Water Action Groups

Enhancing Consumer Participation in the Provision of Water Services

Water Services for All Kenyans
WAGs promote demand driven services which gives a degree of assurance on institution’s transparency, accountability, and improves the quality of service.
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About Water Action Groups

Water Action Groups (WAGs) are community based volunteer organisations which act as consumer representatives and provide a platform for engagements with stakeholders in the water sector. Wags act as an extended arm of the Water Services regulatory Board (Wasreb), under whose mandate consumer protection lies.

The goal of Wags is to ensure that consumer’s views are taken into account in matters related to water service provision. The initiative is meant to facilitate improved understanding of the roles and obligations of consumers and sector institutions.
Wasreb has instituted Wags in all the eight Water Services Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Service Board</th>
<th>Water Company Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Athi Water Services Board</td>
<td>Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>2. Tana Water Services Board</td>
<td>• Murang’a South Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Murang’a Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Embu Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>• Kirinyaga Water and Sewerage</td>
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<td>3. Tanathi Water Services Board</td>
<td>Mavoko Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>4. Rift Valley Water Services Board</td>
<td>Nakuru Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>5. Lake Victoria South Water Services Board</td>
<td>Kismu Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>6. Lake Victoria North Water Services Board</td>
<td>Kakamega Busia Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>7. Coast Water Services Board</td>
<td>Mombasa Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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<td>8. Northern Water Services Board</td>
<td>Garissa Water and Sewerage Company</td>
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About Water Services Regulatory Board

The Water Services Regulatory Board (Wasreb) is a non-commercial State Corporation established in March 2003 as part of the reforms in the water sector. The aim of the Regulator is to protect consumers by ensuring the provision of efficient, adequate, affordable and sustainable water services.

Wasreb established Water Action Groups to ensure consumer participation in the provision of water services.

Vision
To be a model regulator of water services

Mission
To regulate water services in line with the human right to water and Sanitation

Motto
Water Services for all Kenyans.
Roles of Water Action Groups

1. Dissemination of Information
   - To ensure that communities are informed about the water sector and roles and responsibilities of sector institutions.
   - To receive and disseminate information from sector institutions that is relevant to consumers.
   - To increase consumers awareness on their rights and obligations.

2. Engagement with Sector Institutions
   - To provide a platform in which consumers and water sector institutions can share ideas and experiences that can help improve service delivery.
     - To represent consumer interests in the provision of water services and improve service provider orientation.
     - To engage with sector institutions to highlight consumer concerns and monitor actions taken with a view to improving customer orientation and accountability in the water sector.
     - To facilitate continuous stakeholder involvement in the provision of water services.
3. Provision of Feedback on Services

- To monitor citizen experiences and provide feedback on visible indicators as per set standards.
- To act as a ‘consumer voice’ on issues which require stakeholder consultations.
- Monitor and provide feedback on resolution of consumer complaints by making follow up on consumer concerns and facilitating conflict resolution with sector institutions.
- Catalyse appropriate action in the event of overdue complaints or issues by involving Management of Water Service Providers, Water service Board and Wasreb.
- To give systematic feedback on public opinion related to issues of performance, access and equity.
- To provide periodic reports to Wasreb on adherence to Service Provision Agreements and Customer service Standards.
Consumer Role and Responsibilities

Consumers can help to ensure that proper services are provided, by understanding their rights and responsibilities in the delivery of water services.

As a water consumer you have a right to:
- Good quality water
- Regular Supply
- Official receipting
- Ethical and efficient services
- Adequate information on water services
- 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 sector institutions any suspicious activities around water infrastructure
- Pay for repairs and maintenance resulting from negligence
- Provide feedback on the quality of services received
Consumer Complaints Handling Procedure

1. Consumer complaint
2. Step 2: If complaint not handled satisfactorily by WSP, complaint is filed with WAG for follow-up
3. Step 3: WAG forwards consumer complaint to WSB
4. Step 4: WAG forwards WSP/WSB-related consumer complaint to WASREB
5. Biannual Review Meeting (WAG-WSP-WSB-WASREB)
6. If complainant or WSI feels aggrieved by WASREB’s decision, the complaint may be referred to the Water Appeal Board
7. Water Appeal Board (WAB)

Complaint falls under responsibility of WSB

Penalties/Compensation applies

Complaint Resolved

Consumer Feedback

Timelimit for response by WSP 5 working days
Manner of Water Action Groups Engagement

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description/Role</th>
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| Community                    | • Connected or not connected to WSP  
• Are the ultimate consumers of water services  
• Are affected by decisions on services, infrastructure, and regulation                                                                 |
| Water Service Providers/Utilities | • Have Service Provision Agreement to deliver water and sewerage services within a designated service area  
• Required to meet targets on access, standard, and services                                                                                   |
| Water Services Board         |                                                                                                                                                  |
| WASREB                       | • Regulates and monitors service provision  
• Develops rules and guidelines for the operation of the sector  
• Sets and enforces standards within the sector  
• Issues licenses and guidelines to Water Services Boards and Water Services Providers  
• Advises Water Service Providers and Water Services Boards on procedures for dealing with consumer complaints  
• Adjudicates tariff applications  
• Develops model performance agreements between Water Services Boards and Water Service Providers                                                                 |
|                             | • Responsible for policy formulation and overall sector coordination                                                                               |
Water Action Groups Engagement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Tools to be used by Water Action Groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Disseminate Information on sector reforms and plans</td>
<td>• Focus group discussions</td>
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<td>• Advise and direct consumers on how to channel concerns through existing utility customer care structures; (only take up unresolved complaints)</td>
<td>• Household interviews</td>
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<td>• 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)</td>
<td>• Complaint monitoring reports</td>
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<td>• Make recommendations on service improvement</td>
<td>• Public Hearings</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Communicate feedback received from interaction with Providers, Boards and the Regulator</td>
<td>• Theatre for Development</td>
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<td>• Forwards unresolved service issues to the Water Service Provider</td>
<td>• Community radio</td>
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<td>• Provides both positive and negative feedback</td>
<td>• Information leaflets, general outreach, photographs, journals</td>
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<td>• Agree on actions necessary to improve customer relations</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Follow up on Agreements</td>
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<td>• Discuss and understand plans for investment within the area of the Water Action Groups</td>
<td>• Official meetings with water utilities every two months, or as required and agreed</td>
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<td>• Provide feedback on citizen priorities for services investment</td>
<td>• Utility hotline, complaint boxes and customer care desk</td>
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<td>• Discuss outcome of monitoring reports</td>
<td>• Utility register of unresolved complaints</td>
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<td>• To facilitate feedback on decision making regarding consumer views, priorities and experiences</td>
<td>• Official meeting with Board, every three months, and producing quarterly reports</td>
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<td>• Informs on policy formulation through annual Water Action Groups report</td>
<td>• Two official meetings a year, and producing quarterly and annual reports</td>
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<td>• Consumer summit on policy considerations as input to regulatory decision making</td>
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WAG Contacts:

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