

## Current programmes

- **The China Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion Programme** (£15 million, 2007-2012) focuses on improving access to water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion services in 25 counties in Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces, targeting around 750,000 people and more than 400 schools. The programme – in partnership with the World Bank and UNICEF – also works at the national level, aiming to influence policies on sanitation and hygiene, and raising awareness on safe sanitation and good hygiene.
- **The Water Resources Demand Management Assistance Project** (£9.4 million, 2005-2010) supports the government of China in implementing the Water Law in two water scarce river basins in Gansu and Liaoning provinces. Through 7 pilots in different rural and urban settings, the project will develop, test, document and disseminate successful approaches for integrated water resources management, making use of international and Chinese best practise. In both river basins climate change impact studies will be carried out with recommendations for possible adaptation measures.
- **The Pro-Poor Rural Water Reform Project** (£7.5 million, 2004-2009) assists the Chinese government in the reform of end-canal irrigation management. In 11 provinces, it supports the development of democratic and inclusive water user associations to manage, operate and maintain small-scale irrigation structures. The project has influenced nation-

al policy, through recommendations, guidelines and practical dissemination and training materials. The project will provide evidence on the positive impact of water user associations on farmer's livelihoods, especially women and the poor.

- **The China Watershed Management Project** (£5 million, 2003-2008) pilots participatory watershed planning and management in four watersheds in Gansu province. It delivers livelihoods and environmental benefits to communities, especially the poor. Better monitoring and evaluation systems for watershed management have been developed. Through its dissemination work, the project successfully promotes the use of participatory approaches and monitoring and evaluation systems.
- DFID has just completed a major piece **analytic and advisory work** of the **Environment and Natural Resources Pricing and Taxation** Task Force under the China Council for International Cooperation and Development (£0.6 million, 2003-2007). Policy recommendations have been provided to the State Council on a number of issues, such as water pricing, reform of public fiscal system, pollution control, and urban water sector reform.

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# DFID China Briefing Paper: Water and Sanitation Sector January 2008

## Key issues

- **China is facing a severe water crisis.** Rapid economic growth is putting huge stress on China's natural resources, especially water. China has 20% of the world's people, but only 7% of the water. Water scarcity and pollution are constraining the sustainability of China's growth, affect public health and cause extensive damage to ecosystems. Recent research indicates that the cost of water scarcity and pollution is around 3% of GDP.
- **North China is extremely water scarce and polluted.** It accounts for 43% of the population, generates half of GDP, comprises around 58% of farmland, but has only 19% of national water resources. The per capita water availability is only one third of the national average. The most polluted rivers are found in North China, with more than 75% of all rivers and lakes being polluted. Main sources of pollution are untreated wastewater, industrial pollution, fertilisers and pesticides used in agriculture.
- **Climate change** is adding to the crisis, aggravating water scarcity, increasing the occurrence of droughts, floods and other extreme weather events.
- Without **safe water supply, sanitation and good hygiene**, people - especially women and girls - cannot live productive, healthy and dignified lives. Lack of access constrains economic development and results in environmental as well as public health costs. Children especially suffer from diarrhoea as a result of unsafe water, sanitation and poor hygiene. It is one of the major causes of child mortality. The economic costs of disease and death related to diarrhoea in rural China are conservatively estimated at 0.5% of GDP.
- Almost **1 in 4 of the world's population** without access to safe drinking water supply and sanitation live in China. Domestic statistics say that in 2005 over **300 million** people in rural areas have no access to safe drinking water and around **670 million** people have no access to sanitation. Although China is generally on-track in reaching the MDG target for water supply and sanitation, **disparities in access** are huge, between the poor, rural western parts of China versus the urban population in the better-off, eastern provinces. Access to safe sanitation in urban areas is nearly twice as compared with rural areas. Not surprisingly, health statistics suggest that the mortality rate due to diarrhoeal disease for rural children is nearly twice as reported for urban children.



## Government Strategy

### On water resources management

■ Tackling the water crisis is one of China's top priorities. The government passed a new **Water Law in 2002**. It recognises the need for **stakeholder consultation** and the **integrated management** of both surface and groundwater resources at river basin level.

■ Recent water policies and guidelines have focused on improving water use efficiencies and better managing **water demand** through regulatory and pricing mechanisms. For example, targets in the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan relate to a 10% reduction of water use for industrial value added.

■ **Water quality management and pollution control** are at the heart of the policy debate in China. The 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan allocates substantial resources to reduce pollution and improve water quality. The need for better institutional cooperation between the Ministry of Water Resources and the State Environmental Protection Administration is now well recognised.

### On water supply and sanitation

■ Government has set ambitious targets to provide **safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2020**. The 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan aims to provide safe drinking water to an **additional 160 million rural people by 2010**, emphasising poorer western regions and rural schools. Central funding commitments are reported to be RMB 40 billion (around US\$ 5 billion) for 2006-2010.

■ **Sanitation** is now an integral part of the New Social Countryside and is included in the National Health Strategy. The

11<sup>th</sup> Five Year plan sets targets for 65% **coverage of rural sanitation by 2010**, up from 45% in 2005. Central funding for latrine improvements in rural China is considerably increased to RMB 250 million for the year 2008. However, resources allocation remains inadequate considering the ambitious target and disease burden in rural areas. The target for hygiene promotion is that 50% of the rural population will practice safe hygiene behaviours by 2010. However, little reliable data is currently available to assess whether these targets are realistic.

■ Recent policies are introducing a **new approach** to safe drinking water programmes. They include the integration of sanitation and hygiene promotion activities together with water supply, also known as the **three-in-one approach**.

## DFID China objectives and focus

We support China's efforts to manage its water resources more sustainably and to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for all, while promoting good hygiene habits

### DFID projects focus on

■ Increasing access for the poorest villages, communities, and households

■ Building capacity for planning, coordination and implementation for scaling-up of water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes

■ Improving institutional arrangements and building capacity for integrated water resource planning and management at river basin level

■ Increasing stakeholder consultation and public participation in water resources management and service delivery

■ Supporting the use of monitoring and evaluation systems for policy development

## Specific Activities

**Our projects are supporting the following innovations and approaches in line with Government policies**

■ **Three-in-one approach for water, sanitation and hygiene** In Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces we will pilot this approach at a fairly large scale. Sanitation promotion activities will create a real demand for toilets and households can choose the type of latrine they prefer. A comprehensive hygiene promotion campaign will motivate people to change behaviour and wash their hands with soap. Based on international best practise, the campaign will use social marketing techniques and measure behaviour change through household and school observations. We will also support the government in its efforts to address the low priority for sanitation and hygiene, starting with a series of advocacy events in 2008, the International Year of Sanitation. Lessons from the pilots will be disseminated at central level to inform policy development.

■ **Integrated Water Resources Management at River Basin level** DFID is introducing tools, models, concepts, and approaches for integrated river basin planning, for better management of water demand through regulatory and pricing mechanisms and for better institutional arrangements to manage pollution. This will support the government to improve environmental sustainability, account-

ability and incentives for using, allocating and regulating water more rationally. DFID is also helping to assess the impact of climate change on water resources availability and future water use in the Daling and Shiyang river basins.

■ **Community participation in all aspects of water sector work** We support China's strategy to increasingly use community-based approaches in the planning and management of its watersheds, the operation of irrigation schemes and the management of drinking water schemes. DFID's programmes in the water sector institutionalise community participation in planning, management and monitoring, through user groups, such as water user associations. We also help to develop training and advocacy packages for communities and government officials to put this work into practise.

## Partners

■ We work in partnership with the Ministry of Water Resources, as well as provincial and county level Water Resources bureaux. Additionally, we work with other government departments such as: the National Development and Reform Commission, the National Health Patriotic Campaign Committee Office, the Environmental Protection Administration, the State Office for Comprehensive Agricultural Development, and the Yellow River Commission. Furthermore, we work with a number of Chinese universities and research groups on a range of water policy issues.

■ We also work closely with the World Bank, UNICEF and Global Water Partnership China and coordinate our work with other international agencies. In hygiene promotion we also work in partnership with the private sector.