

# DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS OF WATER KIOSKS IN ZAMBIA

## 1.0 Acronyms and Abbreviations

CUs	Commercial Utilities
DTF	Devolution Trust Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NWASCO	National Water Supply and Sanitation Council
PKOs	Private Kiosk Operators
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation

## 1.1 Introduction

In line with the **vision**<sup>1</sup> of the Government of the Republic of Zambia for the water sector reform, the urban poor who are found in informal settlements (which have usually been termed as illegal settlements) have also been considered through the water kiosks initiative. Water kiosks are simply communal water points in a given community.

In nearly all urban centers in the country, water supply currently serves those that are living in housing units that have piped water and those that are able to provide themselves with the expensive piping materials to connect their housing units to the water provision network. This limits the availability of safe and clean water to a few households that are able to buy pipes for the initial connections (which may be several kilometers of pipelines), and also sustain the monthly payment of the water charges. The poorer households in peri-urban and rural areas obtain their domestic water from traditional shallow wells which may not provide safe and clean water. Under the water kiosks scheme, these shallow wells are deepened, cleaned and maintained by a private operator or a water committee.

In summary, the water kiosks initiative falls under the **DTF**<sup>2</sup>, established under NWASCO by a statutory instrument based on the WSS Act of 1997. The DTF focuses on service provision to the urban poor thereby promoting low cost technology. Emanating from this structure, Water Kiosks are an appropriate instrument to reach the MDGs for the urban poor.

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<sup>1</sup> The WSS sector shall be developed to improve the quality of life and productivity for all people by ensuring an equitable provision of an adequate quantity and quality of water and sanitation services at acceptable cost and on sustainable basis

<sup>2</sup> Whose procedures reinforce the role of the CUs in the service provision for the urban poor

## **2.0 Objectives**

Among the many and varied objectives of the water kiosks initiative depending on a community set up and culture, key universal objectives are as outlined below:-

- To enable the peri-urban and rural WSS communities accept and recognize their role as owners and be responsible for maintenance of the water kiosks facilities;
- To provide safe and clean drinking water to the urban and rural poor.

## **2.1 Management**

The low cost technologies (water kiosks), promoted through the DTF are set up with the participation of the local population and operated by a Private Kiosk Operator (PKO) under a contract closely supervised by the CU. The CUs control the tariff so that PKOs do not charge more than the fixed tariff. The PKO carries out maintenance and ensures that the kiosk is kept clean at all times.

Linking water kiosks to the main water supply network automatically guarantees that the poor will receive the same quality of water as everyone else on the network. At the end of it all, it's the CUs that ensure the sustainability of the system.

On the other hand if the system is not managed well, access to different water sources by the consumers may cause laxity among themselves to support any of the water kiosks, a fact that may cause kiosks to remain unattended when broken down. Those being served by desire to have piped water supply, without understanding the inherent investment and operating costs.

## **2.2 Existence**

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Detailed information on the existence and numbers of established water kiosks may be obtained from NWASCO. Evidence on the ground indicates that water kiosks exist and are operational in the Copperbelt, Eastern and Southern Provinces.

## **3.0 CONCLUSION**