

Unlocking franchising to improve water services: a pilot

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South African research has found that operations and maintenance partnerships, using the basic principles of franchising, could address many challenges in the operation and maintenance of water services. Franchising provides appropriate training and incentives to on-site personnel, and also offers backup off-site skills. Findings indicate that many opportunities lie in the franchising of suitable elements in the water services value chain, and a selection of these has been modelled. The franchising concept is being piloted with considerable success in the Eastern Cape province. Under the guidance of a franchisor, trainee franchisees are undertaking the cleaning and routine maintenance of the sanitation facilities at 400 schools. Irish Aid is funding the concept development, while the franchisees are paid by the provincial Department of Education from the normal departmental budgets for operation and maintenance. Services delivery has shown such a marked improvement that the Department is requesting rollout to a further 1000 schools.

1. Introduction

Throughout South Africa, people fill up their cars at a petrol station and eat food purchased at the local KFC or McDonald's, confident that these products contain no contaminants. In some parts of our country, however, they cannot be sure that the tap water is fit for drinking purposes and that the local stream is not polluted by effluent from sewers. Yet the oil from which petrol is made is imported, whereas the 'raw material', so to speak, for the clean water is sourced from relatively close by.

Two likely reasons for the successes are listed here.

- Incentive: The manager or owner of the retail outlet, and also the staff, know if they cannot provide food or petrol reliably every day, they will not be paid. If something goes wrong, it has to be corrected quickly.
- Capacity: The staff of the outlet, the people responsible for producing the product (e.g. those who refine the petrol) and those who have to ensure it is delivered to the outlet have received proper training to the level required for a specific task. They also have an obligation (through,

for example, a contract) to call on people with higher levels of expertise when these are needed. The experts called on have a corresponding obligation to provide that assistance.

This paper highlights research that has addressed the following topics.

- The operational principles that make franchised food outlets or petrol stations work as well as they do.
- Whether these principles can be applied to providing acceptable sanitation and water services.

2. Franchising principles

Businesses such as petrol stations and food outlets are, in South Africa, very often run by franchisees, participants in franchising partnerships. The principles of franchising partnerships in the generic sense (i.e. not specific to water services or other sectors) can be summarised in the following manner.

- Franchising is robust and able to ensure consistent quality products and services.

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- (b) Franchisors are obliged to provide the franchisees with specialist expertise and other forms of assistance.
- (c) The success of franchises is based on replication of proven methodologies, prior successes, efficient logistics and skilled and capacitated workforces.
- (d) Small business franchises businesses are relatively easy to establish.
- (e) Franchisees are obliged to adopt the tried-and-tested systems and procedures of the franchisor, and to accept the quality control of the franchisor -- thereby assuring higher quality and greater efficiencies.

The franchise system initially correlates and systematises the business, and then facilitates the setting up of the business, supporting and ensuring business discipline thereafter (Figure 1 depicts a simple franchising model.).

The key is the incentive, to franchisor as well as franchisee, to improve efficiency and provide improved service reliability and control of quality, thereby giving assurance that service quality will be consistent.

The cardinal elements of a franchise are summarised in the following list.

- (a) Identifying components of the value chain that are simple enough to systematise.
- (b) Discovering good practices.
- (c) Systematising the identified component(s).
- (d) Selecting franchisors and franchisees.
- (e) Identifying the financial and other risks to both

franchisors and franchisees, and as far as practically possible, reducing those risks.

- (f) Providing start-up help, including initial training.
- (g) Preparing operations manuals.
- (h) Conducting ongoing research and development for the product or service and of the market dynamics.
- (i) Continued support, training, control and discipline of the ongoing business (FASA, 2005; Illetschko, 2005).

3. Adapting franchising principles to water services

In 1994, the first post-apartheid government evaluated the imbalance in infrastructure that characterised the nation, and embarked on an ambitious plan to put matters right. For example, it has invested in providing potable reticulated water to 17 million people. Government is committed to increasing levels of infrastructure investment at national, provincial and municipal government level as a foundation for economic growth and social development.

Taken together with the need to operate and maintain the very large stock of older infrastructure, the rapid rate of construction and commissioning of new water services infrastructure has severely challenged the public sector institutions in South Africa that are responsible for operating and maintaining this infrastructure. ('Water services' means 'water supply services and sanitation services' (South Africa, 1997, p. 10).) Innovative approaches are required. Even if all existing water services institutions were coping with the demand, there would be valid reasons to investigate alternative institutional models to establish whether alternatives could

- (a) be more cost-effective
- (b) allow existing role players to focus on their other responsibilities
- (c) offer a range of other advantages, including greater local economic development.

The quality of the operation and maintenance of water services infrastructure in South Africa varies greatly from place to place. As a result, the quality of tap water, sanitation, treatment works effluent, and other water products and services varies greatly.

Could the application of franchising principles, which is evidently able to guarantee consistent quality of other products and services, help to ensure consistent and satisfactory quality water services?

To address this question, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of South Africa (CSIR), with financial assistance from the Water Research Commission (WRC), has over a number of years researched the application of franchising

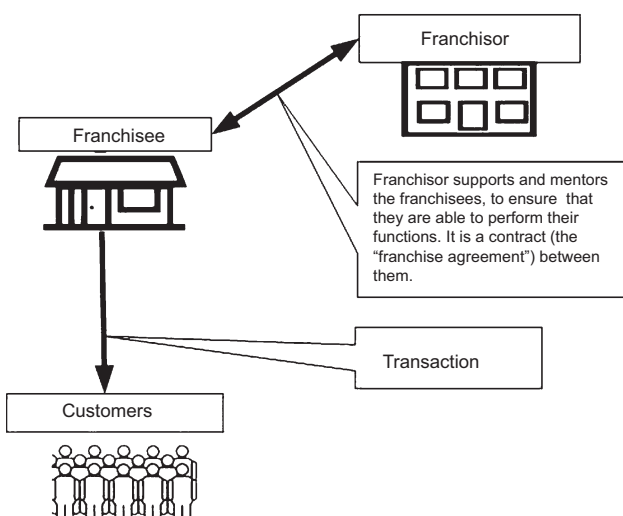


Figure 1. Conventional franchising model

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partnership principles to the operation and maintenance of water services infrastructure.

Worldwide, there is limited experience of the application of the franchising approach to water services infrastructure operation and maintenance, although some existing partnerships share general characteristics of the franchise approach.

A scoping study completed in 2005 (Wall, 2005) found that franchising partnerships could alleviate and address many challenges in the management of water services. Simultaneously, franchising would support the development of local micro-enterprises and broad-based black economic empowerment, all within the public sector service delivery environment.

The CSIR and its partners have developed the partnership concept considerably since 2005, adapting principles of franchising to the operation and maintenance (O&M) of water services infrastructure (WRC, 2010).

Through such partnerships

- (a) owners of infrastructure can access the higher-level expertise in operations and maintenance needed and seldom found outside larger urban areas
- (b) micro-enterprises able to provide locally-based service provider solutions can be created and nurtured.

The research and concept development has been conducted by practitioners who have an 'on the ground' understanding of water services delivery, and who have consulted with practitioners in the conventional franchising sector (refer to FASA, 2005; Illetschko, 2005).

4. The case for water services franchising partnerships

In the CSIR and WRC franchising partnership concept for improved water services infrastructure operation and maintenance, ownership of the water services infrastructure remains with the public sector.

The concept has been formulated with a view to improving water services operational quality and efficiency through introducing an innovative (for water services) supply-side operation and maintenance provider mechanism.

At present, the staffs of many public sector water services infrastructure entities are capable of dealing with basic day-to-day operational needs, but not with anything more demanding than that. This results directly in frequent non-compliance with the specified performance standards (inter alia, see DWA, 2009, 2010; DWAF, 2007, 2008; SAICE, 2006, 2011) For example, the 2006 'report card' review by the South African Institution of

Civil Engineering (SAICE) of the state of infrastructure in South Africa assigned the grade of 'C+' to water infrastructure of the major urban areas, while sanitation received a 'C'. The equivalent infrastructure in small towns and rural areas received 'D' and 'E', respectively, not far from the lowest-possible grade. SAICE found that, to a very significant extent, the difference was that infrastructure in major urban areas is generally maintained by skilled professionals, whereas the other areas often do not have access to these skills levels (SAICE, 2006).

Improvements would soon be seen if the generally under-qualified or under-resourced water services staff of municipalities and other water services authorities outside major urban areas could enjoy ongoing support, mentoring and quality control, and have quick access to skilled assistance when needed. If these authorities could enter into partnerships with franchisee micro-enterprises, improvement of water services quality and reliability would surely follow. A carefully designed set of authority/franchisor/franchisee arrangements, efficiently implemented, could go a long way in assisting in the water services provision environment.

Franchising might often not be a feasible alternative, but would in many situations offer the prospect of improved operation and maintenance of water services.

Franchising also offers opportunities to the micro-enterprise sector and to local economic development. While franchisees are micro-enterprises, their association with a franchisor gives them considerable advantages – reflected in the better service that they can provide – compared to stand-alone micro-enterprises.

Given that the costs of the franchisor's higher levels of specialist expertise would be shared by several franchisees, the franchisor could afford to make this expertise available to each of them when needed, and provide other resources normally available only to larger water services authorities. This holds significant benefits for water services reliability.

An authority's competence to monitor performance and enforce contract compliance is key to effectively using the micro-enterprise sector. Furthermore, if a water services authority is short of management resources, it would be more efficient to use its existing resources to manage the work of a franchisee partner or contractor rather than trying to cope with the operational issues itself.

There are precedents in South Africa of franchising partnerships for the operation and/or maintenance of water services infrastructure – but these have only been on behalf of private sector owners of infrastructure (WRC, 2010). The longest-running of these is a Pretoria-based company called The Drain Surgeon, which has provided plumbing and related services to

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urban households, businesses and industrial premises for 30 years. This well-known franchisor has become a nationally-known brand, represented in most cities and major towns of South Africa.

Another example is a company that provides a range of high-end wastewater solutions in specific sectors of industry. Its franchisees are appointed by private clients to treat their wastewater streams for reuse or discharge to a natural watercourse in compliance with the requirements of the Department of Water Affairs. In this instance, the franchisees are typically university graduates, with degrees in chemistry or chemical engineering, and clients include mines and other heavy users of water, such as poultry processing plants.

5. The potential of franchising partnerships

Research undertaken prior to commencement of the pilot, the description of which is the main topic of this paper, showed that a franchising partnership would in many situations be an attractive option for a number of reasons, in particular because it would address the lack of higher-level expertise often identified as a key to improvement of service, especially in the more remote areas (Wall, 2005; WRC, 2010). The essence of water services franchising partnerships is the creation of a pool of appropriate expertise upon which the water services authorities can draw; a restructuring of the local responsibility for operating the services; and the creation of a two-way obligation -- an obligation to call for assistance from the pool, and an obligation to respond rapidly to that call. All of this combined with incentive structures will ensure that this will happen. The activities are listed here.

- (a) On most days at the (say) treatment works, nothing out-of-the-ordinary would happen. Franchisee staff who are appropriately skilled would be able to cope.
- (b) When major maintenance or upgrading is needed, or when there is a breakdown, those staff would know who to call at the franchisor in order to summon the higher level of skills needed.
- (c) Staff would know that the franchisor will be obliged to help, because there would be a binding contract and a shared reputation.
- (d) It would be a two-way obligation – an obligation on the franchisee to ask for assistance, and an obligation on the franchisor to provide such assistance.
- (e) Costs of the higher skills levels, which are needed only intermittently, would be spread across many sites – thus the cost per site is low.

Franchisee water service providers, who depend for their livelihood on the success of their business, would have a strong incentive to perform.

The franchisees would be micro-enterprises. The franchisors would be any institutions, private sector, parastatals or non-governmental organisations, that have the required expertise, are willing to provide the service, and would not have a conflict of interest in providing the service.

There are already many potential sites for water services franchising partnerships, as much water services infrastructure currently already in place is not being operated and maintained properly. Many of these sites fall under the jurisdiction of, or are owned by, water services authorities, but other sites belong to other public sector institutions such as schools and clinics. Assistance from the franchisor would be of particular value for areas away from the major urban centres. Few rural municipalities in South Africa can, for example, afford to employ competent qualified staff, and this leads to periodic unreliability of supply and frequent non-compliance with national standards relating to, for example, the quality of effluent from wastewater treatment works.

In summary, these partnerships are a means of achieving the following activities.

- (a) Assisting infrastructure owners by providing expertise in water services infrastructure operations and maintenance that would very seldom be found outside the metropolises and larger urban areas.
- (b) Creating and supporting small locally-based and efficient service provider solutions.

Water services operation and maintenance tasks with identifiable potential for franchising include leak detection, borehole management, management of municipal treatment works, management of treatment package plants, meter reading, pit-emptying services, laboratory services, data management, demand and pressure control management, and site and property management. The CSIR has modelled some of the selected elements of the water services value chain that are suitable for small business as the components can be systematised readily. This modelling has drawn on first-hand knowledge of operating such elements in contexts as close as possible to franchising. It has also drawn on the understanding of the small number of franchises already active in the water services sector, and on the understanding of the large number of franchises in other fields. A substantial body of documentation of value to water services authorities, potential franchisors and potential franchisees has been published (see report numbers TT 432-3-10, TT 432-4-10, TT 432-5-10, TT 432-6-10, TT 432-7-10, TT432-2-10 and TT 432/09 (WRC, 2010)).

Whereas a business based on a single element of the water services delivery value chain might not be viable, a franchisee

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could build a viable business by offering several water-related services, thereby achieving dual objectives, namely

- (a) economy of scale
- (b) less dependence on one or a limited number of clients.

Should a water services authority (WSA) require contractual recourse not only to the franchisee, but also to the franchisor, the franchisor could be a guarantor of the performance of the franchisee. If deemed necessary, this would require an additional contract that closes the loop between the franchisor and the authority (Figure 2). The authority may require this contractual assurance that the franchisee will be supported by strong management and that the franchisor is able to make alternative arrangements to ensure continuity of service. This assurance could be necessary especially if the franchisor's expertise or track record is a significant reason for contracting with the franchisee, and the franchisee is a largely unknown quantity.

6. The need for pilots

By 2008, development work had been taken to the point where the concept of franchising partnerships for the operation and maintenance of water services infrastructure had been thoroughly described, including guidelines on where and how it could work. The team anticipated that, where the environment was favourable, potential franchisors would seize the opportunity and would do the detailed modelling to suit their abilities and the circumstances under which the concept could be applied.

It was also realised that pilot projects would be necessary. Only through piloting would unanticipated challenges be identified – and overcome. Whereas some public sector officials, when approached by members of the research team, said they would not consider franchising partnerships, others said it would be easier to convince their principals (municipal councillors in the case of municipalities) once a successful pilot had been completed.

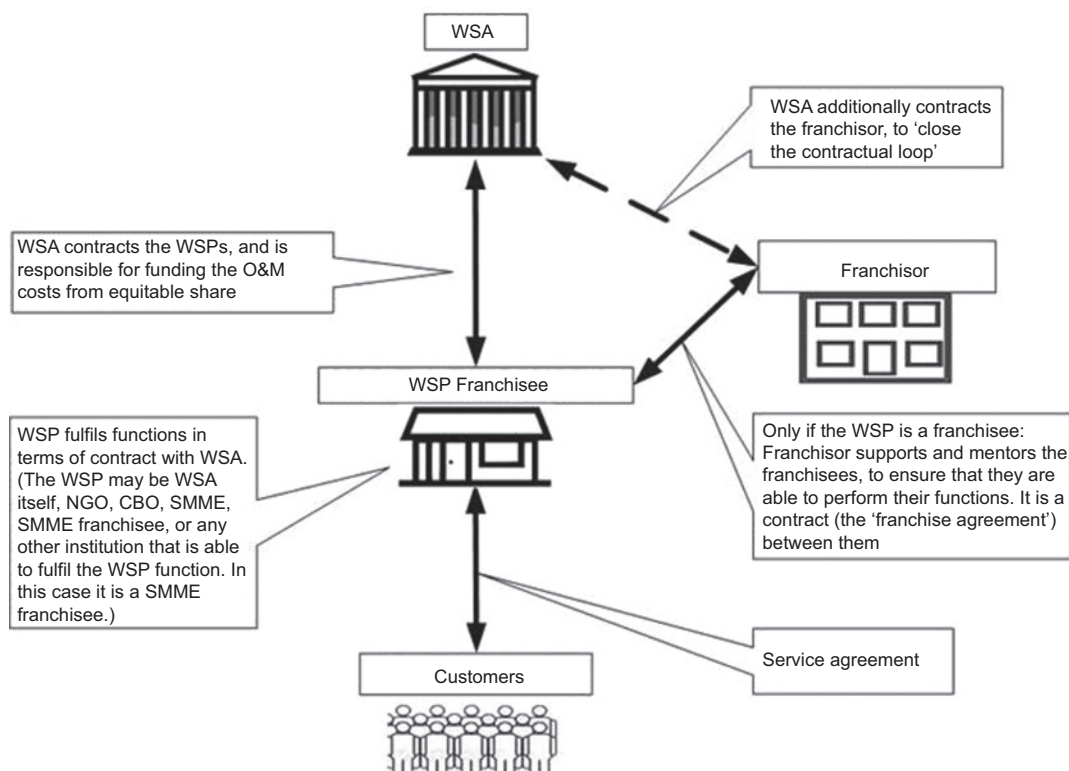


Figure 2. Adaptation of franchising principles: assisting a water services authority (WSA) with operation and maintenance: CBO, community-based organisation; NGO, non-governmental organisation; SMME, small, medium or microenterprise; WSP, water services provider

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7. Preparation for the pilot

A few large water services providers have shown interest in franchising partnerships. Amanz'abantu Services (Pty) Ltd, a provider based in East London with a footprint covering the whole Eastern Cape, adapted the franchising concept to its well-established and appropriate expertise and its track record of working successfully with rural and developing communities. It set up a subsidiary, Impilo Yabantu Services (Pty) Ltd, to be a franchisor, and started assessing the potential market, approaching selected owners of public sector infrastructure in the province. (The company names mean, in Xhosa, 'water for the people' and 'healthy people'.)

Irish Aid, whose South African-based water services specialist had been convinced of the potential of the concept for several years, agreed to provide substantial funding for advocacy, situation-specific development for a pilot, and general support over the period 2009–2012. Irish Aid's intention was for the funding to be used to add value to public sector budgets – that selected water services infrastructure operation and maintenance funding already available in public sector budgets but not being spent effectively and efficiently would be unlocked by franchising of the operation and maintenance.

The team had come to realise that the first pilots could be negotiated with infrastructure owners who were least resistant to change for the following reasons.

- (a) They had already realised that they were unable to operate and maintain their infrastructure.
- (b) Existing public sector jobs would not be threatened.

However, contrary to expectations that the public sector entity willing to pioneer a franchising partnership pilot would be a municipality, it was the Department of Education (DoE) of the Eastern Cape provincial government that was first to prove receptive. Its officials responsible for infrastructure indicated great interest in a pilot that would see franchisees doing routine cleaning and maintenance of school toilet facilities.

Early in 2009, a memorandum of understanding was signed between five parties: the DoE, Irish Aid, the CSIR, the WRC, and Amanz'abantu. This memorandum inter alia included the following statements.

- (a) The DoE wished to utilise small, locally-based enterprises, in partnership with an established provincially-based service provider, to provide identified maintenance services for its facilities.
- (b) Research indicated that the franchising model would offer public authorities 'a contractual mechanism for improved efficiency, flexibility and accelerated resource mobilisation'.

- (c) Amanz'abantu would contract with the DoE to set up and run a pilot programme based on the principles of franchising partnerships, for maintenance of school sanitation facilities in the predominantly rural Butterworth Education District (Figure 3).
- (d) Impilo Yabantu would be the franchisor.
- (e) From its budgets normally allocated for this purpose, the DoE would provide the funding for maintenance of the facilities.
- (f) The WRC and the CSIR, funded by Irish Aid, would provide policy, technical and other assistance necessary to facilitate the pilot programme. This would include drafting the terms of reference, formulating contractual documentation, monitoring progress and disseminating results with a view to replication in other areas.

Schools have the responsibility for maintenance of their property – grounds, buildings and services (including water and sanitation facilities). Each school receives from the DoE a budget for this purpose. Nonetheless, there is general consensus that most schools in the Eastern Cape, and especially the rural schools in that province, do little maintenance, and that a prime reason in many cases was that staff members do not accept responsibility for the infrastructure.

8. School toilets and access to education

The built infrastructure of many South African schools leaves a lot to be desired (SAICE, 2012). While it is unacceptable that some schools have lacked facilities from the outset, it is even less acceptable that so much of the infrastructure provided has been neglected

... a substantial proportion of schools could not be classified as providing an enabling physical teaching and learning environment. ... While school construction had increased, maintenance had deteriorated. In 1996, 11,003 schools were reportedly in excellent to good condition. By 2000, the number had dropped to 5078. In 2006, 26% of schools [i.e. just over 7000] were in either poor or very poor condition. (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2010: p. 18)

When water supply, sanitation and hand-washing facilities are insufficient or non-existent, schools more readily become places where diseases are transmitted. Interventions at schools lead not only to safer learning environments, but are investments – when one teaches a child, one teaches the whole community.

Schools need safe water and separate, clean sanitation facilities. ... Health education curricula are undermined if children are unable to practice what they learn about drinking safe water or washing their hands. (UNICEF, 2005: p. 12)

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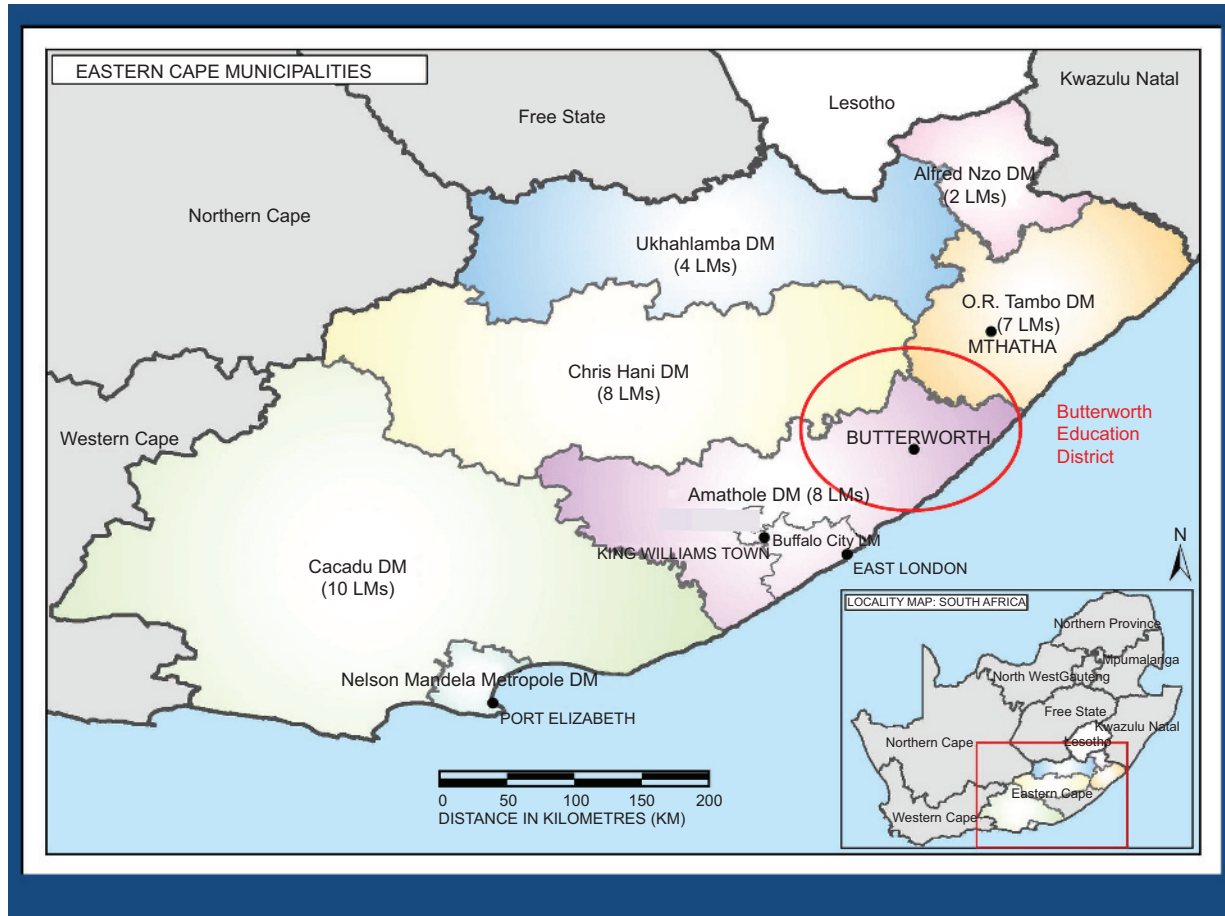


Figure 3. The Butterworth district in South Africa

Improved sanitation and water facilities, hygiene education and the promotion of hand-washing inevitably lead to less sickness and to improved school attendance. This is true not only in terms of fewer days absent from schools, but also increased classroom time each day.

9. Progress with the pilot

A franchising partnerships model for the routine maintenance of water services infrastructure is being tested and evaluated at some 400 schools in the Butterworth Education District. Throughout, the Amanz'abantu and Impilo Yabantu team have worked closely with the DoE managers.

The pilot commenced in May 2009 with exploration of the practicalities of managing the process and the allocation of tasks. Advertisements called for interested parties to respond. That they were resident in the Butterworth area was stipulated for two reasons: the work must be done by local people from the communities concerned; and travelling time and cost to Butterworth and to the schools that they would be servicing

would be minimised. Prospective franchisees were screened and those short-listed were interviewed. Those selected received initial training in East London during the first week of June 2009. The trainee franchisees then met with the DoE Butterworth District staff and school principals to plan programme schedules and agree on work orders.

Distinct areas, determined by accessibility and scope, were identified within the Butterworth District. An area was allocated to each franchisee, which had to have its home base within that service area.

Impilo Yabantu also trained an in-house team to be the back-up should a franchisee withdraw, and to provide the franchisor with benchmark costs.

Five franchisees would have been sufficient for regular servicing of the school sanitation facilities in the Butterworth District, but, based on the assumption that a few might withdraw, eight were trained. Many of the trainee

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franchisees are starting in business on their own for the first time.

Impilo Yabantu set up an office and stores in Butterworth, and the cleaning and maintenance of school sanitation facilities started at the end of June 2009. Each trainee franchisee was supplied with basic cleaning equipment and protective clothing, a light delivery vehicle clearly sporting the Impilo Yabantu logo, and a digital camera. The purpose of the camera is to take photographs before and after the maintenance service; franchisees are paid on the evidence of these photographs and also the sign-off of the works order by the school principal. Spot check visits to randomly selected schools are also undertaken by the franchisor.

A key component of the service provided by the trainee franchisee is that of inspection and reporting on the serviceability and suitability of the facilities. Reports are submitted to the district managers of the DoE following each visit, and repair and maintenance lists agreed on for the following visit. In this manner, ongoing service relationships are developed between the trainee franchisees, the school principals and the DoE's district managers.

By May 2010 the toilet facilities of most of the 400 schools in the Butterworth District had benefited from a first round of maintenance, and a second round had started.

Initially, Impilo Yabantu is receiving the works orders directly from the DoE and then instructing the trainee franchisees to perform the work. In effect, each order is a small contract. For the preliminary round of maintenance, each order is between R2000 and R5000 (£200 and £500, respectively).

The business decision has been taken that, for the first 2 years of operation, the trainee franchisees should still operate as subcontractors managed by Amanz'abantu. The reason for this is that revenue streams are not yet firmly established, potential further work opportunities are still being explored, and training is incomplete. When Amanz'abantu and Impilo Yabantu are confident that the trainee franchisees no longer need the comfort and safety net of a subcontract arrangement, the switch will take place to a franchising arrangement, with the franchisees being appointed directly by the DoE for the small contracts. Once fully-fledged franchisees, they will be expected to manage their own interactions with the DoE, in particular monthly meetings with the DoE district officials and ensuring that the school principals are satisfied with the results (Figure 4)

Potential total turnover of the five Butterworth District franchisees is estimated at R1 million (around £100 000) per annum, assuming that schools are visited on a six or seven



Figure 4. Franchisee Nocawe Lupuwane (the lady kneeling) and her team

week cycle. If a school requests additional work (e.g. add solid waste or water), or if they also do work for other clients, their turnovers will increase accordingly.

The trainee franchisees are billing the schools (or the DoE on the schools' behalf) each time they do cleaning and maintenance. All the development costs, including developing the concept and the training schemes, giving training and preparing operations manuals are being funded by Irish Aid and by in-kind contributions of Amanz'abantu and the CSIR.

The trainee franchisees have taken loans to fund the capital outlay for vehicles and equipment. Because the banks prefer lending to franchisees than to stand-alone businesses, the franchisees have had no difficulty in obtaining loans. Franchisees are paying the loans off from their income. Due to the burden of this and other start-up costs, trainee franchisees are not expected to make net surpluses until the third year.

Impilo Yabantu continues to provide structured learning in the form of on-the-job specific skills training and mentoring, and also skills and business training as needed. It is also responsible for quality assurance.

Progress with cleaner sanitation facilities in the schools that form part of the pilot project is evident. The franchising partnership concept, as applied in the Eastern Cape schools pilot, is greatly improving the state of sanitation and hygiene at the schools it has reached. The emphasis is on the quality and reliability of the service delivered, and the viability of the franchisor and franchisees.

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The state of the sanitation facilities at the pilot schools has improved so much that the Department has requested the programme to be rolled out to a further three education districts, totalling 1000 schools.

Most of the schools are not on a reticulated water supply system, and thus reliant on rainwater harvesting. When the schools were built, gutters were in place to collect roof water and channel it to storage tanks. The gutters at many schools are, however now broken – therefore no collection, and no water in the tank. The tanks are in many instances broken or fouled, with taps often broken or missing. Many children have to bring water to school.

The Department recognises this, and has requested that the scope of work of the franchisees be widened, initially to address water facilities repair and, thereafter, routine maintenance.

It is envisaged that once the system is working smoothly, franchisees will be able to offer their services to clinics, other public buildings, and to the private sector.

Furthermore, the programme is establishing and supporting locally-based small enterprises (mostly women-headed) for the provision of appropriate and locally-based service solutions. It is creating jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities and, through facilitating workplace learning, equipping with skills rural people few of whom have previously held a steady job. In addition, of course, the programme is improving school sanitation facilities.

10. Lessons learned

The principal lessons learned from progress with the pilot so far are listed here.

- (a) Task-specific concept development (for example the specifics of the business model, the training programme and the operations manuals) can be done only by a franchisor that has detailed knowledge, based on first-hand experience in the same or a similar community, of what is involved in performing that task.
- (b) Potential franchisees must be chosen on the basis of their willingness to work hard and to commit to the business principles.
- (c) More potential franchisees must be chosen for training than will be needed to undertake the work -- attrition during the pilot will reduce numbers.
- (d) Because the water service is an essential service, provision must be made in the franchising agreement for prompt replacement of non-performing franchisees.
- (e) Careful attention must be paid to resolving any procedural issues around the payment process and ensuring prompt payment of invoices submitted by the franchisees.

Cash flow problems will quickly put any small enterprise out of business.

- (f) In order to facilitate rapid and dissension-free agreement that the work has been performed according to contract and that payment can be authorised, tasks must be as standardised as possible, and assigned standard prices.

In 2012, when the Irish Aid funding comes to an end, the research team will analyse the approach and the franchise model, and adapt it to accommodate lessons learned.

11. Conclusions

The franchising partnerships concept, as it is being applied in the pilot, is very promising in terms of the quality and reliability of service delivered and the viability of the franchisor and franchisees. This pilot is benefiting from an extraordinary amount of management attention from Amanz'abantu, Impilo Yabantu, the CSIR and the WRC, made possible by the Irish Aid funding. This attention manifests in many ways, not least in the assistance given to trainee franchisees to ensure that the processing of payments to them is running smoothly, and in the bridging finance they have received from Amanz'abantu.

This service delivery success is being noticed by municipalities in the area that have responsibilities for water services facilities at household level, and how the franchisees and/or franchisor can provide services to these municipalities is currently being explored.

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