



MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF LOCAL WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES



INFORMATIONS :
monitoringwash2014@ouagaseminar.org
www.ircwash.org, www.pseau.org

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Dear colleagues, the second day of the seminar gave us the opportunity to further our understanding of what is at stake in terms of monitoring and evaluation and many ideas and suggestions were made. Read on to discover the lessons and key ideas that arose during our sessions on the 8th of April!



Village monitoring of water and sanitation services

In countries with decentralised government, the district or communal authorities are responsible for managing and hence for monitoring water and sanitation services. And yet, in most of the cases presented, monitoring is currently focused on rates of access and mainly serves to indicate where future investment is required. However, many service monitoring experiences (actual service usage, services received in relation to

national standards) in Ghana and Burkina Faso are encouraging: monitoring constitutes a tool for decision-making and helps the local authorities in carrying out their service management role. Nonetheless, these experiences are most often financed by external structures; which raises questions as to their sustainability...

Monitoring small piped water systems

The most advanced form of monitoring in the sector is that carried out by public or private operators on small piped water systems. Here, monitoring practices are quasi-professional, spurred by the need to monitor service technical and financial performance to ensure both service accountability and profitability. Most often, monitoring and evaluation involves collecting and analysing data and advisory

services provided by structures external to the operator or local authorities. Nonetheless, these cases also face certain difficulties: sometimes precarious financial viability and lack of appropriation by the local authorities. Furthermore, in some contexts effective and pragmatic regulation by national government is an issue.

Ensuring sustainable monitoring of water quality

Unlike the urban context where operators (public or private) are responsible for ensuring water quality is systematically monitored and have the necessary resources to do so, this is not currently the case in rural areas. And when quality is monitored (in pilot schemes), the results are usually alarming and indicate both water quality problems at the source as well as contamination during transport and storage.

While innovative solutions exist to ensure the rapid and virtually automatic monitoring of quality (use of mobile phones) it is important to adapt these methods to rural realities, taking into account their complexity and the financial and human resources needed to analyse and make use of the results. Nonetheless, some countries, like Benin have set up a very encouraging water quality monitoring strategy!

Using ICT for monitoring

The water sector today is brimming with innovative solutions based on mobile telephone technology (including MWater, M4Water, Akvo FLOW), which enable service levels to be visualised in real time, reduce data gathering time, improve data transmission, reduce service outages and reduce the cost of monitoring (up to 30% in Senegal and Benin). However, the actual benefits of using these technologies are dependent on the institutionalisation of monitoring and the associated tools, the

definition of relevant indicators and the authorities' capacity to analyse the results. Furthermore, other considerations should be taken into account in implementation: the availability of internet connectivity, the centralisation, ownership and security of the data collected as well as the sharing of information among the various stakeholders, particularly at the local level and how appropriate the resulting information is for the different stakeholders.

The cost and funding of service monitoring

Undeniably, monitoring costs money and this is not systematically or fully tracked. Most frequently, the initial set-up cost can be identified, but on-going support and update costs are often unknown. It is difficult to identify clear and sustainable sources of financing. Nonetheless some principles can be outlined: i) stakeholders who have a use for certain aspects of monitoring are prepared to fund it (users interested in transparency and the cost of water; operators to know the cost of operation; local authorities to control services and the

State for regulatory purposes)
ii) generally speaking it is not

reasonable to expect the cost of the regulatory monitoring role of the public authorities to be covered in the price of water.



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IRC / pS-Eau Seminar Team