



## Analysing service delivery options for Cambodia

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The paper analyses service delivery by breaking it down into the wide range of different services, and the range of service delivery organisations and individuals. Breaking things down in this way can be helpful in planning service delivery and ensuring that all aspects are covered. The paper then looks at specific issues in Cambodia that may be relevant in other countries, including demand for services, community management and ownership, technology choice, organisations including the private sector, and capacity building.

From 1999 to 2001, the Government of Cambodia, through its lead agency the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), developed a rural water drinking water supply and sanitation Policy Framework through a Policy and Capacity Building (PCB) Project. The World Bank Water and Sanitation Program's East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, with funding from Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) and Agence Francaise De Developpement (AFD), supported the Project.

For the rural water supply and sanitation sector to develop effectively, a strategy was needed to operationalise the Policy Framework. The author of this paper was hired as a consultant through WEDC to prepare a strategy guidance note on service delivery options to assist the Cambodian working group to develop this strategy. It was one of seven guidance notes, each covering a different aspect of the needs of the sector.

The Policy Framework has the following RWSS vision statement for Cambodia:

'Every person has sustained access to safe water supply and sanitation services and lives in a hygienic environment by 2025'. (MRD, 2001a)

The Policy Framework describes the meaning of the key components of this vision statement:

"**Sustained access to RWSS services**'. Services are continually provided over an indefinite period of time. The term 'sustained' applies to a number of sectoral components". Services are sustained:

- **financially** when the funds necessary to ensure continual service delivery are available as and when required.
- **socially and institutionally** when the organisational arrangements and rules that are needed to continue service delivery do not break down.
- **technically** when the system requirements to keep them physically operational are met.

- **environmentally** when the delivery of services does not cause permanent damage to the living environment. (MRD,2001a)

Communities are to be the decision-makers in all phases of a project, including community-level selection, planning, implementation, management and monitoring of RWSS services. (MRD, 2001a)

### Definition of Service

At first sight, the term "services" appears to be easy to define. It is the water supply to and sanitation for a community. On further thought, it gets more complicated. What exactly is a water service? Is it the water coming out of a pump? Is it the construction of the tubewell and pump? Should it include the operation and maintenance to keep the pump running? It is, in fact, all these things and more. Then, how are all these things delivered? And by who?

Thus, the term "service" can be and is used to mean a range of different things. These include:

- the physical infrastructure for the delivery of water
  - technology
  - construction;
- the physical infrastructure for waste disposal, both human excreta and solid waste;
  - technology
  - construction;
- the organisational arrangement to run the water supply system;
- the maintenance and repair of the water supply system;
- the training and other methods to enable communities to manage the infrastructure;
- the support to monitor and ensure the sustainability of the physical infrastructure by its community managed organisation.

Delivery of different aspects of each of these can be done by various organisations:

- Government agencies
- Bilateral and multilateral support agencies
- International NGOs
- Local NGOs
- Representative community managed organisations
- The community itself
- Private sector

- Village/commune based artisan
- Village/commune based pump mechanic
- Local market or shop
- Local manufacturer
- Drilling company
- Consultants (individuals and companies)
- Public enterprise

There are two important points to note in this list. A community managed organisation, usually known as a water user committee, is also an organisation delivering a service to the community. In addition, the community itself can be involved in some aspects of service delivery. Secondly, the private sector covers a wide range of different types of organisation, from an individual artisan or pump minder to national contracting companies.

The possible arrangements for delivery of the different services by this range of organisations are shown in the matrix in Table 1, with the different aspects coded according to the following key:

- \$: funding
- F: facilitation
- R: regulation
- T: technology development
- C: construction
- S: support
- M: management
- P: provision
- A: advice
- M&E: monitoring and evaluation
- ( ): a possible but not usual or optimum role

The best arrangements for the type of organisation to deliver a particular service needs to be considered. With the variation in conditions between countries and between regions within a country, different arrangements may be suitable.

## Service delivery issues in Cambodia

### Demand for services

Most projects and organisations have tended to work in a supply-led way, rather than responding to demand from communities and villages. Some projects did not have a procedure for villages to make requests. A 'demand responsive approach' appropriate for the special circumstances in Cambodia needed to be developed, with special attention to service delivery options for the poorest people. This could include recognition that the community's contribution may be 'in-kind' instead of in cash, and that some services may need to be subsidised; e.g. education, infrastructure, and things that involve behaviour change.

Because of current preferences of people for traditional sources of water, and the easy availability of these during much of the year, there may be a need to be a "supply driven" promotion to create the demand for safe water.

### Technology

Appropriate performance standards and design standards need to be considered for the various technologies. Such standards have costs, but can also lead to savings. It will be necessary to promote public awareness of standards to encourage "self-enforcement".

### The private sector and regulation

The Policy Framework proposes that the private sector has an important role to play in the provision of water and sanitation service delivery. This should not, however, be considered the solution to all the problems. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed to make the most benefit from the potential of the private sector.

Regulation is needed to ensure accountability, transparency, and quality control. An important aspect of this is the procedures for selection, award and administration of contracts with the private sector. Overall regulation of the sector is necessary to ensure co-ordination between different organisations, integration of the different components, and acceptance of minimum standards of procedures and performance. Regulatory procedures have to be enforced.

### Capacity building

The capacity of all organisations to provide the various parts of service delivery at the rate that will be needed to reach the Vision does not exist at present. Within this, the private sector to provide water supply and sanitation construction, operation or maintenance services, and NGOs to provide community organisation, capacity building and training services, are not available in all parts of the country does not exist in all parts of the country. Various factors inhibit the participation of the private sector, including lack of technical and business management skills. Some of the more remote and less populated areas may need special attention to develop the ability of small entrepreneurs to carry out small-scale construction of wells, rain-water jars, latrine components, provision of replacement parts for pump, etc. Thus, there is a need to foster as well as regulate the private sector, including developing ideas for financing and incentives.

Implementation by government organisations such as the Central Drilling Base and provincial level drilling units of MRD inhibits the development of a competitive private sector giving best value-for-money. These operations should be transformed so that they operate under the same competitive tendering conditions as the rest of the private sector. Subsidised operations by NGOs also inhibit development of a competitive private sector.

Expansion of service delivery must be geared to the component that requires most time, which is the development of the capacity of communities to manage their own services. The expansion of service must not be driven by the technical implementation capacity. Otherwise services will not be sustainable in the long-term.

Systems to support to community organisations in management of operation and maintenance are essential for



sustainability of physical infrastructure. Support does not mean taking over the functions of the community management – rather it means providing technical and management advice and training to enable communities to function better. An essential part of this is to monitor whether communities are successfully managing their systems and to take action in cases where there are problems. In many places and projects, these support systems have not been established, or funding is not allocated to run them adequately. As the number of water supplies increases, this component of the sector will become a major function. It will be necessary to increase the capacity of the organisations selected to run the support services at the same rate as new systems are constructed.

### **Strategy development**

Key sector players in Cambodia have used the strategy guidance notes in a series of sector workshops to develop a first draft strategy with objectives and indicators for each thematic area. This was presented to key sector policy makers and planners from the concerned ministries and agencies in June 2001. (MRD, 2001b)

### **Conclusion**

This analysis of service delivery shows all the different aspects that need to be planned and co-ordinated and the

range of organisations and individuals available to provide the services. The process of breaking a subject down into its component parts in order to strategize or plan was certainly helpful for the author, and hopefully for the Cambodian working group.

### **References**

- Most of this paper is based on the unpublished *Strategy Guidance Note for Second Workshop: Service Delivery Options*, prepared by the author for the RWSS PCB Project, Cambodia, with some modifications.
- MRD, 2001a, *Rural Water Supply And Sanitation Sector Policy Framework*, Ministry of Rural Development, Phnom Penh
- MRD, 2001b, *10 Year Sector Strategy: 2001 – 2011*, draft, Ministry of Rural Development, Phnom Penh

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