

Innovations in Sustainability for Water and Sanitation Services

SWA partners gathered in Stockholm at World Water Week to share experiences on sustainability of water and sanitation services (see [here](#) for a recording of the meeting).



Participants were welcomed by session chair, Honourable Mrs. Sarah Reng Ocheke, Federal Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria, while opening remarks were made by Ms. Charlotte Petri-Gornitzka, Director-General, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Mr. Junaid Ahmad, Senior Director, Global Water Practice, World Bank.

In her address, Ms. Petri-Gornitzka stated that sustainability and innovation are a “*highly relevant thematic, close to SIDA’s work*”. She then described her organization’s efforts towards triggering innovations that reach a large number of people and markets, as well as developing the knowledge to make them sustainable: “*It is important that innovations and technical improvements are accompanied by capacity to use them. Institutional and administrative capacity and financial reforms are needed and this is something that SIDA will continuously support.*”

In his intervention, Mr. Ahmad emphasized the importance of decentralization at a local level and of finding ways to incentivize local governments to come up with innovative solutions for sustainability. “*If local governments are strengthened, their ability to provide service delivery is also strengthened. The WASH family has to invest in understanding what the triggers towards creating a local government platform are.*”

Following the opening remarks, Dr. Darren Saywell, SWA’s Vice-Chair provided a short overview of the partnership’s [2014 High Level Meeting](#), where countries and donors tabled over [370 commitments](#) towards universal access to WASH. The 2014 HLM had dual themes of sustainability and elimination of inequalities and Dr. Saywell’s highlighted the 67 commitments focused on sustainability. Mostly, these commitments set out actions to move away from infrastructure alone and towards systems-strengthening and development of service.

The Marketplace

The opening session was followed by the “marketplace”, where over 140 participants visited one of ten stalls, each highlighting innovative policy and analysis tools developed by SWA partners to create more sustainable water and sanitation services:

Framework of Service Delivery indicators for Assessing and Monitoring Rural and Small Town Water Supply Services in Ghana

Vida Duti, IRC Ghana, Ben Kubabom, CWSA and Patrick Moriarty, IRC, discussed their new monitoring framework, developed to support the shift from counting rural water facilities to monitoring sustained water services. The framework has been developed and tested in collaboration with the IRC-led 'Triple-S' project and has served as a decision-support tool for a transition from focus on counting systems to monitoring services for sustainability.



Sustainability Index Tool (SIT)

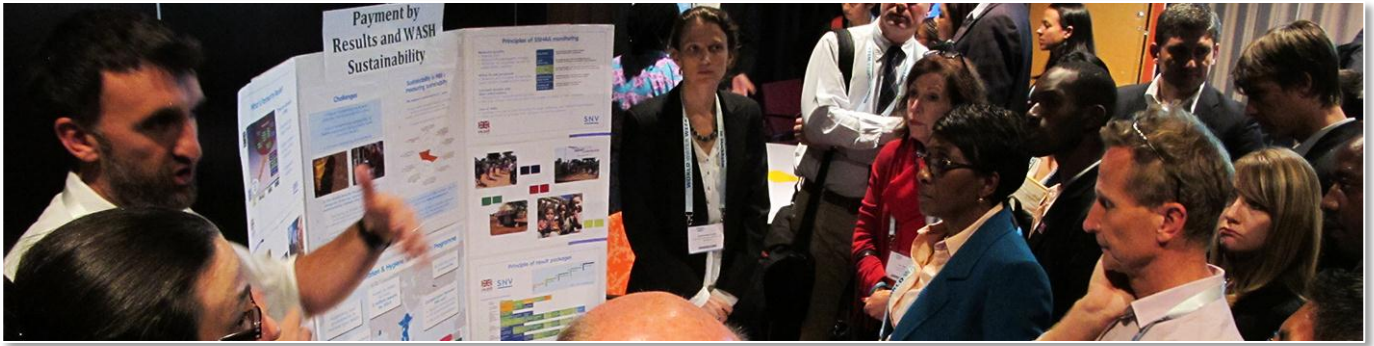
Katy Beggs and Heather Skilling, USAID presented the Sustainability Index Tool, a methodology for assessing activities or investments against five factors critical to ensuring the sustainability of service: institutional, management, financial, technical and environmental. Participants learned that the tool can be applied in urban and rural contexts at any levels of service delivery and can be used to assess water, sanitation or hygiene activities.

Sustainability Compacts

Dick van Ginhoven, DGIS, presented his organization’s efforts towards reaching agreements between government and partners to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure and behavioral outcomes, the so-called Sustainability Compacts. These can include the identification of bottlenecks, annual sustainability indicators and monitoring frameworks and external sustainability checks by independent third parties.

Politics of Professionalism

Stef Smits, IRC on behalf of RWSN presented a case-study on reaching the right balance between WASH professionals and decision-makers. Participants learned that in many countries, professionals in water supply and decision-makers often have trouble communicating effectively with each other. This presentation stressed the need for them to work better together. Building trust, respecting positions and professional expertise, listening carefully and having the spaces for discussion and exchange can overcome these communication barriers.



CLTS approaches for sustainability at scale

Rija Fanomezana, MCDI/FAA Madagascar and Clara Rudholm, WSSCC, presented the results of type of Community-led Total Sanitation Training (CTSL) programme implemented in Madagascar: The U-Approach. This promising and innovative CTSL addresses both the challenges of scale and of sustainability by mobilizing the involvement of individual and institutional actors across sectors.

WASH Results Programme and other sustainability approaches

Antoinette Kome, SNV and Leonard Tedd, DFID spoke of the four-year WASH Results-based financing program that SNV and DFID recently implemented. The programme is focused on rural sanitation and hygiene, and was implemented across nine countries. Funding is linked mainly to outcomes, taking into account that implementation is pre-financed by the organizations. Participants learned that SNV has used a Results-based Funding modality before, but at a smaller scale and not in the WASH sector.

“Mapper Lite” and “WASHTech”: Monitoring and assessment of WASH sustainability

Spera Atuhairwe and Vincent Casey, Wateraid spoke of next-generation water mapping. The “Mapper Lite” was created to monitor the distribution and status of water points in rural and urban areas. It supports local-level planning and but improve accountability for water sector performance at both local and national levels. The WASHTech helps WASH practitioners understand what social, financial, institutional, legal and skillset issues need to be addressed for a WASH technology to deliver benefits in the long-term.



GLAAS sustainability insights

Bruce Gordon and Fiona Gore, WHO gave an overview of the *GLAAS Report*, a biannual assessment of the inputs required to extend and sustain systems and services via country led-processes. Participants learned that GLAAS 2014 highlights the inputs and enabling environment needed for the delivery of WASH services. It also proposes basic components of sustainability, by collecting data on different elements of sustainable services. The 2014 Report will be published in November.

Institutional sustainability for CLTS in Indonesia

Roel Blesgraaf, Simavi, briefed participants on the innovative CLTS programmes focusing on ending open defecation in Indonesia. This methodology mobilizes communities to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of the problem and take action to become “open defecation free”. Challenges of this approach include sustaining changed behaviour and creating the enabling environment needed to maintain it.

WASH-BAT

Evariste Kouassi Komlan, UNICEF, presented the WASH-BAT, a sector analysis and monitoring tool developed in 2011 by UNICEF and World Bank. It aims to assess the enabling environment of WASH delivery by tracking the removal of barriers to sustainable and efficient services at national, regional, service provider and community levels.

Closing Plenary

Mr. Sanjay Wijesekera, Chief of WASH, UNICEF and Mr. Dominick de Waal, Senior Economist at the Water and Sanitation Program, World Bank, provided closing commentaries to the plenary.



Mr. Wijesekera highlighted the importance of government ownership to ensure the sustainability of WASH projects. He pointed out that most of the projects presented during the marketplace reflect that idea: they were about “*governments showing leadership and taking responsibility, but also about development partners coming up, not only with money, but the tools and the advice that helps governments to address this responsibility.*”

Mr. de Waal opened his address with a reflection on the history of improving access to WASH. He pointed out that decades of extreme polarization between “*cost recovery*” and “*community management*” had the effect of removing governments from the development agenda, weakening the results. Mr. de Waal argued for “*bringing government back*”: “*If you look at all the innovations around sustainability, they are about “how do we bring governments back post-construction?” (...)* *These are all great ideas and what we need to do, over the next few years, is find out how we can better give money to countries to help them support these innovations and (...)* *also for countries to change the way money is received.*”



Hon. Sarah Reng Ocheke closed the session, summarizing: “*To make the vision of universal coverage a reality, we need political commitment, resources and good management. But we also need new ideas. We have seen that today in abundance. I hope that you all learned something from the great presentations and marketplace stalls. Take these ideas and help us to apply them to the billion without water and 2.5 billion without sanitation and to the many more whose services are at risk of being unsustainable.*”

To know more about SWA’s presence at Stockholm World Water Week 2014, please [visit our website](#).