

PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD, SINGAPORE

1. LEGAL STRUCTURE & OWNERSHIP

Created originally in 1963, the Public Utilities Board (PUB) had been a statutory authority (created in 1963) with responsibility for electricity, water, and piped gas. In 1995, the electricity and gas undertakings were corporatized and Singapore Power was created. PUB, as it operates today, was established in 2001 under the Public Utilities Act 2001 (PU Act) as the national water authority of Singapore. PUB is a statutory board under direct public management. It is owned by the government through the Ministry of the Environment. PUB is largely self-regulating.

2. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

PUB is governed by a **Board of Directors** including a chairman and 5-10 members who are selected by the Minister of Environment. The minister selects and appoints against criteria set out in the PU Act.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is appointed by the board (according to merit) after consultation with the Public Service Commission and approval of the minister. A new CEO was recently appointed on 8 December 2003.

Employees at all levels are evaluated on how well they achieved their targets and according to their rating on the key performance indicators. Rewards are in the form of performance bonuses given yearly or in the form of promotions.

3. DOCUMENTED OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS

PUB sets its own performance targets against the standards set by the Ministry of Environment. The **PS21 (Public Service in the 21st Century) Committee** of the Singapore Public Service oversees quality service in the public sector and works with PUB to set appropriate targets. The annual targets are set out in PUB's **Corporate Plan**.

PUB reports on performance against targets to its parent ministry, the Board of Directors, the PS21 Committee, the Pollution Control Department and the National Environmental Agency. Financial performance is reported in the [Annual Report](#) submitted to the government and available to the public through the [Web site](#).

Tariff setting requires the approval of the Cabinet and Parliament. Adjustments are proposed by PUB to the Minister of Environment. The request then goes to the Ministry of Finance, Cabinet and Parliament for approval.

Senior management of PUB (Board of Directors and concerned department directors) meet with the Ministry of Environment at least monthly on overall policy formulation and coordination.

4. ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The annual accounts of PUB are required to be audited by the Auditor General or an auditor appointed annually (external auditor) by the Minister in consultation with the Auditor General. There are well-defined requirements in terms of accounting standards and financial management for statutory boards.

5. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

PUB has an extensive system for customer care. Its contact center, PUB-One, provides customers with a single point of contact for inquiries and feedback related to water, sewerage, drainage. The center, which is never closed, can be reached through toll-free telephone calls, fax, letters, emails, short message service (SMS), web-chat, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Every department in PUB maintains a customer care process and customer service is tracked and monitored. A Quality Service Committee analyzes customer feedback and develops reports for PUB management.

PUB actively seeks the opinions of its customers through customer satisfaction surveys held every three years, regular dialogue sessions, and feedback forms. The feedback is also used to identify areas and processes for improvement in PUB's operations. A Public Suggestion Scheme was introduced to reward customers for suggestions that improve PUB's services.

Emphasis is placed on the selection and training of frontline staff who come into direct contact with customers. They are specially trained in the area of customer listening skills and service excellence.

PUB receives an average of 600 complaints per year (about 150 for water and 450 for sewerage concerns) which are normally operational issues. Over 99% of the complaints have been addressed successfully.

6. TRANSPARENCY AND USE OF DATA (OTHER OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY)

PUB is an information-driven company with detailed processes for the collection, analysis and use of data. Customers are seen as an important source of feedback. Employees and customers are rewarded for suggestions which lead to managerial or operational innovations at PUB.

PUB customers are able to access a full range of information on the company electronically, either through the PUB [Web site](#) or the PS21 [Web site](#).

7. PERFORMANCE RESULTS

PUB is considered to be one of the best water utilities in the Asian and Pacific region.

Annex: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators ¹	2000	2001	2002
Unaccounted for Water (%)	5.0%	5.3%	4.8%
Working Ratio	0.369	0.518	0.577
Staff per 1,000 Accounts ¹	2.02	3.09	2.95
Staff per 1,000 Population Served	0.53	0.83	0.80
Accounts Receivable (months of sales) ²	n. a.	0.969	0.938
Service Coverage: Water Supply (%)	100%	100%	100%
Service Coverage: Sanitation (%)	100%	100%	100%

¹ *Water Supply & Sanitation Working Notes*. Note No 9. February 2006, Characteristics of Well Performing Utilities, Baietti, Kingdom, Van Ginneken.