - b) To ensure reduction in the incidence of mortality and morbidity caused by water borne diseases.

C. Objectives of the Policy

3. The overall objectives of the policy are outlined below;
- a) To provide a supportive policy and legal framework that facilitates access of all citizens to safe drinking water on a sustainable basis.
 - b) To provide guidelines that will allow consistency and conformity between the drinking water policy and the overall water sector policy, environmental policy, health policy and drinking water quality standards that will facilitate the provision of safe water to all.
 - c) To define an institutional framework within which the sector institutions can more effectively address the challenges they face in the provision of drinking water in all areas of the country.
 - d) To provide a financial framework within which the provision of water supply can be undertaken in a cost-effective, equitable and sustainable manner.
 - e) To identify and facilitate the implementation of a set of key strategies that will help in enhancing access to safe drinking water supply.

- f) To provide a framework within which local communities, women and vulnerable groups can be facilitated to enhance their access to safe drinking water.

D. Policy Principles

- 4. The key policy principles that will be pursued are the following;
 - a) To recognize that access to safe drinking water is the basic human right of every citizen and that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure its provision to all citizens.
 - b) The right to water for drinking takes precedence over rights for water for all other uses such as environment, agriculture, industry etc.
 - c) To recognize the role of the broad range of providers in the sector and provide a supportive policy framework that encourages alternate options through private provision, public-private partnerships, the role of NGOs and community organizations.
 - d) To fashion the role of the state in a manner which allows balance between its functions as a service provider and the authority it must exercise as a regulator.
 - e) To ensure that the existing inequities in the provision of safe drinking water are removed and the needs of the more vulnerable and poor are effectively addressed through adequate financial allocations and provisions of suitable technological options.
 - f) To recognize the key role that women play in the drinking water sector and ensure their participation in decision-making for the sector at all levels.
 - g) To recognize the provision of safe water should be undertaken through a community centered demand driven approach in which the community members are given a key role.
 - h) To introduce financial sustainability in the drinking water sector through levying appropriate user charges, cost recovery and cross-subsidization for different segments of the population.
 - i) Water treatment will be an integral part of all drinking water supply schemes.

E. Key Targets

- 5. While each provincial government and district government will pursue its own targets, the overall aim of the Government will be to facilitate the attainment of the

targets specified in the Medium Term Framework and the Millennium Development Goals for the country as a whole. The specific targets entail the following;

- a) To provide safe drinking water to 93% of the population by 2015 thereby raising the current coverage by almost 30% for the existing population and ensuring that the additional population is also provided access.
- b) The technical specification of schemes will be based on the provision of a minimum of 20 liters per capita per day for rural households and 40 liters per capita per day for urban areas.
- c) To provide at least one hand pump or spot source for every 250 persons.
- d) To establish district and tehsil level water filtration plants by 2007.
- e) To establish water treatment plants in all urban areas by the year 2015
- f) To ensure that water quality standards are approved and a system of surveillance, testing, monitoring and disseminating information regarding water quality is in place by 2007.

F. Key Policy Instruments and Strategies

6. A host of policy instruments and strategies will be used to achieve the objectives of the drinking water policy. The key strategic thrusts of the policy will be as follows;

6.1 Targeting Strategy

All municipalities will adopt a demand led approach in providing access to safe water to ensure that scarce resources are properly utilized and ownership and sustainability of schemes is ensured over the long-term.

Priority will be accorded to un-served and under-served areas, disadvantaged areas, brackish water zones and those areas where there is shortage of sweet water in the underground aquifers.

Those areas will be especially targeted where women have to walk more than 0.5 kilometres to acquire access to safe drinking water.

The responsibility for provision of water to urban slums and *katchi abadis* will be undertaken by the municipal authorities in whose jurisdiction these areas are located.

The Federal Government will develop special action plans on an emergency basis with special allocations for areas which are hit by a natural calamity such as floods, droughts and earthquakes, etc.

6.2 Legislative Strategy

The constitutional roles and responsibilities for the water sector will be respected and followed and institutional roles and responsibilities will be consistent with the provisions of the Local Government Ordinance 2001 and the devolution framework in ensuring access to safe drinking water.

To frame a broad policy frame work at the national level which encourages and supports provincial and district governments to design and implement policies which are in-keeping with the existing capacities and strengths of institutions.

To develop a framework which allows the participation of the private sector, encourages public-private partnerships and the role of NGOs in the sector.

To develop a realistic framework for community participation in the sector and ensure that their inclusion helps to build more effective scheme identification, implementation, operations and maintenance systems.

A Safe Drinking Water Act will be enacted to ensure adherence to technical and supply standards for municipal water supply and hold municipal bodies accountable to the general public. The Act will also declare “Safe drinking water” a fundamental human right.

Appropriate legislation will be enacted to ensure compliance with the Pakistan Drinking Water Quality Standards and to affix appropriate penalties for any institution or individual not adhering to the standards.

The Drinking Water Quality Standards should be formally adopted by the provincial governments through appropriate legislation and proper measures undertaken to ensure its enforcement.

There will be a regular review and updating of the drinking water policy after every five years by a committee constituted specially for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of its guidelines, their efficacy and continued relevance to the changing situation in the country.

6.3 Protection of Water Sources

Regular monitoring of water sources to ensure the protection of water sources in the country.

Preserve and protect surface and groundwater resources which offer sustainable sources of supply for local communities in both urban and rural areas.

Encourage and support rainfall harvesting schemes for augmenting municipal water supply.

6.4 Institutional Strategy

The Federal Government will be responsible for establishing overall guiding policy and legislative frameworks for the drinking water sector at the national level and be responsible for special initiatives and allocation of special funds to ensure coverage in underserved and disadvantaged areas.

To focus on the role of the state as both a service provider and regulator to ensure that water quality standards are properly articulated, maintained and enforced.

The Provincial and Area Governments will be responsible for establishing policy guidelines and legislation for the drinking water sector at the provincial level and be responsible for special initiatives and allocation of special funds to ensure coverage in underserved and disadvantaged areas.

The Provincial Government will be responsible for determining the institutional responsibilities at the provincial level for the water sector. The institutional roles and responsibilities for water supply will be clearly stated and assigned in keeping with the human, financial and technical capacity of those institutions.

All Provincial and Area Governments will develop medium term plans for the drinking water sector in keeping with the Medium-Term Development Framework and the Millennium Development Goals in conjunction with relevant municipal authorities to guide and steer the future developments in the sector.

The Public Health Engineering Department will be strengthened in provinces and areas where the responsibility for drinking water still rests with them.

The TMAs will be encouraged to make use of the LGO provision that allows for a variety of “contracting in” and “contracting out” arrangements for more effective service provision through the civil society and private sector organizations using performance-based contracts. These arrangements can potentially be used for design and implementation, water testing, operation and maintenance, collection of water charges, awareness building, etc.

The TMAs will be encouraged to adopt a service provider orientation to its clientele. It will develop an approach which integrates community engagement, demand assessment and service provision and marketing in order to effectively enhance its professional credibility and meet the needs of the people within its jurisdiction.

Capacity Building programmes will be designed to strength institutions which are lacking in capacity such as the Town and Tehsil Municipal Administrations, the Provincial Environmental Protection Agencies, the Local Government and Rural Development Departments, etc. In order to strengthen their capacity further, the

Public Health Engineering Department will be merged with the TMAs in all provinces except Balochistan by 2010.

The planning, design, implementation and operations of water systems will ensure a decision making role of the intended beneficiaries, who should be treated as partners rather than passive recipients of development;

To ensure that community organizations the planning, implementation technological choices and supply specifications are determined through close participation with the users, especially in rural areas where the participation of women is critical to ensure effective use and sustainability of water supply systems.

High performing municipalities will be given special acknowledgement by instituting a system of performance grants and rewards for the institutions and the individuals.

6.4 Technical Strategy

- Promote effective rehabilitation and efficiency improvements in existing water supply systems, through justifiable investments, significant reductions in non-revenue water, increased water metering and other initiatives.
- Technical assistance will be provided to the provincial and area governments for the preparation of appropriate technical guidelines which can be subsequently disseminated to all TMAs and other water sector agencies.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be developed for planning, design, implementation and operations and maintenance for the various categories of water supply schemes. This will ensure adherence to technical standards and eliminate the huge concerns with regards to poor and inadequate water supply networks.
- The drinking water system will not be separated from the existing system which provides domestic water supply. The quality of water supplied through the domestic system will adhere to drinking water quality standards.
- Appropriate and cost-effective technology will be used to ensure that the local government resources are used optimally and that the systems are easy to design and build and easy to maintain by the local communities and/or the concerned local governments.
- Special care should be taken to use materials and parts of good quality in constructing drinking water schemes. Special attention will be made to ensure that pipes with standard specification will be used and rusted pipes will be replaced.

- A survey will be undertaken of all existing functioning and non-functioning schemes to determine which of the schemes can be rehabilitated. Priority will be given to those schemes which can be rehabilitated.
- A minimum distance will be ensured to separate water mains and sewerage lines to avoid contamination of drinking water supply.
- Water filtration plants will be established by the government in a phased programme beginning with installation at the district and Tehsil head quarters in phase I and in each Union Council in phase II.
- Low cost technological options will be provided to ensure water treatment options in both urban and rural areas.

6.5 Operation and Maintenance Strategy

- The responsibility for the operations and maintenance of all drinking water schemes in urban areas will be given to the Water and Sanitation Agencies and Town Municipal Administrations.
- The responsibility for the operations and maintenance of mechanized schemes in rural areas will rest with the TMA or the provincial government. However, the community will be given responsibility for monitoring and surveillance of the scheme.
- The responsibility for the operations and maintenance of small un-mechanized schemes in rural areas will be devolved to the intended beneficiaries. These communities will be responsible for routine maintenance and operations. However, in case of a major breakdown of the scheme, the TMA will be responsible for scheme rehabilitation.
- Women will be especially consulted when determining the operations and management arrangements for un-mechanized schemes in rural areas.
- Capacity building programs for community organizations will be implemented in collaboration with NGOs for improving the local level capacity for operation and maintenance of schemes.

6.6 Drinking Water Quality Standards

- Drinking water quality standards will be developed for Pakistan by the Ministry of Health using the World Health Organization's drinking water quality guidelines.
- The Pakistan Drinking Water Quality Standards will be approved by the Cabinet

and enforced through an act of Parliament before 2007.

- The Drinking Water Quality Standards will come into immediate force in both urban and rural areas and the agencies responsible for the provision of water supply will ensure that the quality of water supplied through government financed schemes does not fall below the standards at any given time.
- Appropriate action will be undertaken to penalize any vendor or supplier found to be providing water quality lower than the standard prescribed in accordance with the existing legislation.

6.7 Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance

- The provincial government will establish a monitoring and surveillance framework and system guidelines to ensure that drinking water quality conforms with required standards.
- The responsibility for monitoring and surveillance of water quality will rest primarily with the Ministry of Environment for water at the source.
- The sector agencies responsible for drinking water supply like the WASA's and Town Municipal Administration in urban areas and Tehsil Municipal Administrations in rural areas will be responsible for ensuring that the water quality adheres to the prescribed standards.
- The Pakistan Quality Control Authority and PCRWR will be responsible for ensuring that the bottled water marketed in Pakistan adheres to the required standards.
- Any private vendor of water will be responsible for ensuring that the water supplied for drinking purposes adheres to the approved water quality standards.
- Random testing and surveillance of water quality will be undertaken of water from different sources including government schemes in urban areas, wells, hand pumps in rural areas, bottled water, private vendors, etc by the PCRWR, Ministry of Environment and PQCA to determine the quality of water from different sources.
- Water testing laboratories will be established at the District level.
- Community activists will be involved in water surveillance and monitoring and will be trained in the use of water testing kits and will be provided kits for each scheme.

6.8 Gender Strategy

- Special efforts will be made by all provider agencies particularly the TMAs in rural areas to ensure that both men and women are consulted in scheme identification, implementation and operation and maintenance.
- Special focus will be placed on gender training programs for all tiers of local government staff, TMAs, Local Government Staff and EPA so that they are able to respond in a sensitive manner to the gender differentiated needs in the drinking water sector.
- Special efforts will be made to recruit and induct women in TMAs, EPA and other relevant agencies to ensure that the needs of women clients are addressed.
- To ensure the representation of female councilors in all review and decision making forums regarding drinking water supply at the district, Tehsil and Union Council tiers.

6.9 Communication and Dissemination Strategy

- The Ministry of Environment will be responsible for disseminating information on drinking water quality standards through articles in the national press, leaflets, newsletters and dissemination of information to schools, through NGOs, civil society organizations, Community Citizens Boards and community organizations, etc.
- At the Federal Level the PCRWR and PSQCA will periodically publish reports in the national press and provide information on the quality of bottled water and also inform the relevant enforcing authority for appropriate action.
- At the provincial level, the approved drinking water policy will be widely disseminated to municipal institutions, civil society, community organizations and users. In order to undertake this effectively, the province may consider putting in place a coordinating and steering mechanism with the participation of key stakeholders.
- Regular policy dialogue will be facilitated between all tiers of government and key stakeholders on key issues and challenges, awareness building, experience sharing and dissemination of good practices.
- A proper system of dissemination of the information of the water quality of all sources will be developed by the providing agency. The provincial government and EPA will be responsible for coordinating and developing a system of information dissemination.

- Each water source and water facility from which people are drawing water for drinking purposes will be marked to indicate whether its water quality conforms to the physical, chemical and bacteriological standards prescribed for drinking.
- A system of colour coding will be devised and indicating clearly through a colour code if it is fit for human or animal consumption or not. The green code will indicate water which is fit for drinking and the red code will indicate its unfitness for human consumption. Different shades of red will indicate the level of danger for human and animal health.
- Civil society organizations and community activists will participate in information dissemination and raising awareness about water sector issues, water testing and quality issues.
- Best Practices regarding successful initiatives in the drinking water sector will be widely disseminated and shared and will be used to enhance the performance in the sector.

6.10 Financial Strategy

- Target achievement of full financial sustainability in urban water supply development. The charging system should ensure appropriate subsidies to poorer communities.
- Provide rural water supply and sanitation services at affordable rates.
- There will be no charge for drinking water only the cost of delivering it to the consumer.
- The Federal Government will provide additional financial resources and create special funds to ensure the provision of water to the un-served and under-served areas.
- All Provincial Governments, AJK and Northern Areas Government will identify the resource allocation required for achieving full coverage in the provision of safe drinking water to the entire population.
- Donor financing for the sector will be undertaken in a proactive and coordinated manner in which the government is in the lead in defining the types of investments that are required in each province in keeping with the MTRF and the MDGs. For this purpose, each provincial government will develop a financing strategy which will clearly identify its resource needs and financing plan.
- The Provincial Governments will provide adequate financial allocations to the Tehsil Municipal Administration to ensure that the specified targets for coverage can be addressed.

- The current system of tying provincial transfers to the Tehsils/TMAs to district population and on the state of development in the district will be revised in light of the MDG commitments.
- The Districts Governments will ensure that drinking water schemes will be given the highest priority in the allocation of funds to the Citizen Community Boards at the local level.
- The provision of urban water supply will be provided on the basis of full cost recovery for operation and maintenance.
- The government will follow an approach of full cost recovery in the sector as a whole but will consider a differentiation approach which will include full cost recovery, partial cost recovery, subsidization and cross-subsidization to achieve financial sustainability in the sector.
- The TMAs will introduce a system for operations and maintenance on full-cost recovery to maintain the water supply system in a sustainable way. However the cost for major breakdown will be paid by the providing public sector authority.
- The current tariff for both residential and commercial users will be revised to ensure that the operational costs of the municipal entities are fully met.
- The providers will be encouraged to promote metering of water consumption to discourage the indiscriminate use of water.
- The implementation of professional system for billing and collection will be encouraged through a host of options such as through strengthening the TMAs, outsourcing to the private sector, community-based system of collection, etc.
- Systems of performance grants will be encouraged to reward those institutions and individuals who have been able to meet performance milestones and achieve the specified targets.
- The capacity of service providers in the area of financial management, budgeting, audit and accounting, revenue collections will be strengthened.

6.11 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

- At the Federal Level, the Ministry of Environment will be responsible for monitoring the overall coverage in the drinking water sector at the national level. It will obtain figures from the Planning and Development Departments at the provincial level on the basis of which it will produce an annual report on the “State of Drinking Water in Pakistan”.

- At the provincial level, the Local Government Department will be responsible for monitoring the coverage of drinking water supply in rural areas and the WASAs will be responsible for the urban areas. The overall coordinating responsibility will be given to the provincial Planning and Development Department.
- The TMAs will initiate the establishment of internal as well as external systems for monitoring and evaluations. They will follow professional protocols for annual work planning, identify key progress indicators and conduct effective monitoring and evaluation functions on a regular basis.
- The specific targets and achievements of TMAs will be displayed on bulletin boards outside their offices to inform the public of proposed plans and achievements. In addition, the TMAs will encourage forums in which citizens and community members can participate to provide regular feedback on TMA performance.
- The Federal Government will ensure that annual surveys are conducted to assess the progress in the achievement of the overall national goals and targets in the drinking water sector. The Pakistan Integrated household Survey will be the main instrument for assessing performance at the national level.
- The provincial governments will conduct third party surveys with provincial and district level resolution to assess the coverage to safe water, conduct water quality surveys and assess the extent to which treatment facilities have been provided.

Research Strategy

- Special efforts will be undertaken to pilot test new approaches and innovative ideas and arrangements in the drinking water sector, especially those which help to improve access, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
- Where these experiments are successful they will be widely disseminated and plans will be made to up scale and replicate them at the national level.