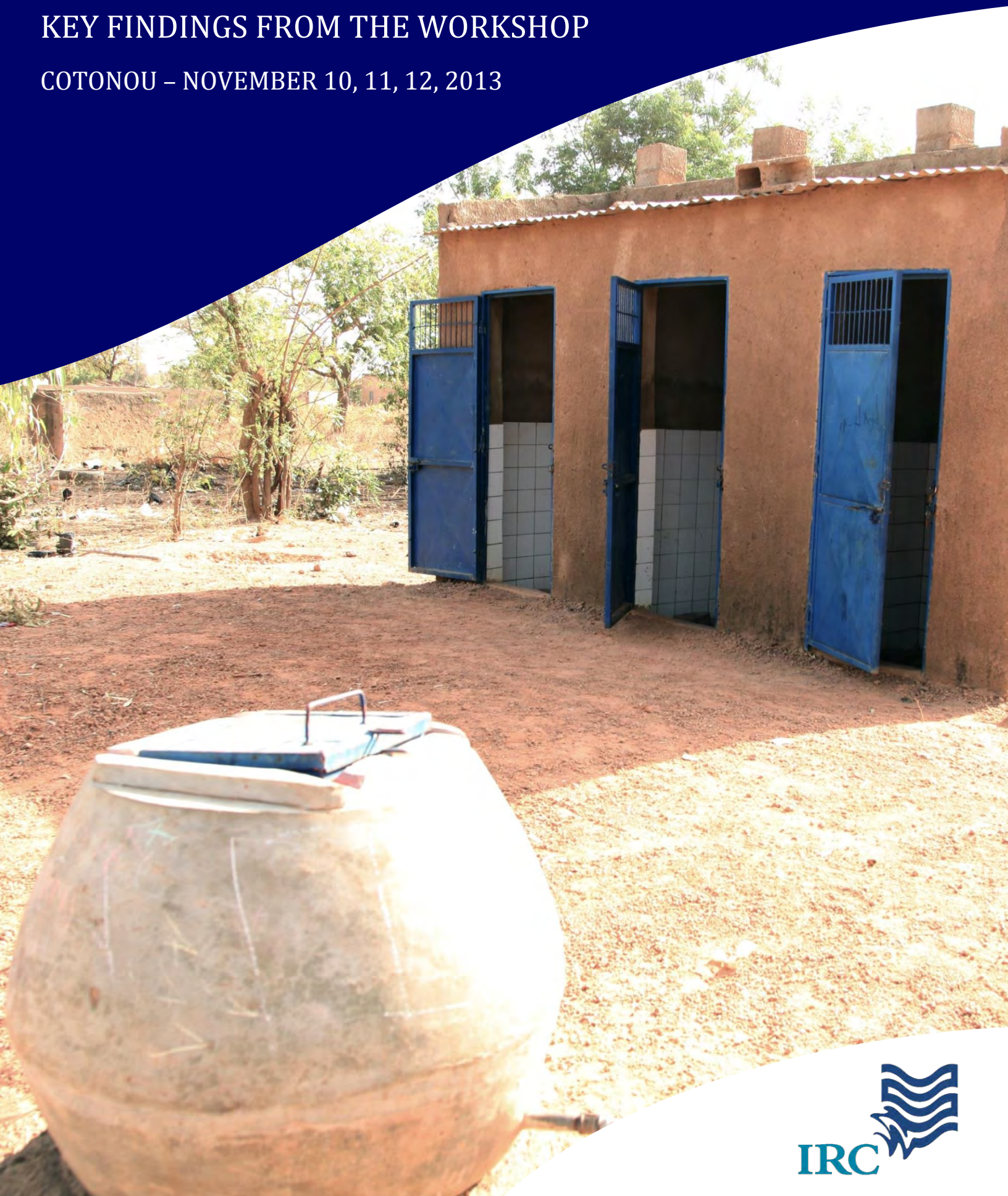
TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOTAL SANITATION

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE WORKSHOP

COTONOU – NOVEMBER 10, 11, 12, 2013



IRC

Introduction

The implementation of sanitation and hygiene programmes, let alone the setup of effective rural sanitation services in West-Africa are facing tremendous challenges, as low coverage rates clearly indicate.

Given these circumstances, IRC with its collaborating partners have decided to have a workshop to discuss the successes and challenges faced in implementing current sanitation and hygiene programmes, and reflected on ways of moving towards more sustainable sanitation. Practitioners from both Francophone and Anglophone countries have been brought together to share experiences, challenges, innovations, and ways forwards in a three-day workshop "Towards sustainable total sanitation" held in Benin in November 2013.

This brochure summarises the key findings agreed upon by the workshop participants with the objective of further sharing and engaging with the sector to set the ground for rural sanitation services that work. The findings are presented in four categories, covering the four conditions to trigger a service[1], namely strengthening the enabling environment, demand creation and advocacy to change behaviour, strengthening the supply chain and appropriate incentives and financial arrangements.

Demand creation and advocacy to change behaviour

What is it?

Demand creation and advocacy to change behaviour seek to promote a lasting change in social norms that favour the adoption of hygiene and sanitation behaviours, creating a demand for services and supplies that underpin the changed behaviour. Key behaviours include the construction, use and maintenance of a hygienic latrine, hand washing with soap after defecation and before handling food, but also safe emptying of pits and tanks, safe and final disposal of faecal sludge or safe productive uses thereof[2].

Key findings from workshop

- Triggering behaviour change is not the sole responsibility of the programme implementer or the community (in case of CLTS). Many other local stakeholders, such as community leaders or women groups can support the uptake of improved behaviour, especially by targeting the most vulnerable groups,

[1] These are defined by Verhagen and Carrasco, 2013. In preparation for the workshop, Dubé and Carrasco (2013) reflected on difficulties and ways forward in setting up sanitation services in rural settings.

[2] Adapted from Verhagen and Carrasco, 2013.

- Understanding the community (local believes etc.) and how sanitation and hygiene take place as best as possible is key to successful behaviour change,
- Natural leaders can organize themselves in networks, enforcing wider dissemination and creating a snowball effect within a district or a region. In turn, such a strategy saves money and time,
- In the West-African context, triggering sanitation demand has to be complemented with a financial mechanism (usually subsidies, but not only), to ensure a stronger buy in, especially to reach the poor. More generally, it was found CLTS triggering mechanisms have to be adapted to the context, hence altering the original principles,
- Using social marketing techniques to trigger change has shown to be highly effective,
- Integrating especially schools and other public facilities in programmes allow a comprehensive behaviour change uptake at community level.

Relevant case studies on this topic include: 1-Baghnyan, 4-Coumbassa, 5-Vries, 7-Ganame, 8-Ganou, 10-Kangni, 16-Snel, 17-Togba. Complete references at the end of the document.

Strengthening the enabling environment

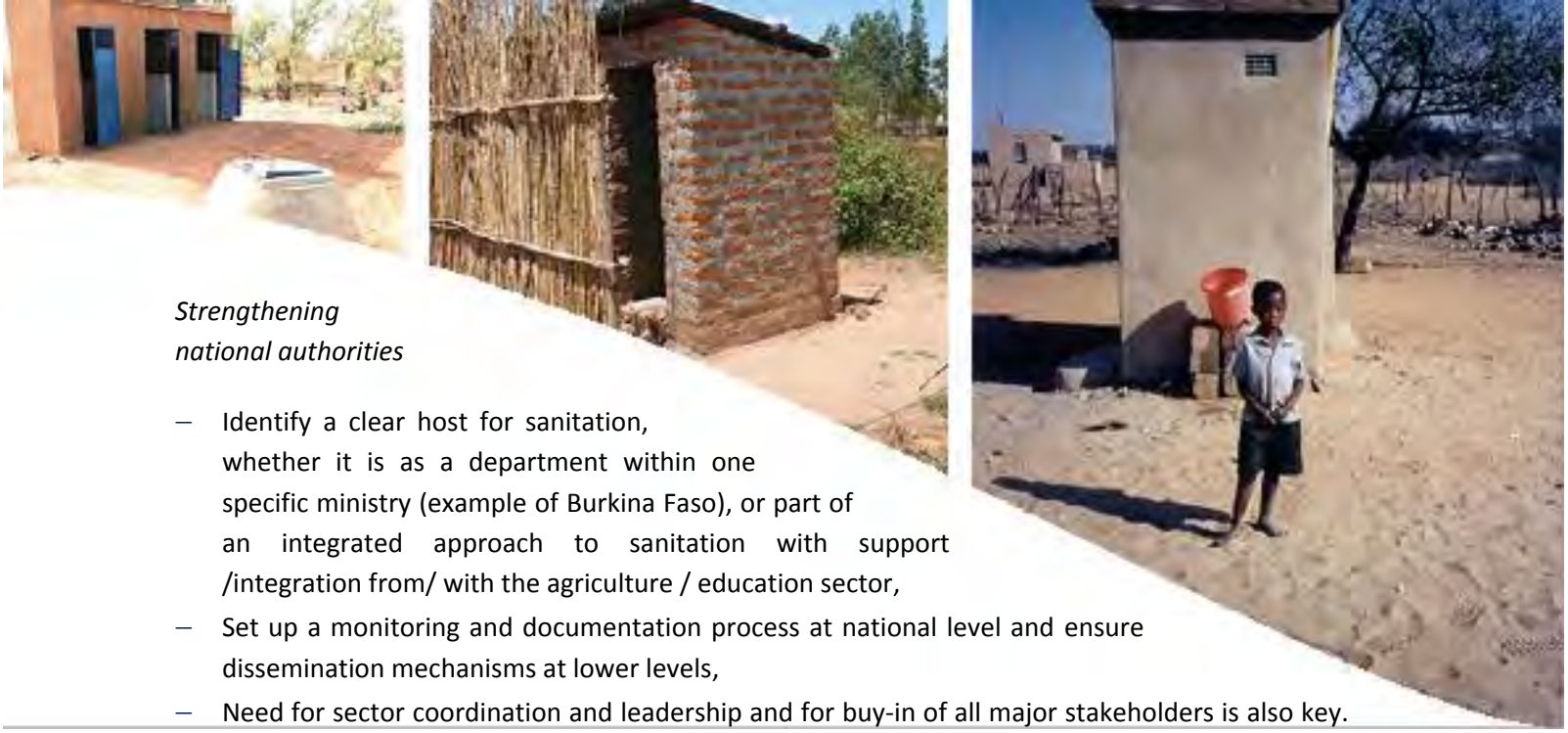
What is it?

The enabling environment relates to a number of critical factors that need to be in place to support the delivery of sanitation services to all: (a) broad and long-term political commitment; (b) a well-developed sanitation strategy and policy framework supported by a regulatory framework, programme and planning methodologies, and implementation planning mechanisms; (c) a clear and well-aligned institutional framework at central and decentralised levels; (d) sufficient dedicated personnel with the capacity to fulfil their tasks; and (e) monitoring and evaluation systems to support learning and to monitor the programme outcomes and changed behaviours (Perez *et al*, 2012).

Key findings from workshop

Strengthening local authorities

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders, and operationalise these by straight forward actions such as inclusion of a sanitation line in the authority budget–this line could support, for example a local technician or support a financing mechanism for poorer members to name but a few,
- Local authorities can be empowered and made accountable by putting the responsibilities in the hand of some specific people. Said differently, building ownership is key,
- Develop a realistic S&H strategy, planning and monitoring processes at district level. This includes identifying a set of documents, tools and indicators adapted to local authorities (i.e. in local languages, etc.), but also monitoring the sustainability of ODF communities,
- Effective monitoring systems can contribute to local empowerment and ownership by showing the progresses or setbacks,
- Exposure to other initiatives allow local authorities to reflect and improve their own practices,
- Clarify expectations and contributions from the central government and other parties, with a MoU or other partnership agreements.



Strengthening national authorities

- Identify a clear host for sanitation, whether it is as a department within one specific ministry (example of Burkina Faso), or part of an integrated approach to sanitation with support /integration from/ with the agriculture / education sector,
- Set up a monitoring and documentation process at national level and ensure dissemination mechanisms at lower levels,
- Need for sector coordination and leadership and for buy-in of all major stakeholders is also key. This includes further harmonization between donors and implementers at national level and the support of learning and sharing platforms between stakeholders,
- Clear and coherent norms for sanitation guidelines are still an issue in most West-African countries. This applies especially for CLTS or CLTS-like programmes where people are expected to build their own facilities. Norms should also define the ODF status,
- Ensure consistency with international agreements (i.e. eThekwini, HLM Washington 2012, etc.).
- Need to harmonize between national authorities, donors and implementers in order to work more effectively towards sustainable sanitation.

Relevant case studies on this topic include: 6-Emesim, 9-Ibrahim, 11-Kaoura, 13-Nadar, 14-Savagado, 15-Schmitzer. Complete references at the end of the document.

Strengthening the supply chain

What is it?

The supply chain that is well developed and competitive, and addresses increased demand for sanitation-related services across the full sanitation life-cycle—including construction, maintenance, upgrading and emptying—includes not only the setup of sanitation markets, desludging businesses and masonry entrepreneurship but also sustainable design of and material for sanitation facilities[3].

Key findings from workshop

- Technological options have to be chosen prior to the programme implementation; either via local supply chains and knowledge or with the support of external engineers and materials,
- Supply chain supported by the private sector or by public-private partnerships, evolving around masons, artisans and other local entrepreneurs,
- Subsidy mechanisms (or other financial schemes) for local entrepreneurs, including women, and more generally for the local private sector providing facilities, have to be encouraged,

[3] Adapted from Verhagen and Carrasco, 2013.

- Developing and supporting technologies such as EcoSan has to be done carefully because although such facilities can generate revenues, cost-recovery has to be considered by the households beforehand,
- Quality monitoring processes must be in place to assess the private sector performance,
- Innovation should be stimulated through research centres, universities and technical schools, and dissemination of technical options and their cost/benefit for different contexts should be encouraged,
- Technological options must be known to households and disseminated through local or regional market places.

Relevant case studies on this topic include: 8-Ganou, 14-Savadogo. Complete references at the end of the document

Appropriate incentives and financial arrangements

What is it?

Incentive and financial arrangements should support service provision. All finances for sustainable sanitation services delivery are derived from a combination of taxes, tariffs and/ or transfers, either at local or national levels. Incentives refer to financial instruments that promote equitable and sustainable sanitation services[4].

Key findings from workshop

Household level

- Financial strategies to support households must be planned ahead. Different mechanisms can be considered, such as subsidies, voucher systems (sanitation materials or hygiene products in different shops), or start-up loans/credit, sub-district sanitation markets. Allocation criteria and amounts have to be adjusted to the context to reach the most vulnerable in an effective way, e.g. with some subsides specifically tailored to support specific vulnerable groups. Subsidies are not the best option for large scale programmes or when coverage is too low,
- Financing facilities through solidarity calls or private funds (i.e. leaders, family members or individual donation -Sanithon[5]) could complement above financial schemes.

Local level

- Provide tools to support the development of a sanitation market, including trainings,
- Ensure the availability of low-cost facilities and supplies,
- Inform households on sanitation options, including costs and maintenance,
- Promote innovative financial schemes e.g. village saving clubs, WASH community scheme, the "cash for work" (CFW) scheme or through private sector- "shop layaway/credit schemes",
- Develop links with new partners - agricultural association; health sector, business association, micro-credit/finance association/organizations (e.g. women groups) and/ or banks.

[4] Adapted from Verhagen and Carrasco, 2013.

[5] Private fundraising event aiming at funding sanitation facilities.

National level

- Support subsidies for the private sector, in collaboration with local level,
- Develop and promote funding mechanisms for software components. Invite donors to consider a higher percentage of their budget towards software components in sanitation,
- Pull fundings, and check that funds (e.g. from NGO) are used to improve conditions of the population / measurement of impact. Said differently, reinforce monitoring from the donor perspective,
- Promote alternative sources of funding such as commercial banks (e.g. loans), public-private partnership (e.g. public Ecosan toilets) or private donors/investors for households,
- Advocate for government to provide incentives for businesses focusing on the development of sanitation products,
- Secure financing at national level through either a sanitation levy tax (from water utilities or on an urban/rural transfer mechanism) or the setup of a national sanitation fund.

International level

- Technical and financial partners and the government shall provide for and integrate a collateral fund for sanitation in micro-finance institutions,
- Make it a condition for sanitation funds to support sustainability measures or have donors consider a higher percentage towards software components in sanitation.

Relevant case studies on this topic include: 1- Baghnyan, 2-Bonkoungou, 3-Codja, 11-Kaoura, 12-Masquelier. Complete references at the end of the document.

Conclusion

Inevitably the categories are permeable as most of the findings cover more than one dimension. However, they clearly indicate where work has to be done in order to continue to move forward. Clearly, the enabling environment and the financial incentives are the two categories that would strongly benefit from more focus not only from practitioners, but from service authorities (districts and other governmental bodies).

Therefore one fundamental first step towards addressing these issues is to shift from programmatic approaches to a government-led service approach. Addressing this shift starts with a change in the vocabulary for all those working directly and/or indirectly in the WASH sector. Another step is to agree on roles and responsibilities across the sanitation delivery chain, and this straight from design level and possibly as part of the overall strategy, before implementation starts. Financial issues should be part of this strategic planning, not for the short term, but for life.

Case studies:

Note all case studies and presentations are available at [http://www.irc.nl/page/82229].

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