WSUP
Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor

PRACTICE NOTE

Get to scale in urban water!

Taking urban water to scale requires 'scaling out' models that work for poorer communities, and at the same time 'scaling up' sustainable management processes. This note reports scale-out and scale-up experience from Maputo and Antananarivo.

A new household water connection in Xipamanine, Maputo

When we talk about 'getting to scale', it's useful to distinguish between scaling out (horizontal replication of approaches to reach more beneficiaries) and scaling up (vertical integration into policy, implying the development of supportive capacities and systems).
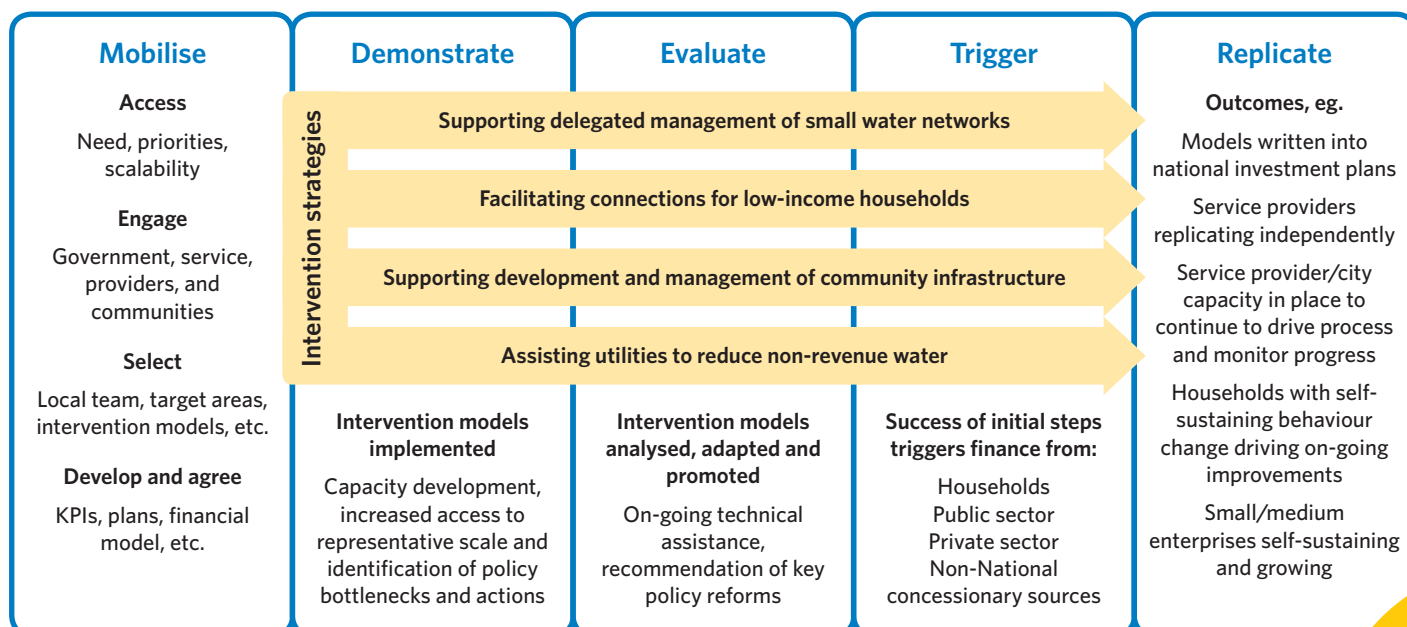
It is theoretically possible for water services to reach scale without strong domestic ownership, through scaling out of a model introduced with donor funds. While this may enable people to access services in the short term, there is a high risk that national service providers will not develop the necessary capacities, management systems, governance arrangements and commitment to sustain, extend and improve services into the future.

WSUP's approach to scale

In WSUP's 2008-2012 programme in Maputo and Antananarivo, and in WSUP programmes generally, the aim is to support cities to move to scale by using a 'demonstration-and-trigger' approach: an initial external investment enables demonstration of service models that are both pro-poor and financially viable, and this triggers increasing resource commitments from domestic service providers, coupled with policy change in relevant institutions. WSUP refers to this approach as the 'Equitable Water Services' process model (Figure 1).

WSUP's experience in Maputo and Antananarivo indicates that, in reality, this 'triggering' is unlikely to be a single event: any change must take place within the city's wider political economy. The realities encountered may require re-evaluation of service models, additional mobilisation around pro-poor goals, and context-specific adaptation. Nonetheless, the continuing experience remains very positive, and WSUP believes that this approach has wide applicability.

Figure 1. Schematic summarising WSUP's Equitable Water Services process model.

Mobilise	Demonstrate	Evaluate	Trigger	Replicate
Access Need, priorities, scalability				**Outcomes, eg.** Models written into national investment plans
Engage Government, service, providers, and communities				Service providers replicating independently
Select Local team, target areas, intervention models, etc.				Service provider/city capacity in place to continue to drive process and monitor progress
Develop and agree KPIs, plans, financial model, etc.	**Intervention models implemented** Capacity development, increased access to representative scale and identification of policy bottlenecks and actions	**Intervention models analysed, adapted and promoted** On-going technical assistance, recommendation of key policy reforms	**Success of initial steps triggers finance from:** Households Public sector Private sector Non-National concessionary sources	Households with self-sustaining behaviour change driving on-going improvements Small/medium enterprises self-sustaining and growing

Intervention strategies:
- Supporting delegated management of small water networks
- Facilitating connections for low-income households
- Supporting development and management of community infrastructure
- Assisting utilities to reduce non-revenue water

Equitable Water Services - key lessons learned

A member of JIRAMA's NRW Reduction Team uses a listening stick to detect leaks

Three key ways in which external agencies can support movement towards scale:

- Support utilities with their overall (city-wide) core business viability, but couple this with strategies to ensure that core business gains are translated into real improvements for low-income communities

- Invest in infrastructure as a way of 'getting a voice at the table', but treat infrastructure construction (i.e. donor-funded scale-out) as secondary to the primary goal of locally led scale-up

- Develop capacity 'on the job' by giving stakeholders - including utility staff and small entrepreneurs - a lead role in the adaptive development of workable service models

For more detailed information, see the WSUP Topic Brief 'Getting to scale in urban water'.

Supporting delegated management of small water networks

In Maputo, WSUP supported delegation of management of part of the utility's lease area to a smaller operator (EMA), on the rationale that a smaller, more locally focused operator would deal better with the particular challenges of serving peri-urban areas. EMA has a 'pure bulk supply' contract, under which it has full responsibility for the customers in its service area, including operation and maintenance, and billing/collection. WSUP provided technical assistance across a number of areas including financial modelling, leakage reduction, metering, contract negotiation and investment planning. A key lesson is that lines of responsibility and incentives within delegated management arrangements take time to become clear, so it makes sense to build in scope for the contract to be modified, in the light of unfolding experience.

Facilitating connections for low-income households

In Maputo, WSUP addressed barriers to connection by low-income households, through a three-pronged strategy of enhancing customer relations, advocating for affordable connection fees, and assisting the utility with tertiary networks and connections. In parallel, staff from the utility AdeM were taken on a study visit to Manila, and inspired to adapt their systems to respond to the particular needs of low-income consumers. Under a Professional Services Agreement, WSUP helped AdeM set up a Low-Income Customer Unit, in return for support with non-revenue water reduction and with procurement processes. The conventional view is that household connections are not affordable or viable in low-income communities. However, WSUP experience has found that with suitable management systems this may not be the case, and a combination of individual household and standpipe connections may be viable in some situations.

Supporting construction and management of community infrastructure

In Antananarivo, WSUP focused on supporting construction and management of water kiosks for low-income residents, strengthening commune-level Water User Associations (WUA) in kiosk management. At the same time WSUP worked with the Bureau Municipal d'Hygiène (BMH) to develop improved procedures for supervision and monitoring of WUAs. Prospects for the financial viability of kiosks are very good and BMH has developed a scale-out strategy aiming for universal access to water in the central area of Antananarivo, which includes several very poor districts. In peri-urban areas, however, the cost of connecting a kiosk to the network remains high, and will continue to present a major barrier to scale until the utility is able to finance network expansion in peri-urban areas.

Assisting utilities to reduce non-revenue water

In both Antananarivo and Maputo, the first step was to engage the utilities to better understand the levels of NRW they faced, and the implications of these losses for core business viability and for capacity to serve low-income communities. In Antananarivo, the utility JIRAMA set up an NRW Reduction team, and attributes recent extension of the network in Antananarivo's 'Western Zone' in part to the NRW savings. In Maputo, AdeM installed bulk meters at treatment stations and distribution centres, more accurately establishing water production and losses. In both cities, agreements have been reached to ensure that NRW savings translate into increased and improved services for poor urban households.