

IUP 2021

ATTACHMENT I

Establishment of the Technical Assistance Support (TAS)

**Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Department of Health
Drinking Water Division**



**Technical Assistance
Support (TAS)**

February 2005

Revised September 2013

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT (TAS)

We have to state that we have been implementing the TAS. During this year for approximately fifty (50) systems that were previously considered within a pilot project, oversight was undertaken as a follow-up of previous action plans and or capacity determinations in order to continue availing their process of compliance and capacity attainment. Concurrent assistance in the area of capacity, as well as operator certification was provided, notwithstanding, the technical assistance provided in the area of compliance and the use of Circuit Riders as a tool for assistance. We are also working the area of small systems security. We were also able to award a contract based on a proposal previously evaluated by our staff. DOH expects to continue exertions to outreach the greatest number of systems possible with the limited funds available.

The TAS establishes the following priorities:

A. *Capacity Development Program and Associated Activities:*

The Capacity Development Program established as a priority enabling several projects directly associate to capacity development to be on-going, initiated or being in the development process:

1. **Capacity Development Project.** With this pilot project in place, the use of the capacity development manual developed by DOH for this purpose will be implemented and validated. This manual is a tool that will assist and guide the systems in understanding and attaining capacity. During this year, the Capacity Development Manual was up-dated. A Comprehensive Performance Evaluation (CPE) designed for small systems by profiling the system will be implemented. It will also use circuit riders approach to provide technical assistance for compliance with the SDWA. Also systems will be profile before and after the use of the manual to measure capacity progress. This project was completed. With new projects the use of the manual is implemented and updated/revised as necessary. A two years contract was executed effective January 2013 with RCAP Solutions for undertaking the development of a Circuit Riders project. Forty eight (48) systems will be evaluated in terms of their capacities, where the technical, financial and administrative capacities will be measured. In addition, Sanitary Surveys will be undertaken to these systems as part of the process of attaining compliance with the SDWA. Up to date, all forty-eight Sanitary Surveys were undertaken.
2. **Operator Certification Project.** With this project the systems are being assisted in the process of complying with the federal and state laws concerning the certification of operators. Approximately 900 persons were trained in their own system thus technical assistance was undertaken simultaneously because operational adjustments happened as part of the training and approximately 300 operators were expected to be certified. In addition, train the trainer session were undertaken to assure continuity of the certification process. (Completed and licenses were issued). New contract

was executed to assist operators in achieving experience necessary to receive the license. (Completed during last year and licenses are in the process of issuance). A grant extension was requested to EPA in order to complete the use of the funds. This was granted by EPA until December 2012. In order to continue the operators' training and thus comply with the Operator Certification Program an existing contract was amended with due date of December 2012 for twenty five (25) systems. As part of the Technical assistance provided to the small Non PRASA systems an assistance plan was develop in order to provide training to the operators of twenty eight (28) systems for a period of twenty four (24) months. To this effect, a contract was executed with RCAP Solutions.

3. **Small Systems Security Project.** The project is expected to incorporate into small systems, major security concepts considered in the security program in order to provide these systems with the necessary tools for the protection of their water system. In this project systems received the technical assistance to develop: Vulnerability Assessment targeted towards small systems and an Emergency Response Plan. (Completed) Contract time extension amendment to existing contract was granted. A new contract was executed to cover additional 25 systems. All activities were completed under grant and contract.

4. **Small Systems Source Protection Initiative.** The initiative will ensure that systems understand their role in the public health protection by protecting their source and making available funding programs to that effect based on the knowledge of the health risk associated to the contamination of their source. This initiative is in accordance to the Commonwealth's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) established as approved by EPA where the goal of the SWAP program is to provide meaningful information to direct ongoing source water protection efforts and the overall drinking water program in Puerto Rico. Efforts to identify potential sources of pollution will focus on assembling useful information that will address the greatest threats to drinking water, guide future source protection efforts, and direct the DOH public water system supervision program. The SWAP will provide the information needed to develop programs within the multiple barrier concepts. The major results of the program will direct where and how intensified, site-specific source water protection will be needed. (Completed) DOH continues to use the existing data base to assist systems in the application of the adapted CPE to determine capacity. **(on going)**

B. Area – Wide Optimization Program Activities: - Develop an Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) to identify performance problems and prioritize SRF resources and activities to improve performance at defined small water systems. *(Initiated)*

1) **Optimization Programs.** They will provide for the effective and efficient use of the federal and state's limited resources while assistance is provided to the

systems and operational adjustments are undertaken to improve performance and compliance. (*On going*)

- 2) **Small Systems CPE.** The Comprehensive Performance Evaluation (CPE) has been adapted to small systems as a procedure to evaluate their performance, unit treatment process and factors limiting performance. (*on-going implementation*) A new contract will be executed with RCAP to undertake the small systems adapted CPE in combination with the sanitary survey evaluations for 48 systems.
- 3) **Priority List.** Systems will be prioritized by the use of a priority list in order to attend the systems based on the needs and health based violations. (Is under development with the revision of the Non-PRASA Strategy using as target systems with the greatest population.)

C. Circuit Riders Program Activities:

1. **Technical Assistance.** DOH has offered technical assistance to systems through the Public Water Supply Supervision Program (PWSS) of the Department of Health Drinking Water program. The DWSRF Program since its establishment has provided support to the PWSS. Several state environmental projects with EPA have been undertaken. Assistance is provided in the areas of operation, maintenance and compliance process. Also advice is offered on the enhancement and need to rehabilitate infrastructure to attain compliance. (*On-going*)
2. **Circuit Riders Project.** With the project assistance will be provided to more communities in order to develop the Capacity and AWOP programs. (Completed to 53 systems; on going for 48 new systems)
3. **Circuit Riders Partners.** This initiative intends to broaden and increase: the number of human resources that provide direct assistance to the small systems, the training skills in order to lead and target the efforts towards small systems to ensure that these systems have the tools needed to comply with the drinking water regulations. The drinking water program has coordinated government efforts to assist these systems and has participated with other agencies, including EPA, as well as private entities, which have participated in partnership to assist them technically and economically on this regard. (New partner identified)

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