

FOSTERING CHANGE THROUGH INTEGRITY AT CHATTOGRAM WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITY (CWASA) IN BANGLADESH

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1 LAUNCHING AN INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS AT CWASA

Located in Bangladesh's second-largest city, Chattogram (previously Chittagong), Chattogram Water and Sewerage Authority (CWASA) is one of the largest utilities in Bangladesh. CWASA's vision is to be the most efficient Water and Sewerage Authority in Bangladesh and its mission is to provide quality water supply, sewerage, and drainage services in a cost-effective manner, while applying appropriate technologies that are environmentally friendly.¹ CWASA has been engaging with Bangladesh Water Integrity Network (BAWIN), WIN, NGO Forum, and cewas on water integrity topics since 2017.

Inspired by the work of the Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority (KWASA) on integrity management, CWASA launched a similar Integrity Management process using the Integrity Management Toolbox for utilities in 2018. An Integrity Management process generally has three phases: a preparation phase, a planning phase (generally a workshop, where the utility identifies integrity risks and priority measures to address them), and an implementation phase. The Managing Director of CWASA was actively engaged throughout these phases and appointed a focal point for integrity to support the process.

WIN, NGO Forum and cewas supported the entire process. For the implementation phase in particular, which ran from 2019 to 2021, they provided a long-term integrity coach to mentor and support CWASA staff. The coach, a former senior CWASA employee followed up on a quarterly basis on progress in the implementation of integrity measures and helped address bottlenecks.

The Water Integrity Network (WIN) has a suite of integrity assessment and management tools to support service providers in strengthening integrity within their work processes for better performance. These tools, including the Integrity Management Toolbox for water and sanitation utilities, have contributed to improving service delivery, customer satisfaction, and financial stability of water organisations, by addressing integrity risks like misuse of financial resources, poor human resources management and nepotism, low public trust, poor customer service, and compliance issues. Globally, WIN integrity tools have been applied with over 130 organisations and/or community groups across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America in both rural and urban areas. For more information, contact the WIN team at info@win-s.org

¹ CWASA Strategic Plan 2015-2020, Weblink: <https://cwasaportal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/cwasaportal.gov.bd/page/6e31d7f6ecd4485e870ce220057d1ac9/Strategic-Plan-2015-2020.pdf>

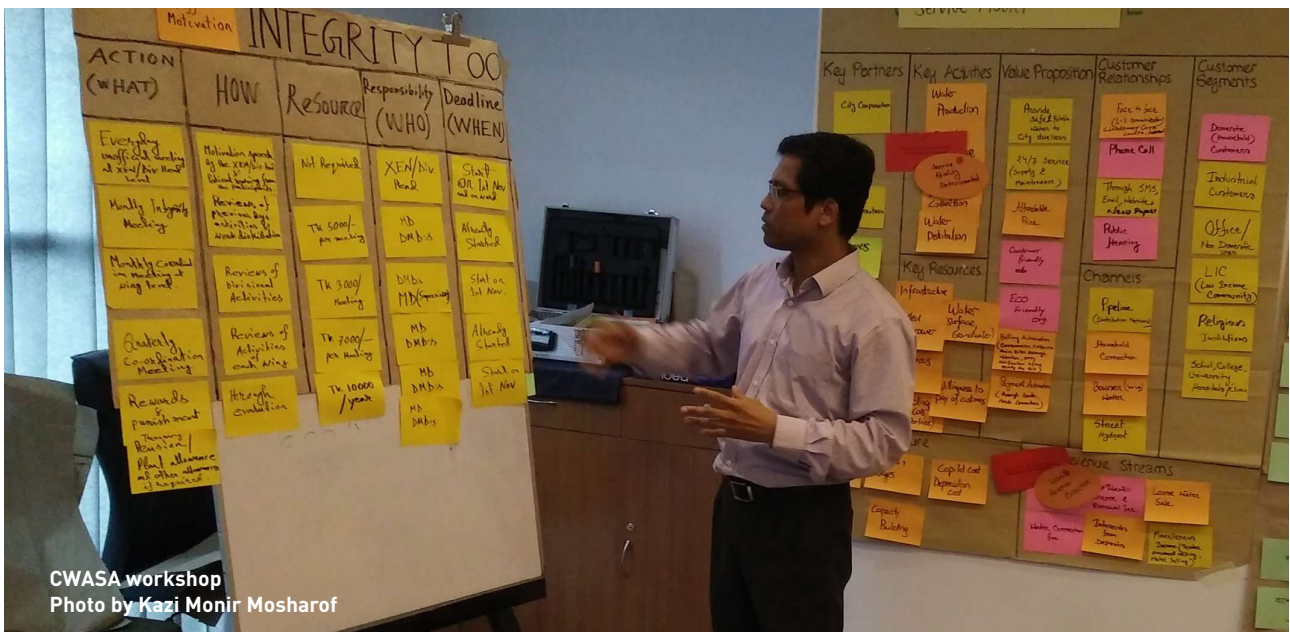
2 PRIORITISING AND IMPLEMENTING INTEGRITY TOOLS

In the Integrity Management planning phase, CWASA prioritised the following measures – also referred to as Integrity Tools – to improve integrity: Field Inspections, Customer Complaint Management, Staff Motivation, and Improved Meter Reading Procedures.

Integrity Tools selected by CWASA	Description	Examples of risks addressed by the tools
Field Inspections	Field inspections are undertaken to monitor operations, and attendance and performance of the field staff and contractors. The field visits can be regular routine or even unannounced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collusion of staff with informal and private water providers Operation and maintenance not carried out properly Manipulation of meters and meter readings Bribes for speedy connections or repair work
Customer Complaint Management System	A customer complaint mechanism is a means to receive, track, and address customer issues and improve accountability. It might also help in detecting illicit practices which often result in low quality and efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inefficient revenue generation Collusion of staff with informal and private providers O&M not carried out properly Manipulation of meters and meter readings Non-cooperative customers Insufficient responsiveness to complaints
Satisfactory Work Environment and Conditions	The work environment comprises the physical, geographical location and the immediate surroundings of a workplace, as well as the perks and benefits associated with employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low staff motivation Unsatisfying employment conditions
Improved Meter Reading Procedures	<p>Dedicated utility staff regularly and manually check consumers' meters.</p> <p>Procedures on meter reading are guidelines on how this activity must be conducted, including responsibilities, standard operating procedures, area of operation and so on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulation of meters and meter readings Bribes Improper Reporting

2.1 INTRODUCING TEMPLATES AND GUIDELINES FOR FIELD INSPECTIONS

Before the introduction of Integrity Tools, field reports were often irregular and unreliable. There was no standardised means of documentation and employees often filled out reports without even having visited the field. The Utility's senior officers did not always check the reliability of these reports.



CWASA developed a standardised reporting template for field inspections and set a procedure, ensuring that all inspectors actually go to the field and immediately share their results with high officials. This made checking and comparing information easier and strengthened accountability among field inspectors. CWASA management now systematically checks field reports and undertakes corrective measures, wherever necessary.

2.2 IMPROVING CUSTOMER COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

Before the introduction of Integrity Tools, complaints from customers were registered ad hoc in person or over the phone. Through the Integrity Management process, CWASA introduced a centralised complaint centre and moved to a digital system. Complaints can now be registered via email, mobile phone, hotline, and website. Additionally, each complaint now has a tracking number for better monitoring and accountability to customers who can now ask for the status of actions taken.

Although the improved complaint management system has not yet led to fewer complaints, complaints are indeed easier to place. A Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted as part of the Integrity Management process in November 2019, showed room for improvement in handling complaints. At the time the Customer Satisfaction Index for CWASA was only 65%, while the internationally accepted standards range between 70-100%. The main complaints were related to unreliable and intermittent water supply, poor/low water quality, untimely delivery and inaccurate bills, poor response time and customer care. Improvements have since been made and in the long run, with the new digital and standardised process, it will be easier to successfully handle these complaints.

2.3 IMPROVING WORK ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS

Besides punishment of illegal behaviour, CWASA's top management introduced an appraisal mechanism to recognise and encourage good performance of staff. The organisation is now working towards creating a satisfactory work environment and improving conditions, to increase overall staff motivation.

2.4 ESTABLISHING A DISTRICT METERING AREA (DMA) AND IMPROVING METER READING

CWASA completed preparation and design of a DMA and new pipelines were installed in the DMA. Additionally, inlet bulk meter position has been selected and by the end of 2019, equipment from abroad had already been installed.

Establishing DMA is a major task and the process was only partially completed before the end of the initial Integrity Management process in 2021. CWASA has since developed new objectives for DMA linked to integrity for June 2022, including:

- Delivery of steady and regular water
- Control of water theft and reduction of Non-Revenue Water
- Accountable and transparent management

3 RESULTS: WHERE DOES CWASA STAND NOW?

“We are making progress in terms of integrity and ethics. In 2018, CWASA developed an integrity management roadmap using the Integrity Management Toolbox. This process has helped CWASA identify the integrity risks we face and to choose the best integrity tools to manage them.”

CWASA Managing Director, A.K.M. Fazlullah

Between 2010-2020, CWASA implemented a \$186 million megaproject to achieve almost universal access to water in the city with support from the World Bank.² Since 2019, CWASA has also undergone remarkable development, in part due to its Integrity Management process. CWASA’s managing director also found the Integrity Management process useful in achieving Bangladesh National Integrity Strategy³ requirements and objectives. In 2021, CWASA shared its experience working on integrity at the Integrity Dialogue Roundtable Discussion in Dhaka and in the Global Water Operators Partnerships Alliance Congress.

CWASA and partners conducted a comprehensive baseline assessment at the start of the Integrity Management implementation phase to improve staff understanding of their organisation as a whole and to gather data on key indicators related to Integrity Management. After three years, local partner NGO Forum conducted an endline assessment to monitor progress. Though they cannot be fully attributed to the Integrity Management process, the overall results are impressive, especially considering the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic faced by CWASA and other WASAs in Bangladesh.

- Between 2018 and 2021, Non-Revenue Water went down from 25% to 22%. This reduction can be linked to a more effective monitoring system combined with improved staff motivation. It led to an increase in revenue.
- Customer service has improved. There are more avenues for placing complaints and complaints are tracked in a centralised, digital system, meaning they can no longer be ignored as they were.
- Although the staff count went down, the overall service coverage increased from 54% in 2018 to 61% in 2021, which shows that operations have become more efficient.
- CWASA is introducing ATM booths for water supply in low-income communities and informal settlements, to further reduce water losses and increase revenues. Although this activity is not directly related to the implementation of Integrity Tools it has had a huge positive impact.

4 LESSONS LEARNT FOR INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

- Buy-in from top management is key to the success of an Integrity Management process. It paid off to invest time at the outset of the project to ensure management support.
- Collecting and assessing baseline integrity data was a useful exercise: it served as a valuable incentive for CWASA management and staff and was used by coaches to monitor and quantify progress.

² <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/bangladeshs-second-largest-city-gets-almost-universal-access-water>

³ The National Integrity Strategy addresses system weaknesses in domestic institutions highlighted by the UN as a key driver of corruption. The NIS reflects the government’s stated belief that “the fight against corruption cannot be won by prosecution alone; an inclusive approach based on values, morals, ethics, and integrity is necessary.”, <https://www.p4dbd.org/national-integrity-strategy>

The discussions on the assessment were particularly useful to understand how the organisation functions and how certain developments are linked to integrity.

It is recommended that such an assessment always be conducted in person, ideally linked to a workshop to discuss the results with the different departments.

- CWASA encountered three major problems in its Integrity Management process. First, the overburdening of CWASA's internal integrity coach. Second, the rapid transfer of the Deputy Managing Director, the Commercial Manager, and Secretary who were posted by the government on deputation. Both led to delays in implementation, as new staff had to get on board with the project. Third, COVID-19 significantly hampered CWASA's routine work as well as its Integrity Management approach.



CWASA workshop
Photo by Kazi Monir Mosharof

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