

Improving the Regulation, Monitoring, and Quality of the Packaged (Sachet and Bottled) Water Industry in Sierra Leone; and Sensitising the Customer Base

Training Packaged Water Producers -(Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Port Loko, Tonkolili and Kono)

September 2014

Created for:

Ministry of Health & Sanitation (MoHS) of the Republic of Sierra Leone
UK Department for International Development (DFID)



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FOCUS 1000
69 Wellington Street
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Phone +232-79-060592
<http://focus1000.org>

The Water Institute at UNC
Gillings School of Global Public Health
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Rosenau Hall, CB #7431
135 Dauer Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7431
Phone +1-919-966-7302
<http://www.waterinstitute.unc.edu>

Authors:

George Saquee, Mohamed F. Jalloh, and Mohamed Bailor Jalloh

Reviewers and Editors:

Ramatu Jalloh, Paul Sengeh, Dr. Samuel Pratt

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WATER INSTITUTE

About FOCUS 1000

FOCUS 1000 is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Sierra Leone that is committed to making the best investment in the most crucial time in a child's life: the first 1000 days – the number of days from conception and pregnancy until the child reaches age two. During this period, the child is fragile and susceptible to numerous illnesses and environmental conditions such as diarrheal diseases, malaria, malnutrition, and lack of access to safe drinking water and safe sanitation. Therefore, addressing these issues presents a golden opportunity to ensure the survival and development of the child especially in the first 1000 days of life.

The formation of FOCUS 1000 was conceived by an interdisciplinary group of Sierra Leoneans who had previously worked at senior leadership levels within the United Nations (UN) system, government, and private sector entities. The organization's professional staff consists of experienced individuals in public health practice and research, water, hygiene and environmental sciences, medicine, nutrition and the social sciences. Our collective experience spans across a wide range of areas in: (i) coordinating national public health initiatives with multiple stakeholder groups; (ii) developing and implementing social marketing campaigns around health, education, environmental safety, and other social development issues; (iii) monitoring and evaluating community development programmes; and (iv) bridging capacity gaps for health and social programmes.

About The Water Institute

The Water Institute (WI) at UNC provides international academic leadership at the nexus of water, health and development.

Through **research**, we tackle knowledge gaps that impede effective action on important WaSH and health issues. We respond to the information needs of our partners, act early on emerging issues, and proactively identify knowledge gaps. By developing local initiatives and international **teaching and learning** partnerships, we deliver innovative, relevant and highly-accessible training programs that will strengthen the next generation's capacity with the knowledge and experience to solve water and sanitation challenges. By identifying or developing, synthesizing and distributing relevant and up-to-date **information** on WaSH, we support effective policy making and decision-taking that protects health and improves human development worldwide, as well as predicting and helping to prevent emerging risks. Through **networking and developing partnerships**, we bring together individuals and institutions from diverse disciplines and sectors, enabling them to work together to solve the most critical global issues in water and health.

WI supports WaSH sector organizations to significantly enhance the impact, sustainability and scalability of their programs.

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- Environmental Health Division, Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- Factory Inspectorate, Ministry of Labour and Social Security
- Freetown City Council
- Guma Valley Water Company
- Health Education Division, Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO)
- Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB)
- Sierra Leone Water Producers Association
- UNICEF
- Water Directorate, Ministry of Water Resources (MWR)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO - Chief Executive Officer
DFID- UK Department for International development
EHD- Environmental Health Division
FI - Factory inspectorate
MoHS- Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MWR- Ministry of Water Resources
PHA - Public Health Act
PW - Packaged Water
SALWACO- Sierra Leone Water Company
SLBC – Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLSB- Sierra Leone Standards Bureau
UN - United Nations
UNC- University of North Carolina
WHO- World Health Organisation
WI - The Water Institute

1.0 Introduction

This is the training report for the Packaged Water Producers workshop organized for Freetown on the 21 May 2014 at British Council, Tower Hill , and for Bo and Makeni on 12 September and 16 September 2014 at the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) Halls, in Bo and Makeni respectively. It was organised by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in collaboration with other regulatory bodies (Factory Inspectorate, Water Resources and Sierra Leone Standards Bureau) with support from FOCUS1000 and Water Institute of University of North Carolina. The workshop aimed at improving the capacity of Packaged Water Producers to ensure compliance and enforce the packaged water regulations. The training was also used to launch the national social marketing campaign to educate the consumers and the general public about the new regulations.

It was a one day workshop for Freetown, Bo and Makeni which comprised of (Bombali, Kono, Port Loko and Tonkolili districts) with an attendance of 58 producers for Freetown, 24 for Bo and 9 for Makeni respectively (see table below). A total of 33 government regulators (19 in Freetown, 8 in Bo and 6 from Makeni) from the Ministries of Health and Sanitation, Water Resources, with local councils also in attendance. Both electronic and print media in these areas also participated and proceedings broadcasted by Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). The workshop was designed to educate, inform and assist packaged water businesses (PWBs) to improve and comply with the standards, rules, and best practices set forth within the new Packaged Water Regulations of Sierra Leone.

Table showing attendance at Packaged Water Producers Training programme

Training Location	No. Packaged Water Producers trained	Date Training was organised	Government regulators in attendance
Freetown	58	21/5/2014	19 (MoHS, FI, MWR, SLSB)
Bo	24	12/9/2014	8
Makeni (Lunsar, Mile 38, Kono, Matotoka, Magboruka and Makeni)	9	16/9/2014	6
	91		33

2.0 Background

The Packaged Water Industry has become a booming business in the country mostly in Freetown and provincial headquarter towns. This is due mainly to limited access to safe drinking water in the country. While the operation of this industry has increased access of urban and rural populations to safe drinking water, it has also posed a public health risk as the industry is not adequately regulated and monitored.

In order to address this challenge the MoHS with funding from DfID contracted FOCUS 1000 and the Water Institute at the University of North Carolina in March 2013, to assess the industry

and make relevant recommendations to government for improvement introduction of packaged water for public consumption.

The project was divided into four phases:

- The Inception Phase which included baseline assessments and legislative reviews,
- The Development Phase comprising of the development of draft legislation and materials for training of regulators/producers and social marketing campaign which have been concluded and;
- The Roll-Out Phase which includes training of regulatory personnel which was concluded in April 2014

The training organised for packaged water producers in Freetown and the provinces(Bo, Kenema, Makeni,Port Loko, Tonkolili, and Kono) covered the following issues:

- Update on Package Water Project
- Guidelines for Packaged Water Producers
- Water Quality Standards
- Social marketing campaign

2.1 Objective of the training

The main purpose of the workshop was to educate and improve the capacity of the packaged water producers to ensure compliance and enforcement of the packaged water regulations. The workshop was also used to launch the national social marketing campaign to educate the consumers and the general public about the new regulations.

Facilitators reiterated that this training would attempt to provide some answers to the issues raised above. In closing, they urged all producers to endeavour to produce quality packaged water that would not create any health hazard for the public and that all should ensure that they comply with necessary regulations.

3.0The One Day Workshop deliberations

The workshop was chaired by Alhaji UNS Jah Board Chairman FOCUS 1000 for Freetown, Mr. Rogers, MoHS WASH Officer for Bo District and Mr. Augustine Tucker, Deputy Director, Water Directorate for Makeni who in their opening statements welcomed the Packaged Water Producers and the regulatory bodies. They gave an overview of the objective of the training workshop for the packaged water producers and also discussed the public concerns for packaged water products now produced. They also reminded the participants about the new regulations which will come into law very soon and its importance to the industry. They admonished the producers to provide quality products to reduce incidences of diarrhoea diseases.

The workshop was launched in Freetown by Dr. Sarian Kamara, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, and in Bo by Mr. Rogers (MoHS) and in Makeni by Mr. Tucker (MWR). They praised FOCUS 1000 and partner in organising such an important workshop for Packaged Water Producers.

They took time to educate the participants that safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are basic necessities for good health, but the inadequate supply of safe water in Sierra Leone poses the spread of diseases such as cholera, trachoma, typhoid, schistosomiasis and other pathogens that cause diarrhoea and other water related diseases. They also indicated that lack of conventional water supply has given rise to proliferation of packaged water in Sierra Leone today, with a good number of people relying on its services. The water packaging industry is timely and servicing a good number of people in terms of filling the gaps created by inadequate water supply services in the country. But as a government they have very serious concerns over the production processes of packaged water and outlined issues such as hygienic production of packaged water products with limited monitoring mechanism in place to monitor the producers; transportation and storage of finished products, workers not even declared medically fit before taking up employment in the industry, safety measures at the production sites not adequately addressed.

3.1 Update on Package Water Project –FOCUS 1000

This presentation informed participants of Packaged Water project objectives, works and key findings established by FOCUS 1000 and the Water Institute to support MoHS. Action undertaken include the drafting of the new regulations, guidelines for the regulatory bodies, operational guidelines for the packaged water producers, development of social marketing campaign and the Data Base.

It also gave a brief outline of the recommendations in particular for the establishment of the Competent Authority which would be charged with the responsibility to issuing certificate/approval to operate water business.

- Ensure standards trade marks on packaged water products to facilitate verification of quality of products,
- Sierra Leone Standards Bureau to develop national standards for packaging materials used in packaging water,
- Establish monitoring procedures to ensure quality of water produced and
- In order to protect consumers, the names of compliant producers and certified products to be publicised through the media

3.2 Guidelines for Packaged Water Producers by MoHS

The presenters educated the producers on the process involved in obtaining license to operate packaged water business. In order to legally produce, package, distribute, and/or sell Packaged Water in Sierra Leone, businesses must meet the minimum requirements for good hygienic condition of facilities and premises, hygiene behaviour of employees, equipment, and quality of products. The presenters provided detail

process involved and the responsible ministry that takes the lead. They informed the participants of the establishment of the Competent Unit within the Environmental Health Division, the structure and its responsibilities as outlined below.

- Application for certificate to operate packaged water business(a **Unit within Environmental Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation**)
- Equipment such as machines/electrical (**Factory Inspectorate, Ministry of Labour and Social Security**)
- Raw Water Abstraction and Testing(**Ministry of Water Resources**)
- Product Certification(**Sierra Leone Standards Bureau, Ministry of Trade and Industry**)
- Certificate to Operate(**Competent Authority, within EHD**)
- Inspection of the facility and premises and hygiene of employees(**Competent Authority/Unit**)

The presenters also outlined the process for applying for **Certification Mark** (which is the sole responsibility of **SLSB**), which is an indication that their products meet the required standards.

The presentation discussed in detail the following issues:

- Sample Collection for Water Quality testing in case they have one in the facility,
- Termination and Suspension of Water Package Business,
- Product Recall,
- Premises and Facilities,
- Treatment Process,
- Transportation of Packaged water Products,
- Hygiene behaviour of workers at the facility,
- Tanker Trucks used for water trucking,
- Raw Water Sources,
- Water Wells as source of supply,
- Human Resources and Waste Management in the facility.

3.3 Water Quality Standards by SLSB and MWR

The presenters started by urging all producers that Packaged water produced and sold in Sierra Leone must meet the minimum quality standards set by the SLSB and that Producers must test the quality of their raw water source to determine the level of treatment necessary to produce finished water product in line with the standards.

The presenters informed all producers that they should regularly test and monitor both their products and source of water to determine if additional treatment is needed, and treatment systems are working properly.

He advised that all producers must undertake water quality testing in an established/accredited Laboratory for the following parameters:

- Turbidity, Colour, Odour/Taste-(daily routine)

- Total Coliform,E.coli counts – (weekly)
- Total viable count at 37 degree-(monthly)
- pH, TDS, Nitrite/Nitrate (monthly)
- Iron,Arsenic,Fluoride, Manganese and Chromium –(annually)

Sierra Leone Standards Bureau(SLSB) talked about the Certification Mark, which is very important for all producers as it verifies the quality of the product for marketing. The participants were informed that the Certification Mark document has been developed and awaiting endorsement/ approval by Cabinet before going into operation.

3.4 Social Marketing Campaign and Consumer Guide by FOCUS 1000

In this session discussions were concentrated on:

- Increasing awareness of the health risks associated with drinking contaminated packaged water.
- Communicating the benefits of adopting key behaviors regarding the handling, storage, and disposal of packaged water.
- Addressing perceived barriers that may hinder the promoted behaviors and
- Providing clues to action that encourage and reinforce the promoted behaviors.

Other key issues discussed under this topic were:

- Regulations,
- Safety of packaged water,
- Handling and storage of Packaged water products,
- Discouraging the use of packaged water for Newborns and babies under 6 months of age
- Labeling of the product to include batch number so that it is easy to withdraw from market if there is any problem,
- Referring to Consumer complaints to the Competent Unit for redress.

The presentation also discussed the development of messages, the target audience and the channels of communication to be adopted using radio, teachers for school going children and religious bodies for Muslims and Christians.

4.0 Issues and concerns raised by the participants

The workshop was highly participatory affording participants the opportunity to raise concerns regarding their mode of operation. Some operators talked of the complexity of service provision with numerous players from the side of government who from time to time ask for dues for their services to secure permits to operate. Other issues emerging from discussion included the following:

1. Packaged water producers wanted to know where to take their raw and treated water products for water quality testing since they are based up country and that the major water quality labs are mostly located in Freetown.
2. They also wanted to know whether the Competent Authority would have branches in the Provincial Headquarters Towns to address their concerns in terms of inspection visits and monitoring of their premises etc.
3. When will the new system come into effect since the new regulations has not been passed into law
4. If up country laboratories are used for water quality testing do they have the necessary equipment/reagents to undertake the required water quality testing.

Deputy Director of Ministry Water Resources Directorate informed the Packaged Water Producers that the Ministry of Water Resources have established water quality labs in each district headquarter town and within the shortest possible time these will be equipped with adequate equipment, reagents and qualified technicians to undertake the relevant water quality tests.



Picture of some of the of participants in attendance in Bo Workshop at Ministry Water Resources Conference Hall on 12th.September 2014 training session



Some of the participants in attendance at Ministry of Water Resources Conference Hall, Makeni on 16th.September 2014 training session.

5.0 Closing remarks

The vote of thanks was given by the Chairman Packaged Water Producers Association, Freetown ,one participant from Bo and Makeni.The participants praised the Government and other functionaries in organizing this workshop. Bo and Makeni do not have any Association for packaged water producers. They have agreed to have them established in Bo by 4 October 2014. Makeni also plans to establish one once the number of producers increases. They also agreed that most of their concerns have been addressed by the presenters and promised to keep within new dispensation.

The Packaged water producers were presented with a copy of the Guidelines for Packaged Water Producers to be used as a reference for setting up a water packaging business which they appreciated very much.

Workshop proceedings were aired by the National Broadcasting Service(SLBC) and other media houses. The CEO of FOCUS 1000,Mr. Tucker (MWR) and Mr. Saquee of FOCUS1000 were interviewed by Sierra Leone Broadcasting(SLBC) in Freetown, Bo and Makeni respectively after each workshop.