Assessing Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector

(Governate of Fayoum)

Policy Brief

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Policy Brief

Towards Good Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector

Pilot Phase:
Governorate of Fayoum

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Mona Salem
This Policy brief presents the results of the governance assessment that has been conducted by the Social Contract Center in the water and sanitation sector in Fayoum governorate and suggests some policy recommendations to enhance good governance in water and sanitation.

Towards Good Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector  
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Findings of the Governance Assessment in the Water and Sanitation Sector

A numeric index has been developed for each service of drinking water, and sanitation separately. The index builds on a data set collected specifically for this purpose in December 2011, via surveying around 3000 households in the 6 main local districts of Fayoum which included; Fayoum, Ebshoay, Etsa, Senores, Tamya, and Yousof Alsedeek.

The index is constructed of eight main dimensions of effectiveness, equity, efficiency, responsiveness, fighting corruption, participation, transparency, and accountability, and then breaks them down to narrower sub-dimensions and indicators.

Using a quantitative approach, the index provided a score for each dimension to indicate the level of governance as perceived by the households. The results are disaggregated by urban- rural, and local districts distributions, and the scale ranged from zero to 100, where zero reflects the lowest value of governance and 100 reflects the highest values.

Graph (1) shows that the overall score for the Water Governance Index (WGI) is 55.9 points, which reflects a "Moderate" performance (50 to less than 75). On the level of WGI’s dimensions, variant results have been scored; for instance, some dimensions have achieved a "Strong" performance such as; Effectiveness, Equity, Efficiency, and Fighting Corruption, while other dimensions scored a striking "Very Weak" performance, such as Transparency, Accountability and Participation. The Responsiveness dimension scored "Moderate".

Graph 1 Water Governance Index by Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Index</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting Corruption</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking in more details at each dimension, the reader will find that **Effectiveness**, which is concerned with the quality of the sector outcomes, and the degree of citizens’ satisfaction, has scored 90 out of 100 points (Strong). The water safety and protection of water source, water accessibility, water quality, and affordability have all scored very high on the index, while the quality of the water service has only scored a moderate performance.

As for the **Equity dimension**, which is concerned with how far citizens do enjoy equal opportunities and equal access to public services, the index has focused on two main aspects of the water service; the coverage of the piped water connections into dwellings and yards, and the citizens' perception of the fair provision of water service to all households in the residential areas.

In general, Equity scored the highest points among all dimensions of governance assessed in the index, by 92.5 out of 100 points (Strong). Water coverage (94.2) and fairness in service provision (90.8) have all scored a "Strong" performance, indicating a favorable attitude of the water company to provide most of the households with piped water connections. The piped water connections into dwellings have scored 92.8, where the piped water connections into the house yards have only scored 1.4. On the other hand, citizens perceived the company's provision of water service as being fair (90.8), where all households in the residential areas could get an equally provided water service with no distinction.

**Efficiency** is more concerned with the production and provision of the sector outputs at the lowest cost and in a timely manner. Since citizens will not be able to judge the extent to which these outputs are produced efficiently, the index has only counted on two principal indicators that citizens can have a say about them; the efficiency of the installed water meters, and the efficiency of service request procedures.

In general, efficiency scored 84.7 out of 100 points (Strong), where metering efficiency scored a "Strong" performance of 97.8 out of 100 points, and the procedures efficiency of extending new household connections
has scored a "Moderate" performance of 71.2.

**The Responsiveness** means that the water sector authorities should actively respond to the citizens' needs, problems, and complaints, and also respond to the social realities of the sector before the citizens start complaining. The index has included three main aspects to measure the sector responsiveness; the complaints handling mechanism adopted in the sector, the level of citizens' satisfaction on the mechanism of handling their complaints, and the responsiveness to crises and urgent needs from the citizens' perspective.

In general, responsiveness scored 50.4 out of 100 points, which reflects barely a "Moderate" score. The mechanism of handling complaints scored a "Moderate" performance of 63.4 out of 100 points, while consumers' satisfaction on handling complaints, and responsiveness to crises scored a "Weak" performance of 40.9 and 46.9 respectively.

The dimension of **Fighting Corruption** is concerned with identifying to which extent the water sector is clean from corruption. For this purpose, households were questioned about whether they perceive the water sector as corrupt in terms of the existence of nepotism or bribes. They were also asked to report about whether they had to pay any forms of bribes, gifts, or any unjustified payments to the water sector employees to extend a water connection or to fix a problem in the service. In general, the dimension has scored the second highest points among the assessed governance dimensions after equity, with a score of 91.8 out of 100 points (Strong). Apparently the citizens do perceive the water sector as free of corruption.

The dimension of **Transparency** is concerned with assessing how far citizens are fully aware and knowledgeable about the water sector's decisions, policies and activities. It is considered a prerequisite for the aspects of participation, and accountability, where information represents the essential base for any community interaction between citizens and authorities. Unfortunately, the overall score of transparency was very weak, scoring only 24 points out of the 100 points.
Participation is a very important governance dimension that is usually paid less attention than other dimensions. The essence of the governance is that citizens and other different stakeholders can participate in the governance process. This could be achieved via several forms of participation such as; defining their needs, evaluating the sectors' performance, and following up their projects' implementation. Obviously, this concept is not very well introduced in the water sector, where participation scored the worst among all assessed dimensions of governance scoring 0.4, almost Zero out of 100 possible points.

The Accountability dimension has been simplified for the purpose of measurement in this index. It assessed the citizens' attitude towards reporting problems of the sector to the relevant authorities.

Unfortunately, accountability has scored very weak, where it obtained only 10.4 points out of 100 points.

The second service that has been assessed in this study is the Sanitation Service. It scored relatively lower performance than the water service. In general, the Sanitation Governance Index (SGI) is 34.9. According to the index showed in Graph (2), this score reflects a "Weak" performance (25 to less than 50). On the level of SGI's dimensions, variant results have been scored; for instance, only two dimensions have achieved a "Strong" performance; Effectiveness, and Fighting Corruption, while other dimensions scored "Moderate" performance such as; equity, and efficiency. Responsiveness has scored "Weak" of 43.7 points, while the other remaining three dimensions of transparency, accountability, and participation have performed "Very Weak".

The SGI's results reflect huge variances among the assessed dimensions. Although the sector's authorities seem to strongly adhere to the principles of effectiveness, and fighting against corruption, they lack on the other hand, concentration on some other key principles such as transparency, participation, and accountability.

Similar to the water sector findings, this gap imposes a very important fact; that the sector still tend to apply a unilateral
policy in managing its plans and activities, without considering the inclusion of citizens or other stakeholders in the process.

Another important remark is that equity in terms of service coverage is not applied in the governorate, where mostly the rural areas are deprived from a public sewage network, in comparison to the full coverage of main cities.

Looking in more details at each dimension, the reader will find that Effectiveness scored 81.5 out of 100 points (Strong). The improved sanitation facilities (98.3), and affordability of service (96.4) have both scored a "Strong" performance, while the aspect of sanitation service quality has recorded the lowest score in this group with a "Weak" score of 49.9 out of 100.

Equity in the sanitation sector has scored much worse compared with its score in the water sector, by 62.2 out of 100 points (Moderate). This drop is due to the fact that almost half of the households surveyed didn't have a dwelling sewage connection. The Sanitation coverage (48) has scored a "Weak" performance, while fairness in service provision (76.5) have performed quite better scoring a "Strong" performance, indicating that households have perceived the sanitation service as being equally provided to all households in the same residential area with no distinction.

Efficiency has scored 61.3 out of 100 points (Moderate), where the procedures' efficiency of extending new household sewage connection has scored a "Moderate" performance of 61.3 points.
Responsiveness has scored 43.7 out of 100 points, which reflects a "Weak" score. The mechanism of handling complaints scored a "Moderate" performance of 58 out of 100 points, while consumers' satisfaction on handling complaints, and responsiveness to crises scored a "Weak" performance of 39.6 and 33.4 respectively.

The dimension of Fighting Corruption has scored the highest score among the assessed governance dimensions, with a score of 94.2 out of 100 points (Strong). Similar to the findings of the water sector, the nature of the sanitation service doesn't require frequent interactions with employees, where the interaction happens mainly at the beginning of requesting the service, and decreases or even disappears after the service is already extended. On the other hand, it worth noting, that this score – as well as the whole index scores - is derived from only one governorate, and should not be compared with other national indexes.

The overall score of Transparency is 10.7, which is unfortunately a very weak score. Similar to the water governance index, transparency is assessed through the availability of information when requested by the citizens (20.5) and the prompt transmission of service-related information by the service authority (0.9).

The Participation again scored the worst among all assessed dimensions of governance scoring 0.3, almost Zero out of 100 points, a very similar result to the water service assessment results.

Accountability has also scored very weak performance, in the sanitation service, where it only obtained 6.6 out of 100 points, because of the weak reporting culture among the citizens, even while facing problems in the service provision.
Conclusion and Recommendations

The Water and Sanitation Governance Index is an attempt to evaluate the governance level in the provision of a very strategic public service. The results showed a progress in some principles such as effectiveness, and equity, while some other principles such as participation, and accountability were still lagging behind.

The Index results suggest some key areas of development in order to improve the overall governance level of the water and sanitation services. These recommendations can be classified into two main parts; organizational and operational recommendations.

1. Organizational Recommendations:

- This index should be regularly repeated through one of the sectors' authorities. Considering the main mandate of the EWRA in conducting the performance indicators and in reviewing the citizens' opinions regarding the water service will pave the way for the authority to tackle the responsibilities of applying this index nationally and will provide the data for the annual comparison later on.

To achieve this role, the authority should be given more attention in terms of financial resources, and qualified staff.

- The index showed that the citizens have almost never been surveyed by the HCWW about their satisfaction and opinion in the water or the sanitation service. Therefore, the HCWW should allocate more funds towards surveying the citizens' opinions regarding the service daily usage. This task should complement the efforts of the EWRA in drawing medium and long term evaluation of the service.

- The large numbers of entities responsible for the water and sanitation sector raise the concern about the effectiveness of coordination among these bodies in managing the sector. The sector, therefore, needs a thorough look from these authorities to ensure a smooth and flexible communication and implementation of projects and services.

- The response of the Fayoum Drinking Water and Sanitation Company (FADWASC) to the urgent needs of the water and sanitation service in the
governorate had a significant influence on the citizens' satisfaction. This fact is crucial for the improvement of the company's performance, especially with the negative opinions of more than 40% of the households towards the company's quick response. The company therefore needs to provide stronger training for building the capacity of the technical support teams in handling the emergency cases. The company also needs to provide advanced detecting systems to quickly identify any problems in the provided service.

- Generally, the water authorities should be more open to the international standards and measurements. This can be reached through joining any of the international benchmarking sectoral assessments, which provide the guidelines and indicators for evaluating the service in all its processes. This exposure will help the water and sanitation authorities to get acquainted with the most recent indicators and measurement in defining the service quality. It will also provide an international benchmarking for the national assessment of the service in Egypt.

2. Operational Recommendations:

- The water and sanitation authorities should provide new mechanisms to enhance the transparency, as a tool for achieving better governance inside the sector, and attain effective communication with the beneficiaries. Many tools can be helpful in promoting transparency, such as publishing the sector's information on the internet and in the offices of customer service.

- Because of the very low citizens' participation rate, the study perceives the important role for the civil society organizations in educating the citizens about their rights of getting involved in the service planning and actively participating in the sector's plans and activities. They can also help in educating the citizens about their rights with regard to other governance principles such as getting equal services, and requiring information about the service.

- One of the key areas that can significantly increase the satisfaction of citizens regarding the water service is the
improvement of the quality of water. This will require the allocation of more resources by the water companies to guarantee the purification of the water source and replacing some parts of the old networks in service today. The budget allocations for operating and maintaining the water networks in Egypt, through the past years, show that very low financial allocations were directed towards improving the quality of service, while the huge amounts of investments were directed towards the completion of new water and sanitation projects.

- The problem of the water quality, as revealed through the research, mostly starts after the ejection of the produced water from the main plants, which usually meet the quality standards of the service, but the real problem starts afterwards because of the deteriorating conditions of some water networks which affect the quality of the water by the time it reaches the households. Therefore, the low cost solutions should be adopted in order to improve this quality, such as connecting some filters to the pipes at certain points on the network.

- The fewer incidents of reporting complaints to the water company should be carefully studied. This is because the fewer number does not always imply a better performance or satisfaction. The study supports this argument by showing that 93% of the citizens, who had already faced problems in the water service, did not complain about them. This finding reflects the importance of ensuring the efficiency of the complaint mechanism used by the company to respond to the citizens' problems.

- The compliant mechanism of the water and sanitation companies is in a real need for improvement. This can positively affect the quality of service and encourage more citizens to report and consequently endorse the culture of accountability in the society.

- Generally, the sanitation sector has been given less attention compared to the water sector and still receives significantly lower financial allocations, despite of the already high water national coverage ratio. This policy needs to be amended to fit the growing needs of citizens for a decent sanitation service especially in the villages.
-The problem of water pressure in the governorate of Fayoum had always been a concern to the FADWASC and the citizens.

The changing water level in Bahr Youssef Canal, the desert and mountainous nature of the governorate's lands, and the rapidly increased population, were all reasons for the problem of the unstable water pressure in the networks\(^{(28)}\).

The low water pressure has caused a frequent interruption of the water flow in more than half of the households surveyed, although the average duration of each water cut off was around an hour and half. Therefore, FADWASC should consider adopting emergent, durable, and low cost plans for increasing the water pressure in the governorate and also working towards decreasing the water losses and leakage in the water and sanitation network.
The Social Contract Center

SCC was established in 2007 as a joint initiative between the Egyptian Cabinet’s Information and Decision Support Center, IDSC and the United Nations Development Program, UNDP, with the support of the Italian-Egyptian Debt for Development Swap Program and the Government of Japan.

SCC was established based on the recommendations of the Egyptian Human Development Report titled “Choosing Our Future: Towards a New Social Contract” which presents a vision of Egypt centered on the ambitious proposal of a new Social Contract. SCC’s mission is to provide technical support to the human development efforts in Egypt using a rights-based approach rooted in the principles of good governance and citizenship.

SCC aims to monitor progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Egypt, and strives to build a national consensus on the concept of the Social Contract and its implications, in addition to rebuilding trust between the government and citizens, as well as supporting efforts to empower civil society.

For more information on SCC, please visit www.socialcontract.gov.eg

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