

SIDE-EVENT ON SANITATION IN SMALL TOWNS

19 February 2019 - Minutes of the session

This document provides a summary of the session “Sanitation in small towns” which took place in Cape Town, on 19 February 2019, in parallel with the joint AfricaSan5-FSM5 conference. The session was organised by GIZ, pS-Eau and SuSanA Working Group 6 – Cities and planning.

Objectives of the event

Small towns, where most of the urban growth globally is taking place today, are at the heart of the SDG6 ambitions to reach safely managed sanitation for all. However, they frequently face difficulties in delivering sustainable sanitation services to all their citizens, especially with regard to the full sanitation chain, which tends to present formidable institutional, financial and technical challenges.

In collaboration with Eawag-Sandec, Gret, WaterAid and the World Bank, GIZ and pS-Eau have initiated discussions on sanitation at several previous events, in particular at the World Water Week in Stockholm 2017 and 2018 (read [here](#) the minutes of these sessions).

Cape Town’s AfricaSan5-FSM5 conference was another opportunity to continue the discussions on sanitation in small towns, in collaboration with SuSanA Working group 6 - Cities and planning.

Programme

Welcome & introduction

Panel: Closing the sanitation gap in small towns: what are the challenges for international cooperation and governments?

Panelists

- Claudio BACIGALUPI (European Commission DEVCO)
 - Clément FRENOUX (French Development Agency - AFD)
 - Rebecca GILSDORF (World Bank)
 - Trinah KYOMUGISHA (Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda)
 - Ababacar MBAYE (Direction de l'Assainissement - MHA Sénégal)
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Presentation: GIZ Sanitation for Millions (S4M) programme on “Collective Sanitation Services” approach
GIZ S4M Uganda

Presentation: pS-Eau research programme on sanitation in small towns & PRADALIS programme in Senegal
pS-Eau

Discussion

Conclusion

Panel discussion

The panelists were invited to share their views on how the theme of sanitation in small towns is being taken into account in national strategies (or in the strategy of their organization).

Mr. Ababacar Mbaye, director of sanitation, Ministry of Hydraulic and Sanitation, Senegal.

Since 2013, Senegal has been implementing a rural sanitation development strategy under the supervision of the Direction de l'Assainissement (DA). This strategy is adapted to low-density areas, where sanitation is essentially on-site, and addresses fecal sludge management but not wastewater management.

In urban areas, the Office National de l'Assainissement du Sénégal (ONAS) is the public operator in charge of the management, operation, maintenance and development of collective and individual wastewater and stormwater treatment facilities. The service takes into account both collective sanitation (sewer systems), but also non-collective sanitation options, which are dominant in peri-urban areas.

The Project and Programme Planning, Coordination and Monitoring Unit (CPCSP), which created from the PEPAM Coordination Unit since 2018, is the national institutional framework put in place to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, and previously the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), regarding drinking water and sanitation.

Senegal's small towns are mostly the result of the evolution of rural villages. While excreta management can be managed through the existing rural sanitation development strategy, the strategy does not address the wastewater problem, which is a major problem in small towns.

In order to better understand the specific context of small towns, two studies were carried out: a research carried out by the PRADALIS programme (see below the presentation of the pS-Water) and a study carried out by the EDE - Ecopsis group for the elaboration the elaboration of the Global Strategy for the Development of

Sanitation in Large Rural Centres (Stratégie globale de développement de l'Assainissement dans les Gros Centres Ruraux), which is currently under discussion.

In summary, the main sanitation challenges in Senegal's intermediate localities that emerge from these studies are:

1. Finding the appropriate sanitation system for the whole sanitation chain. The organization of the service represents a major challenge. For example, organising emptying services is a challenge, especially as there are sometimes no emptying operators in most of these towns. Also, authorized dumping sites are almost non-existent in small towns.
2. Another major issue is investment: how to finance the construction of wastewater or faecal sludge treatment plants in low-resource towns?

Ms. Trinh Kyomugisha, Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda

In Uganda, small towns don't receive subsidies from the government with regard to the sanitation service. However, they often lack the capacity to manage the services, as well as the financial resources needed.

90% of sanitation is on-site in Ugandan small towns, and the dumping of fecal sludge in the environment is a problem. Planning is difficult in small towns; and manual emptying is happening. Additionally, most pit latrines are not lined and thus are challenging to empty them and this a major problem.

Currently, a few Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTP) have been built, but without the consideration on how these can be served - since the emptying of unlined pits is still a major issue.

In Uganda, the Water and Sanitation Development Facility, an implementation agency under the Ministry of Water and Environment, was specifically initiated to tackle sanitation improvements in small towns and rural growth centers. This is an agency that can be closely studied to understand how the Ugandan model can be replicated to other countries.

Mr. Claudio Bacigalupi, head of Water, DEVCO European Commission,

The small towns of today will be the big cities of tomorrow, which is why it is necessary to take them into account. With regard to financing, the European Commission operates on two levels:

1. The local level is based on intervention strategies at the national level, driven by governments. The European Commission's 2021-2027 strategy and the instruments dedicated to this level are under discussion. A total budget for Africa of €32 billion will be allocated.
2. At the global level, the [EU's External Investment Plan](#) is an instrument for attracting Financial Institutions and private investors; the EIP provides grants funds to National Authorities and investments guarantees to the private sector. The targeted sectors for the guarantees scheme are: renewable

energies, agriculture, digitalization, small and medium enterprises and urban development.

The European Commission in HQs also supports the conduct of preliminary studies. For this purpose, a "Water Facility" technical assistance will be established in 2019. From 2020, a cooperation mechanism will also be put in place to connect Southern operators with European operators ("peer to peer leaning").

Ms. Rebecca Gilsdorf, World Bank

The World Bank's activities are also driven by the needs of government.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now allow a strong argument in favour of small towns, in line with the objective of "leaving no one behind". However, this remains complex because there is generally no dedicated small town institution, and the projects often involve different ministries (technical, financial, etc.).

The World Bank must question the economic reasons for investing in small towns. In particular, it is a question of scale, which calls for territorial approaches (rather than projects targeted on a single city) to be considered. Such projects have been carried out in Latin America in particular, where access to sanitation is higher than in Africa.

One argument for action in small towns is that projects in these areas often involve several sectors (sanitation, agriculture, etc.) and various institutions. This is a good lever to give more visibility to small towns.

Mr. Clément Frenoux, task team leader, Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

AFD faces similar constraints in taking into account small towns.

It is worth pointing out that AFD's main activity is based on loans. Similarly to the European Commission's instruments, part of these are investments at the local level (driven by governments), the other part is covered by guarantees (provided by the AFD to banks).

Currently, 40% of AFD's portfolio is concentrated in Africa, with the majority in urban areas - although the rural sector has recently expanded a little more ("Burkina Faso" for example).

Even if small towns do not have a precise definition, we can still observe a common pattern or characteristics, particularly with regard to the development of collective services (drinking water, electricity, etc.). But financing sanitation remains complicated:

1. It must be a solicitation from governments;
2. Projects must operate on a sufficient scale: at the regional level, as part of a national programme, etc. Otherwise, the investments per capita are too high. It would not be responsible for AFD to encourage governments or cities to take on debt for these amounts.

Q&A

Some remarks from the audience called on financial donors not to forget their influence on the sector. They also called for urgent action, since small towns are growing rapidly – becoming soon cities.

Presentation: GIZ Sanitation for Millions (S4M) programme on “Collective Sanitation Services” approach

>> see [PowerPoint presentation](#) & [video](#) (in English)

Presentation: pS-Eau research programme on sanitation in small towns & PRADALIS programme in Senegal

Since 2017, pS-Eau has initiated several projects, with the aim of identifying experiences of (complete) sanitation services in small towns, and better understanding the specific challenges faced by small towns with regard to sanitation services.

Several activities have been developed (or are still ongoing):

- A [literature review](#) led by a group of students at Cranfield University
- Interviews and questionnaires with pS-Eau partners in Burkina Faso and Togo
- A field visit to 3 small towns in Tanzania (S. Baty)
- The PRADALIS research action programme in Senegal, in collaboration with CONGAD, Eau Vive, GRET and the Institute of Environmental Sciences (ISE) of the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (UCAD), funded by the European Union and the Government of Senegal.

>> see [PowerPoint presentation](#) (in French and English)

>> More information (in French): www.pseau.org/fr/services-dassainissement-dans-petits-centres

Conclusion of the session (Christian Rieck, GIZ)

Small towns are the cities of tomorrow, and they face a variety of challenges regarding sanitation services. Globally there is a need for small towns strategies at governments and financial partners' level, in order to give more importance to small towns in the sanitation sector and tackle these specific challenges.

Some levers for action were discussed in this session: how to include other sectors in sanitation planning, and develop integrated approaches? How to ensure the service viability as well as its affordability in low-income towns?