

Summary of Stakeholder Consultation

Jarreng, The Gambia on 6th Dec 2023

A stakeholder consultation was held on 6th December 2023 in Jarreng to discuss the clean water system and smart taps. This report summarises the meeting for those who were unable to attend and documents the feedback received.

Sections:

1. Agenda
2. Project Summary and Impact
3. Meeting Minutes
4. Comments & Feedback
5. Contact details

Date of report: 15th January 2024

1. Agenda



If you are unable to attend please note that feedback and comments can be emailed to info@ewater.sevices or contact Alieu Colley eWater Country Manager +220 388 7057

MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, 6th December 2023
15.00 to 17.00 PM
Jarreng, Central River Region

Attendees:

CRR Governor
Alkalo (Village Chief)
VDC Jarreng
eWater Services

Agenda 1

Arrival and registration of public participation attendees 15.00 - 15.10

Agenda 2

Opening prayer and welcome by Alkalo 15.10 - 15.20

Agenda 3

Summary of eWater project, potential impact and results 15.20 - 15.35

- Technology, design, implementation and future
- Summary of impact so far, potential, and monitoring
- Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Agenda 4

Household Meter discussion and survey 15.35 - 16.05

- Technology
- Participant survey

Agenda 5

Open to participants for feedback and comments: 16.05 - 16.35

- Clarifying questions
- Feedback round
- Discussion of continuous input and grievance mechanism

Agenda 6

VDC closing words and closing prayer 16.35 - 16.55

- Request to complete evaluation form
- What to expect next, how minutes will be distributed and who to contact
- Closing words
- Closing prayer

2. Project Summary & Impact

Project Summary

eWATERservices (“eWATER”) is a private water operator providing 24/7 access to clean water in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Using smart technology and local operational excellence, eWATER installs, operates and maintains water systems serving drinking water to rural communities sustainably.

Only 2 in 10 people living in rural parts of SSA have access to a reliable source of clean water, while 8 in 10 have a mobile phone. Those that can access clean water often walk many kilometres to collect it, they use manual pumps or buckets, and the water is often unclean and untreated, leaving many people boiling the water to avoid getting sick.

The project involves the installation, operation and maintenance of eWATER Smart Water Systems in Kenya, Tanzania and The Gambia. Clean water is accessed through eWATER Smart Taps™ connected to piped water systems and powered by solar energy. People in the community can use their mobile phones to purchase credit and access safe water from nearby eWATER taps. Local residents do not have to worry about the maintenance of the system, as engineers from eWATER detect and rectify any issues as soon as they happen.

The main purpose of the project is to provide clean and safe water for drinking, cleaning and cooking to rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Project Summary & Impact

Summary of economic, social and environmental impacts of the project

Since 2015, 838 Smart Taps have tracked and dispensed 1.3 billion litres of water, providing 231,198 people in SSA with safe water. The project aims to serve around a million more people by 2028, through the installation of approximately 4,400 eWATER Smart taps. Each tap, located in Kenya, Tanzania and the Gambia, dispenses roughly 1,500 litres of clean water per day. The project's social, economic and environmental advantages align closely with the sustainable development goals:

SDG 3: Good health and Wellbeing

The installation of smart water taps means that clean water is readily and conveniently available for drinking, cleaning and cooking, meaning the community avoids the risks associated with untreated water consumption such as disease. A village water distribution system ensures water is delivered throughout the village and is convenient for local residents to access.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

By reducing the amount of time spent collecting and treating water, the project benefits women and girls by allowing more time available for attending school and other educational activities. This allows women and girls to achieve a better quality of education and improved employment opportunities. The project activity also provides employment opportunities to local people regardless of gender, who are anticipated to work in diverse roles within the project. eWATER Credit can be purchased in local shops meaning that business managers, which includes women, will profit from the sales.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

The clean water systems installed provide an affordable, long-term solution to local residents, allowing them access to a safe supply of water sufficient to meet their daily needs.

SDG 13: Climate Action

Before this project activity, it was common for local residents to manually collect water from untreated natural sources and boil it using wood or charcoal stoves. Through the installation and use of safe and clean water taps, no boiling is required. Therefore, emissions resulting from the use of firewood and charcoal are avoided.

Potential negative impacts

Some water system components, for example materials in the solar panels and batteries, could pose a hazard and must be handled and disposed of with care. At the end of a system life, eWATER commits to dispose them in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. For most parts of the equipment, there commonly are local recycling plants that are apt to receive the materials.

3. Meeting Minutes

Jarreng Consultation Minutes, 6th December 2023

Opening:

Rob Hygate of eWATER opened the meeting with a warm welcome and a summary of the agenda to be covered. He noted that the whole meeting would be video recorded.

Opening Prayer and Welcome

There was an opening prayer and a welcome address by the respected Alkalo, setting a positive and respectful tone for our meeting.

eWATER Project Summary

Rob Hygate provided a detailed summary of the eWATER project. This included insights into the technology, design, and implementation of the Smart Water Systems, and a look at the future of this initiative. Rob also discussed the impact we've achieved so far, our potential for future growth, and how our efforts align with the Sustainable Development Goals. He covered SDGs 3, 5, 6, 13.

Household Meter Discussion and Survey

There was a focused discussion and survey on the Household Meter. This segment delved into the technology behind it and gathered valuable feedback from the participants through a survey. The Pre-Paid Smart Household Water Meter, or HHM, was developed between November 2022 and January 2023 and is being trialled in Jarreng.

The discussion of technology included details of the technical specifications and the customer-focused design. The impact of the household meter technology was then covered including benefits of enhanced water access, empowering Users, reduced environmental impact, data-driven management.

Open Feedback and Comments

The host, Rob Hygate stated: "We highly value your input and have dedicated time for you to ask questions, provide feedback, and discuss any concerns. This is also the moment to talk about how we can maintain an open and continuous dialogue, including addressing any grievances." This was followed by a Q&A with the participants. Comments and questions are summarised in sections 4 and 5.

Closing of the Meeting

To conclude, the Village Development Committee (VDC) offered closing words and a prayer. Attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form. For further feedback, attendees were told: "You can always call Alieu, and send emails to info@ewater.services. We welcome continuous feedback and input, and we will also listen to any grievances." The eWATER team shared what to expect next, including how and when the meeting minutes will be distributed.

4. Comments & Feedback

Thank you to everyone who participated in the day, completed an evaluation form or got in touch with feedback about the project. We held a 2-hour Q&A session and received 11 written or verbal responses to the evaluation form, the majority very positive. Here are our answers to the questions and feedback we received:

Held on: 6th Dec 2023
At: Jarreng
Attendance: 57 people

“The price of water should be clear and understood, including amounts used”

Answer: We are installing new water taps throughout the village in Dec 2023 with displays, allowing users to check credit balance on their tag, see the volume of water dispensed and amount charged. eWATER is not for profit. The price of water is fixed and is kept as low as possible, while also ensuring there are enough funds for maintenance and repairs. **It is 1 Dalasi for 20 litres of water.** After the meeting, the eWATER team went with community members to taps and dispensed 1 Dalasi of water showing that it filled a 20 L jerry can. If you find that this is not the case, please contact us straightaway on +220 2120965 or +220 3887057 (WhatsApp only) so the problem can be fixed.

“Please could the community be involved and informed if the price of water is going to change”

Answer: Yes, this would not take place without the involvement and awareness of the community and there are no plans for the price to change.

“Could you explain about the water quality and how it’s cleaned? Does it have chlorine?”

Answer: The water is treated and tested every 6 months to make sure it is within WHO standards. In our other sites in Tanzania and Kenya we add chlorine to the water, however in The Gambia some people don’t accept this and in the past we have been asked not to add it. If this is something that this community now wants, please could the VDC and water committee let us know and in which case we will install this.

“Have there been any issues with the new household meters? What happens now that the 6-month trial time has elapsed? What type of meter is it? (e.g. Pre- or post-paid)”

We have been trialling a new technology and have seen the same problem at 5 or 6 compounds where it takes too long to connect to the internet. We are currently fixing this problem, at which point we will be ready to give out more household meters. We apologize that the trial has lasted longer than 6 months - we really want to get this right and appreciate all your feedback to help us achieve this. We are developing a new “compound meter” which allows many people to use it while each paying with their own tag. This avoids issues where the tap owner pays for all the water used.

“The second contract appears to be less clear than the first. The prior contract was with the water Management committee and this one is with the VDC. How would we expand the system?”

The country manager will review the contract and explain it so that it is clear. eWATER’s model has adapted in response to feedback from our users - we have shifted from being a community model to a utility model which means that we are now responsible for the whole water system and we extend the system at our own cost. If you want extensions, please raise it with the country manager Alieu (+220 388 7057) and if there are people in need of water and if we are able to secure the necessary funds we will lay the pipework and install a closer tap.



5. Contact

Telephone: +220 388 7057

Email: info@ewater.services

In person: Speak to us in person when we visit the community or when one of our technicians is in the community performing maintenance (roughly once per week). If you have a question you can also speak to a member of the local county government, any eWATER representative, or ask one of our resellers.