UNDERSTANDING POST-IMPLEMENTATION-MONITORING IN NGOS WASH PROGRAMMING
27-29 APRIL, ADDIS ABABA, EHTIOPIA
▶ Workshop Report

Where	Monarch Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Facilitation	Thilo Panzerbieter, Robert Gensch (German Toilet Organization, GTO)
Participants	37 persons from 11 countries and 22 different organisations including National Government, Local and International NGO, private and public Donor as well as the Private Sector – see Annex 1

Problem statement, Rationale

For far too many people in developing countries, water and sanitation services are unreliable and substandard. Lack of local management capacity, poor maintenance of infrastructure and inadequate financing means that the initial gains of rural water and sanitation supply are often not sustained.

Alarmed by reports of high levels of non-functionality of infrastructure and by political debates in the donor countries demanding value for aid money – development partners are becoming more critical about the value and sustainability of their investments .

Increasingly governmental donors are also demanding evidence of sustained service delivery for the millions in tax money which are transferred to multilaterals and NGOs. The adding of a sustainability clause[1] in contracts between donors[2] and implementers for their grants to the WASH sector globally is regarded to be one alternative to tackle this problem. There is still debate within the policy and practioner community as to the legal basis of a "sustainability clause" and how it would be enforced but one way is through sustainability compacts. These compacts describe the roles and responsibilities of the implementing partner, the partner government and others in ensuring sustainability. It thus provides the institutional framework for guaranteeing sustainability but also is a ways of assessing any sustainability risks. The actual checking of compliance with the clause would be done through a type of sustainability check.

Why and how this should concern implementers when this is still "only" under discussion and, at this stage, multi-lateral organisations are most likely to be affected by clauses and compacts while the policy, legal and accountability issues are still to be finalised?

Why post-implementation monitoring (PIM) ?

Typical Project Monitoring – as it is still carried out by many implementing organizations – is limited to the defined lifespan of a project intervention and is generally short term. It is typically geared towards reporting progress against the correct and timely inputs for construction of WASH facilities against stated time frames or budgets – with the purpose to inform external funders about progress and performance at the end of the project term.

In contrast, the very nature of sustainable services as a concept means that it is about the continued (future) functioning of something that is working now. Ongoing monitoring at local level is a prerequisite for taking action to maintain water systems, to repair them, to expand or upgrade the system.

In the end, comprehensive and robust monitoring is about improving performance and delivering better services to the users of WASH facilities. Measuring the right things at the right time and, most critically ensuring a response (at both operational and policy level) to make things better are the heart of why monitoring is done at all.

Adapted from "From Infrastructure to Services", T.Shouten, S.Smits, IRC 2015

But at least implementers should be aware of the functionality status of "their" water supply systems and the usage of toilets that have been constructed and handed over. Post-implementation monitoring (PIM), in particular, can provide a great opportunity for institutional learning. It can help to understand why some previously installed water and sanitation systems are performing well and expose the factors behind why other systems are not performing well. Data can be shared with local service authorities and line ministries and help to facilitate corrective action and effective post construction support in the future.

To discuss this hot topic Welthungerhilfe invited a number of implementing partners and different sector stakeholders to discuss this in a workshop. Of major concern during the 3-day workshop were the following questions:

- How can we better integrate roles and responsibilities of different actor groups with regard to long term monitoring?
- What does it take to design/conceptualize, introduce and finance Post Implementation Monitoring activities to enhance the sustainability of WASH systems?
- How can we trigger a broader discussion within the sector to share the responsibility on financing post construction activities?

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[1] A new water and development strategy is under development in USAID, which provides a strong emphasis on sustainability. Concretely, it means a commitment of USAID to monitor the sustainability of their programmes, beyond the duration of the project life-time.

[2] A second driver is a political one: Dutch parliament adopted a resolution to include more explicit sustainability criteria in future funding. In response to political discussions, DGIS is planning to include a sustainability clause in its future funding agreements, starting with multilateral programmes. Through such a clause, the implementing partner commits itself to monitor the sustainability of services for a period of 10 years after project completion and correct any failures that arise.

Workshop concept, objectives and agenda

The workshop consisted of 15 **presentations**[3] – to share challenges, concerns, approaches and experiences of various stakeholders, **discussion time** – to digest the presented content and provide feedback, and **group work** – to develop a common understanding of the issue and possible ways forward.

The workshop concept foresaw flexibility of the agenda with regard to time and scope, in order to ensure a "natural flow" of discussion along the participants' interests, without losing focus. A joint exchange on the participants' expectations on day 1 resulted in the following adaptation of the agenda:

Day 1 provided ample time to understand the broad range of challenges to the sustainability of WASH services. The participants also developed a common understanding for why this workshop was initiated and on the scope of barriers different actors face to go beyond the regular project cycle monitoring.

Day 2 began with an extensive discussion on the roles and responsibilities of various actors with regard to PIM, identifying synergies and balancing tensions between them. We then focused on exchanging knowledge about possible approaches, good practice examples and tools for carrying out Post-Implementation-Monitoring. It was also discussed how to include long-term sustainability concepts from the outset of project planning (e.g. "smart handpump" concept). The day ended with lively discussion about the necessity to positively communicate long-term sustainability concerns with private and public donors.

Day 3 utilised the findings of day 1 and 2 to develop possible next steps with regard to promoting the importance of PIM in the WASH sector and brainstorming possible action within our respective organisations to keep the momentum going.

Clarification on the term "PIM"

During the workshop it became apparent that the name "post implementation monitoring" is misleading: "post" implies that the activities should be done after the project or implementation is completed, but the workshop showed that in order to sustain service levels certain activities should/must even be considered during the planning and implementation stage. Furthermore, some participants felt that "post implementation monitoring" fails to encompass the "optimization" aspect (→ taking corrective action) that should be central to the concept.

Therefore, during the WS the discussions focused on all approaches that contribute to the long-term sustainability of WASH service levels (WASH-services that last). Post Implementation Monitoring is only one important activity that has to be considered in all that approaches.

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[3] Presentations are available under https://docs.google.com/folderview?pli=1&id=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaThZOVJnM0xvTkE&tid=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaVhIdndoc2kyaG8

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Welcome and Introduction^ **Why are we here? Background and motivation** ▶ Sustainability discussion within WHH (S. Simon) ▶ Sustainability of hand-dug wells in Tanzania (F. Flachenberg, CONCERN) ▶ PI Assessment on WASH sustainability in Amhara (W.Gebre; T.K.Gabriel, WHH)	**Roles and responsibilities of relevant actor groups II**	**M&E from a Government perspective** ▶ OWNP Monitoring and Evaluation (A. Girma, GoETH) **Use of sector platforms** ▶ SuSanA thematic discussion series (R. Gensch, GTO) ▶ The RWSN platform (M. Adank, IRC)
▶ Sustainability in rural water supply in Amhara (F.Bachmann, Helvetas) ▶ WaterAID PIMS Experiences (S.Oupal, WaterAid)	**What do we need to measure? Key indicators for PIM**	**Key take-aways and next steps**
Lunch	**Lunch**	**Lunch and End of Day 3**
Why is PIM not happening? Key barriers	**Sustainability assessment tools** ▶ Mapping Sustainability Assessment Tools for WASH service delivery (R.Schweitzer, Aguaconsult) ▶ Success factors in setting up sustainable monitoring system - SMARTer WASH in Ghana (M. Schoonmann, Akvo) ▶ Lessons learned from the SMART Handpump project (J. Koehler, Oxford University)	
Best practices to improve sustainable service delivery ▶ Quality management and servicing in WASH self supply (W. Buchner/ E.L.Bunduka, EMAS, WHH) ▶ Experiences with post construction support in Zimbabwe (M.Harper, WHH) ▶ O&M approach of the Grundfos-Lifelink model (S.Mutiso, WHH)		
Roles and responsibilities of relevant actor groups I	**How to communicate and market PIM?** ▶ WASH Sustainability from a private donor perspective (C. Wiebe, VcA)	
End of Day 1	**End of Day 2**	

Left column label: MORNING / AFTERNOON

Workshop results

Why is PIM not happening? Key barriers

The participants discussed the following question in small working groups:
"Although it is apparent that a long-term monitoring of the sustainability of WASH services is essential to improve the sustainability of outcomes and impacts, why is it that such few organisations actually practice PIM?" A wide range of barriers had been identified (refer to annex 2). Key findings are presented on the following page.
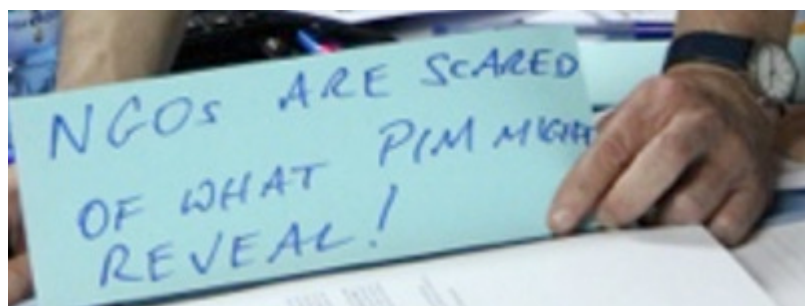
- Lack of understanding why PIM is needed and what it should look like (i.e. the process of what data should be collected, how frequently, by whom, how it should be reported etc.)
- Reluctance of stakeholders to openly communicate failures (project staff to their superiors, organisations to their donors, donors to the tax payers, governments to their citizens);
- Funding gap (no cost recovery by donors beyond project termination)
- Donors still focusing on coverage, rather than sustainability
- Lack Institutional arrangements for the collection and analysis of data as well as the corrective action that has to follow
- Absence of harmonised, cross-sectoral PIM approaches, frameworks

Roles & responsibilities

Participants were divided into groups according to the nature of their own organisations ("NGO I", "NGO II", "Government" and "Donor, Private Sector & Research"). Each group was asked to define their own roles and responsibilities with regard to PIM, also highlighting key interrelation with other actors ("How can you support other actors?" and "What do you need from other actors?"). Results were presented and the "Motivations to carry out PIM" were collected for each actor group (refer to Annex 2). Three major findings can be concluded:

- The WS reaffirmed that governments should take the lead for creating an enabling environment for the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of services and that it is the role of implementing actors and donors to support the local government, national initiatives and plans of action related to the safe drinking water and sanitation.
- Participants stressed the need to integrate the roles of the various stakeholders (Government, NGOs, donors, private sector, research). Different players need to join hands with the other actors involved for as long as it takes to develop sustainable service models.
- It was generally accepted that if communities receive better services, they need assistance form local government and /or the private sector and NGOs to maintain those services. In turn local water authorities need the professional and competent support of central Government and implementers (→ capacity development, awareness raising) to do their job.

Indicators

Participants were divided into 3 groups and were asked to identify sustainability indicators for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (refer to annex 2)

Participants felt that there is an inherent tension resulting from different interests between the perspectives of different stakeholders. E.g. Donors and governments are concerned about coverage, beneficiaries about service levels and NGOs want to monitor their performance. Still there was an agreement amongst WS-participants that any indicator frameworks set up by implementers or other WASH-actors should harmonize with national monitoring systems.

Identifying the right indicators

Too often the purpose of collecting data is not clear, resulting in databases that are no used for corrective action or decision making. Data is collected from the perspective of "nice and interesting to know", not from the perspective of "must know"…

Current monitoring approaches tend to focus on a limited set of indicators that measure coverage and numbers served rather than quality aspects of the service, which can be proxy indicators for sustainability: the amount of water, the quality of that water, the reliability and accessibility of the water supply. For sanitation, taking a service delivery perspective means not only counting the number of toilets built but monitoring the use of those toilets, hygienic behaviour and the disposal of faecal sludge. Indicators could also include the level of downtime, the performance of operators, and the capacity to support local operators.

Adapted from "From Infrastructure to Services", T.Shouten, S.Smits, IRC 2015

Sustainability assessment tools and technologies to facilitate monitoring

A number of tools and available technologies to facilitate PIM were presented and discussed by participants (refer to presentations from Aguaconsult, Oxford University and Akvo[4])

Sustainability assessment tools and national monitoring systems

„Projects supporting locally governed monitoring systems should first ask "What is the problem?" rather than picking from a pre-set menu of solution asking "Which solution should we adopt"

"From Infrastructure to Services", T.Shouten, S.Smits, IRC 2015

Workshop Conclusions, Way Forward

The "Summary, Results and Next Steps" session of the workshop was carried out in a "fish bowl" format in four rounds. Each round consisted of a focus group of four to five participants, who were asked to discuss the results of the workshop amongst themselves, while the other participants listened in. After initial statements by each group member, participants from the same organizational type as the speakers were allowed to chime into the discussion.

Welthungerhilfe staff discussed what insights they take with them from the workshop and how they plan to deal with this inside Welthungerhilfe.
Alliance2015-INGOs and local partner NGO discussed what they take from the workshop to their own organisations and how they believe their NGOs could work together to further the issue.
Government and government-support staff discussed whether they felt the discussions were to NGO focused and whether they felt the government role became clear during the workshop.
Persons from **research institutes and organisations with PIM-experience** discussed how they view the success of the workshop and which new ideas came out of it.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the WS:

- Government is the lead / key actor in ensuring long term sustainable services. Government should let others know what they need (which data) and how best they can be supported.
- Ffor organizations to be committed to effectively implement long-term monitoring, PIM does not only require costs for the (post implementation) monitoring of service levels, but one must also consider the costs of taking corrective action, i.e. rehabilitating poorly implemented project components.
- Almost all participants recognized the potential and need for long-term monitoring of WASH services in order to maintain service-levels and learn from past implementation to improve the sustainability of future project designs. Participants also agreed that exposing failures (that may result from PIM) is something that contributes to credibility and transparency within the sector and finally helps the discussion on WASH-sustainability in a positive way. Still there was a debate that the transparent reporting of PIM-results (including failures) to donors and taxpayers still is something that might "scare" some of the sector-stakeholders.
- All participants appreciated the transparency maintained between all actors during the workshop. Most were convinced that this type of transparency is necessary in order to learn from each other to bring the sector forward. It was discussed in length whether all donors would react favorably to such "honesty". It was also discussed, which strategy should be chosen to drive the joint development of monitoring systems to support the sustainability of systems without harming our own organizations' interests (e.g. Everyone Everywhere Initiative, Everyone Forever Initiative, the Water Point Data Exchange).

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[4] available in Welthungerhilfe WASH Library https://docs.google.com/folderview?pli=1&id=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaThZOVJnM0xvTkE&tid=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaVhldndoc2kyaG8

Way Forward, Action Points Welthungerhilfe

It shall not be subject of this WS-report to report on potential commitments of other organisations that have participated in this WS. Lessons learned and suggested action points for Welthungerhilfe (WHH) – still to be discussed on management level - can be summarized as follows:

At Country Office level

- At this stage, a standardized "one-fits-all" PIM-approach is not recommended due to the different framework conditions in the partner countries
- Standardising the information that is collected at project level around a set of core service indicators linked to national monitoring systems.
- The costing and budgeting of monitoring activities.
- The harmonisation of project indicators with national/Govt data collection/management systems so that Govt can plan and manage these services better (this would help with developing a clearer exit strategy for projects).
- Discussion with "progressive" donors in-country about corrective actions based on PIM and development of projects that are responsive to past failures i.e. not just documenting the lessons and failures but incorporating these into project design
- Support to develop project concepts in WHH strategic countries with large WASH portfolios that "go one step further" to support decision making and capacity development of local government and reduce the barriers to entry into WASH service delivery by the private sector.
- Support innovation and approaches that have the potential to provide disaggregated information and the evidence base to allow a cost-benefit analysis of investment decisions by Government, institutional donors and the private sector e.g. SMART handpump

At HQ level

- Cost-benefit analysis of how far WHH should move along this continuum i.e. determining to the extent possible, the point at which there are diminishing returns from investment
- Setting up a global WHH WASH inventory with AkvoFLOW to provide a good baseline for post implementation monitoring systems
- Developing internal guidelines on how to support the governance and coordination of monitoring at country level, providing guidance on how to design a (country-wide) PIM-concept for Welthungerhilfe interventions
- Developing policy on the sharing of PIM-data I.e. reporting failure and contributing to knowledge management and learning within the organisation and with external stakeholders (WASH network, RWSN, IRC, SUSANA and other global forums like the Water Point Data Exchange))
- Sourcing for funding to carry out PIM, based on cost estimates published by IRC (US$ 0,10 to US$ 0,20 per person per round of monitoring data on services provided)
- Advocating for and setting up clear internal institutional arrangements
- Improving coordination and aligning project-monitoring systems with the monitoring systems of government agencies

Welthungerhilfe
Stephan Simon
13.05.2015

Annex 1   **Participant list**
Annex 2   **WS Documentation**
Annex 3   **Presentations** (available in Welthungerhilfe WASH Library
https://docs.google.com/folderview?pli=1&id=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaThZOVJnM0xvTkE&tid=0B1zx2E-vMw2OaVhldndoc2kyaG8)

ANNEX 1: Participant List – PIM Workshop, Addis Ababa, April 2015

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