



CASE STUDY

A City Finds a Windfall in Efficiency

A new approach increases efficiency in energy and water use



Photo: Alliance to Save Energy

Efficiency improvements at the central water supply system in Vizianagaram mean more money for other services.

“Money saved can be redirected to better municipal infrastructure, and better environment and social development interventions for the welfare of the poor,” said Somesh Kumar of the Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development.

Challenge

Indian cities and towns are facing the challenges of growing populations and urban expansion, and, for many, direct access to clean, affordable and reliable drinking water remains a dream. Only a fraction of the urban population has direct access to clean piped water, often because of inadequate and inefficient supply systems. The situation in the southern city of Vizianagaram — home to 200,000 — is a case in point. Water supply is inefficient and waste is high. Women have complained to government officials that water is supplied only once in three days in poorer parts of the city. Water and sanitation-related diseases are a serious problem, with levels among the highest in Andhra Pradesh.

Initiative

USAID supported the development of Watergy, one successful approach to resolving these challenges. Since most municipal water utilities in India spend nearly 60 percent of their budgets on energy costs for water pumping, Watergy works to increase energy efficiency as a starting point. With a more efficient process, cities can optimize energy use, reduce water waste and ultimately improve water services. In partnership with the state government of Andhra Pradesh, USAID helped launch Watergy in Vizianagaram to promote the concept throughout the state and demonstrate that it works.

Results

Vizianagaram municipality has already put 80 percent of the proposed energy savings measures into practice. The city now saves more than 100 megawatt-hours of energy and \$63,700 annually — slashing its energy costs by 18 percent and eliminating 600 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. The measures have also reduced water waste through more effective supply and distribution, and according to local officials, the energy cost savings frees up money for other needed urban services.

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