



Call for abstracts

International bilingual seminar

Monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in West Africa

April 7-9, 2014

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Extended submission deadline: 17th February 2014

Background and objective

In most African countries, local governments have recently been more and more involved in the provision of basic services. This is particularly true in the water and sanitation sector, in West, East, Central and Southern Africa, where local governments are responsible for a growing number of functions such as strategies definition, implementation modalities, planning, fund raising, development of services (implementation, extension, rehabilitation of infrastructure), management of services and regulation. In order to fulfil these functions and to make informed decisions, local stakeholders need reliable and up-to-date information on water and sanitation services, collected and analysed through regular monitoring and evaluation. Varying degrees of testing monitoring and evaluation have been carried out, ranging from pilot activities to fully-tested experiences and integration in local strategies.

Monitoring and evaluation is crucial for stakeholders in charge of water and sanitation and is the gate-keeper of an efficient service authority. However, local stakeholders do not operate in isolation from the national level, which most of the time, carries out monitoring activities. As such, it is crucial that monitoring and evaluation of water services is coordinated across the board. As a response to the growing concern of local stakeholders involved in water and sanitation service provision, IRC and pS-Eau, with the political support of ECOWAS, are organising a seminar on monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in sub-Saharan West Africa, which will offer a bilingual learning and sharing platform on practical challenges related to monitoring and evaluation in the region.

Targeted audience

This seminar is designed for all stakeholders involved at the local level, in the development or management of water and sanitation services. In particular, it targets local decision-makers, municipal technicians, NGOs, consultants, national and regional stakeholders and development partners.

Definitions of key terminology and concepts

- **What monitoring and evaluation refers to?** For the purpose of this seminar, monitoring and evaluation refers to the following activities, carried out on a regular basis:
 - **Data collection**, qualitative and quantitative
 - **Data analysis**, to produce performance indicators
 - **Data and indicator sharing**, depending on their type, with local regional or national stakeholders, regulatory bodies
 - **Use of data and indicators**, for decision making by service authorities, accountability to users or delegating authorities, regulation, comparing to other services and settings
- **What is meant by rural areas and small towns?** Locations outside the perimeter of the national operator in charge of water and sanitation services, where local governments (communes, municipalities, districts, water service boards) are responsible for developing and managing water and sanitation services in a sustainable way. The size can vary from one country to the other ranging from a group of hamlets to large villages, whereas small towns refer here to places featuring a degree of economic development (markets, transport infrastructure) ranging from 10 000 to several thousands of inhabitants, with local resources (a variety of local skills, significant financial resources). Rural areas and small towns both are responsible to mobilise financial and technical resources to ensure citizens have access to sustainable water and sanitation services.
- **What is a water service?** Water services refer to infrastructures, stakeholders or mechanisms to ensure access to drinking water on a territory administered by a service authority. Infrastructures include all types commonly found in West Africa: wells, protected springs, mechanised boreholes, hand pumps, water schemes.
- **What is a sanitation service?** A local sanitation service refers to the infrastructure, stakeholders and mechanisms that ensure the provision of liquid sanitation services. The full supply chain includes:
 - **Upstream** (or access) covers all facilities that collect liquid waste and their temporary storage (potentially partial treatment). Facilities include latrines, septic tanks, can be autonomous or linked to a network, individual or shared.
 - **Intermediary** (or evacuation) ideally consists of on-site evacuation of non-treated waste water (from latrines or poor flush). Options for evacuation include conventional drainage system, mini drainage or fleets of specialised vehicles that offer services in all West-African capital cities.
 - **Downstream** (or treatment) includes technologies that allow for deposit of water and sludge along with their treatment (with or without re-use/valorisation).
- **The hygiene dimension.** In direct link with water and sanitation services, hygiene refers to a series of activities aiming at the sustainable adoption, by the inhabitants of a given locality, of adequate behaviours linked to the use of water and sanitation services and that contribute to reducing significantly risky human contamination.

The four seminar themes

The seminar on monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in West Africa will be structured around four themes:

1. Monitoring and evaluation to support local governments' water and sanitation strategic planning
2. Monitoring and evaluation to improve water, sanitation and hygiene services
3. Monitoring and evaluation to manage water and sanitation services
4. Monitoring and evaluation to regulate water and sanitation services

Monitoring and evaluation to support local governments' water and sanitation strategic planning

Understanding the theme:

Addressing the challenge of access to water and sanitation requires clear decisions: what objectives are we setting in terms of water and sanitation? What level of service are we targeting and for how many people? What facilities are we providing and how much do they cost? What management model are we selecting? What arrangement should be prioritized to ensure service quality and reliability? What role for the private sector do we wish to promote in the delivery of public services?

Answers to these questions are bound to be included in a local strategic framework that defines realistic objectives, principles and modalities for interventions to reach these targets. Monitoring and evaluation is key in defining such a strategic framework and provide the necessary information. Local governments are also responsible for carrying out a variety of interventions on a heterogeneous territory, for users presenting a diversity of needs. In order to take these needs into account and address the most pressing ones, planning is crucial. This requires collection and analysis of data in order to make informed decisions. Whether it is about defining a local strategy or planning interventions, monitoring and evaluation is a crucial solution to allow local governments make informed decisions, based on rational and objective data. Monitoring and evaluation must allow data to be analysed and fed into multi-annual planning.

A few challenges linked to monitoring and evaluation:

- User needs assessment (use of formal and informal water sources) ;
- Quality of services provided, tariffs applied, recovery rates ;
- Measuring access rates ;
- Knowledge of existing infrastructure (type, location, functionality, quality of water) ;
- Updated needs for improvement ;
- Knowledge of life-cycle costs ;
- Update action and financing plans ;
- Local cohesion ;
- Needs for infrastructure or/and investment on a short, medium and long term ;
- Needs for capacity support on a short, medium and long term;
- Etc.

Monitoring and evaluation to improve water and sanitation services

Understanding the theme:

The improvement of water and sanitation services refers to the measures adopted to enhance the quality of existing services, extend the service to new users and carry out activities linked to hygiene promotion, water and sanitation.

On a given local territory, various regular interventions take place to improve access to water and sanitation. Monitoring and evaluation is a crucial instrument to effectively coordinate these interventions, in particular to keep track of the progress (studies, works, training, support to organisations, sensitisation) and to appreciate their efficiency and identify necessary adjustments. Monitoring and evaluation is also crucial to check that various interventions are adequately carried out, that all stakeholders can mobilise adequate information to be accountable to users/authorities. Finally, monitoring and evaluation can be used by users or citizens to have an independent appreciation of the performance of service providers and service authorities and influence their decisions.

A few challenges linked to monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring of financial mobilisation ;
- Progress tracking (studies, works support to organisations) ;
- Monitoring efficiency of operations ;
- Monitoring of service providers and suppliers ;
- Monitoring of project implementers (NGOs, Government) ;
- Accountability to users and to delegating authorities;
- Independent monitoring and evaluation by citizens or users ;
- Etc.

Monitoring and evaluation to manage water and sanitation services

Understanding the theme:

Operating a water or sanitation service is a complex activity that requires multiple actors and professionals, on a technical, economical and commercial aspect. Service providers are in charge of operating and maintaining facilities or to provide other similar services to users; and can have a public, private or association status and can cover scheme operators, handpump mechanics, spare part suppliers, latrine artisans, community practitioners in charge of hygiene sensitisation campaigns, sludge treatment and valorisation operators. Although skills and knowledge for the management of services can be found in West African rural areas and small towns, these suffer from low capacities of service providers including weak cost recovery, opaque contractual arrangements, lack of transparency, etc. This situation results in weak water and sanitation services, whose quality and sustainability are threatened.

In such contexts, monitoring and evaluation provides reliable information on the quality of services thus allowing the service provider to make informed decisions. On a practical side, monitoring and evaluation of services allows for alignment between demand and offer, optimisation of costs, needs for operation and maintenance, better financial balance and enhanced capacity of service providers. In addition, it strengthens the responsibility of the service authority, by providing crucial information on service providers.

A few challenges linked to monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring of service provider's performances (technical, financial, commercial) ;
- Monitoring of relations to customer/users ;
- Etc.

Monitoring and evaluation to support the regulation of water and sanitation services

Understanding the theme:

Regulation refers to « *the close control and follow up of activities with a value for the community, by one or more public organisation¹* ». In rural areas and small towns where water and sanitation services crystallise a number of challenges (political, social, economic, financial, legal, etc), monitoring and evaluation is a central instrument to ensure regulation, in particular regarding the quality and accessibility to financial services for users, equity in addressing various types of users etc.

Exercising regulation is often a subtle balance between local level (by the municipalities) and national level (by ministries in charge of water, sanitation, finance, social services etc.). Monitoring and evaluation provides information for both levels to exercise their control.

A few challenges linked to monitoring and evaluation

- Follow-up of the quality of service (quantity, quality, reliability, accessibility, crowding, financial access, etc.);
- Service authority or providers follow-up (and contract fulfilment and compliance);
- Customer satisfaction follow-up ;
- Definition and follow-up of incentivising and coercing measures to ensure compliance to roles and responsibilities;
- Update of national norms and standards via field experience ;
- Conflict arbitration between service authorities and service providers ;
- Etc.

What formats are expected?

The final format for the contributions can take various forms: oral presentation, paper article, video, poster, pictures etc. Any other suggestion is welcome!

Regardless of the chosen format, you are invited to submit a 250 words summary describing the content of your contribution (see below the four steps to make a contribution).

All contributors are required to involve a local government and/or a local service provider. As far as possible, selected contributions will be presented by or with a representative from the local government or service provider.

¹ OGUS. A. (1994) *Regulation: legal form and economic theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Steps to follow to submit a contribution

Step 1: Submission of a summary contribution

People and organisations wishing to contribute during the seminar are invited to submit a summary of their contribution. In order to do so, you must first fill in the summary contribution template and send it to the following address: monitoringwash2014@ouagaseminar.org before the 17th of February 2014.

Step 2: Selection of summary contributions

During the course of February, the technical committee for the seminar will meet and select the most interesting contributions, in accordance with the four chosen themes and the involvement of one or more local governments and/or service providers.

Step 3: Submission of a complete contribution

Selected contributors will be notified via email and will be invited to submit a full contribution. Only contributions complying with provided instructions will be invited to give a presentation during the seminar.

Practical information

The seminar is a free event (no registration fees). Pre-registration is open and accessible through our websites. However, participants must cover other costs themselves, including travel, hotel, visa costs, airport transfers, evening meals and other expenses.

For additional information and for downloading the submission template, please visit the following webpages: www.irc.nl/page/79226 and pS-Eau www.pseau.org/ouaga2014

For any other question, please be in touch with: monitoringwash2014@ouagaseminar.org

January 2014

This initiative is supported by:

