



## WATER SERVICES REGULATORY BOARD

*Ensuring Access to Quality Water Services for All*



## Enhancing consumer participation in water service delivery through Water Action Groups



WASREB

# Vision

To be a Model Regulator for Water Services

# Mission

To Regulate the Provision of Water Services to Ensure Universal Access



# **The Water Action Groups (WAGs)**





## About the Water Action Groups

Water Action Groups are local community based organizations made up of citizens, who have volunteered to address issues which affect consumers of water services. Water Action Groups operate as an extended arm of the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB), under whose mandate consumer protection lies.

The goal of Water Action Groups is to ensure that consumers' views are taken into account on matters related to water service provision, in line with the objectives of the water sector. They are meant to facilitate improved understanding of the roles and obligations of consumers and sector institutions.

WASREB has appointed and trained Water Action Groups in four regions. These are Nairobi (area covered by Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company), Kisumu (area covered by Kisumu Water and Sewerage Company), Kakamega (area covered by Western Water Services Company), and Mombasa (area covered by Mombasa Water and Sewerage Company). For the period 2010 to 2011, effort will be made to highlight the lessons learnt in these regions regarding benefits and challenges of the initiative, and to provide information to WASREB on how citizens' engagement can help improve water service provision in the country.

## About the Water Services Regulatory Board

WASREB is a state corporation established in 2003 as part of the reforms in Kenya's water sector. The aim of the regulation is to protect consumers, while ensuring that Water Services Boards (WSBs) and Water Service Providers (WSPs) provide efficient, affordable and sustainable services. There are eight Water Services Boards who manage water infrastructure assets on behalf of the Government of Kenya. Water Service Providers, also referred to as water companies, are in charge of direct water and sewerage services provision to consumers. WASREB takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders in making decisions.



By appointing Water Action Groups, WASREB is taking keen interest in the views of consumers with an eye in protecting their interests.

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## **How the Water Services Regulatory Board regulates the water and sewerage sector**

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WASREB has developed the following guidelines to facilitate service delivery and to ensure that consumer needs are addressed by the water sector:

- Licences (issued to Water Services Boards which stipulate desired coverage in water and sewerage services)
- Service Provision Agreements (signed between Water Services Boards and Water Service Providers, with targets, e.g. hours of supply, quality of water, and reduction of unaccounted water)
- Guidelines on corporate governance
- Guidelines on minimum service levels
- Guidelines on tariff setting
- Guidelines on customer service and complaints procedures
- Guidelines on reporting

WASREB regularly monitors the performance of Water Service Providers and produces an annual performance report on Kenya's water services sub-sector. These documents can help consumers understand the type of services their water providers are expected to provide, and may be obtained from WASREB offices, or the local Water Service Providers' offices. The documents can also be downloaded from [www.wasreb.go.ke](http://www.wasreb.go.ke).



## **Role of Water Action Groups**

The role of Water Action Groups can be summarized as follows:

### **1. Dissemination of information**

- To ensure that communities are informed about water sector reforms, and roles and responsibilities of sector institutions in service delivery
- To receive and disseminate information that is relevant to consumers, as obtained from both WASREB and Water Services Boards
- To increase consumer awareness on their rights and obligations, so that they can optimize on the benefits under the regulatory framework

### **2. Engaging with providers**

- To act as a link between consumers and Water Service Providers, to provide a platform for the two to exchange ideas and experiences that can help improve water service delivery
- To represent, in a structured manner, the interests of consumers in water supply and sanitation, and make contributions towards improving service provider orientation
- To engage with Water Service Providers and Water Services Boards to highlight consumers' concerns, and monitor action to be taken with a view to improving customer orientation and accountability in the water sector
- To facilitate continuous stakeholder involvement in water supply and sanitation services



### 3. Providing feedback on services

- To act as the 'consumer voice' on issues which require stakeholder consultations
- To monitor citizen experiences and provide feedback on visible indicators which demonstrate the extent to which Water Service Providers deliver service, in accordance with the set standards, as per the Licence and Service Provision Agreement
- When faced with a situation of continued failure to act on the part of the provider, Water Action Groups will inform the Water Service Provider's management, the Water Services Board, and the Regulator, progressively, to catalyze appropriate action
- To monitor and give feedback on consumer experiences, and resolution of consumer complaints by making follow-up on consumer concerns and facilitating conflict resolution with Water Service Providers
- To give systematic feedback on public opinion related to issues of performance, access, and equity in investment planning and service quality
- To provide periodic reports to WASREB on adherence to Service Provision Agreements and customer service standards

Water Action Groups will ensure that Water Service Providers deliver services in accordance with the standards set by WASREB.

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#### **Your role as a consumer**

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Consumers have a role to play. They need to support all efforts put in place to receive clean safe water. Consumers can help to ensure that proper services





are provided, by understanding their rights as well as responsibilities, in water service delivery.

As a water consumer, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Good quality water
- Regular supply
- Official receipting
- Ethical and efficient service
- Professional debt collection
- A satisfactory response to your complaints and enquiries

As a water consumer, YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- Pay bills on time
- Allow Water Service Providers access to water points and infrastructure
- Ensure that unauthorized usage or interference with water supply is reported
- Keep water equipment in good condition
- Report to Water Service Provider any suspicious activities around water infrastructures
- Pay for repairs or maintenance resulting from negligence
- Provide feedback on the quality and quantity of services received

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## **Manner of Water Action Groups Engagement**

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Water Action Groups will engage with Water Service Providers, Water Services Boards, WASREB, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, and citizens, as illustrated in the table that follows.

## How Water Action Groups will engage with stakeholders

Level	Description/Role
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected or not connected to a WSP</li> </ul>
<b>Water Service Providers/Utilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have Service Provision Agreements to deliver water and sewerage services within a designated service area</li> </ul>
<b>Water Services Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed to oversee service provision in a wide area covering several districts and supervise the work of Water Service Providers</li> <li>• Required to hold assets and raise resources for further investment to expand services</li> </ul>
<b>WASREB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulates and monitors service provision</li> <li>• Develops rules and guidelines for the operation of the sector</li> <li>• Sets and enforces standards within the sector</li> <li>• Issues licences and guidelines to Water Services Boards and Water Services Providers</li> <li>• Advises Water Service Providers and Water Services Boards on procedures for dealing with consumer complaints</li> <li>• Adjudicates tariff applications</li> <li>• Develops model performance agreements between Water Services Boards and Water Service Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Water and Irrigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for policy formulation and overall sector coordination</li> </ul>

	<b>Activities of Water Action Groups</b>	<b>Tools to be used by Water Action Groups</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate Information on sector reforms and plans</li> <li>• Advise and direct consumers on how to channel concerns through existing utility customer care structures; (only take up unresolved complaints)</li> <li>• Receive and document feedback on water and sewerage services (related to access, quality, reliability, customer care, cost of existing services and planned adjustments through tariff review, transparency and compliance to guidelines/law)</li> <li>• Make recommendations on service improvement</li> <li>• Communicate feedback received from interaction with Providers, Boards and the Regulator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group discussions</li> <li>• Household interviews</li> <li>• Complaint monitoring reports</li> <li>• Public Hearings</li> <li>• Theatre for Development</li> <li>• Community radio</li> <li>• Information leaflets, general outreach, photographs, journals</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forwards unresolved service issues to the Water Service Provider</li> <li>• Provides both positive and negative feedback</li> <li>• Agree on actions necessary to improve customer relations</li> <li>• Follow up on Agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official meetings with water utilities every two months, or as required and agreed</li> <li>• Utility hotline, complaint boxes and customer care desk</li> <li>• Utility register of unresolved complaints</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and understand plans for investment within the area of the Water Action Groups</li> <li>• Provide feedback on citizen priorities for services investment</li> <li>• Discuss outcome of monitoring reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official meeting with Board, every three months, and producing quarterly reports</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate feedback on decision making regarding consumer views, priorities and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two official meetings a year, and producing quarterly and annual reports</li> <li>• Consumer summit on policy considerations as input to regulatory decision making</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informs on policy formulation through annual Water Action Groups report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual report</li> <li>• Consumer summit on policy considerations as input to regulatory decision making</li> </ul>



## Water Action Groups Contacts

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