

CP2B: Sensitize and educate consumers about their rights and obligations

REGULATORY FUNCTION: CONSUMER PROTECTION REGULATION		CP2B
OBJECTIVE CP2 There are mechanisms to monitor and review information received about consumer protection rights	ACTION CARD CP2B <h1 style="margin: 0;">SENSITIZE AND EDUCATE CONSUMERS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS</h1>	
COST: Medium FREQUENCY: Regular TARGET GROUPS: Regulators, consumers, civil society		
DESCRIPTION Equally important to collecting information from consumers is to provide them with important global and regional sectoral messages. Turning World Water Day or World Toilet Day into public events, for example, could be used to raise public awareness about consumer rights. Celebrating human rights to water and sanitation through webinars or fairs could be another way of equipping consumers with the necessary tools to understand their duties as well as to defend their rights. Most importantly, regulators should create spaces and enabling environments for consumer awareness about their rights. Other regulatory possibilities are public meetings, conferences, or seminars.		
EXPECTED OUTCOMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is awareness among the public about their rights and obligations. • There is enhanced public engagement in the sector. • There is feedback to a regulator about its potential actions regarding consumer protection. 		
EXAMPLE 1: ZAMBIA In Zambia , the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) joins other stakeholders in observing World Water Days since 1993 when the United Nations General Assembly declared 22 March as the World Day for Water. The UN and member nations devote this day to implementing UN recommendations and promoting concrete activities regarding the world's water resources. In 2001, the World Toilet Organization declared its founding day, 19 November, as World Toilet Day. Since then, this has been observed globally by its member organizations. In September 2009, a new website was launched, dedicated to the celebration of World Toilet Day. NWASCO joins other stakeholders in organizing events. Consumers are welcome to participate in activities on both days, that typically include exhibitions, drama, and various entertainment and awareness programmes.		
EXAMPLE 2: CHILE The Superintendency of Sanitary Services (SISS) provides a link on its website at which training days may be requested for users of drinking water and sewerage service providers in urban areas. These training sessions provide the community with guidance on the work carried out by the SISS, rights and duties, and aspects like the reasonable consumption of drinking water. The training days can be requested year-round and they are offered according regulator availability. These training days are aimed at social or community organizations and subscribers or users of service providers, and require a minimum enrollment of 15 people. It should be noted that these types of trainings are free of cost and response times may be a maximum of 10 working days.		
EXAMPLE 3: PERU The National Superintendency of Sanitation Services (SUNASS) is the public regulator of Peru, which has implemented an initiative called " <i>¡Participa, vecino!</i> " ("Participate, neighbor!"). The policy offers the citizenry spaces for sharing information, dialogue, proposal creation and representation on the various aspects related to aqueduct and sewerage service provision. This space serves to educate and sensitize users on the questions they may have regarding rights and duties, service information and claims procedures, among other aspects, and seeks to contribute to the improvement of services, the population's assessment of such services, and the recognition of the regulator's role.		

Some of the specific spaces for dialogue offered by the initiative include informative talks on how to assess the service and workshops on rights and duties, as well as training on how to implement water conservation best practices, and the updating of standards, among other matters.

Lastly, in order to access and request these training days, SUNASS provides online channels (website, e-mail) and phone numbers.

LINKS:

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

Chile: User training days:

<https://www.chileatiende.gob.cl/fichas/3274-jornadas-de-capacitacion-para-clientes-de-empresas-deservicios-de-agua-potable-y-alcantarillado>

Peru: “¡Participa, vecino!” Program:

<https://www.sunass.gob.pe/usuarios/participacion-ciudadana/participa-vecino/>

INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

Public relations and communication skills are very helpful to regulators when conducting these kinds of actions. To that end, working with media agencies, consumer associations, and other related public services enhances success. Development partners could support by bringing global events to local level, and by helping sector voices to reach international level. Regulators’ staff must be trained on public relations, event organization, and on issues related to the international WASH agenda.