



## Guaranteeing user information and participation

The consumers – users must have **access to full and comprehensible information** about the workings and results of the service and the quality of the water. They must also be **involved in the decisions** which will have direct consequences for their daily lives. In particular in those communities (especially in Africa) in which women have a central role in managing water-related tasks, they must be associated with this process.

## Assessment of performance

Regular assessment of the performance of the services is a key factor in improving their quality, facilitating an objective debate between all interested parties and protecting the interests of the users. Regulation by the responsible authority allows correct execution of the contract to be checked. But more than just “regulation”, the aim is to establish a **“partnership”** between the local authority and the operator.

At the initiative of France, **international standards on the management, assessment and improvement of water and sanitation services** (ISO 24510, 24511 and 24512) were published in December 2007. These service standards constitute a reference framework for assessing the quality of service and bring water services under the sustainable development umbrella, through monitoring of performance indicators. The nature and number of indicators can be adapted to each situation, for both developed and developing countries.

<http://www.afnor.org/isotc224/waterservices>

## Capacity building

Depending on the management model chosen, the local authorities have to develop appropriate skills. **Vocational training** of all personnel is essential. It is also necessary to speed up modernisation of the management systems and develop the use of information and communication technologies.

### The French National Water Training Centre (CNFME)

It trains 6500 people every year (technicians, engineers, managers of water services, local officials) and organises 845 training sessions annually ([www.oieau.org](http://www.oieau.org)). The CNFME also supports the training of engineering abroad, in particular the creation of training centres (Poland, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, etc.) and has just created an International Network of Water Training Centres ([www.inwtc.org](http://www.inwtc.org)). Private operators have also developed their own training capacity.

[www.partenariat-francais-eau.fr](http://www.partenariat-francais-eau.fr)

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COMMITTED TO WATER FOR THE WORLD.

# GIVING LOCAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SERVICES THE POWERS TO ACT

## Four priorities:

- The State sets the general rules for management and financing of the services
- The local authorities are responsible for choosing the model for management and organisation of the service
- The local authorities give priority to developing their human capacities for management of the services
- The local authorities report to the users on the efficiency, integrity and fairness of the service

The 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Mexico recognised the major role of local authorities in organising water and sanitation services.

For the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, France aims to place emphasis on the need for the local authorities, wherever they exercise this responsibility, to be given the necessary powers and skills.

## The action of the local authorities must be incorporated into a national context with:

- a legal and institutional framework in place and regulating mechanisms for fighting corruption, organising transparency in awarding of contracts, regulating public-private partnerships, ensuring solidarity, and so on.
- integrated water resource management at hydrographic basin level which takes account of the interaction between management of water services and that of the water resources.

Management of water services must also be able to **adapt to global changes** (climate change, demographic pressure, urbanisation, etc.)



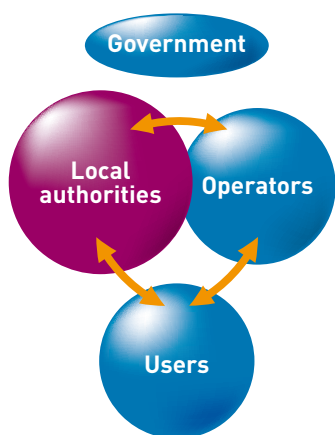
# The essential is that local authorities get the human and financial capacity they need to perform their duties.

## Good management of public water services rests on the ability of each local authority to:

- decide on the general organisation of its water services and how they are to be managed;
- define the user service priorities (security of drinking water supply, continuity of service, etc.) and the multi-year programming of investments;
- determine prices while limiting water price rises and mobilising any public subsidies necessary;
- ensure quality control and performance assessment of the service provided to the users;
- ensure transparency and information, organise debate and participation of all stakeholders, particularly the users;
- it is crucial for local authorities to get the human and financial capacities they need to perform their duties

These governance principles are applicable **whatever the local context**, whether dealing with a large city, a small town or a rural community.

## Organise the public service and choose the management model



Local public authorities must be at the heart of the system and be able to **choose the management model**.

With the direct management model, the local authority itself manages all tasks involved in drinking water distribution and wastewater sewerage.

With the delegated management model, the local authority entrusts management of all or part of the service to an operator, for example for the construction of certain works, but it is essential that it retains ownership of them. This partnership may be concluded with a public or private company. In any case, the law must require prior tendering, limit the length of the contracts and provide for their regular renewal, in order to ensure market transparency and fluidity.

## The organisation of drinking water and sanitation services in France

Local public services: since an Act passed in 1885, the municipalities (so-called the “communes”<sup>1</sup>) have been responsible for access to drinking water and sanitation for their populations. For more than 36,000 municipalities, there are 12,400 drinking water services and 16,700 sanitation services. Grouping of municipalities enable them to share their expertise and resources and is encouraged by the French law.

A framework defined by the State: while respecting the competence of the local authorities, the State sets general rules for administration of the services and health and environmental standards, and is responsible for overseeing compliance with these regulations.

Local authorities free to choose their management model: **the most appropriate management model** (direct management or management delegated to a public or private operator) is chosen and can be reversed at any time. **The local authority however always remains the owner of the infrastructures.**

Contractual transparency: private management concerns 72% of the users served with drinking water and 55% of the users provided with a sanitation service. The contracts are awarded **after a tendering process** (more than 700 contracts per year on average) with definition of the obligations of the partners, the services and the prices. The contractor submits an **annual business report**.

Rigorous budgetary management: each service, regardless of its management model, must be **independent and financially balanced**, including with regard to financing of infrastructure renewal, thus applying the “water pays for water” principle.

Informed and consulted users: the mayors report on the drinking water and sanitation activity in an **annual report on the price and quality of the services**. In order to organise a debate with the user representatives, a “**local public services consultative committee**” is set up for communes of more than 10,000 inhabitants and certain groupings of communes.

Services assessed on the basis of performance indicators: **a system of performance indicators** for evaluating the quality, economic and financial management and environmental performance of the service was defined for all water services. In 2009, all the citizens will have access to these data through the creation of a national observatory managed by the French National Office for Water and Aquatic Ecosystems ([www.eaufrance.fr](http://www.eaufrance.fr)).

France has developed **considerable experience of local governance**, the principles of which can be transposed outside the French context. **This experience is shared** through bilateral support or through projects financed by international funding institutions, or through decentralised cooperation programmes (see “decentralised cooperation” message).

1. Smallest administrative subdivision administered by a mayor and a municipal council