

CP2A: Conduct regular households surveys or similar instruments to assess consumer satisfaction

REGULATORY FUNCTION: CONSUMER PROTECTION REGULATION		CP2A
OBJECTIVE CP2 There are mechanisms to monitor and review information received about consumer protection rights	ACTION CARD CP2A <h1>CONDUCT REGULAR SURVEYS OR SIMILAR INSTRUMENTS TO ASSESS CONSUMER SATISFACTION</h1>	
COST: Medium FREQUENCY: Regular TARGET GROUPS: Regulators, consumers, civil society		
DESCRIPTION Information can reach regulators through various sources, but a primary goal is to establish direct communication with consumers. To help to protect consumer interests, regulators must employ mechanisms and tools where consumers' views can be shared. To that end, regulators should undertake surveys, forums, or use other means to gather relevant information from consumers or their respective associations on their satisfaction with service provision. Surveys are increasingly conducted online and are also made available to operators.		
EXPECTED OUTCOMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers have an opportunity to provide feedback directly to regulators. • Regulators collect essential information regarding operators' performance. • Service operators can access feedback from surveys. 		
EXAMPLE 1: ZAMBIA In Zambia , to strengthen consumer participation in the water and sanitation sector, the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) instituted a consumer forum in each province. The purpose is to sensitize the public about their rights and obligations with regards to water supply and sanitation provision, and service level guarantees. These forums also act a survey platforms to enable consumers to give feedback on the quality of services, as well as to present complaints. To date, consumer forums have been held in Kabweand Solwezi, the capital cities of Central Province and North-Western Province, respectively, and are to be repeated and scaled out as part of a developing regulatory survey mechanism.		
EXAMPLE 2: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC The President of the Republic issued a national decree on the Regulation of the National Public Utilities Quality Monitoring System, thereby creating the National Observatory on Public Utilities Quality (ONACSEP) as an integrated platform for research, participation and accountability. As one of ONACSEP's tools, it also created the Public Utility Quality Satisfaction Barometer with the aim of attaining greater knowledge on citizen opinion trends regarding the quality improvement of these services. The barometer therefore seeks to promote continuous service improvement through elements such as the national user satisfaction survey, which must be elaborated by institutions that provide public utilities, the results of which are to be published annually in accordance with models and dates defined by the public administration. In a complementary fashion, the Public Utility Quality Satisfaction Barometer includes quarterly publications based on complaints and suggestions submitted directly by consumers, the results of which are used in service planning and improvement.		
EXAMPLE 3: URUGUAY In 2015, the Energy and Water Services Regulator (URSEA) carried out its first user satisfaction surveys (of both residential and non-residential users) with companies providing electricity, drinking water, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and fuel services. These surveys measure, on the one hand, user satisfaction with each of the services, and, on the other, satisfaction with regard to specific aspects such as supply quality, billing information, customer service, service value for money and information and communication from companies to their users.		

The survey was applied randomly and an agreement was signed with the National Statistics Institute (INE) declaring them “Official Statistics,” making survey response mandatory for users.

On the basis of the results obtained, possibilities for improvement were identified, as well as the most important aspects according to users. This information is considered useful to both the providers and URSEA when it comes to defining action plans for service improvement.

LINKS

Zambia: NWASCO web page: <http://www.nwasco.org.zm/index.php/consumer-service/consumer-events>

Dominican Republic: Regulation of the National Public Utilities Quality Monitoring System:

https://observatorioserviciospublicos.gob.do/publicaciones/reglamentos/decreto_111-15.pdf

Uruguay: User satisfaction survey:

<https://www.gub.uy/unidad-reguladora-servicios-energia-agua/comunicacion/noticias/encuestas-satisfaccion-usuarios>

INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

Regulators require public relations and communication skills when conducting this action. Primary partners include media and marketing agencies, civil society, research institutions, and consumer associations that can help to facilitate and communicate consumer feedback to the wider public. Regulators’ staff must be trained by development partners on how to gather the necessary information using different observation tools and mechanisms.