

# 5 COMMUNITY CONTRACTS

## 5.1 Introduction



Maldives

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“Women work together to process coral stones from old and demolished walls and buildings; these are recycled and used for housing construction. They get about 12 Rufiyaa per bag of crushed stones and this has now become an additional source of income for them”

### Recycling Construction Material

A Community Contract is a contract awarded to a community organization by a government agency, NGO or a project to carry out physical works that have been identified in the Community Action Plan. In most cases the community organization, which represents the community of a

particular settlement, is the registered Community Development Council. The set of activities is usually the construction of housing and community infrastructure, a prioritized need in the community identified in the Community Action Plan. Over time however, Community Contracts have been used for a number of innovative activities beyond the construction of simple infrastructure facilities. These activities are for example the provision of services and the enhancement of skills.

It is important to note that Community Contracts emerge from a process, in which communities identify their needs, prioritize their problems and agree upon plans for their solutions. The technical preparation of the plan is usually facilitated by the organization, which assists the community or which is commissioned by the community.

### Why Community Contracts?

If physical infrastructure or housing is carried out through the conventional contract procedures, the community benefits only from the output of the contract and not from the process of the construction. Awarding the contract to the community has the advantages outlined in the following table:

**Table 5.1** Comparative Advantages of Community Contracts

Process	Conventional Contract	Community Contract
Planning	Outside professionals	Community
Design	Outside professionals	Community assisted by professionals
Physical works	Outside contractor	Community
Labour	Machine intensive	Labour intensive
Experience	Goes out of community	Stays with community
Quality of work	Chances of being inferior	Good, it is their own
Profit margin	High	Low
Feeling of ownership	None	Very high



Maldives

People Are at the Centre of the Process in Decision-making and Action

The typical type of community contract would be for works that can be classified as follows:

- Physical improvements within the settlement
- Technically not complicated in nature
- Mostly labour intensive, rather than mechanized
- Not capital intensive
- Not requiring highly specialized skills
- Relatively easy to manage

The most common types of works constructed through community contracts are:

- Housing construction
- Access roads to and within the settlement
- Paved footpaths
- Drains, culverts and small bridges
- Water wells, hand-pumps with platforms and water tanks
- Public toilets
- Small-scale sewer systems
- Community halls, schools, clinics

## 5.2 Accountability

It is important to ensure social and economic accountability in any participatory development initiative. The question of accountability has always been looked at from the top, from the centre, i.e. local and peripheral organizations being accountable to the centre for expenditure and output. Therefore central organizations keep control of funds and expenditure.

Contracts are awarded from the central agencies to big time contractors because they are believed to be the only trustworthy partners. These contractors are only accountable to the body that awarded the contract and not to the community. However, experience has shown that community organization and other grass-roots organizations are accountable, not only to the funding agency but also to the people that they represent and who they serve. Therefore accountability is a two-way process. The people are the best judges of any facility

that they have been provided with: they have a better judgment of whether it is worth the cost and whether it is done to satisfactory standards. To ensure this process, it is necessary to formalize the accountability and monitoring in the hands of the people who will benefit from the facility. The openness of procedures and economic transactions is the key to accountability in this system. It strengthens the trust, both within the community and between the CDC and the local authority. By doing these contracts the communities become more responsible for their own development work and for the management of facilities. They acquire a feeling of ownership and attachment to the facility, which will automatically ensure long-term maintenance.

### 5.3 Contract Award and Management

A Community Contract is awarded to the CDC or recognized Community Based Organization representing the community. The particular works are designed and estimated by the organization responsible for the project in consultation with the community. The contract is entered into between the CDC and the project. Generally "The Community Contract" is signed by the Chairperson and the Treasurer of the CDC representing CDC and respective Project Manager (Annex 006). Attestation of two witnesses is necessary for the Contract and generally they are a representative of the local authority and another member of the community.

The CDC should appoint a book-keeper/store keeper, who is from the community. She or he should maintain proper records of stock, tools and equipment and the cashbook. If the Treasurer of the CDC is capable of performing this duty or is willing to learn how to do this job it is better for the CDC. The cost of remunerating the person should be included into the contract. The CDC should at all times ensure that the accounts are available to the contract-granting authority.



Communities Keep Control of Funds and Expenditure

### 5.4 Eligibility Criteria for CDCs for Community Contracts

Before a CDC is awarded a Community Contract, its capacity needs to be assessed using the following criteria:

- Be fully represented by all the Primary Groups of the community
- Be registered with the Local Authority or Government Authority
- Have prepared the Community Action Plan
- Have a bank account
- Have received instructions or training in Community Contracting

### 5.5 Technical Training to Build Back Better

If the reconstruction is as result of an earthquake, typhoon, flood or other disaster, it is essential to include mitigation measures into the reconstruction process. It is necessary to ensure that housing and infrastructure facilities are safe and will not be damaged to the same degree in the next catastrophic event. This requires the introduction of disaster resistant construction techniques.

First the guidelines and standards for safe construction have to be developed, which should be followed by training for community builders in disaster resistant techniques. The training should consist of instructions on correct building practices and of on-the-job training in construction. There is an opportunity to introduce disaster awareness and mitigation methods for the whole community. The Community may prioritize some of the protection measures in the Community Action Plan.



Pakistan

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Developing Feeling of Ownership