Service Charter for better Service delivery – The Kano State Water Board Story

The Service Charter Story

A Service Charter is a public document developed by a Ministry, Department and Agency (MDA) to communicate to the public, especially its service users, the MDA’s vision, mission and strategic objectives, as well as the type and standard of services it will render. It represents a commitment by the MDA to quality service delivery. Additionally, the service charter highlights the MDA’s expectation of its customers as well as the mechanisms for making complaints.

Service Charters also help MDAs to monitor and report on how they have performed against their standards. Performance measurement of service charters will push such MDAs to improve where their delivery standards have not been met, and where they have been exceeded, it will drive the agency to set higher standards and ultimately increase satisfaction of service users. An effective service charter is one that is implemented and monitored to generate information for service and customer satisfaction improvements.

The development of the Kano State Water Board (KnSWB) Service Charter began in 2014 and was successfully concluded in 2015. It was comprised of three main activities: the development of the Service Charter, the measurement of performance against its service delivery commitments and the development of a Service Improvement Plan (SIP).

How it started

The service charter development in KnSWB involved a series of meetings and workshops facilitated by the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) consultant, and involved the KnSWB management team and members of the Kano State Service Charter Task Team (KnSCCTT). There were three stages of consultations with internal and external stakeholders to get their inputs before validation; and final adoption of the charter document by all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Water Resources.
Results

- Implementation of the Service Charter has resulted in improved customer service and an approximate reduction of 15% in customer complaints;
- Following the successful conclusion of the entire process, the Management of KnSWB requested SPARC for further technical support to carry out Corporate Planning for the Water Board in order to better position it to achieve the service delivery targets that have been set;
- Although SPARC has to date supported six MDAs in developing their Service Charters, only KnSWB continued with the process leading to the development of a Service Improvement Plan;
- The new administration has shown keen interest in the quality of service delivery in the state and is adopting the strategy of Service Charter development as a means of improved service delivery. In July 2015, Kano State Government upgraded SERVICOM from an office headed by a Coordinator to a Directorate headed by a Permanent Secretary. The Directorate was then instructed to roll-out Service Charters for all MDAs in the state. In the same month, the Executive Governor launched the 6 Service Charters that had been developed and signed a SERVICOM pact with the citizens of Kano State in which he assured them of his commitment to providing the highest level of service delivery.

What led to the Success?

- The successful completion of KnSWB Service Charter was due largely to a high-level display of commitment by the management of the Water Board, as well as the provision of funds required to conduct some of the activities.
- The involvement of all levels of the Board’s staff in the process ensured their buy-in and clear understanding of the value of a Service Charter. This helped to increase customer awareness of the Water Board’s commitment to high quality service delivery.

Challenges

The performance measurement activity of data gathering in KnSWB experienced a number of delays; the commencement date was shifted twice from the scheduled date of July 2014 to December 2014 as a result of difficulty in collecting the required data. There was also delay in sensitising KnSWB staff on performance measurement.
Customer Testimony

Interviewer: Assalamu alaikum, can you please tell us your name?
Nura: Nura Sha’aibu Abdullahi

Interviewer: What area is this?
Nura: Yankaba Quarters Hadejia Road, Kano.

Interviewer: What can you say about the water supply in your area?
Nura: All I can say about water supply in my area is we Thank God because we have it abundantly, we have it almost constantly.

Interviewer: Does it mean that the supply has increased?
Nura: It has increased much more than in previous years.

Interviewer: What is the improvement?
Nura: ‘We Thank God’ for the increase in water supply in Yankaba, because previously we didn’t have water. Right now, from what you have seen, we have it almost all the time; even if it stops it doesn’t take much time to come back, maybe 2-3 hours at most.

Interviewer: Are you aware of any complaint process where you can register your complaint?
Nura: Yes, we are aware of complaint process because the staff of the Water Board have informed us that if we have any complaint we can go to their offices and register.

Interviewer: Have you ever complained to the Water Board?
Nura: Yes, there was a time that they blocked our water meter; but when we registered our complaint to their office, they unblocked it.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.
Nura: Thank you also.
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