

SQ1B: Establish policies and procedures for the provision of good quality services

REGULATORY AREA: SERVICE QUALITY REGULATION		SQ1B
OBJECTIVE SQ1 Define service requirements to be met by operators	ACTION CARD SQ1B <h2 style="margin: 0;">ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROVISION OF GOOD QUALITY SERVICES</h2>	
COST: Low FREQUENCY: One time TARGET GROUPS: Regulators, service operators, consumer associations		
DESCRIPTION <p>The definition of service quality requires appropriate communication through transparent mechanisms. It is important that service quality procedures are comprehensible and accessible to service operators and consumers at all times. Regulators should therefore develop sets of policy and procedure guidelines aimed at setting common rules for service quality provision. In accordance, in most cases, these procedures are outlined through or built upon consumer charts. Outlined often with some incentives, these guidelines motivate operators to share accurate information. In turn, this helps regulators in the long term to reduce overall auditing costs.</p>		
EXPECTED OUTCOMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent service quality guidelines and policies are accessible to all interested parties. • There is an independent and impartial supervision of service operators. • Consumer associations are actively engaged. 		
EXAMPLE 1: AUSTRALIA <p>In Australia, the regulator in Victoria state establishes that operators must issue and comply with a customer charter that meets the procedural and substantive requirements of the relevant code, and sets out the water business's approved service standards. In addition to complying with applicable requirements of public health and environmental regulations, a water business must provide a service in accordance with any commitments in the water business's approved service standards. Each water business is therefore required to adhere to the following.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Meet the customer-related standards, procedures and practices set out in this code. b) Develop, issue and comply with a customer charter which meets the procedural and substantive requirements of the water code, and sets out the water business's approved service standards. 		
EXAMPLE 2: ZAMBIA <p>Zambia introduced through its national regulator NWASCO the following Consumer Charter.</p> <p><i>You have the right to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum level of service as guaranteed by your provider • Regular supply • Good quality water • A satisfactory response to your complaints • Be invoiced every month • Demand better services <p><i>You have the responsibility to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give feedback on the quality and quantity of services received • Keep water infrastructure/fittings in good condition • Pay bills on time 		

- Report any illegal activities around water infrastructure
- Allow water providers access to infrastructure and water points
- Pay for repairs and maintenance of distribution pipes
- Conserve water

LINKS

Australia Customer Service Code: <https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/customer-service-codes-customer-service-code-urban-water-businesses-august-2018-20180801.pdf>

Zambia Consumer Charter: <http://www.nwasco.org.zm/index.php/consumer-service/consumer-rights-obligations>

INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS

Strong administrative, procedural and communication capacities must be embodied within a regulator to conduct this action. It is common however, that regulators' staff will require additional support from development partners when drafting the guidelines and conducting multi-stakeholder consultations. Substantive inputs by relevant ministries will help to match these guidelines with other sector policies. Feedback from consumers, operators and civil society is necessary to ensure a common understanding through the use of understandable terminology.