



SEWAH WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS | MAY 11, 2022
ROLE OF FIELD SERVICE ENTITY
TO PROMOTE RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY FROM WATER ATMs



SEWAH ALLIANCE PARTNERS





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Roundtable Workshop titled “**Role of Field Service Entity to Promote Reliable Water Supply from Water ATMs**” was organized on May 11, 2022 under the aegis of **Project SEWAH** - Sustainable Enterprises for Water And Health, an initiative of Safe Water Network India and USAID. The roundtable deliberated upon knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer learning, and sharing challenges to maintain the UPTIME of Water ATMs. Improving UPTIME for reliable delivery of safe drinking water is a complex and enduring challenge, especially in the light of low revenues from water sales, spares not readily available, and the high cost of technicians travel to long distances. Most Water ATM implementers aspire to repair broken infrastructure within three days or 72 hours. They lamented that the biggest challenge is cost of training the technicians, retaining the manpower and the L-1 criteria for selection through tenders that force them to install poor plant quality, which adds to the maintenance cost. The FSE service delivery aggravated due to adverse shocks to their operations during Covid.

The SEWAH Alliance partners transparently presented their FSE organization structure and monetary resources required to maintain them. Additionally they shared the qualification of the FSE team members, selection process, skills required, the roles and responsibilities and the expenditure to ensure UPTIME. Some partners shared the need and cost of periodic refresher training programs, and the importance of Master Trainers.

Setting the Stage

Ms. Poonam Sewak, *Trustee & VP – Programs & Partnerships*, Safe Water Network welcomed all six SEWAH Alliance partners for their in-person participation at the roundtable SEWAH workshop. She presented that in India there are ~ 50,000 Water ATMs spread over in rural, urban and railway stations set up by more than 30 SWE Implementers. The market is growing and since 2020 about 11,500 water ATMs have been set up. However their UPTIME is a challenge and mostly fail to deliver water beyond twelve months for various reasons. Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted several SWE implementers abilities to keep the UPTIME of their Water ATMs due to lack of manpower, non-automated dispensing systems, broken supply chain, absence of digital transactions, economic viability, etc. It demands innovative thinking and urgent solution to tackle this multidimensional problem.

Poonam deliberated upon the need for an independent FSE, of multi-skilled technicians to solve technical, electrical, mechanical and plumbing break-downs for economic efficiencies, need of standardized digital training toolkit for capacity-build programs..

We extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Chigozie Okwu, Foreign Service Officer, USAID India, for delivering Special Address at the event. We also express our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. R K Srinivasan, project SEWAH AOR, WASH Project Management Specialist, USAID India, for his kind participation, guidance and support throughout the project implementation.

We thank all SEWAH Alliance partner organizations, Clean Water & Energy Trust, Drinkwell Systems, JanaJal, Maithri Aquatech, Rite Water Solutions, WaterHealth India, and Waterlife India for their active participation and continued engagement through Water Knowledge Resource Centers (WKRCs) under the project.

Special thanks to our donors and patrons: USAID, PepsiCo Foundation and Pentair Foundation for their grant and technology support.

Can we create private professional companies for maintenance and repair to whom the SWE implementer can outsource to bring efficiency of spares and service costs? She also informed how Safe Water Network has progressed in terms of use of ICT through cloud-based analysis and reporting, remote-monitoring sensing technology and automation, to improve UPTIME.

Mr. Chigozie Okwu, *Foreign Service Officer*, USAID India, delivered Keynote Address to the audience. USAID India has long-focused on integrating gender equality and community participation through its international flagship WASH projects, in partnership with the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. With Safe Water Network as a partner, USAID has helped develop innovative models for Safe Water Enterprises including water ATMs, for improving public health and generating livelihoods. SEWAH Alliance is converging the sector for the scale – up of Water ATMs in urban India. **Mr. R K Srinivasan**, *Technical Advisor – WASH*, USAID India, made special remarks on accessibility of funds through private sector banks that are supported by USAID. USAID extends credit guarantee for firms on safe drinking water solutions and waste water treatment to NGOs and organizations.

Discussions- The SEWAH Alliance partners highlighted the specific break down challenges faced by them due to poor water treatment plant components, configuration and poor electricity. Average monthly expenditure of FSE on manpower and spares in a cluster of 50 Water ATMs in one State spread over two districts range between INR Three lakhs fifty thousand to Four Lakh. This excludes the salary of the operator and automation costs. The FSE team consists of 4 technicians of average salary INR 25,000 led by a Technical manager at salary INR 50,000 and the rest are spares and travel cost. The maximum breakdown is of the high pressure pump, choking of the R.O. membrane. The FSE costs can be further reduced through predictive maintenance using remote monitoring system and application of IoT. Discussion resources enclosed



SEWAH Alliance
resources_FSE presenta

Closing Remarks

Mr. Ravi Sewak, *India Country Director*, Safe Water Network, gave Closing Remarks on the need for technical training and capacity build programs at regular intervals at the grassroots level for SWE sustainability. Safe Water Network offers “SaaS” services, in the form of standardized online digital tools. These can be used by partner organizations in field-based training on operations, maintenance, technology selection, site & model selection, community engagement for demand generation, and remote monitoring systems. Ravi informed how Safe Water Network provides technical assistance to the Government of Karnataka to improve the state’s 18,500 water purification plants and enable access to ~30 million people.

Workshop Video Recording can be accessed [HERE](#).



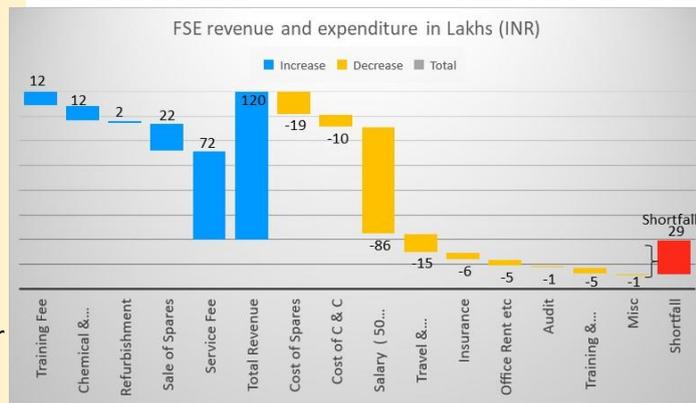
Case Study 1

Rite Water Rajasthan

It is extremely important to keep the UPTIME as the local community is dependent on the Water ATM for their daily drinking and cooking needs. In Rajasthan, we have experienced the ire, and violence of the community leading to destruction and vandalism of the Water ATM. In such a situation we open the store for transparency and engage with the local key opinion leader to control the consumer.

Case Study 2

Clean Water Energy Trust – A private professional company that renders Maintenance and Repair services to the Water ATMs reported that despite aggregation they incur a gap of 29% in monthly expenditure.



This gap is filled through other cross functional services such as assembling plants, and providing Water ATM consumables

Next Steps : UPTIME of Water ATMs is a challenge. SEWAH partners highlighted those gaps and seek two pronged solution to increase the UPTIME – policy and advisory and training and capacity building. There is a need to develop FSE training modules in addition to the existing [iSWEET – digital Safe Water Enterprise Entrepreneur Toolkit](#) on the [SEWAH Alliance platform](#).

Policy and advisory:

The policy makers, water ATM proponents and the private company operators all need to now think long term. The usual contracting system based on tenders in the urban space is by the Municipal Corporations with negligible or none participation of the Public Health Engineering department except raw water supply. For improving the UPTIME i) there is a need for targeted subsidies based on result framework as the water is priced low Rs 1/200ml and ii) professional managed low cost private FSE to outsource managed services for getting benefits such as reduced operational and infrastructure investment costs, improved operational sustainability, and agile complaint closure.

Field Service Entity:

The Alliance partners to share best practices from their initiative and specify the ASK for the challenges being faced by them to develop a suite of tools for training the technicians of Water ATM. The following will be undertaken-

- Standard e-training Modules on HR – criteria of selection of candidates, job description, roles and responsibilities, skill testing, soft skills etc
- Development of 10 core repair and maintenance modules on identification of problem and troubleshooting at the Water ATM purification plant.
- Digital/mobile-based recharge systems.

SEWAH WORKSHOP on

ROLE OF FIELD SERVICE ENTITY

TO PROMOTE RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY FROM WATER ATMs

INDIA HABITAT CENTER, TAMARIND HALL, NEW DELHI | Wednesday, May 11, 2022 | 10:00 am – 3:00 pm



Chigozie Okwu
Foreign Service Officer
USAID INDIA



Ms. Poonam Sewak
VP - Programs & Partnerships
SAFE WATER NETWORK



Mr. Prabhat Saxena
Technical Business Director
CLEAN WATER AND ENERGY TRUST



Mr. Minhaj Chowdhury
CEO and Co-Founder
DRINKWELL SYSTEMS



Mr. Sanjay Jairath
State Head Delhi NCR
WATERHEALTH INDIA



Mr. Kapil Sharma
IT & Technical Training Head
JANAJAL



Ms. Arti Verma
CSR Program Lead
WATERLIFE INDIA



Mr. Avikal Singh
Technical Operations Manager
RITE WATER SOLUTIONS

"Through this platform, I welcome all partner organizations to brainstorm ideas on effective operations and maintenance of water ATMs. Together, let's create inclusive, sustainable strategies with development outcomes to help ensure the reliable water delivery from water ATMs."

- **Chigozie Okwu**, Foreign Service Officer, USAID India

"Safe Water Network opens doors for greater collaboration with SEWAH Alliance partners to work together and make use of our 'SaaS' services comprising training tools and programs for capacity building of their Field Service Entity to improve their UPTIME and ensure reliable safe drinking water supply."

- **Poonam Sewak**, Vice President – Programs & Partnerships, Safe Water Network India

"The digital platform for training Water ATM social entrepreneurs is an excellent initiative of program SEWAH as it standardizes the training process and is readily available and accessible. The platform will assist us in technical training, strengthen IEC for improving sales and sustainability of our water ATMs. We wish to strengthen our Remote Monitoring System as well and digitize recharge system."

- **Arti Verma**, Head – CSR, Waterlife Indian

"JanaJal has deployed JJ Suite Ecosystem that provides Operations and Sales Dashboard. We conduct in-campus team trainings. We seek ways to create multimedia training modules for ease of training to the semi-literate JanaJal WoW social entrepreneurs"

- **Mr. Kapil Sharma**, Head of Information Technology, JanaJal

"There is need for a separate Field Service Entity, with dedicated resources to handle various repairs and maintenance jobs and ensure 98% uptime of water ATMs for reliability. This, coupled with training programs, is the need of the hour."

- **Prabhat Saxena**, Technical Business Director, Clean Water & Energy Trust

"Training is undoubtedly essential for reliable drinking water supply. This component largely remains unfunded. A shared Knowledge Platform like iSWEET built by SWE Alliance is really beneficial to reduce cost and promote classroom style and remote learning."

- **Mr. Sanjay Jairath**, State Head – Delhi NCR, WaterHealth India

"Robust training programs (with audio-visuals) on operating ATMs, particularly High Pressure Pumps and IC Chips with standardized modules are most needed by technicians for field servicing. They should be in local language and video format.."

- **Avikal Singh**, Technical Operations Manager, Rite Water Solutions

"We thank USAID for supporting the SEWAH program. We thank all the Alliance partners for sharing lessons and challenges transparently, offering opportunities for cross-learning, and building a resource pool for modules. We need to carry these lessons worldwide and equally learn from each other's experiences."

- **Ravi Sewak**, India Country Director, Safe Water Network



Small Water Enterprise Alliance

