

Stage 1: Build institutional commitment and partnership for planning

One of the inherent challenges with sanitation planning and subsequent implementation of city sanitation plans is that they require a range of institutions and organisations to work together. Therefore, the level of commitment, capacity and the relationships between these institutions has a significant bearing on the planning process. Consequently, the success of the sanitation planning activity will be strongly influenced by the extent of collaboration between the local authorities, utilities and the other stakeholders.

Activities in Stage 1 of the planning process:

- Establish planning process leader and city sanitation task force
- Consultation and facilitation of the process
- Assess key priorities and incentives
- Define a collective vision of sanitation and priorities for improvement
- Agree upon the planning process

Outcome from Stage 1: The outcome from Stage 1 should be the formation of a Task Force with representation from the relevant stakeholders and agreement between members about their common vision for sanitation improvement and principles that are to govern the way that services are to be delivered. This should help to mitigate future disagreements about overall policy towards sanitation services in the city and demonstrates their commitment towards improving sanitation services on the ground.

Establish planning process leader and city sanitation task force

Although there is clearly a need for engagement between the various institutions responsible for urban planning, public works, health, finance, there needs to be one institution that plays the lead role to ensure that the planning process maintains strong direction and achieves the objectives agreed by key stakeholders. The local authority is generally the most appropriate lead of the sanitation planning process because of the official mandate for municipal governance and services as well as being the body responsible for upholding lines of accountability between service providers and the public.

The local authority needs to ensure that the relevant institutional stakeholders are fully committed and has the leadership capacity to convene the other institutions and, where necessary, mediate any differences in opinion and resolve any institutional blockages. There must be sufficient time and opportunity for these stakeholders to become

Box 3: The role of city sanitation working groups in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the national programme initiates activity in a city once a letter from the Mayor of the city has been received by the Governor (Head of the Province) expressing commitment and interest to join the program. The Accelerated Sanitation Development Program (PPSP) then established Provincial Sanitation Working Groups, operating under the Governor's office, with the aim to coordinate, facilitate and supervise the sanitation development activities to be carried out by each province.

The City Sanitation Working Groups (Pokja Sanitasi) form the backbone for the Accelerated Sanitation Development Program. These are formally endorsed entities consisting of representatives from governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in and/or related to sanitation/environmental development at the city (regency) level. The working groups operate under the leadership of the local planning agency (Bappeda) with specific tasks with regards to sanitation development planning and implementation including:

- promote/advocate the improvement of sanitation conditions in their constituency, both to the general public, decision makers in the local government as well as the non-governmental/private sector;
- prepare a 5-year strategic sanitation plan including annual implementation programs/activities on the basis of an empirical analysis of sanitation conditions in their constituency;
- identify and propose funding (mechanisms) for the proposed programs/activities;
- arrange and oversee the implementation of the programs/activities for which funding was secured;
- develop appropriate management arrangements for the operational and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure.

Source: Personal communication: Sjoerd Kerstens (Royal Haskoning/DHV)

involved and this may require some time and effort – firstly to gain the support from the mayor and subsequently from the other institutional stakeholders. Experiences from Indonesia (see Box 3) and India show that the creation of a city sanitation task force is an important foundation for the planning process and an effective means to engage with different institutions from the public and private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Consultation and facilitation of the process

Stakeholder consultation is necessary at different levels and at various fora; usually with the involvement of NGOs to facilitate interaction with civic society. It is clear that the success of sanitation planning activities is dependent upon good communication between stakeholders. Therefore, a continuous focus on stakeholder engagement is a key part of the planning and implementation process to ensure that representatives from different stakeholder groups are adequately informed and consulted. This is especially important with the wider stakeholder involvement in setting of the functions and specific objectives of the improved services.

There is a need for facilitation of the planning process between institutional members of the city sanitation task force to guide the planning process and support stakeholder consultation. A good facilitator requires social skills for interaction, negotiation and mediation with stakeholders and a good understanding of cultural and institutional sensitivities. Throughout the planning process, there is likely to be a need for external support to help stakeholders consider the implications of different options and their viability in accordance with local conditions. Provision of funds to support consultation activities, paying for publicity or development of channels for dissemination and communications can help to reach different stakeholder groups, improve transparency of decision-making and promote ownership of the plan.

Assess key priorities and incentives

This activity focuses on key questions relating to: Who are the key stakeholders and the main service providers? and What are their interests with respect to sanitation? The assessment should recognize the roles that the different stakeholders play in sanitation service provision, considering their key priorities and organizational strengths for implementation and management of sanitation services. It should also consider policies and regulations related to sanitation, and the existing arrangements with regards to financing of sanitation improvements and mechanisms to recover costs.

The assessment should include governmental authorities (both the elected political bodies and regulatory bodies) and public and private sector entities involved in the provision of sanitation services. As well as utilities, small-scale private enterprises (both formal and informal) play an important role in service delivery (especially for faecal sludge collection and transportation). In addition, NGOs often support sanitation service improvements and their contribution should be recognized and included in the stakeholder assessment.

Define collective vision and priorities for improved sanitation

This stage involves the development of a collective vision and the identification of the strategic priorities for sanitation improvements. There may be need to revisit these priorities after the assessment of the existing situation, but it is good at an early stage to draft the expected priorities based upon existing expectations in relation to official institutional mandates. This process should be managed so as to encourage stakeholders to consider the priorities from a service delivery perspective, rather than focussing the discussion on specific types of technology. Preparing a list of criteria or functions that the improved system should meet is therefore a good start to develop strategies for the improvement. These criteria may subsequently be used as the basis for the development of service level agreements with service providers (see Box 4).

Box 4: What do we mean by service level?

Service level refers to the level of benefit achieved in relation to user requirements or the need to protect the environment. In terms of user requirements, the key considerations are generally related to access to facilities, convenience of use and privacy; comfort, compatibility with cultural norms and level of hygiene (including smell). Users are generally not so concerned about the downstream impacts on the environment, but the local and governmental authorities have the duty to maintain the quality of the natural watercourses. The level of service related to the environment is therefore determined by the required use of these waters. e.g. fishing and other recreational activities. There are some aspects of service provision that should never be compromised – notably those pertaining to public health. However, there are other factors which mean that service levels may not be uniform throughout the city. For instance, in high-density slum areas it is often unrealistic to provide facilities for every household and therefore communal latrines may be the only option.

Agree upon the planning process

The final step in this first stage of the planning process is for the Task Force to agree upon the activities in the planning process itself, identify the specific activities where different organisations will be playing a key role and to fix a time schedule for the planning activities. External agencies can provide support to the Task Force and develop the technical and management capacities of local institutions involved in the planning process, many of whom will be responsible for implementation and management. However, if the planning process is driven by external agencies in too short a time scale, the plan will invariably lack ownership and there will be no incentive to move forward with the implementation of the plan.