



FIETS SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

“AS PART OF THE DUTCH WASH ALLIANCE AND MEMBER OF THE SUSTAINABLE SANITATION ALLIANCE (SUSANA), WASTE HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIETS SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES.”





FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT OF THE “FIETS”

Definition

Financial Sustainability means that continuity in the delivery of products and services related to water, sanitation and hygiene is assured, because the activities are locally financed (e.g. taxes, local fees, local financing) and do not depend on external (foreign) subsidies.

Problem statement

The continuity and up scaling of WASH services pose a serious challenge in developing countries: governments lack own funding; donor funding is not sufficient to serve all communities and is decreasing. Governments, civil society and communities are struggling with issues such as decentralisation, inadequate fund allocation to invest, operate and maintain and with cost recovery. Few countries have realistic and operational policies and strategies to enable sustainable financing for increased WASH service coverage, particularly for the poor.

At the same time local resources are available, e.g. local financing and local labour (entrepreneurs).

The involvement of the financial sector in the WASH service provision is minimal. Local banks and micro finance institutes hardly provide loans for WASH to the poor. The involvement of the local informal sector and small enterprises is often informal, not regulated. Financial products to support and improve these local enterprises' involvement in the sector are rare.

Not only suffers WASH from a lack of funding, but also from a lack of attention from governments.

Often the focus is on water supply and sanitation coverage in urban areas, with little attention for rural and peri-urban areas. Most rural communities lack own resources to invest in drinking water supply, and do not always see the importance of investment in sanitation and hygiene improvements. Revenues of existing systems in the urban areas are rarely used for re-investments in the extension of WASH coverage to non-urban areas or for maintenance.

In short: in government policies and budgets, sanitation has low priority, water interventions focus mostly on “easy to serve” geographical areas, and the integration of water, sanitation and hygiene is lacking.

Vision

Sufficient structural local financial resources to invest in improving WASH services and to finance the operation and maintenance of existing WASH services are available through engagement of the local financial sector, the local business sector and improved local (and national) government spending on WASH and improved targeting of this spending within the sector.

Trends

There is growing awareness that effective WASH service provision can be driven by market forces, whether these services are provided by government, civil society or private sector participants. People realise that free services do not exist; costs have to be covered one way or another if the service is to be durable. Providing grants as a single tool for poverty alleviation has not worked, as they fail to create incentives for people, businesses and governments to use their own resources and creativity.

Furthermore people, companies and governments are starting to appreciate that investment costs are covered as much as possible through local funding sources such as household contributions, recurrent tax revenue, fee systems and loans from local banks and micro-finance institutes. Proven successes in using instruments such as micro finance, guarantees and cross-cutting subsidies provide examples and inspiration to rely more on local finance and the ability of people to be (come) customers instead of recipients of support. There is a growing recognition of the crucial role of the informal sector and small enterprises in the provision of WASH services. Water and nutrient resource recycling is slowly but steadily gaining economic momentum, the next stage will be to convert the recycled resource into a source of income.



The ongoing decentralisation through which the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people (so from national to more local level) provides opportunities for local communities and consumer groups to be more engaged in decision making by the local authorities including influencing budget allocations.

Approaches

The WASH alliance will build its financial approach on a variety of strategies to promote mechanisms and introduce models that create incentives for various stakeholders to contribute to the financing of WASH improvements.

The main financial principle of the WASH alliance is Local Finance First. The alliance will work towards models in which WASH investment costs are covered as much as possible through local funding sources e.g. from consumers, public sector and private investors, through household contributions, recurrent tax revenue, fee systems, decentralized funds and loans from local finance institutions like banks and micro finance institutes. Operation and maintenance of WASH services are always paid through local financing instruments.

Market forces will be recognised and be stimulated. Small local enterprises will have the opportunity to flourish by properly addressing water and sanitation in a locally regulated business sector.

The WASH alliance will use a rights based approach. Through local lobby, advocacy and budget tracking, communities will be empowered to express their needs and demands to their local, regional and national authorities for adequate budget allocation and use. Civil society organizations will be supported to translate needs and demands at grass roots level into advocacy messages to influence government policies and budget allocations, and function as watchdog to hold responsible WASH authorities and the business sector accountable.

Three levels of WASH service interventions will be dealt with, and for each of them a different approach is required:

1) Household level WASH services: a Social Marketing approach

Household level WASH services are solutions that are a part of the assets of a household. Examples are household latrines, household water filters, soak-away pits, or individual rainwater harvesting systems. For these investments, a social marketing approach will be promoted, aimed at three aspects:

- Enhancing Demand through a variety of campaigning methods.
- Strengthening Supply through capacity building support for entrepreneurs on development and promotion of low cost technology, and for construction and distribution.
- Supporting the market mechanisms through market research, training in marketing techniques, and development and introduction of innovative finance mechanisms.

2) Community level WASH services: Local Finance First

Community level WASH investments are solutions that are owned and managed by communal management structures and accessible to, as well as used by, all community members. Examples are public boreholes, hand dug wells, spring capitations and storage tanks with possible distribution systems and taps / standpipes; community managed public toilet and bathroom facilities. "Institutional" systems for schools and rural clinics are included in this category.

For hardware investments in such systems, especially in rural areas, it is foreseen that local funds will be inadequate. Communities will be capacitated, facilitated and empowered to enhance adequate budget allocations and use. Advocacy, local lobby and budget tracking is used for increased fund allocation and better targeting by the government, together with strategies for creating local fund mechanisms. Initial hardware investments can be subsidized but always in collaboration with local contributions.

3) Private service providers type WASH services: A business approach with investments loans

Under private service WASH we understand a large variety of WASH services for which clients have to pay to use the service. Examples are water kiosks, toilets at markets and bus stations, water trucks, and latrine pit emptying services. They are owned and managed privately, as a business, and investment costs need to be recovered from revenues. This type of service provision is usually found in urban and peri-urban areas.

By means of a business support programme private initiatives of individuals and businesses are stimulated that combine social goals (increasing access to proper WASH services) and financial goals (earning revenues that will create financial sustainability of the business while providing returns on investment). Support can include strengthening and expansion of a network of independent local business developers and local financiers, development of financial instruments (for example loan guarantee funding), training and legal advice.



Criteria for sustainability

1. Projects are substantially and progressively co-financed by local stakeholders. Especially the share from (local) private investors is valued positively but also financing through tax revenues is seen as sustainable.
2. Local entrepreneurs and companies take up an increasing and serious role in the provision of WASH services.
3. Project and initiatives are based on a business (plan) approach, including operation, maintenance and depreciation, preferably with positive financial results within the project period. Payments by the end user are based on market research on paying ability and life cycle costs.
4. After the project period WASH service provision can be sustained based on local finance, meaning based on payment for services by the end-users or tax revenues.



INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT OF THE “FIETS”

Definition

Institutional sustainability in the WASH sector means that WASH systems, institutions, policies and procedures at the local level are functional and meet the demand of users of WASH services. Households and other WASH service users, authorities and service providers at the local and the national level are clear on their own roles, tasks and responsibilities, are capable of fulfilling these roles effectively and are transparent to each other. WASH stakeholders work together in the WASH chain through a multi-stakeholder approach.

Problem statement

Access to WASH services is a basic human right, and ensuring the provision of WASH services is ultimately a government responsibility. The institutions that are responsible for the service (duty bearers) not always have the political will to fulfil their duties or lack capacity to fulfil their role. Next, in water as well as in sanitation, a systematic or integrated approach towards solving WASH problems is lacking. Too many actors are using different approaches, which are not well coordinated. Government, civil society and the private sector are not working optimally together towards the improvement of access to WASH services.

- NGOs fill existing gaps in WASH services to marginal and isolated communities with funds from (inter)national donors. By taking this implementing role, they are taking away the responsibility of other actors to ensure the provision of WASH services. They lack at times the required technical expertise.
- The institutional framework in terms of policies, procedures, standards, roles and responsibilities is relatively transparent for drinking water, but lacks for sanitation and hygiene. In those latter cases the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between different Ministries (Health, Water, and Environment) at different levels remains unclear. A related problem is that the process of decentralization, though an interesting opportunity for greater participation of communities, is taking place without transfer of the necessary financial means and technical capacities to local levels.
- The private sector is too much limited to urban areas. The local market is not functioning in an optimal way to encourage business investment and operation to invest in and develop relevant WASH services, especially for marginal and isolated communities.
- Communities, especially women and marginalised groups, have been regarded too long as vulnerable and weak, as victims of injustice. Too little attention has been paid to their capacities and strong points. The experiences with the provision of free services have not led to sustained services in the long run.
- Multi-actor platforms where WASH actors meet, and learn, discuss and plan together are not always well in place. This absence hinders necessary collaboration and coordination between them.

Vision

WASH systems, institutions, policies and procedures meet the demand of all different users of WASH services effectively and ensure transparency. They ensure the roles, tasks and responsibilities of all stakeholders in such a way that their collaboration and coordination leads to the delivery of WASH services with the required quantities and qualities. All these systems, institutions, policies and procedures are constantly updated based on inputs of all stakeholders.

- The role of NGOs will shift from implementing to facilitating: NGOs support communities to achieve their rights to WASH and facilitate improvement in multi-stakeholder coordination and synergy in the WASH sector.
- The public sector fulfils a leading and coordinative role in the WASH sector.
- The role of the private sector in the WASH service delivery increases significantly.
- Communities, specifically women, claim and use their right to sustainable water and sanitation services.



Trends

- Increased recognition that only by collaboration between all WASH sector stakeholders effective and sustainable WASH delivery will be achieved.
- The decentralisation of the government offers a chance to bring WASH services closer to the communities to ensure proper implementation and influencing of policies.
- It is broadly recognised that free services are not sustainable and that a more 'business like' approach is required.
- The private sector is interested to develop sound technical and cost-effective WASH services, adapted to more marginal groups.
- The civil society can now better concentrate on their key role of facilitation of the WASH chain, lobby and advocacy, especially towards ensuring the rights of marginalised groups to WASH services. This greater focus of NGOs is desired and will ensure the quality of their work and interventions.
- Communities are more aware of the need to contribute time and resources for the operation and maintenance of WASH services. Having rights also implies having duties.

Approaches

The WASH Alliance promotes an integrated approach to WASH sector, which includes components such as the mobilization and organisation of the community around their right to WASH; clarifying roles and responsibilities of all WASH actors and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms; building the capacity of the sector(s) towards better delivery; lobby and advocacy towards better policies and mobilization of government budgets. Hereunder these elements are further explained:

Partnering with women and coalitions at local level

People organize themselves around specific interests and that will be the starting point of building strong organisations. In view of their role in WASH service provision, the inputs of women in these organisations will be pivotal, including their leadership to achieve results. The WASH Alliance will also bring together these different WASH user groups into coalitions of local groups to scale up their interventions and influence.

Setting up and facilitation of Multi-stakeholder Platforms

All stakeholders in the WASH sector should know, from themselves and from each other, what is expected from them in terms of their specific roles and responsibilities on the one hand, and their competencies and focus on the other. This considers all stakeholders in the WASH chain. Determination and agreement of these roles and responsibilities include the interaction between all different WASH actors. Multi-stakeholder platforms will be set up and facilitated and will be the meeting places for all these WASH actors, and constitute the basis for joint discussion, negotiation, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and learning. They will take into account different levels: local, regional and national. They are also a relevant place for lobby & advocacy. Platforms are essential for coordination of activities and use of budgets for better performance of each actor. They may at start have an informal character and gradually develop into more formal bodies, if required and desired.

Capacity building

To achieve a better performance in the WASH sector, capacity building is needed at different levels for the different actors in accordance with the specific roles and responsibilities, thus achieving both better performing WASH actors and improved coordination between all different players in the sector. For that reason the WASH Alliance will address three levels of capacity building:

- Human Resource Development (HRD), enhancing knowledge, skills and capacities of individuals in technical, personal and managerial areas
- Organisational Development (OD), improving organisational performance, management, systems and governance, in order to build effective, efficient and accountable institutions
- Institutional Development (ID), strengthening interrelationships between stakeholders, strengthening cooperation and coordination, clarifying tasks, roles and terms of interaction

Advocate for increased responsibility and involvement in decision-making

In the Multi-stakeholder platforms, during capacity building and at any relevant opportunity the actors of the WASH Alliance will advocate:

1. For the specific involvement of women and marginalised groups in decision making to ensure equity for all users.
2. For the active role of water users in L&A as this increases legitimacy of claims; L&A on behalf of water users by other actors will be minimised
3. For budget tracking to be taken up as a special activity in the hands of communities to make sure that funds from the national level will reach the right beneficiaries.
4. To convince public and private stakeholders to invest in and create an enabling environment for WASH services.
5. As much as possible based on evidence based inputs. For that purpose the search for and documentation of evidence based cases is of prime importance
6. For both formulation and practical implementation of relevant policies



Criteria for sustainability

1. A mandated local party, that is (or is made) responsible for the delivery of services and/or products, and that represents especially the interests of the weakest stakeholders, has (or gets) a leading role. Local party: local business or government.
2. The interests of the different stakeholders in the WASH chain are structurally incorporated and met.
3. Activities must be in accordance with local policies, laws and regulations. If not this must be solved through improved cooperation and coordination in line with sustainability criteria.
4. Transparency and accountability of planning, decisions use of budget and results must be met by all stakeholders involved (for example by the use of innovative ICT applications).
5. Training/capacity building of a.o. the local private sector must be structurally embedded in order to ensure sustainability of the service/product.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT OF THE “FIETS”

Definition

The element of environmental sustainability implies placing WASH interventions in the wider context of the natural environment and implementing an approach of integrated and sustainable management of water and waste(-water) flows and resources. WASH interventions connect to and affect the natural environment and hence people's livelihood.

Problem statement

At a global scale, quantity and quality of water is under serious threat. Unsustainable management, over and uninformed abstraction and use of water (and water resources) and waste (water) flows leads to further depletion and pollution of water resources. This is even more aggravated by the negative impacts of climate change and population growth itself. Uncontrolled waste deposit (solid and fluid) leads to non-hygienic living conditions and life threatening water quality problems. Large consumers of water and producers of waste hold a key position in reversing these trends in over-abstraction and uncontrolled waste flows.

At a local scale, WASH strategies and interventions aiming to actually improve WASH service provision for people tend to orient themselves at generating quick results in line with MDG targets, resulting in a strong sector and/or thematic focus on WASH as stand-alone issue. Taking an environmental sustainability perspective would bring WASH strategies and interventions in line with the possibilities, requirements and restraints of the natural environment. It is crucial to fully understand this interaction between WASH services and the environment and take into account all aspects related to this interaction in order to ensure sustainable WASH services, now and in the future.

Besides ensuring sustainable interventions at a local level, it is crucial to work together with key actors from public and private sector in larger management and development plans, to ensure a bigger impact for people and the environment.

Vision

Key actors of civil society, public and private sector are aware of the linkage between WASH interventions and the natural environment and are capable of balancing environmental and development needs into their strategies and interventions. The Dutch WASH Alliance works towards ensuring integrity and functioning of the natural ecosystem in which WASH interventions take place and upon which local livelihoods (both rural and urban) depend.

Trends

Governmental and non-governmental actors are increasingly becoming aware of the impact of climate change, uncontrolled waste deposits and pressure on natural resources and are including these issues more and more in their policies and programmes. Global water and food shortages are directly related to each other and it is time for innovative and holistic solutions to tackle both. Private sector actors are including sustainability aspects on water use and waste deposits as part of their corporate social responsibility strategy. Governments are working on water management plans, which focus on sustainable forms of water supply. Even if the current economic situation seems to lead to less attention for environmental issues, it is even more important to implement so-called no-regret measures, which benefit both people and the environment in all development activities. Collaboration between different sectors and integration of other themes (like spatial planning, soil erosion and food security) into natural and specifically water resource management, hence working in a holistic way, is seen as crucial to develop and implement sustainable solutions. WASH, food security and the natural environment are interlinked, but this linkage, its potential and challenges need more attention.



Approaches

It is not a matter of re-inventing the wheel, but integrating and adapting existing approaches in WASH strategies and interventions, by focusing strongly on the local context: the natural environment and actors and their needs and demands. The aim is to design and implement holistic and practical solutions whereby WASH interventions are beneficial for people, natural ecosystems and water resources.

- Thinking with the landscape: understanding of water flows and community needs
- 3R approach: Recharge, Retention and Re-use of water resources
- 3R approach: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle of waste(flows)
- Low cost, low maintenance environmental friendly technologies
- Ecosystem service approach: maintaining resources and services of natural environment upon which community depends

Criteria for sustainability

1. The project has at its base knowledge of the hydrological, ecological and socio-economic situation of the (smallest) relevant catchment level in which the intervention takes place.
2. The project involves the analysis of the impact of the interventions on the environment (particularly water and soil) and the immediate environment of the target by means of an Environmental Impact Assessment. Crucial part of this is a hydrological analysis of the project. The project preferably has a positive impact on the environment, but should have no negative effect on it.
3. The project uses sustainable techniques. Here, preference is given to techniques which 1) make use of durable water (such as rain water according to the approach 3R), or in such a way that make use of natural water the groundwater level remains the same, 2) contamination of water, soil and air (due to CH₄ methane emissions) prevent or reduce to an acceptable level (such as eco-sanitation) and 3) purification and reuse of waste water and sanitation 4) important/prevaling ecosystem services can be maintained / are not diminished.
4. The project should strengthen capacities and increase knowledge and awareness on linkage between WASH interventions and the natural environment. This can be done by:
 - Including environmental actors in WASH platforms, committees, networks and programmes / projects at all levels,
 - Strengthening capacities and knowledge (through trainings, learning alliances, pilots etc) on environmentally sustainable tools and approaches (see 1 criteria).
5. The project should influence governmental key players in WASH to make informed decisions and ensure integration of environmental sustainability in policies and programmes. This can be done by:
 - Including environmental paragraphs in policies and legislations on WASH,
 - Allocating budget to environmentally sustainable WASH programmes.



TECHNOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT OF THE “FIETS”

Definition

Technological sustainability of WASH services is reached when the technology or hardware needed for the services continues to function is maintained, repaired and replaced by local people and it is not depleting the (natural) resources on which it depends for its functioning.

Problem statement

Sustained functioning of WASH systems is a major concern and largely depends on whether the selection of technology matches with the local conditions. Improper and malfunctioning of the technology, (software and / or hardware) of the system are often a cause for the whole system to stop functioning. Rather than major flaws in the technology itself, failure of the technology is associated with the use of (high-tech) non appropriate technologies and/or lack of support structures that are needed to maintain, repair and replace the technology. The costs/benefits balance of the system often does not justify the use of the facility for users, let alone the repairs. And finally, in developing countries the ability to pay for services is often limited. With expensive systems in place, the contributions from users in the best case cover the costs for operation and repair, which does not leave room for building up financial reserves for replacement of the system at the end of its lifespan.

Vision

Sustainable water and sanitation technologies, optimally satisfy the direct and indirect needs of the users in their environment from a development perspective. The Quality, means fitness for use, or suitability, is one key element, while the sustaining context is the other key-element. Access to water has been declared a human right, which entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal, domestic and productive use. Complying with that right, an economic value may be ascribed to the access to water and sanitation. Appropriate financing mechanisms should be developed.

Sustainable Technologies (ST) can substantially contribute to more and better water supply and sanitation systems. ST promotion amongst the various stakeholders is needed for attracting more finance, particularly from the private sector. A worldwide and large-scale application of ST in a sustainable way requires a homogenization of the concept of ST in water and sanitation.

Whether a technology can be **considered as appropriate** - whether it has sufficient Quality, fitness for sustainable use, depends on the following technical criteria, or critical success factors:

1. Functionality, fitness for complying with the needs (facilitating its intended use)
2. Reliability and Safety, built-in continuity of functionality
3. Repairability and Maintenance, restoring and maintaining functionality
4. Eco-security, a maximum of positive and a minimum of negative effects on ecology
5. Affordability, within reach of the intended users
6. Replicability, fit for local (scaled-up / mass) production

When focusing on sustainability of water and sanitation technologies and hardware, a shift in mindset is needed towards local contextual orientation., Meaning making use of local hardware and technologies, focus and improve local capacities, take into account the local context and maintenance of the technology by local people.

Sustainability of the technology will depend on the continued existence of the local supply and service chain which in its turn depends on the actual demand for the products and services. Subsidies for Operation and Maintenance (O&M), when not part of the sustainable finance model, are likely to have a negative impact on the sustainability of the service chains. The service chain (system) should include appropriate revenue systems that generate enough funds to guarantee coverage for O&M.

The WASH Alliance, with knowledge and skills of the various Alliance members, can assist local parties in the fields of technology selection, procurement, development, implementation and trainings to help maintain, repair and replace a specific technology.



Trends

Although all people do have some kind of access to drinking water, official numbers usually include only those individuals with access to an improved water source, often limited to protected groundwater sources or (centrally) treated surface water sources. From the perspective of sustainability of technology, working with (low cost) local technologies through the local private sector, the concept of **drinking water self supply** becomes interesting; this concept includes all efforts of individuals to improve the quality of their drinking water step by step ('climbing the water ladder') to a point where eventually the source can be considered an improved water source. By using this concept as an official policy, it stimulates people to invest in improving drinking water quality without subsidy, creating a sustainable local demand for services from the private sector.

Incentives to maintain, repair and replace hardware rely on the felt need to have those systems working. Adding productive use to the WASH facilities will help to improve sustainability, as the income of its user will depend on it. For sanitation, feces and urine as fertilizer will increase agricultural production. For drinking water, designing the water system as a multiple use water systems includes sufficient water for different (small scale) productive uses.

Approaches

Adapt the WASH technologies to the context where they are being used

- Preference for the use of locally made/available designs and materials
- The technology should not exceed the levels of complexity that match the expertise levels of people involved (users, mechanics, implementers)
- Use of options that are already available on the market, supply chains and service chains in place; and replicable
- Adhere to local rules, regulations, standards
- The technology should be in compliance with the need
- The selected technology should be affordable

Adapt the context to the technologies needed to deliver the WASH services

- Influence policy to include the technologies in use in local standards and regulations
- Involve local entrepreneurs in the establishment of the wash service
- Train local stakeholders (technical sustainability)
- Introduce sustainable means of financing of WASH in investments and O&M
- Introduce appropriate revenue systems

Criteria for sustainability

1. Sustainable availability of the hardware / technology is based on a **viable business model**; That is, the activities of the actors in the chain of supply, installation and maintenance do have enough financial incentive to sustain the services;
2. Proposed technology is produced or procured, installed and maintained by the local private sector (or in specific cases by end user groups or cooperatives that could take over such a role).
3. For new technologies, training should be included to transfer all knowledge and expertise needed for the continued functioning to the local level.
4. For household level options, it is essential that the technology can be acquired by the majority of the intended users free of subsidy. In case a (micro) financing scheme is used, the repayment period of the loan does not exceed the expected lifetime of the technology. For communal systems (like community handpumps or piped water supply), the users should (periodically) pay for the services to such an extent that not only costs for repair and maintenance are covered but also reservations are made to replace the system after its lifetime.



SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT OF THE “FIETS”

Definition

Social sustainability refers to ensuring that the appropriate social conditions and prerequisites are realized and sustained so the current and future society is able to create healthy and liveable communities. Social sustainable intervention is demand-driven, inclusive (equity), gender equal, culturally sensitive and needs-based.

Problem statement

There is an unequal distribution in access to WASH services, goods and knowledge. Investments in the WASH sector suffer from an urban bias, a bias towards upper and middle classes, a bias towards politically favoured ethnic groups and towards the male. Specific groups, like the poor, women, and minorities are often excluded, which deepens discrepancies in health, wealth and wellbeing, thus creating tensions in society that ultimately leads to conflict. Also due to scarcity water increasingly becomes a source of social and political conflict. Although access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right¹ has been accepted by many governments, policies and actions to enforce this right have not always been developed. WASH programmes and investments are often developed around what an organisation, institute or company can supply, not taking into account local demand and not building on the current existing positive local practices, knowledge, and attitudes.

The rights of communities, their needs and demands, need to be taken serious, in order for communities to have a positive attitude and willingness to change behaviours and to participate during implementation and during operation and maintenance. Poor people, women and the marginalised might lack the social power to get their needs to be taken into account, and to demand and claim their rights. The societies, groups or geographical areas that are targeted might therefore not be the ones that are in most need for the services. The institutions that are responsible for the service (duty bearers) not always have the political will to fulfil their duties or lack capacity to fulfil their role. Conflict of interests exist between the different stakeholders (men – women, poor – less poor, service provider – service user, political institution – cultural institution, etc.). The WASH needs and demands from the women in a society often differ from those of the men. Women suffer most from the lack of WASH services due to their responsibility and traditional role as caretakers for the health of the (extended) family. Limited knowledge, awareness and skills of women can result in adverse human behaviour like poor personal hygiene practices and in the inability to make informed decisions and demands in the field of WASH.

Vision

Social sustainability will contribute to WASH interventions being sustainable through ensuring that:

- Interventions are based on real demand as these will be well embedded in the society, people participate and will feel listened to, leading to a feeling of ownership towards the provided service, leading to a proactive attitude towards solving the demand and keeping it solved.
- Interventions are fully inclusive for all groups in society (equity) as that will ensure that all groups will benefit and advance in development thereby lessening the potential for internal conflicts.
- Interventions are based on strategies that are sensitive to local and cultural incentives, as these will be adopted by the society more easily, people can relate to the chosen strategy more easily and are more open to changes if these are based on a positive attitude towards local and cultural practices and behaviours.
- Interventions are needs-based so solving WASH problems in societies, groups and geographic areas where relatively higher need exist compared to other societies, groups or geographic areas.

¹ Human right to water and sanitation: defined as the right to equal and non-discriminatory access to a sufficient amount of safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses—drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation and personal and household hygiene—to sustain life and health. States should prioritize these personal and domestic uses over other water uses and should take steps to ensure that this sufficient amount is of good quality, affordable for all and can be collected within a reasonable distance from a person’s home.



Trends

The greater acceptance of the right to water and sanitation as a human right provides the opportunity within the sector to work on social sustainability. However WASH policies need to support this change in approach, current policies at times still favour supply driven approaches and quick fixes.

Decentralisation processes in which more responsibility is delegated to local authorities will enhance accountability between local authorities and the communities. This will have a positive effect on social sustainability as contact between the service user (communities) and the one responsible to increase access to WASH services (the local authority) diminish. The decentralisation process should however include transfer of knowledge and capacity to ensure that the responsible local government institutions have the appropriate knowledge, capacity and willingness to fulfil their roles and take up their responsibilities.

Sanitation is gaining more attention within the water sanitation and hygiene sector however attention to hygiene seems to be lacking behind.

Communities in the WASH sector are seen as consumers or customers or clients that are in need of a service and not as victims that need help. The need to pay a fee for the provided services it is gaining acceptance.

Approaches

Make use of Participatory methods

for identification of demand, creation of demand, establishing local needs in a sensitive and inclusive manner and for behaviour change, during the whole programme and project cycle (planning, monitoring, and evaluation):

These methods encourage the participation of individuals in a group process and to build self-esteem and a sense of responsibility for one's decisions. They are designed for planning at community level and can be useful for identifying positive and negative behaviours related to specifically hygiene. Participants learn from each other and develop respect for each other's knowledge and skills. Community mapping, transect walks, focus group discussions, gender role analysis, use of drawings, posters, role-play, theatre, and songs are examples of participatory methods.

These tools need to be made context specific and thus the facilitators need to be well trained and committed to use them in a context specific manner and to analyse the results for programme / project planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Make use of Rights-based approaches:

A rights-based approach is about improving wider systems of governance, which determine progress towards the vision of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation. It implies a change in the power dynamics between those without access and the duty bearers. It aims to bring about sustainable and long term structural change in policies, procedures and laws, as well as changes in attitudes and behaviours.

Applied to concrete programming this implies the following key components:

1. Vulnerable groups: Development efforts should target/include vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded groups and should pay attention to structural and indirect forms of vulnerability and discrimination in terms of public policies (or lack thereof), local power structures or cultural practices
2. Root causes: understand the reasons why people lack access to basic water and sanitation (political, economic, social, cultural, etc) not simply in terms of needs, but in terms of society's obligation to respond to the rights of individuals.
3. Rights holders and duty bearers: recognise beneficiaries as rights-holders and target their ability to claim their rights, while targeting duty-bearers' ability to fulfil their obligations towards rights-holders and to increase their accountability and responsiveness to all rights holders. Accountability is not only a concern for the outcome of development, but also for the process by which it is achieved and for the organisations implementing it.
4. Empowerment: Work closely with those who do not have access to WASH to empower them to claim their rights to WASH, implying participatory approaches (see next section). Important to note herewith is that development should not only regard participation as a tool, but also as a goal for development. Platforms and networks: development should promote platforms and networks for mobilisations and support peoples ability to take part in governance and claim their rights individually and in groups.



Make use of Gender mainstreaming approaches:

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally (gender equality) and inequality is not perpetuated. Key components:

1. Recognising that no development activity is gender neutral.
2. Recognising that women and men have different needs and that development activities can affect them differently.
3. Understanding that women and marginalised people tend to have more limited access to information and more limited opportunities to participate, unless specific measures are taken to address these limitations.
4. Facilitating the direct participation of both women and men in all activities, as beneficiaries, as stakeholders, as managers, etc.
5. Ensuring there is appropriate benefit and positive outcomes from activities for women as well as men.
6. Integrating a gender perspective into all phases of planning cycles.
7. Strengthening the (political) will to achieve gender equality and equity, at the local, national, regional and global levels.
8. Incorporating a gender perspective into the planning processes of all partners.

Make use of Social marketing approaches:

Social marketing means applying lessons from commercial advertising to the promotion of social goals. It is a systematic approach to influencing people's behaviours and to create demand. Social marketing is not merely motivated by profit but is concerned with achieving a social objective. It goes beyond marketing alone as it is also concerned with how the product is used after the sale has been made. The aim is, for example, not only to sell latrines but to encourage their correct hygienic use and maintenance. The key components of social marketing are:

1. Systematic data collection and analysis to develop appropriate strategies.
2. Making products, services, or behaviours fit the felt needs of the different consumers/user groups.
3. Strategic approach to promoting the products, services or behaviours.
4. Methods for effective distribution so that when demand is created, consumers know where and how to get the products, services, or behaviours with the different groups.
5. Improving the adoption of products, services, or behaviours and increasing the willingness of consumers/users to contribute something in exchange.
6. Pricing so that the product or service is affordable.

Criteria for sustainability

1. The project / programme is demand driven and aimed at provision of basic services on the basis of rights based approaches and enhances empowerment (of women and marginalized groups).
2. The project / programme includes concrete actions to ensure that the interests of all groups in society, including women and especially the marginalised², are taken into account. The project / programme guarantees the interests of the marginalised people are anchored in constitutions, bylaws, ownership agreements and consultation / coordination mechanisms.
3. The project / programme clearly guarantees good working conditions, appropriate environmental measures and attention to include female employees and female entrepreneurs.
4. The project / programme takes into account socio-cultural and religious beliefs, habits, practices and attitudes.
5. The project / programme includes actions to stimulate behaviour change related to hygiene improvements, for example through social marketing.

² Defined as: people who, often for political reasons, are marginalized in society, meaning that they have less than average access to means, services, and bargaining power.