



Assessment of the potential deployment of prepaid water meters in the Gaza Strip

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ABSTRACT

Palestinian water sector institutions have identified a series of interventions to address the severe water crisis in Gaza both in the short-term and in the long-term. This includes the development of desalination facilities to increase potable water supply, as well as the prioritization of efforts to improve the overall governance and commercial viability of the water sector. With the expected increase in the quality of water services, service providers can advance efforts to improve user collection rates. One key measure, utilized globally, that contributes to improving collection rates is the installation of prepaid water metering devices and systems. The aims of this study are to evaluate the socio-economic, legal and governance, technical, and commercial perspectives of deploying prepaid water meters, both at customer and service provider levels. An iterative process of information-gathering, structured household questionnaire, and consultations with key sector stakeholders were conducted. Based on the results analysis of the household surveys, it was found that out of the total surveyed households who are unwilling to use prepaid water meters, 85% say that the use of prepaid water meters will increase their household's financial burden, while 90% fear that the inability to pay for credit will result in water disconnection. Furthermore, not all service providers can comply with the technical and/or financial requirements needed for the successful implementation of prepaid meters programs, given that only two out of 25 service providers in Gaza have some experience in implementing such programs. Effective implementation of a prepayment system requires an integrated management system that takes into consideration the various social, technical, legal and commercial aspects identified in this analysis. To ensure this, different actions were recommended to be implemented.

Keywords: Prepaid water meters; Socio-economic; Legal; Governance; Water; Gaza Strip; Cost recovery

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