
34th WEDC International Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2009**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTISECTORAL APPROACHES****Single door approach for planning, implementation
and operation of rural WATSAN projects in Nepal***A. Mohan Basnet & B. Kamal Jaishi, Nepal*

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Too many stakeholders (e.g. Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, Donor Agencies, and Private Sectors) are involved in rural Water Supply and Sanitation (WATSAN) sector, and are currently executing projects in their own approach and modality which is easier and comfortable to them. The lack of single approach has not only brought confusion among recipient communities but also created managerial dilemma among various stakeholders. Therefore, in order to make a well established single approach in rural WATSAN sector, Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) has taken initiative. Thereto, DoLIDAR prepared an outline of the approach which was then revised by the centre level consultative meeting of major rural WATSAN stakeholders. Regional level workshops were also organized to collect comments/suggestion/aspirations from different stakeholders. The single approach thus prepared and endorsed by all stakeholders will be a milestone towards moving to Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in rural WATSAN sector in Nepal.

Introduction

Government of Nepal has enacted Local Infrastructure Development Policy (LIDP, 2007) in order to accelerate the pace of rural development and to support reducing rural poverty by improving the access of rural people in goods, service and physical facilities. The policy states that Ministry of Local Development (MLD) is responsible for rural Water Supply and Sanitation (WATSAN) sector. The projects with beneficiaries less than 1000 are considered to be rural WATSAN projects and they do fall under the jurisdiction of the MLD. Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) is the only technical department within the MLD providing technical backstopping to the local level institutions, especially for the District Development Committees (DDCs). There are DDCs in all 75 districts of Nepal implementing around 1000 rural WATSAN projects either solely or in association with different stake holders including Donor Agencies, Governmental Organisations (GOs), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and Private Sectors. However, it has been experienced that most of these agencies have their own approaches and modalities which is easier and comfortable to them- immaterial to what actually needed. This means there is no defined rural WATSAN sector approach for planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of the projects. This has not only brought confusion among recipient communities but also created managerial and administrative dilemma among various stakeholders. Therefore, the need of a well established single approach for planning, implementation, operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of rural WATSAN projects has been realized since the past. In this context, with the aim of harmonizing approaches and modalities for the development of rural WATSAN sector, DoLIDAR has taken initiative to prepare an approach manual. Thereto DoLIDAR prepared an outline of the approach, which was then discussed and revised by the central level consultative meeting of the major rural WATSAN Stakeholders. Regional level workshops were also organised to collect comments / suggestions/ aspirations of different stake holders. DoLIDAR has envisioned that preparation of this manual would be one step forward towards moving to a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) sector leading to the delivery of RWSS projects in a coordinated and timely manner with donor harmonization. Moreover, it also

leads to create an environment to put all the resources of RWSS sector into a single basket with a single approach (or modality) for planning, development, implementation and post implementation phases of the RWSS projects /schemes. The objective of this paper is to share the practice (i.e. single approach) we are adopting which will eventually lead us to SWAp in rural WATSAN sector in Nepal.

Materials and methods

Literature review

In order to identify the gap, existing literatures/documents in WATSAN sector were reviewed. According to WECS (2005), major issues and challenges in WATSAN sector are lack of clear roles and responsibilities of different sector agencies, resource gap to meet the set target, long gestation periods of sub-projects resulting inadequate budget allocation, lack of coordination and duplication of efforts. The Government of Nepal aims to help and support in uplifting the living standard of the people and to improve the public health situations by providing safe and potable water and basic sanitation facilities to all by 2017 A.D. on a sustainable basis (NPC, 2002). To achieve this national goal, there has been extensive increase in the participation of consumer groups in the construction, operation and maintenance of WATSAN schemes. However, according to NPC (2007), only about 76% and 46% of total population have access to drinking water and sanitation facilities respectively. Moreover, it has been realized weaker coordination of various agencies working in WATSAN sector as different modalities are being developed and applied. It is therefore expected that a uniformly accepted modality will be enforced which adopt "Basket Funding" consisting of all development partners (NPC, 2007 and WECS, 2005).

Centre level consultative meeting

With the aim of collecting comments/suggestions/aspirations for the preparation of approach manual, a consultative meeting of different WATSAN sector stakeholders was organized at DoLIDAR. The meeting was attended by the representative of major WATSAN stakeholders including:

- Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS) –leading governmental agency in WATSAN sector.
- UN agencies: United Nation’s Children Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO)
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (RWSSFDB) - being funded by World Bank (IDA) and DFID, RWSSFDB implement WATSAN schemes by mobilizing NGOs
- Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP) – project under Ministry of Local Development / DoLIDAR jointly funded by Government of Nepal (GON) and Finland
- Community Based Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CBWSSP) – project under Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MPPW) / DWSS jointly funded by GON and Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- Nepal Water and Health (NEWAH) – NGO working in WATSAN Sector.

In that meeting, an outline of the contents of approach manual (prepared by DoLIDAR) was distributed to the participants and a live discussion was held on it. Finally, a revised outline, with the incorporation of comments and suggestion from the floor, was prepared.

Workshops for district level implementing stakeholders

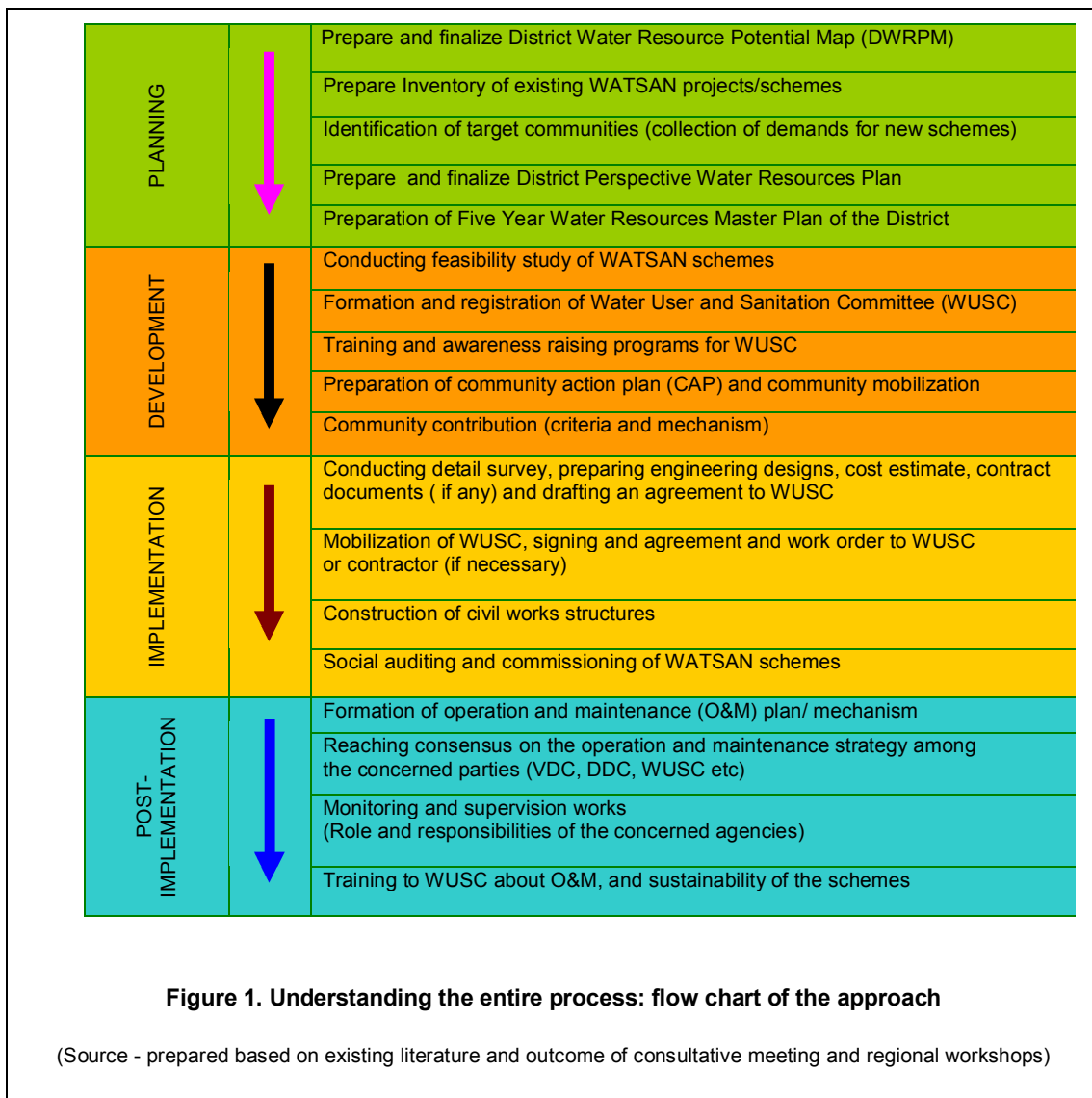
In order to collect views and suggestions (from the implementing stakeholders at field level) regarding the contents and materials to be incorporated in the approach manual, one day workshops were organised in three different region namely; Biratnagar (for eastern region), Pokhara (for mid and western region), and Nepalgunj (for mid-west and far-west region). In each workshop, there were representation from different geographic regions e.g. Terai (southern low land), Mid Hills and Upper Mountainous areas thereby area specific challenges and opportunities were collected. There were enthusiastic participation of key personnel (Engineers, Development Officers etc) from GOs, donor agencies, NGOs, and INGOs. The workshop was successful in understanding participants’ aspiration; some major findings are summarized below:

- Sanitation program should be considered separately as currently less than 1 % of total WATSAN budget is utilized in sanitation and health related activities
- Basket fund needs to be established for Operation and Maintenance (O &M) of completed schemes

- Effective measures should be taken to avoid duplication
- Role and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be clearly defined in the manual
- At least 30% women participation should be ensured in the formation of User Group, emphasis should be given for the involvement of disadvantaged (DAG) group
- Demarcation of the percentage of community contribution should be based on project characteristics
- Project selection/prioritization criteria should be developed /enforced
- The approach manual should ensure/enhance decentralization

Results and discussion

The approach (Figure 1) has been developed. This approach enhances the entire process in the project cycle, from project identification to the operation and maintenance of the completed projects. Stepwise participatory planning, decentralized decision making, clear division of responsibilities and specific time bound actions are some in-built characteristics of this approach. It shall be mandatory to follow the approach by User’s Committee, Village Development Committees (VDCs), District Development Committees (DDCs), DoLIDAR and MLD. Though the approach is still to be endorsed by other sector stakeholders, DoLIDAR believes that it will be followed by all rural WATSAN sector agencies. Different phases of flow chart (Figure 1) have been briefly explained below:



Planning phase

The first step –Planning phase- deals with the preparation of District Water Resource Potential Map (DWRPM), after that rest of the steps shall be focused only on rural WATSAN projects. DWRPM shall clearly show the development potential (including rural WATSAN, Irrigation, Hydropower etc.) of a district through available water resources. District inventory map of existing WATSAN projects shall be plotted in the indicative map; it can then be used by planners and the decision makers to identify the areas requiring interventions. Although the planners can tentatively identify District's need, the DDCs should still collect formal requests of the projects from VDCs. By incorporating these requests, DDC can prepare the draft perspective plan. The DDC shall then, with the assistance of other governmental and non governmental organizations, prepare five year projected financial and development plan by considering all possible funding sources. The five year water user master plan is a prioritized abstract of the perspective plan, also referred as 'District Water User's Master Plan' (DWUMP) and may be prepared in line with five year tenure of District Council. The plan thus prepared avoids duplication and optimize the use of limited resources.

Development phase

The development of rural WATSAN program in the Districts depends upon the commitments shown by the communities, their capacity, willingness and also their attitudes. In contrast to current minimum 20% participation (in governmental organizations), the percentage of community contribution shall be fixed based on project characteristics. Water Users and Sanitation Committee (WUSC) shall be compulsorily registered according to Water Resource Act (1992) ensuring proportional representation of gender, caste and disadvantaged ethnic groups. Such group should include at least 30% women's representation. Commitment to contribution and registration of WUSC follows engineering works (survey, design, estimate etc.).

Implementation phase

DDC shall be responsible for implementation, coordination (if implemented by other stakeholders) and monitoring of rural WATSAN projects. The projects shall be implemented through registered WUSC, only (if necessary) procurement of pipe/fittings shall be carried out through contract. Provision of pre-construction orientation training shall be in place to disseminate project related information and also to clarify duties and responsibilities of WUSC. Standardized monitoring and evaluation system shall be developed for technical/social auditing after construction to ensure transparency and the quality of structure as per design and specification.

Post implementation phase

The users themselves shall own, operate and have responsibility to maintain WATSAN projects. Thereto, post implementation training shall be imparted to the WUSC. An operation and maintenance fund at WUSC level shall also be created. Huge and complex projects that are not handed over to the consumers shall be provided technical as well as financial assistance.

Conclusions

The single approach we have developed can be a good reference for a wider range of organizations working in rural WATSAN sector in (inter) national arena, and we believe that there will be synergic effect as the single modality reduce managerial dilemma and ensure coordinated and smooth execution of schemes/projects. Prepared in a participatory way, we expect that all the actors, stakeholders active in rural WATSAN sector will follow this single approach in planning, implementation and operation of schemes/projects in Nepal. Moreover, It is also expected that finalization of this -Single Approach Manual- will be a milestone towards moving to a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in WATSAN sector.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend thanks to Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads/ Ministry of Local Development/ Government of Nepal for providing fund to this work.

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