

INTERNATIONAL SMALL COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY NETWORK

Background:

How to protect the public health of people who rely on community water supplies has been a topic addressed by WHO for many decades. Volume 3 of the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality (3rd edition) is dedicated to the subject. However, today's national and international policy frameworks recognize that further attention to this topic is needed in order to meet the water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, Goal 7 (b) is to "Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation."

Community water supplies in both developing and developed countries are more frequently associated with outbreaks of water-borne disease than urban supplies.

Small community water supplies are those most vulnerable to contamination and breakdown everywhere in the world. As such, even in developed countries these water supplies pose potential health risks. Sharing information, ideas and resources is extremely valuable to all countries dealing with the special challenges posed by small community water supplies.

Purpose and Objective of the Network:

The International Small Community Water Supply Network was formed to promote the achievement of substantive and sustainable improvements to the safety of small community water supplies around the world, particularly in rural areas, as a contribution to the Millennium Development Goals related to water and sanitation. Network members collaborate on their shared objectives of :

- Developing internationally-recognized guidance;
- Developing and facilitating access to tools to implement this guidance; and
- Building the evidence base to facilitate advocacy for political support.

The Network's work plan in this regard is expected to be completed by 2014. At this point, the Network's achievements relative to this plan of work and the need for any additional work will be reviewed. Based on this review and a wider review of achievements with respect to the Millennium Development Goals, the Network will either cease to exist or be redefined.

Approach:

The International Small Community Water Supply Network is a platform to conduct and share innovative research, good practices and advocacy tools related to the management of small community water supplies. The Network members work together to identify common management and technical issues and problems in relation to community supplies, and to find workable solutions in a geographic and cultural context.

Membership in the Network is open to all interested stakeholders that agree with the Network's purpose and objective and who are willing to commit themselves to working towards achieving the objectives of the Network.

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