



Engaging all actors to improve water supply and sanitation services for Niassa Province. GOTAS: *Governança Transparente para Água, Saneamento e Saúde*

GOTAS and governance

The Governance and Transparency for Water, Sanitation and Health (GOTAS) programme, is implemented by the Provincial Government of Niassa, with technical support from the SNV-United Purpose consortium and funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). It aims to contribute to improving the quality of life of local communities by supporting the decentralized provision of water, sanitation and health promotion services.

One of the key features of GOTAS is the creation of coordination and dialogue spaces for participants from State and Non-State actors, where each party plays a specific and complementary role. One of the strategic partners of GoTAS is the Provincial Assembly (AP) of Niassa. GOTAS has been active in strengthening the capacity of the AP through training and mentoring on inspection and advocacy as follows:

- Greater government engagement with all implementing actors.
- AP members participation in dialogue spaces.
- Inclusion of issues related to water and sanitation in schedules of the AP sessions.

In the national decentralized governance cycle, the AP, as a democratic representative body has deliberative and monitoring powers. The law also gives it sufficient powers to assess, approve and oversee the plans, strategies and other local development instruments proposed by the Provincial Executive Council, such as the Economic and Social Plan and Provincial Budget (PES-OP). The GoTAS activities and budget are an in-

tegral part of the Economic and Social Plan and Provincial Budget.

District visits by representative assembly

It is within this framework that the GOTAS program, through the civil society organization FOFeN - Forum of Women's Organizations of Niassa, organized a working visits between 1 and 20 October 2020 for members of the Provincial Assembly to the five programme target districts: Mandimba, Lago, Sanga, Lichinga and Chimbunila.

The purpose of the visits was to enhance the role of the Provincial Assembly, as a partner of the programme, as well to contribute to the better performance of the programme and the water and sanitation sector.

AP members residing in each district (Sanga, Lago, Chimbunila, Lichinga and Mandimba) participated in this inspection exercise. The mission began with an introductory visit with the respective administrators and ended with a concluding meeting where the main findings were presented and recommendations with deadlines were agreed with the respective people in charge.

In each area visited, a detailed report was presented on funds received from GOTAS, the main achievements, their impact on the lives of the beneficiary communities, and material or equipment acquired with programme funds.

Field visits

The second step of the visits consisted of a field visit where, in addition to "on-site" verification of the infrastructure referred to in the reports, the members met with some Community Water and Sanitation Committees (CAS) and Local Advisory Council.

In general, the members of the AP appreciated with satisfaction the programme's contribution to the improvement of water supply and sanitation, strengthening community participation in governance processes through local councils, and the increased level of awareness of the communities on the management of sustainable water sources through the Community Committees. They appreciated the renovations that are underway in health centers, aiming to improve water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in maternity hospitals with the integration of sanitary blocks including incinerators. Based on what they saw and heard from users as the professionals at the Health Center in Lussanhando, Sanga district, where the referred infrastructure is complete and in use, members of the AP committed to bringing this experience to the Government's attention in order to replicate the initiative in other health centers.

On the other hand, there was some concerns raised by AP members to learn of the delays and problems with quality of the ongoing construction work of the sanitary block at the health center in Meluluca, Lago District. It was also observed that the water supply system in Maniamba, Lago District, had been vandalised and was not operational. The reasons for the delay in the completion of works and the operational challenges with some of the infrastructure as explained by the contractor and supervisor and was included in the report by the local newspaper **Faisca Nr.752** (pg. 8-10) who accompanied the visit.

"We managed to see that the GOTAS programme is fulfilling its role, there are assets and infrastructure financed through SDPI, but there must be greater and better use of this infrastructure and equipment, because of failures in the Maniamba and Kobwe water systems, and delays in the conclusion of the Meluluca works, we feel that there are number of deficiencies in the community water supply services that we can work together to resolve."

-Anifa Matola, spokesperson for the group of members of the AP, Lago District.



Provincial Assembly members visit the construction works for the Health Center sanitary block in Meponda.

In the concluding meetings of the visits, members of the AP presented findings to the District Administration and obtained explanations on what corrective actions will be taken. In general, the members of the AP had recommendations to clearly define final deadlines for the completion of works and greater accountability of the contractor and the supervisor for oversight of the quality of construction. Regarding the Maniamba system shutdown, there was the urgent recommendation for the Government, in coordination with private manager, to accelerate the repair process to return water supply services to the communities, and the need to appeal to the communities for greater control and engagement in protection of their infrastructure.

Conclusion

Through this process, the full spectrum of actors in the province of Niassa have been engaged, and the programme can proceed with the satisfaction that government oversight bodies, government service providers, civil society and local journalists are engaged in collaborative dialogue to resolve issues and improve services over time in the Province of Niassa in a constructive approach.

GOTAS

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