WATER OPERATORS’ PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN

Belize Water Services (BWS) — Belize

Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) — California, USA

TARGETED IMPROVEMENTS ON

Safety | Operations | Customer Services | Engineering | Finance
MENTEE
Belize Water Services Limited
BWS — Belize
National urban water and sanitation utility

MENTOR
Contra Costa Water District
CCWD — California, USA
Public urban water district

GENERAL DATA (2015)

55,710 WATER CONNECTIONS
(Length of water network: 1,400 km)

61,330 WATER CONNECTIONS
(Length of water network: 1,298 km)

24% NON-REVENUE WATER

6.7% NON-REVENUE WATER

262 EMPLOYEES
(Staff per 1,000 connections: 4.7)

188 EMPLOYEES
(Staff per 1,000 connections: 3.1)

MOTIVATIONS
Build staff capacity to increase operational efficiency
Adopt good practices to strengthen organizational capacity
Increase staff motivation and commitment
Increase motivation and develop professional staff
Exercise social responsibility
Improve public visibility and broaden international networks

SUPPORTING THIRD PARTY
The Inter-American Development Bank and GWOPA/UN-Habitat, through the WOP-LAC regional platform: facilitation, formalization and guidance of the WOP. 1st phase funded by the WOP-LAC platform; 2nd phase funded by the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility and GWOPA.
**TIMELINE**

- **2009 -2010**: Staff from the operators meet at two workshops (2009 and 2010)
- **2010**: September 1st MoU signed between BWS and CCWD
  - November 2010: Planning visit in Belize
  - March 2011: BWS managers to CCWD to draft work plan
  - July 2011: BWS staff to CCWD to decide implementation strategies
- **2012 -2015**: Implementation
  - February 2012: CCWD to BWS for on-site training
  - July 2013: 2nd MoU signed
  - March 2014: BWS to CCWD for job-shadowing
  - March 2015: CCWD to BWS for follow-up training and recommendations
  - August: Final report submitted
- **2016**: BWS becomes a mentor with the support of CCWD

**COST**

**PHASE 1**
- **2010-2012**: WOP-LAC (GWOPA and ADB)
  - BWS: Staff Time & Additional Travel: US$ 54,000 & US$ 32,000
  - CCWD: Staff Time: US$ 50,400

**PHASE 2**
- **2013-2015**: PPIAF
  - GWOPA: Training Expenses: US$ 12,000
  - BWS: Staff Time & Additional Travel: US$ 12,600 & US$ 21,600
  - CCWD: Staff Time: US$ 29,400
Two consecutive phases with different funding and under separate agreements.

**Phase 1:** identify improvement tracks, create action plan and initiate work.

**Phase 2:** continue work on action plan and incorporate further action to sustain progress.

Classroom training, job-shadowing, information sharing and on-the-job guidance approaches used.

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**IMPROVEMENT TRACKS**

**Safety**

- **Improved worker safety:** Health and safety corporate culture changed (e.g. use of safety gear, safety committee); Working days lost to incidents reduced by 75% and US$ 350,000 earmarked to purchase new safety gear.

**Operations**

- **Operator Certification Program:** 119 employees enrolled in Sacramento State University program, 215 courses; Staff motivation and career opportunities improved.
- **Water meter:** Service life of meters extended from 5 to 10 years on average; Contributed to NRW reduction from 34% to 24% since 2009; Improved revenues and reduced meter replacement costs by US$ 3M.
- **Leak detection:** Adoption by BWS of techniques and detection tools used at CCWD, increasing average system pressure countrywide by 12% between 2010 to 2016.

**Customer Services**

- **Call center:** New phone system purchased and in use; More efficient management of users calls and shorter response time for requests.

**Engineering**

- **SCADA system:** infrastructure developed and installed in all major systems internally, enabling BWS to save an estimated US$400,000 (compared to outsourcing).

**Finance**

- **Electronic payments and time sheets:** Monitoring and accountability of revenues streams more rigorous. Online payments increased by 15% between 2010 and 2015; Time saved by cashiers allowed BWS to outsource their collection agents to the Belizean Electricity company. Since 2014, BWS earned around US$220,000 in commissions.
- **Purchasing and stores:** More efficient management of stocks and assets, e.g. vehicle tracking system saved around US$60,000 in fuel expenses. Increased vehicle efficiency by 14% and 7% reduction in maintenance.
**CHALLENGES**

**Need for guiding tools:** Despite support in the creation of the partnership, readily available tools could have supported the implementation of activities

**Exhausting visit schedule:** Greater use of distance communication tools could have reduced the work load during visits

**Hindering contextual factors:** The Belizean context posed challenges to the implementation of certain recommendations, namely the nonexistence of regulatory framework for safety and the difficulty of purchasing specific equipment in Belize

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**SUCCESS FACTORS**

**Alignment with strategic planning:** Initial analysis of needs aligned WOP activities with ongoing operational interventions and priorities of the mentee, creating greater management and political buy-in

**Mentee’s ambition to become regional leader:** BWS aptly used the WOP to fulfil its vision of becoming a leading regional utility and mentor

**Cost-effectiveness:** the gain in efficiency enabled BWS to save money, beyond the staff time invested. CCWD also considers the approach cost-effective in terms of staff development and motivation

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**WHAT THEY SAID**

“The WOP struck me as a very cost-effective way of delivering technical assistance, compared with the alternative of having consultants.”

*Stephen Gaull, Senior Operations Advisor, on staff detail to USWP from Millennium Challenge Corporation*

“We want to become the leading water and sanitation provider in our region and no doubt, the twinning boosted us to head in the right direction.”

*Rashida Castillo, Chief Financial Officer at BWS*

“You can learn things fast without reinventing the wheel from scratch in these types of partnership.”

*Sanjay Keshwani, Technical Services Manager at BWS*

“It was more than mentoring, we learnt a lot. It allowed us to re-examine our management style and ways to retain good employees.”

*Gayle Ross, Chemist-Microbiologist at CCWD*
WATER OPERATORS’ PARTNERSHIPS

WOPs are peer-support arrangements between two or more water and sanitation operators, carried out on a not-for-profit basis with the objective of strengthening operator capacity.

BEWOP

Boosting the Effectiveness of Water Operators’ Partnerships (BEWOP) is a 5-year research, operational support and outreach initiative aimed at boosting the effectiveness of Water Operators’ Partnerships around the world.

Launched in September 2013, BEWOP is a collaboration between leading water sector capacity development institute, UNESCO-IHE, and UN-Habitat’s Global Water Operators’ Partnership Alliance, the organization leading the global WOPs movement.

This project has been made possible by the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).

This factsheet is part of a series summarizing WOPs cases being studied in order to draw lessons and guide better practice.

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