



TRAINING MANUAL ON WATER INTEGRITY

MODULE 5: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION



Transparency and access to information

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Freedom of information laws

Freedom of information laws aim to make governments more accountable in their actions, such as service delivery. They do this by providing a right of access to official records that then enable the public to scrutinise the performance of government agencies and officials.

Information and the role of civil society

Information and participation for public oversight and improved transparency

- Participation in water budgeting and policy development by selected representatives of the civil society can facilitate pro-poor focus on government spending.
- Farmers' participation in site selection of intakes and pumps and irrigation asset management helps to assure that they are properly represented when it comes to accessing water.
- Civil society participation in performance and financial auditing, water pollution mapping and performance monitoring of water utilities creates important additional checks and balances.
- Transparency and stakeholder participation build trust and confidence required for governance.

Transparency in water infrastructure development

The value of information to get ‘value for money’

New water infrastructure projects tend to be complex, infrequent, large, site specific and unique which makes unit costs difficult to estimate. Open access to information relevant to construction of works during the different project phases in the project cycle is essential to ensure cost efficiency and value for money.

The different stages of the project cycle

- Preparatory phase
- Procurement and contract award
- Implementation of construction works
- Operation and maintenance phase

Integrity pacts

Objective of the integrity pacts

To reduce the risk of corrupt practices during procurement through a binding agreement between the client or owner and bidders for specific contracts.

The Integrity Pact involves:

1. The bidders, contractors, goods and service providers who pledge to abstain from bribing, by assuring all bidders will also refrain from paying bribes;
2. The client or project owner, e.g. government agencies who pledge to prevent corruption, by adhering good procurement practices including not seeking nor soliciting for bribes.

Tools to improve access to information and transparency

Public meetings

Raising citizen's voice

Access to information laws

Participatory budgeting

Community participation
methodologies

Complaints and ombudsman's
offices

E-procurement

Some simple actions to improve water integrity

- Keep technologies and designs as simple, practical and relevant as possible.
- Plan water service with the community, involving leaders, rich and poor, men as well as women.
- Simplify information, plans, designs, reports and accounts so that they are understandable by all stakeholders.