

# Operation and Maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation systems

**A TRAINING PACKAGE FOR MANAGERS AND PLANNERS**

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## Preface

The aim of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) programmes, as described in this training package, is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of water supply and sanitation services. Operation and Maintenance activities, which encompass not only technical issues, but also managerial, social, financial and institutional issues, must be directed towards the elimination or reduction of the major constraints which prevent the achievement of sustainability.

This document and the training activities described in it are intended for managers and planners who are concerned with the challenging problem of how to implement effective operation and maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation services in developing countries. In addition to the traditional management aspects of operation and maintenance, this training package highlights the importance of community participation, with a right gender balance, in order to make more efficient use of local human resources for sustainability.

The courses in this training package are based on participatory training methodologies, an important feature of which is to draw on the experiences of all the participants, under the guidance of an experienced facilitator and resource persons. The courses should be adapted to the local situation, and the modules can be modified with additions or deletions according to local needs.

The package is based on material and documentation of global experiences provided by various agencies and institutions in the water supply and sanitation sector. This work was initiated in 1991 at a meeting in Oslo, Norway, which called for an overall effort and the establishment of the Operation and Maintenance Working Group (currently the Operation and Maintenance Network) of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

We are confident that this document will make an effective and useful contribution to progress in the rural water supply and sanitation sector.

*José A. Hueb*  
Coordinator  
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