

Report:



Water Assessment Mission to Afghanistan

January-February 2002

Part E: Structure of Water and Sanitation Management in Afghanistan

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It should be noted that the contents of this report represent the personal opinions of the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the International Water Academy or InterConsult.

Oslo. 26/2/02

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1. Afghan Governmental Authorities

MINISTRY OF WATER AND POWER

The Ministry of Water and Power has responsibility for:

- mapping, monitoring and management of surface water and groundwater resources
- design and construction of all major irrigation schemes
- design and construction of dams and reservoirs for irrigation and agriculture
- design and construction of deep wells and tubewells for irrigation and agriculture
- regulation of activities related to surface and groundwater according to Afghanistan's water law
- monitoring of surface water flows via a (inoperative) network of 144 river gauging stations in 5 main river basins. The network has not been active for over 20 years. Flow measurement was typically carried out by impeller flowmeters.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

Urban water supply is the remit of the Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage (CAWSS) which sorts under the Ministry of Public Works. CAWSS do not appear to have any strategic plan for Kabul's water supply, although such a plan was developed in 1978 with the assistance of a Canadian Consultant (Eng. Salem, ICRC 27/1/02).

Water supply and sewerage to the Microrayon area of Kabul is the responsibility of the Microrayon Maintenance Department, a separate department belonging to the Ministry of Public Works.

Central Authority for Water Supply and Sanitation (CAWSS)

CAWSS' mandate is for urban water supply within the areal limits of the Master Plan of the city, and also for any piped sewerage. The 11 cities for which CAWSS has had a historical responsibility are:

Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Ghazni, Herat, Kandahar, Qala-e-Naw (Badghis), Qalat (Zabul), Kunduz, Mehtarlam (Laghman) and Shiberghan (Jawzjan)

Additionally, CAWSS also seem to have acquired responsibility for:

Charikar (Parwan), Taluqan (Takhar), Sharan (Paktika – have taken over a former NGO system), Gardez (Paktia) and Khost (Paktia).

CAWSS employs, in total, 579 staff, of whom some 350 are based in Kabul. Of these, 65 were women prior to the Taliban period, but now, no women are employed. CAWSS state that they are taking active steps to re-employ former female staff.

Within Kabul, former Soviet complexes are typically not the responsibility of CAWSS. For example, the Microrayons are managed by the Microrayon Maintenance Department, also a part of the Ministry of Public Works. The Polytechnic University, the former Soviet Embassy and the Technikum (Chelsetoon) complex also have separate systems.

The President of CAWSS, Mr Najibullah Patan, has one Deputy president and one Secretary. All communication between the CAWSS organisational structure and the President is passed via the Secretary. The Secretary officiates over a Secretariat comprising 7 staff.

Beneath the Secretary are a number of Departments, each in turn comprising several Sections:

1. *Planning Department – 9 persons. Responsible for planning of activities and budgets for activities on a 1-year planning cycle. No planning beyond a 1 year horizon seems to exist.*
 - Section for Financial Planning
 - Section for Accounting Planning
 - Section for Project Assessment
 - Foreign and Political Section (liaison with NGOs and overseas collaboration)
2. *Engineering Department – 37 people. Office based department largely dealing with technical planning and design.*
 - Section for Survey and Investigation
 - Section for Water Supply
 - Section for Sewerage
 - Section for Estimation
 - Section for Mechanical and Electrical Engineering
 - Section for Construction
 - Section for Scientific Investigation and Research (includes laboratories)
3. *Department of Pipe Production. CAWSS formerly established a 3.5 million USD factory for production of concrete sewerage pipes. Only 2-3 km were ever installed, before the factory was destroyed around 1992 in the Mujihaddin wars. Some pipe is still stored at the factory site. 3 persons are employed in the Department to maintain the pipe store.*
4. *Department of Accounting – 53 people.*
 - Salary Section
 - Beneficiary (i.e. Water Fees) Section
 - Balance Section
 - Goods and Equipment Section
 - Stores Section
5. *Department of Administration – 8 people*
 - Section of Employees
 - Section for Promotion
6. *Department of Monitoring and Control – 3 people*
 - Function unclear
7. *Department of Services – 11 persons. Manages service sector, including transport, although currently CAWSS have no vehicles..*
8. *Workshop Department – 7 persons. Manages some equipment left behind by OXFAM.*
9. *Department for Water Supply of Kabul City – 52 staff plus some 210 temporary workers. These are the people who actually work on the city network.*
 - Afshar Project (based at CAWSS main office)
 - Logar Project (based at CAWSS main office)
 - Water Supply Zones 1 to 6 (based at offices elsewhere in city)
10. *Department of Construction*
11. *Department of Provinces*

Each of the Provincial offices has a structure reflecting that above, However, as contact between Kabul and many of the regional offices is almost non-existent, the structure within the provinces is highly unclear.

CAWSS had a turnover of 12 billion Afghanis (340,000 USD) in 2001. 30% of the income typically arrives in the form of water fees, 70% as direct subsidy from the Ministry of Public Works.

During the past 8 months staff did not receive salary and typically finish early (1 pm) to work in secondary employment. On 7th February 2002, 1 month's salary was paid to staff.

CAWSS currently occupies a block in Microrayon, rented from the Ministry of Public Works. It is in a very bad state of repair and decor, with little electricity, sporadic water, no telecommunications, and almost no heating. The former library was destroyed by a rocket, and the room is still open to the elements via the resulting hole in the exterior wall. There are no computer facilities.

The above information is largely derived from interviews with senior CAWSS staff on 3/2/02 and 9/2/02.

MINISTRY OF RURAL REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry has several Departments, including those for Social Issues, Planning, Education etc. Rural water supply is the remit of the Ministry's Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Department (RRD). The Department is currently largely funded by UNICEF. The Department has responsibility for all deep, semi-deep and shallow wells and boreholes providing potable water in rural areas (i.e. areas outside of urban Master Plans), including many rural towns and some suburbs of Kabul. The Department has no responsibility for irrigation water. The Department has representatives in each province, and employ some 70 people, including engineers, hydrogeologists and hydrologists. It also has 5 drilling rigs, of which one is suited for deep wells.

RRD is active in designing deep wells and networks for parts of Kabul City outside of the Master Plan (Districts 11 and 15), where shallow groundwater is salty. As an emergency measure RRD is also drilling 100 shallow water supply boreholes in Kabul City, both within and without the area of the city's Master Plan.

RRD also have a structure for maintenance of rural handpumps, such that it can (in theory) take over maintenance of wells and boreholes sunk by NGOs, subject to agreement.

MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRY

Ministry of Mines and Industry (MMI) have responsibility for:

- groundwater investigation and survey, especially of "deep" groundwater
- hydrogeological mapping
- strategic plans for optimal exploitation of resources. Such plans are, however, rather focussed on Kabul and, to a lesser extent Mazar-e-Sharif.
- Afghanistan's (inoperative) observation well network.

MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION

This Ministry has not been visited or mapped during the current survey. In addition to irrigation, it is believed that its mandate may extend to land drainage of waterlogged areas.

MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities usually have responsibility for surface water drainage and solid waste disposal. In some cases, there may be involvement in water supply, although the exact mandate boundary here is unclear.

MINISTRIES AND POLITICAL FACTIONS

Donors and NGOs need to be aware that, in the current interim administration, different Ministries have been awarded to different factions of the “Allied” government. For example, all leading staff in the Ministry of Public Works belong to the Monarchist Faction, and the Ministry of Planning to the Hazara faction of the Northern Alliance. The key Ministries of Water & Power and Mines & Industry belong to the mainstream Tadjik Northern Alliance faction.

Thus, it is likely that competition may arise between Ministries for control of water resources and supply, in the form of self-motivated “mandate creep”. Individual Ministries may also have interests in encouraging NGOs to work in specific regions (e.g. the Planning Ministry has encouraged NCA to work in the Bamyan area). Of course, geographical interests may coincide with genuine humanitarian interests, but NGOs should be aware of becoming tools of one particular political faction.

2. United Nations

HABITAT

Within the UN system, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS), also known as Habitat, plays a leading role in urban water supply. The main contacts in HABITAT are :

- Samantha Reynolds (Chief Technical Advisor, Afghanistan): samantha@undpafg.org
- Eng. Sattar Orya (previously employed in Kabul Water Supply Dept.)

HABITAT have offices in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar and Mazar.

UNICEF

UNICEF (contact: Aung Chen in Islamabad) play a leading role in support of rural drinking water supply and sanitation.

UNICEF co-ordinate the national Water Supply and Sanitation Working Group (which deals both with urban and rural water supply and sanitation). The next meeting is in Kabul on 18th March at 09:00. Regional groups for Northern, Western, Southern, Eastern and Central Afghanistan also meet in the main regional centres. The Central Working Group focuses heavily on Kabul’s water supply, and is co-ordinated by Action Contre la Faim, where the main contact is Bertrand Brequeville (fax: 051-4431984).

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO)

In the field of water supply for irrigation, FAO is the leading UN agency. FAO also co-ordinate a Land and Water Resource Development Group which meets regularly.

3. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

MAIN INTERNATIONAL NGOS

Amongst the main international NGOs historically active in the field of urban water supply are:

- Oxfam (together with HABITAT rehabilitated the Logar network, Timmins 1996). Still have some presence in the water sector.
- Solidarités (from 1993/94 they rehabilitated the Afshar network, Timmins 1996). Have now essentially pulled out of involvement in Kabul’s water supply.
- CARE (rehabilitated the Nasaji network of Kabul [Timmins 1996], and currently running the Alaudin network)
- DACAAR (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees) have historically worked on rehabilitation of tubewells in Ghazni (a long time ago) and Jalalabad. Nowadays DACAAR concentrate on rural areas and rural towns. In the context of rural towns, they see rehabilitation of dug wells as the way forward.
- ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), who have implemented a handpump/tubewell program, and a latrine improvement program in the 1990s. They continue to assist with spare parts and maintenance to the Afshar wellfield, they implement peripheral semi-rural networks in Kabul, they have plans to extend the District 11 network into the area

north of Khair Khana, to implement a new reservoir for Khair Khana and to drill two new wells at Afshar (Eng. Salem, ICRC 27/1/02).

FUTURE ROLE OF NGOS IN AFGHANISTAN

During meetings with a number of government departments and ministries, a clear message has been delivered. The new government has a low opinion of the continued poorly regulated activities of some NGOs. Several Ministries (notably the Ministry of Water and Power and MRRD) have expressed a clear desire to “control” and “instruct” NGOs and force them to conform to planning and water laws. The approach within such Ministries is at present confrontational rather than reconciliatory.

International and Afghan NGOs have been guilty of implementing water projects in ignorance of Afghan water law and without consultation with relevant government agencies. During the Taliban period, this attitude may have been a necessity. At present, at a time when the Afghan interim administration requires support, such an approach is difficult to justify. Extreme cases have been observed where employees of the water authority CAWSS have been refused entrance by International NGOs to their own waterworks premises in Kabul.

The international community has expressed a willingness to support the Afghanistan State and its civil service. Continued uncritical support of the NGO community can in some cases serve to undermine this objective.

The Afghan NGO community has historically been seen as a network of idealistic groups, co-operating with each other in dividing projects amongst themselves according to donor, geographic area and sector. However, the Afghan NGO community is becoming more aware that their activities also have a business aspect. This may be no bad thing and, in time, the NGOs may evolve into a much-needed community of private sector consultants and contractors working for, and regulated by, the public sector. Alternatively, the current semi-official co-ordination meetings of NGOs to avoid geographical, sectorial and donor overlap, may also be seen as stifling competition, and such a co-ordinated community could easily evolve into a cartel. Donor agencies such as NCA need to recognise this possibility and take steps to audit partner NGO procedures and encourage competition.

4. International Banks

KFW BANK

Under terms of financial co-operation agreed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the recipient developing country, KfW finances, on behalf of the German Government, investment and project-related consultancy services to expand economic, social and industrial infrastructure, while protecting the environment and natural resources.

KfW has a history of involvement in Kabul’s water supply and has financed the development of the Afshar wellfield in the 1970s (KfW 2002). Their current program of activity vis-à-vis CAWSS in Kabul seeks the following objectives:

1. In the short term: bring all three wellfields back into operation and improve disinfection
2. In the medium term: leakage detection and repair
3. Placement of public standpipes.
4. Introduction of a sustainable billing system for water use, possibly with implementation of water metering.
5. Long term: extension of existing networks.
6. The future development of CAWSS as an economically viable water operator.

WORLD BANK

At the time of writing this report, World Bank has an urban water supply assessment unit in Afghanistan. World Bank have already recognised the importance of:

- (a) institutional strengthening at CAWSS
- (b) consideration of other provincial cities, in addition to Kabul.

5. *Payment for Water Services*

There is confusion as to how water is paid for in Afghan cities.

- Operators of Afshar wellfield, employed by the Kabul Water Supply Department of CAWSS, state that water has essentially been supplied free since 1995. Before this date, an annual fee of around 15-16,000 Afs. was charged.
- According to staff at Microrayon, there is a general charge for water and sewage utilities of 100,000 Afs/year flat rate (= 200 Rp = 3 USD) per apartment. Having 9500 apartments, this fee thus generates c. 30,000 USD per year. This fee goes directly to the State Treasury. The State then provides the water authority with a subsidy which funds staff salaries, electrical fees, maintenance etc.
- According Eng. Orya (HABITAT, 27/1/02), there used to be a quarterly billing system prior to 1992 in all cities, being paid directly to CAWSS. This was either a flat rate (depending on diameter of pipe connection) or a metered rate corresponding to 7.5 Afs per m³. During the Mujihaddin period most metres were removed and there was billing chaos. Currently, consumers should pay either (i) a flat rate corresponding to 900 Afs./year for a half-inch connection, or (ii) a metered rate of 3400 Af/m³ if a metre exists. These are now paid to the Central State, which subsidises CAWSS.
- According to Eng. Jamil (Balkh Water Supply Dept., 30/1/02), the fee for water in Mazar-e-Sharif is currently 10,000 Afs/month (=20 Rp = 0.3 USD) per household and is often not paid. The fees come directly to the finance section of the Water Supply Department. The Department's total monthly income from water fees is 4,000,000 Afs = 8,000 Rp = 130 USD. Fee income is supplemented by government subsidies.
- Water in Charikar is stated to be essentially free of charge (Eng. Ehsanullah, NPO, 13/2/02)

The above statements, though varying, do confirm that the water payment system is chaotic, that there is difficulty in collecting fees and that the size of fees does not generate sufficient revenue to support anything approaching a modern water supply system.

The size of fee reported (as little as 900 Afs/year is a commonly cited figure) can be compared with the gas rate charged in Mazar of 300,000 Afs/month flat rate for an unlimited supply of gas to a household (Eng. Mirwais, NPO Mazar, 29/1/02).