

Annex 9B. Effectiveness of Enabling Environments

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In the face of slow progress in WASH coverage in many developing countries, and remaining problems in sustaining WASH services, the 'enabling environment' has gained greater attention in the past decade. The enabling environment has been variously defined and classified. Several key initiatives with global implications are described here.

The World Bank has defined eight enabling environment dimensions considered essential to scaling up rural sanitation, comparing performance over time in three pilot countries (India, Tanzania and Ethiopia): (1) policy, strategy, and direction; (2) institutional arrangements; (3) program methodology; (4) implementation capacity; (5) availability of products and services; (6) financing and incentives; (7) cost-effective implementation; (8) monitoring and evaluation (Rosensweig, Perez et al. 2012). An assessment of progress between the 2007 baseline and the 2010 endline strongly suggests that the countries with the strongest enabling environment made the most progress in sanitation coverage.

The Country Status Overview (CSO) is a methodology that has been applied in 32 African countries in 2010 – adopted three service delivery cycles, each containing three building blocks: (1) enabling: policy, planning and budgeting; (2) developing: expenditure, equity and service outputs; and (3) sustaining: maintenance, expansion and use (AMCOW 2011). Since then, similar assessments (where they are called "Service Delivery Assessments" - SDA) have been applied East Asian and the Pacific (WSP 2015) and in South Asia (WSP 2013), as well as Latin American (where they are called "Monitoring Country Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation" - MAPAS).

An initiative that has built on the above frameworks is called the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASH-BAT) (United Nations Children's Fund 2014). The tool enables detailed, separate assessments of rural water, rural sanitation, urban water and urban sanitation, at various levels - national, sub-national, service provider and community. The aim of the tool is that it is applied jointly in a meeting of sector stakeholders, which increases transparency, objectivity and buy-in, and encourages government leadership. The tool requests the users to score a number of enabling factors at each level and in each sub-sector, followed by identification of bottlenecks, activities to remove bottlenecks and their costs. Further, the users follow a process of prioritization and sequencing, which finally leads to a simplified output table of the required steps, their costs and their financing gaps.

At global level, separate assessments have been conducted under the UN-Water Global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS), which covers 74 developing countries and 24 external support agencies and includes indicators on policies, planning, coordination, financing, human resources, equity and external support (World Health Organization 2012). The GLAAS report is used as an advocacy tool to bring greater attention to key drivers of sector progress, and is reported at the biennial “High Level Meetings” organized by the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership.

Together, these initiatives have covered the majority of developing countries. They have successfully highlighted the importance of supportive policies, transparency and collective action in building a strong sustainable sector. With the experiences of these various initiatives comes important learning on the relative importance of different levers to advance the WASH sector.

References

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