



“Regulation and governance” is arguably a soft discipline but when soundly expressed and delivered, it is a powerful one.

**A Communiqué to the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit
from the 3rd IWA Workshop “Regulation and Governance in Water Supply”
Sunday 2nd December 2007, Beppu, Japan.**

If we accept that water is a fundamental human right, we must also accept that it is a core responsibility of governments to ensure that their people have access to safe drinking water.

There are some 1.1 billion people in the world who do not have access to safe drinking water and approximately 60% of these are in the Asia-Pacific region. In many countries drinking water supply facilities have not been properly maintained or managed, or aging facilities have not been renewed. In other cases the necessary infrastructure does not exist or development is surpassing the capacity of existing water supply systems.

Sometimes we do not have adequate funding or human resources to tackle these needs. But even where the people and funds are available we observe that some countries or utilities are successful and others are not. This suggests that our challenges in water supply are not just engineering in nature, they will often rely on the structures and frameworks within which we operate.

At the 3rd IWA Regional Workshop in Beppu, Japan, participants explored various cases of regulation and governance and concluded that soundly expressed and delivered governance is integral to the efficient and effective use of human and financial resources, and in turn, to attain the MDG (Millennium Development Goals)

The meeting recognized that there is no single exemplar of good regulation or governance systems in water: effective systems may vary between countries – this will depend on the prevailing economic, social and governmental systems. There are however several key considerations that are universal:

1. Water supply systems have long lives and long lead times for their implementation. Accordingly it is essential that there is robust long term planning process and capability.
2. Both the quality and quantity of water supply is dependant on water being considered holistically as part of an integrated cycle. We must therefore consider the broader environment from which we draw our water. This requires protection of our aquatic ecosystems through urban planning, agricultural land use and catchment management and sanitation/sewerage treatment as integral aspects of securing drinking water supplies. Further we must recognize that Climate Change will increase the complexity and enormity of our task and will warrant action in adaptation and mitigation.



3. Strong policy setting and regulatory structures are the foundations upon which plans will be set and delivered and performance monitored

In many nations there will be a combination of public and private involvement in water supply. Regardless of who delivers services, what is clear is that governments must fulfill their responsibility to set expectations and regulate delivery for the benefit of its people.

Knowledge sharing and capacity development will also be key to achieving the MDG's and the meeting reviewed examples of various practical tools and solutions. Benchmarking and the use of Performance Indicators have the potential to support the regulatory or oversight function and to be important business improvement tool. Both knowledge sharing and capacity development can be significantly assisted through the use of programs such as Water Operator Partnerships which allow utilities to twin with each other on a not-for-profit basis.

The sponsor organizations for the workshop have given their commitment to developing these tools further. Working with governments, this will be achieved through professional associations – such as IWA and JWVA – and adjunct programs.

The 3rd IWA Workshop "Regulations and Governance in Water Supply"

Organizer:

IWA (International Water Association),

JIP-Water (Japan International Partnership for Sustainable Water Management)

Contact:

JIP-Water c/o Japan Water Works Association, Mr. Yoji Matsui (Email:matsui@jwwa.or.jp)