

## CP1B: Develop procedures to establish water consumer spaces at utility level

REGULATORY FUNCTION: CONSUMER PROTECTION REGULATION		CP1B
<b>OBJECTIVE CP1</b> There are clear rules regarding the interface between consumers and operators	<b>ACTION CARD CP1B</b>  <h1>DEVELOP PROCEDURES TO ESTABLISH CONSUMER SPACES AT UTILITY LEVEL</h1>	
<b>COST:</b> Low <b>FREQUENCY:</b> One time <b>TARGET GROUPS:</b> Regulators, consumers, service operators, civil society		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b> An important modality for protecting consumer interests is setting the stage where their voices can be heard and they can discuss their rights openly and directly with operators. In accordance, regulators provide rules and guidelines to promote such consumer participation at utility level. Regulated modalities and mechanisms determine how consumers can contribute to the timely supply of drinking water and sanitation services, build confidence among the public, and raise awareness about the effective use of drinking water and sanitation. With the primary aim of protecting their rights and interests, consumer platforms are often encouraged to become involved in decision-making processes, and sometimes have representatives on operators' management boards.		
<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service operators ensure the functioning of participatory mechanisms.</li> <li>• Consumers actively participate and share their feedback.</li> <li>• Regulators have a clearer picture of service performance.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXAMPLE 1: TAJIKISTAN</b> In <b>Tajikistan</b> , Public Advisory Councils (PACs) have been established in water supply companies to protect the rights and interests of consumers. In many places they are very active, with consumers making inquiries and complaints that companies must respond to. The aim of these advisor councils is to protect the rights and interests of consumers and encourage their participation in decision-making processes.		
<b>EXAMPLE 2: KENYA</b> In <b>Kenya</b> , the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) acknowledges the need to involve consumers as participants in decisions that affect the way they receive water services. The empowerment of consumers is in line with Kenya's constitution, which recognizes access to water services as a human right. Section 72 of the Water Act 2016 requires WASREB to establish a mechanism for handling complaints from consumers regarding the quality or nature of water services, and to develop guidelines on the establishment of consumer groups and facilitate their establishment. A consumer engagement guideline was developed to facilitate the engagement process between consumers and sector institutions. It defines the roles and responsibilities of various players in consumer engagement and the handling of complaints.		
<b>LINKS</b> Tajikistan: <a href="https://siwi.org/latest/tajikistan-water-supply-companies-raise-transparency-and-improve-cooperation-with-consumers/">https://siwi.org/latest/tajikistan-water-supply-companies-raise-transparency-and-improve-cooperation-with-consumers/</a> Kenya: <a href="https://wasreb.go.ke/downloads/Consumer%20Engagement%20Guideline%20Revised%202018.pdf">https://wasreb.go.ke/downloads/Consumer%20Engagement%20Guideline%20Revised%202018.pdf</a>		
<b>INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS</b> This action requires regulators to have improved public relations abilities in order to be able to establish and facilitate space between consumers and operators. Consumers and their associations, civil society, and development partners, take an active part in supporting this regulatory action. The staff of both regulators and operators must be trained on how to manage their operations in an inclusive manner, and how to systematically allow consumer participation in their executive decisions.		