

Developing a national policy and strategies for sanitation

Guidelines for action

SANITATION



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Sanitation policies and strategies in Africa: frameworks for action with room for improvement

National **hygiene and sanitation** policies and strategies are essential to sector development. They enable political will to be translated into concrete actions and constitute a frame of reference when dividing roles between stakeholders and defining actions to be undertaken.

Strategies for sanitation... and hygiene!

Sanitation-related interventions tend to focus on the construction of facilities rather than on actions aimed at promoting the hygienic behavior of users. It has been established, however, that appropriate hygiene alone has a far greater impact on health than providing access to sanitation facilities. A strategy should, therefore, be developed specifically for hygiene.

As a result of the combined impetus of **AfricaSan** and the 2008 **international year of sanitation** (see boxes), many African countries have undertaken to produce sanitation sector development policies and strategies. The rationale behind this trend is twofold: not only does it serve to reflect the political will for a framework to 'manage' the sector, it also helps place the spotlight firmly on hygiene and sanitation, thereby ensuring they are no longer considered subsectors of the water supply or environment sectors, but rather as sectors in their own right.

Although decision-makers in Africa are becoming increasingly aware of sanitation and hygiene issues, the development of national policies and strategies is still largely contingent

upon lobbying from donors and the international community. Over the last few years, a large number of African countries have put strategic documents in place for sanitation; however these have prioritized urban areas and so have overlooked the vast majority of the population in rural regions.

Furthermore, the **quality of the national sanitation strategies already in place varies considerably from one country to the next**. Certain policies and strategies are unrealistic; in order to reassure international partners, they include lofty ambitions which are now proving

A 3 point action plan following AfricaSan 2008

During the AfricaSan 2008 conference in South Africa, 32 African countries pledged to uphold three commitments: i) to adopt or update national sanitation and hygiene policies with a national action plan, ii) to put in place one principal institution to coordinate the sector, iii) to establish a specific budget for the sanitation and hygiene sector.

difficult to translate into concrete action plans. At the same time, other sector strategy documents fail either to reflect the full extent of the issue or put forward adequate solutions. Lastly, over and above the quality of the frames of reference currently in place in Africa, mobilizing the budgets required to actually implement most policies and strategies remains a real challenge.

Purpose of this document

What is included

The purpose of this document is to provide a **methodology for developing or improving national policies and strategies**. As such, it is intended for sector stakeholders wanting to fulfill the various recommendations made during the international year of sanitation and to implement the pledges made by those African countries that are signatories to the eThekini Declaration (2008 AfricaSan Conference, Durban, South Africa).

It is important to bear in mind that the methodology presented here is purely indicative and will need to be adapted in line with both stakeholder expectations and specific sector issues.

What is not included

The process of developing a national sanitation policy (NSP) or national sanitation strategy (NSS) (which mobilizes all stakeholders

involved, providing them not only with an opportunity to express their expectations and concerns, but also with information and training on the wide variety of issues and challenges encountered within the sanitation sector) is therefore just as important as the policy and strategy documents that result. In order to ensure the consultation process between stakeholders is carried out effectively and to prevent pre-existing NSP/NSS documents being modified without consultation, this document does not propose content for national policy or strategies on sanitation. In other words, this publication does not provide recommendations as to:

- Objectives to be included in a NSP;
- Directions and approaches to be included in a NSS;
- The operational content of a NSS, whether in terms of technical choices, for example, or methodological options (particularly as regards capacity-building and promotion and awareness-raising campaigns).

A NSP/NSS is only of any value if it has been understood, approved and adopted by all stakeholders!!!

Distinguishing between policy and strategy

This chapter provides a **strictly indicative definition** of the terms 'national sanitation policy' and 'national sanitation strategy'. The nature and format of such or similarly titled sector documents can vary widely from one country to the next. Furthermore, the content of the NSP and NSS logically reflects sector stakeholder and institutions' concerns; concerns which are directly related to the 'specific sanitation needs' of a country, to the traditional approaches used for drawing up sector documents, as well as to the sector's institutional set up (particularly within the ministries).

A policy sets out the objectives and guiding principles

The aim of a National Sanitation Policy (NSP) is neither to reorganize existing bodies nor to create new institutions responsible for sanitation, but instead to organize the entire sanitation sector around a realistic development project. A NSP is intended to serve as a reference document for all those stakeholders concerned. A National Sanitation Policy is deliberately **synoptic** in nature: it outlines a **common vision** and summarizes the **common principles of intervention** for the whole sector.

In particular, the NSP needs to:

1. Define the targets (ideally quantifiable) for sector development. What associated targets are to be set, notably with regard to sanitation

coverage? What level of effluent treatment? And what are the deadlines?

2. Define the body or institution in charge of overseeing the sector. Which existing (or new) institution is most able to supervise the sector, particularly as regards planning, mobilizing finance and monitoring progress?

3. Establish the guiding principles for the sector, notably with regard to recovering the operating costs of services, fairness, skill-sharing and public and private stakeholder relationships.

4. Set out any potential amendments required to the legal and institutional framework, particularly to detail stakeholder roles and responsibilities and **align** their interventions.

5. Define scaling-up priorities, notably in terms of the **harmonization efforts required** to integrate potentially disparate approaches and the **increased financing** needed for the sector.

Strategies define the intervention methods and means

The term 'sanitation' can cover a wide range of concepts, from issues pertaining to '**liquid waste**' (excreta, sewage, domestic wastewater, commercial and industrial wastewater), '**solid waste**' (whatever its origin), '**hazardous waste**' (in particular, biomedical waste and pesticides), and '**stormwater**', through to **hygiene education and awareness-raising** measures and activities.

To deal with the specific characteristics of each of these issues, a greater level of detail is required than that found in the NSP. A NSP, therefore, needs to be broken down into several **sub-sector strategies**, with these sub-sectors being defined by the government in accordance with the specific issues encountered. Sub-sectors can be created for the different types of waste to be treated (liquid waste, solid waste, stormwater, special waste and skills transfer), the different types of settlement (rural, urban, peri-urban, small towns), etc. Regardless of the type of sub-sector established, each strategy should ideally contain a review of the sub-sector, strategic directions and an action plan.

In particular, a NSS should:

1. Define the perimeter of the sub-sector targeted by the NSS. For instance, what issues (identified during a prior review) and activities should form the focus of an excreta and wastewater management strategy? Or of a hygiene strategy?

2. Define the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. For each administrative level (local, regional, national), who is in charge of sub-sector planning? Coordination? Monitoring and evaluation? Capacity-building?

3. List the most appropriate technological approaches. What are the most suitable technical solutions? In which context and based on which criteria?

4. Define funding mechanisms for the sub-sector. What are the possible funding sources available to finance investment and cover operating costs? How is this financing to be mobilized? What eligibility criteria need to be met to benefit from this funding? What pricing structure is to be put in place?

5. Define social intermediation approaches. What awareness-raising and promotion measures are to be implemented? Who is the priority target audience?

6. Establish an action plan. Which priority actions are to be implemented, particularly in the short and medium term? What are the timescales? And based on which budget?

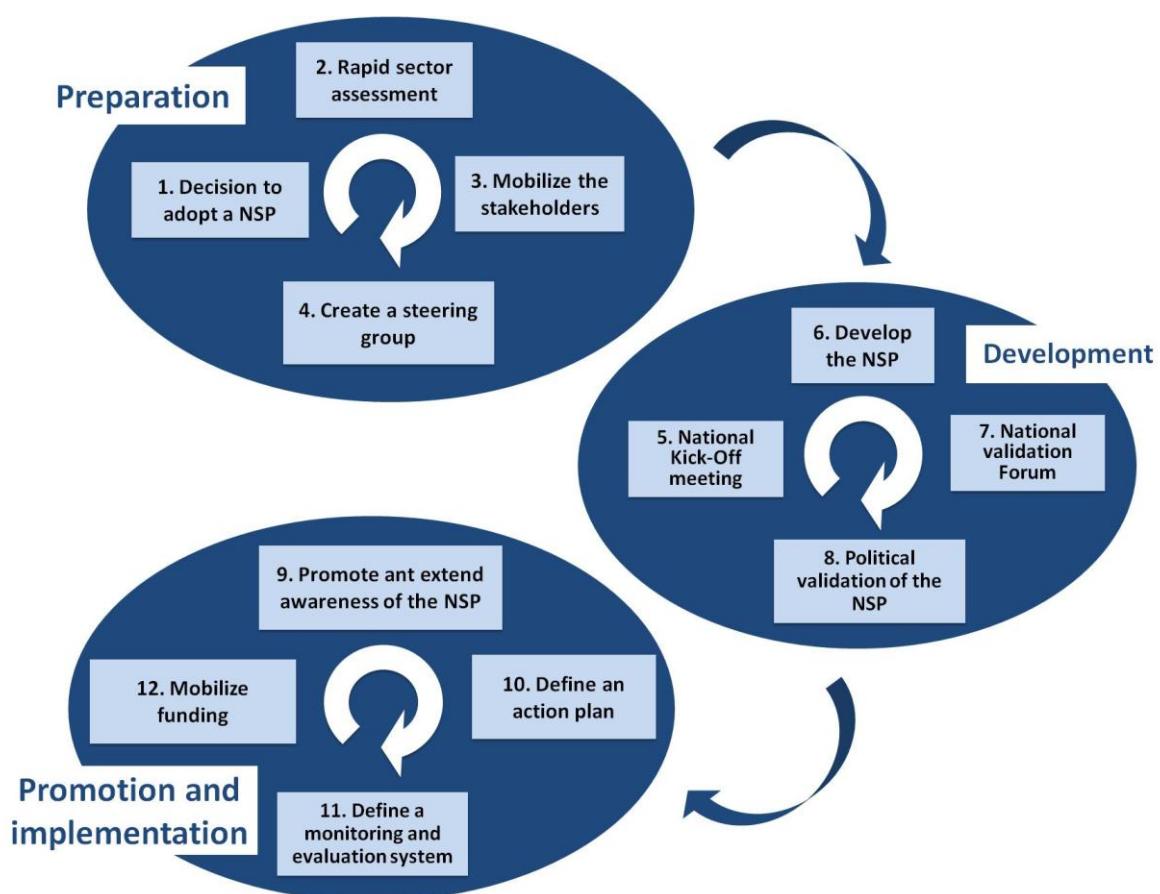
Developing a national policy and strategies for sanitation: a 12 step process

The process of developing a NSP can be broken down into 3 cycles (preparation, development, promotion and implementation), each of which consists of 4 steps.

At the end of these 3 cycles and 12 steps, the NSP development process is complete and the focus shifts to actual implementation. This implementation involves the disbursement of

funds, the provision of technical assistance to local contracting authorities (local authorities), the launch of invitations to tender, the execution of works, the updating of monitoring indicators, etc.

Implementation is planned over several years with a view to reaching the MDG targets.



Preparation phase

Step 1: Decision to adopt a NSP/NSS

What does this involve?

It is essential that the political decision has been made to adopt a NSP/NSS prior to beginning development of such a sector document. It is important to ensure that a mandate is granted to a ministry or national technical directorate by a political authority (ideally at government level) - via a letter of engagement from the supervisory ministry, for example – to initiate a NSP/NSS development process.

What activities need to be undertaken?

Advocacy activities are to be undertaken only if the ministers and ministries in charge of sanitation fail to appreciate the need to adopt a NSP/NSS. Should this be the case, it is possible to conduct the following activities:

- a) Define an advocacy strategy** (who should be targeted? What are the key messages to be communicated?).
- b) Produce arguments and communication tools** to influence political bodies.
- c) Implement the advocacy strategy** (information meetings, press releases, etc.).

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Lack of political interest in sanitation issues*

The health and environmental risks associated with lack of sanitation are often underestimated, leading to insufficient political attention being accorded to the sector.

Nowadays, however, as a result of the many studies conducted on the advantages of sanitation, there are numerous arguments that can be used to convince political bodies of the need to adopt a NSP/NSS. Whether these arguments relate to health, environmental, economic or social issues, sanitation represents a social (virtuous) sector in which it is cost-effective to invest.

Choosing compelling arguments to convince top level political bodies

Over the last few years, several studies have been conducted that have identified a number of advantages to sanitation. For example, it has been established to be cost-effective for a government to invest in sanitation, particularly as regards the impacts of this investment on reducing health expenditure, increasing productivity and improving the school enrolment rate.

► *Lack of resources or experience for defining and implementing an advocacy strategy*

Designing and conducting an advocacy strategy, aimed at influencing politicians and political bodies, requires certain competencies and sometimes financial resources. There is a civil society in place in most countries, often supported by national or international NGOs, which will have advocacy experience. It is, therefore, possible to make use of this resource, not only for its knowledge and experience, but also for its financing capacity.

Step 2: Rapid Sector Assessment

What does this involve?

The aim of a Rapid Sector Assessment (RSA) is threefold. It will:

- Establish a physical inventory (access rate, type of most common facilities/equipment, etc.),
- Provide a review of the intervention methodologies being used (level and type of technical assistance provided to the local contracting authority, hygiene promotion and awareness-raising measures, etc.),
- Provide an institutional review (what are the main categories of stakeholder involved at local and national level).

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Draft the basic terms of reference for the Rapid Sector Assessment (RSA). These terms of reference, although brief, are crucial: they define the purpose of the RSA, which is namely to obtain the information necessary to ensure the successful implementation and careful consideration of the NSP/NSS development process.

b) Produce the RSA. Whether this be carried out by a national institution or outsourced to a consultant, the RSA needs to be developed quickly and efficiently to ensure it does not delay the NSP/NSS development process. The RSA needs to provide a detailed institutional analysis: institutional fragmentation is a regular feature of the sanitation sector. Given that organizing all stakeholders and institutions around a common vision is one of the main NSP/NSS development process challenges, it is advisable to ensure that the expectations and needs of each institution involved are clearly understood upfront.

c) Validate and disseminate the RSA. Once completed, the RSA can be validated by the

main sector stakeholders and then widely disseminated as preliminary work conducted for the NSP/NSS process.

Identifying the sanitation stakeholders: a key challenge of the RSA

One of primary aims of the RSA, and one which will greatly facilitate the subsequent process, is to identify the different types of stakeholder concerned by and involved in sanitation. To simplify this task, stakeholders can be divided into three categories:

- the **institutional stakeholders** responsible for sector coordination, planning and financing (national and deconcentrated administrations, local authorities and technical and financial partners);
- the **supply stakeholders** (national sanitation service operators, small private operators, NGOs, consultancy firms, etc.);
- the **demand stakeholders** (domestic users, industrial and commercial users, consumer associations, etc.).

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► Lack of time or financial resources for conducting a RSA

As its name implies, the Rapid Sector Assessment is designed to be conducted within a short period of time and with minimal resources. An assessment can still be undertaken even where there are no financial resources available: every country has documentation (of some description) on sanitation. A few days spent reviewing the available documents and reports should provide the information and findings required to initiate the NSP/NSS process.

Step 3: Mobilize the stakeholders

What does this involve?

A NSP/NSS is only of any value if all sector stakeholders contribute to its development and jointly validate it. This also helps ensure stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the sector documents. The aim of this third step is to mobilize all categories of stakeholder to participate in the rest of the process.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Define a stakeholder mobilization strategy. The main aim of this strategy is to provide the answers to the following two questions: Who are the target stakeholders? What key messages need to be communicated to them? It is worth bearing in mind that each category of stakeholder identified in the RSA (step 2) will be motivated by their own reasons to join the NSP/NSS development process. It is, therefore, advisable to draft specific messages to appeal to the individual interests of each stakeholder.

What communication tools are required to mobilize the stakeholders?

There are a number of communication aids that can be used to mobilize and raise the awareness of the various stakeholders. For instance, a brief, educational and attractive document (or brochure) providing an overview of the NSP/NSS process will prove useful for explaining the rationale behind a NSP/NSS and why it is in the interest of each stakeholder category to participate. Ensuring local language versions of this document are available will help reinforce the educational aspect. Disseminating this brochure to as many stakeholders as possible will ensure the exposure received is commensurate with the NSP/NSS process issues and challenges.

b) Implement the mobilization strategy.

Regardless of the communication method chosen and the strategy defined, the strategy implementation period needs to be relatively short (2 to 3 months) so as to enable the main activity (actual NSP/NSS development) to be initiated as soon as possible.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Problems mobilizing the sector's informal stakeholders*

Small independent operators may prove hard to reach, especially when these belong to the informal sector. For instance, it is often difficult to mobilize inhabitants of precarious settlements, manual pit emptiers or masons as they rarely form part of their organized profession. Locally-based NGOs working on local development issues will often be aware of some or all of these stakeholders, however. These NGOs are, therefore, in an ideal position to act as intermediaries, informing and mobilizing those informal stakeholders active in the sector.

Step 4: Create a steering group

What does this involve?

Given that institutional responsibilities for the sanitation sector are too often fragmented, a steering group composed of representatives of the various state departments working on sanitation issues will be vital for developing the NSP and providing regular process updates. The steering group will delegate the various NSP development tasks to the most appropriately skilled and experienced state departments among its members.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Draw up the steering group terms of reference. This brief document should precisely define the steering committee's objective and mandates. What is the aim of the steering committee? Who are its members? How long is the lifespan of the steering committee?

b) Define an action plan for development of the NSP. As part of its initial working sessions, the steering committee should be able to quickly produce an action plan listing the key stages of the NSP/NSS development process, the implementation timetable and the human and financial resources required. It is, of course, possible to formulate this action plan in accordance with the different steps presented in this present document.

c) Define the allocation of tasks between the different steering group members. In order to ensure the final NSP is of high quality, this task allocation needs to be both methodical and rigorous.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Members of the steering committee fail to regularly attend meetings*

Lack of regular attendance can be a major issue as where there is a high rate of absenteeism, the legitimacy of any decisions then taken by the steering committee can be lost. It is possible to overcome this type of issue, however, by ensuring that:

- The initial step, 'political decision to adopt a NSP/NSS' (step 1), is validated. Affirmation of political will, when strongly and clearly expressed, usually has a mobilizing effect.

- There is sufficient effective communication (step 3) to convince steering committee members of the magnitude of the issues at stake and that it is in their interest to attend and participate in meetings.

► *Steering committee members find it difficult to reach consensus*

Steering committee meetings will inevitably give rise to the expression of conflicting opinions and expectations. To prevent any such disagreement from creating a bottleneck, it is advisable to appoint a key figure from within the sector to chair the committee; someone well-known, whose views are respected and who is able to effectively take on the role of mediator.

Development Phase

Step 5: National Kick-Off Forum

What does this involve?

The national kick-off forum is an important and necessary institutional component: bringing together and updating all sector stakeholders, it aims to initiate discussion to share the diagnostic results (RSA, step 2) and jointly develop the NSP/NSS sector documents.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Draw up terms of reference for the forum.

As a national kick-off forum partly determines the success of the future NSP/NSS development process, the steering committee should draw up precise terms of reference (or have these drawn up): What are the objectives? What should the program look like in terms of activities and speakers?

b) Identify subject matter experts. Relevant subject matter experts should be among the speakers taking part in the forum. It is possible, for instance, to invite representatives from other countries to speak about potential strategic options or particularly innovative or proven and successful approaches. Such presentations of experiences conducted outside the country serve to enrich discussions and expand horizons.

c) Organize and facilitate the forum. A forum requires considerable logistic planning and this, of course, has an associated cost. The steering committee, therefore, needs to identify all forum costs and create both a budget and finance plan. Similarly, to facilitate the forum, suitably qualified facilitators will be required.

These not only have to be sanitation sector experts, but also need to have experience in training and facilitating discussions. Lastly, with regard to the format of the forum, organizing workshops or small roundtables to conduct structured discussions and debates enables stakeholders (identified during step 3) to express their opinions more freely.

d) Draft the minutes of the Forum. The questions, expectations and recommendations made during the kick-off forum are all useful for informing the NSP/NSS development process. Highlighting the main points, recommendations and key people to contact in the forum minutes will provide a solid base from which to initiate the NSP/NSS development process.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Problems raising the funding necessary to hold a kick-off forum*

It may not be possible for one, or even several, administrations to meet the costs associated with organizing a forum. However, technical and financial partners should be in a position to provide funding for this type of event. The more they have been kept regularly informed and involved in the preparation phase (steps 1 to 4), the more disposed they should be to provide the necessary assistance.

Step 6: Develop the NSP/NSS

What does this involve?

NSP/NSS development consists of working together with all sanitation stakeholders to draw up documents that establish targets and strategic directions for the years to come. It is vital that stakeholders consult and work together regularly to ensure the NSP/NSS development process is validated on a regular basis. The aim of this approach is twofold: it transforms the NSP/NSS process into a learning exercise for all those involved and it also ensures there is general consensus on the documents produced, thereby facilitating validation of the final versions.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Mobilize the authors and facilitators. The tasks of drafting documents and facilitating stakeholder consultation can either be conducted by members of the administration concerned or entrusted to a team of consultants. Regardless of the option selected, it is important to bear in mind that overseeing the process requires three main competencies: excellent knowledge of the sector, good written skills, and proven experience of facilitating meetings and social intermediation.

b) Work together and consult with stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement in NSP/NSS development through cooperation meetings and regular consultation is crucial and will not only ensure understanding of the future sector documents, but also instill a sense of ownership. The steering committee is strongly urged to provide each stakeholder category several opportunities to express their opinion during the process. It is particularly important to regularly inform and consult with the sector's financial partners, as it is they who will be asked to fund NSP/NSS implementation once the overall process is completed.

c) Draft the documents. This sixth step should culminate in a national sanitation policy document and national sanitation strategy documents being produced. Upon submission of the final versions of these documents, the steering committee needs to ensure that these documents are both clear and concise.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Insufficient stakeholder cooperation and consultation*

It is often easier to formulate recommendations individually than to consult with a variety of stakeholders, take the time to listen then integrate their concerns into a NSP/NSS. In order to avoid succumbing to the temptation to work in isolation, a significant part of the NSP/NSS development terms of reference, therefore, needs to be dedicated to cooperation and consultation activities. Progress reports and meeting minutes can be requested to ensure that these activities are actually being carried out. Consulting with sector stakeholders takes time. The steering

The role of facilitation in the NSP/NSS development process

A consultation process, such as that recommended for developing a NSP/NSS, enables not only areas of agreement to be identified, but also areas of disagreement. Whether these differences of opinion be objective and substantive or reflect institutional or personal disputes, the facilitator role is essential: it involves enabling disagreement to be expressed, whilst at the same time ensuring this does not create bottlenecks. It is highly recommended that an external and entirely neutral consultant is appointed to this task.

committee needs to take account of this, particularly when determining the budget allocation for step 6.

► *National strategies are not operational enough*

In order to avoid producing strategy documents that are too vague to be translated into concrete actions, the steering committee can,

for example, call upon the experience of stakeholders in the field. These stakeholders, brought together as a consultative committee and provided with draft versions of the national strategy documents, will be invited to comment on the practical elements of these strategies: are the national strategies detailed enough to meet their expectations and requirements for improving and accelerating their activities in the field?

Step 7: NSP National Validation Forum

What does this involve?

Once development of the NSP has been completed, a forum is held to validate the sector's framework documents. Here, the strategic directions that are to guide the activities of all stakeholders over the years to come are presented to the whole sanitation community.

What activities need to be undertaken?

The activities required to organize this forum are the same as those undertaken for the national kick-off forum (step 5): **draw up terms of reference for the forum, identify subject matter experts, draft the Forum minutes.**

Far from being a simple formality, this forum should generate commitments on various levels:

- Political commitments. The ministers or their representatives will be invited to take a position on the sector documents produced and, in particular, on the implementation of these documents. Specifically, to what extent are they prepared to promote the NSP/NSS

within the administrations under their supervision and in the international arena?

- Institutional commitments. The different technical departments and national administrations will be invited to formally commit to taking on their roles and responsibilities, as set out in the NSP/NSS.

- Financial commitments. The sector's financial partners will be invited to state how much financial support they are willing to provide to help fund the strategic directions set out in the NSP/NSS.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Lack of political, institutional or financial commitment within the Forum*

The three aforementioned levels of commitment (political, institutional and financial) are an ambitious goal which it will not always be possible to reach. Should this turn out to be the case, it is worth bearing in mind that the following step (step 8) may well give rise to further commitments, over and above those made during the validation forum.

Step 8: Political validation of the NSP/NSS

What does this involve?

Validation of the NSP/NSS at the highest level is necessary both for ratifying the sector's development objectives and for securing the release of national and international funding to implement the sector policy and strategies.

What activities need to be undertaken?

Ideally, the NSP should be translated into a bill approved by parliament as it contains provisions that need to be included in national legislation and which can affect other existing texts: such as, for example, if the NSP introduces misdemeanors, fines or license fees; if a new status is created for sanitation workers; if certain expenditure is due to come out of the national budget; if local authority competencies are to be modified, etc.

The legal route provides the NSP with maximum legitimacy, but is a long process (in Mali it took over two years from NSP approval to publication of the corresponding law in the Official Journal) and requires a lot of time and energy. In particular, it is necessary to **monitor and closely follow the various stages set out by the legislation**: ensuring it is presented to the cabinet (so mobilizing the lead minister's office), included on the parliamentary assembly's agenda, discussed at the law commission or special commission, approved, implemented (both the law and then the decrees). During the parliamentary stage, it may be necessary to **lobby members of parliament** through a briefing note or working sessions, etc. (which is why it is important to involve national politicians in the previous steps, such as during the National Forum, for example).

It is highly recommended to go down the regulatory route whenever possible (particularly in the case of a simple strategy) and **break the key elements down into orders**

or decrees which will be passed at the level closest to the 'sector' and notably by the ministry or ministries responsible for leading strategy development. In this case, advocacy efforts should focus on the signatory or signatories of the regulatory texts (sanitation is characterized by the fact that it is dispersed across a number of ministries, meaning there is likely to be several signatories involved).

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *No leader in place to accompany the political adoption process*

There is a risk that nobody is willing to take on the role of monitoring NSP/NSS progress and ensuring it successfully passes through the various legislative stages, particularly when this involves validation at parliamentary level. This type of issue needs to be anticipated at the earliest opportunity: ministerial staff members, as well as parliamentarians, need to be involved in the NSP/NSS development process from the beginning, if possible. They will then be 'allies', on side to support and accompany the process as it passes through the various political validation procedures. Those to be sought out and included are people with close ties to the government, national elected officials or ministerial cabinet members.

► *There is political opposition to the approval process*

Opposition can arise during the political approval process: for example, voting on the law could take place at a time of major discord between the majority and opposition. It is important, therefore, to transcend the political battles and refocus the debate onto the population at large and on public services, namely safeguarding public health and the environment (which are the primary aims of

sanitation). Those in charge of accompanying the NSP/NSS political adoption process (the 'allies' mentioned above) need to be responsible for refocusing this debate.

► *The publication of decrees, orders and regulations is delayed*

The publication of decrees/ orders/ regulations can be delayed for political reasons (for example, the sanitation license fee proves unpopular) or because of jurisdictional disputes between two ministries (a typical

example is where ministry of sanitation and the ministry of the environment both claim leadership of the sanitation sector, subject to a decree to be enacted by parliament). Dialogue, communication and awareness-raising are the tools required here to iron out any differences and bring sector stakeholders together. Once again, it is up to those responsible for accompanying the NSP/NSS political adoption process to use their mediation skills to ensure consensus is reached and the process completed.

Promotion and implementation phase

Step 9: Promote and extend awareness of the NSP

What does this involve?

Extending awareness and understanding of the new sanitation sector documents is vital. By promoting the NSP/NSS, the aim is to make as many people as possible (including local and national stakeholders and development partners) aware of the sector's strategic priorities to ensure these are adopted by all.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Define a communication plan. As part of its role overseeing the development of the sector documents, the steering committee can call upon its various members to define a communication plan. To maximize its effectiveness, this action plan needs to list specific activities adapted to the different target audiences, in particular local authorities, users, service providers (NGOs, consultancy firms, entrepreneurs), deconcentrated state departments, etc.

b) Implement the communication plan. Depending on the scope of the communication plan and the size of the budget available, it may be possible to contract these activities out to external providers. In this case, it will be necessary to draw up terms of reference to precisely define the scope of the tasks outsourced. Regardless of the method used to implement the communication plan, however, the steering committee will have an important supervisory role to play to ensure this ninth step is carried out satisfactorily.

In order to ensure this step of promoting and extending awareness of the NSP is conducted effectively, recommendations as to the format and content of the communication plan are provided below.

Format:

- do not overly rely on the written word: in addition to paper-based aids, it is also important to organize public meetings at which to present the content of the documents and the practical implications of these texts on stakeholders 'at all levels';
- fully explore the vertical structure of the sector: holding meetings at national level only is not enough; it is also necessary to inform those at regional and local level by making use of existing consultation frameworks;
- do not neglect the local authorities: make maximum use of associations and federations (e.g. the Association of Municipalities which exists in virtually all countries) to 'get the message across';
- make the most of all events due to take place in the year following the adoption of the NSP/NSS: water day, annual sector meeting, etc.
- remember that sanitation is closely linked to health and that the health sector is both equipped and used to communicating public health messages to a wide audience. It is, therefore, worthwhile developing not only specific communication tools aimed at healthcare workers, but also explanatory posters to be displayed in healthcare centers.

Content:

- avoid overly technical language: the NSP includes many, sometimes complicated, technical concepts. It is important to explain the terminology used, simplify the vocabulary and place these concepts in context so as to highlight their actual implications;

- do not forget local languages: it is a good idea to disseminate key messages in all the indigenous languages used within the country.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

- ▶ *Lack of finance for promoting / extending awareness of the NSP/NSS*

The phase of promoting and extending awareness of the NSP/NSS is a key strategic activity. By now, the sector's financial partners should already have been made aware of the financial contribution required of them to implement this step.

- ▶ *Administrations are neither used to nor skilled in communication*

Communication is a profession in its own right; however, not every administration that deals with sanitation will have a communication team in place. Often, the most practical solution to offset the lack of competencies in this area is to outsource the communication function to an external provider. This can also prove more cost-effective than implementing a training and capacity-building plan for public administration employees.

- ▶ *Communication requires time that the departments in charge of sanitation do not have*

Here again, outsourcing (or contracting out to an external provider) is one solution to this issue. The administration can call upon the services of locally-based NGOs or specialist companies to perform this communication role.

Step 10: Define the action plans

What does this involve?

The aim of this step to define the action plan for NSP/NSS implementation is to translate the NSP/NSS guiding principles into concrete actions.

Some of the main issues to be covered in this action plan are: sustainable financing of the sector, monitoring and evaluation and capacity-building. The action plan should also include a budget forecast of the total implementation cost.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Draw up the action plans. An action plan is required for each sanitation sub-sector for which a strategy has been developed. This action plan should include priority actions, which are staggered over time, and be supported by a budget to enable these actions to be carried out. The action plan ensures that all actions that are to be undertaken within the timeframe set out in the NSP are properly listed. In order to facilitate the carrying out and monitoring of planned activities, it is recommended to specify, for each activity: the institution responsible for its implementation, the stakeholders involved, the timeframe allotted to the action, any supporting measures required, tools for monitoring implementation of the activity and the amount of financing required.

b) Verify that the action plans are aligned to the NSP/NSS. The steering committee's role

during this step consists of ensuring that the different action plans drawn up are acceptable in that they are consistent with the objectives and guiding principles set out in the NSP/NSS. In particular, it is necessary to make sure that the allocation of the administrations' roles and responsibilities in the different action plans is aligned to that included in the NSP/NSS; that there is no duplication of activities; that, for each NSS, the accumulated output of all activities listed in the action plan will be sufficient to ensure the strategic objectives can be reached, etc.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

- ▶ *Action plans are supported by unrealistic budgets*

It is always tempting for an administration to establish a large and generous budget for implementing an action plan: it serves as a guarantee, providing assurances that all the financial resources, competencies and infrastructure required will be in place. It would, however, be far more beneficial to ensure the budget includes realistic working time and investment costs that accurately reflect the local implementation context: not only does this prevent a sudden and uncontrolled escalation in local market prices for sanitation, but applying realistic costs can also help convince the different financial partners to contribute the necessary funding.

Step 11: Define a monitoring and evaluation system

What does this involve?

Monitoring and evaluation makes it possible both to report on advances made within the sector and to measure progress against defined development goals. It enables managers to improve the way in which activities and projects are implemented by providing them with the opportunity to take timely corrective measures to overcome any difficulties encountered and resolve any issues identified.

What activities need to be undertaken?

a) Define the monitoring and evaluation indicators. The aim of this initial step is to establish a finite number of qualitative and quantitative indicators. Typically, each sanitation sub-sector will have its own indicators, in addition to transversal indicators common to the whole sector. A pragmatic approach is required here to ensure the indicators defined are simple and easy to measure: it is usually more costly to obtain information for complex indicators, which then only specialists are really able to understand.

b) Define the data collection method. Once the indicators have been established, a measurement protocol then needs to be defined for each one. For reasons both of practicality and technical and financial feasibility, it is advisable to first identify those procedures already in place. This will help ensure that the monitoring and evaluation system is underpinned by existing institutions, competencies and communication channels.

c) Define the monitoring and evaluation results communication strategy. Once up and running, the data regularly produced by the monitoring and evaluation system will need to be shared with all the sector stakeholders. A results communication strategy will therefore need to be drawn up that precisely defines to whom the results are to be disseminated, as well as how often and in which format the data is to be communicated, etc.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *Lack of precision in the definition of service levels for sanitation*

One of the main aims of the NSP/NSS monitoring and evaluation system is to regularly report on the progress made, in terms of both access to sanitation and the evacuation and treatment of effluent. To do this effectively, rigorous and precise definitions must be set out in the NSP/NSS (for instance, what is meant by access to sanitation? What are the different types of facility deemed acceptable for providing this access?). This is a vital prerequisite and involves employing language commonly understood by all so as to ensure these definitions are accepted by the different stakeholders.

► *Lack of collaboration with the official statistics bodies*

Each country has at least one office of statistics with its own proven tools and methodologies for collecting data and producing monitoring and evaluation indicators. This expertise should, of course, be utilized – at least in part – and particularly for carrying out household surveys to measure progress in access rates. More generally, it is also recommended to work together with recognized national institutions and with the JMP¹, in particular.

¹ The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) regularly collects data to measure progress in water and sanitation access rates in different countries around the world (www.wssinfo.org).

Step 12: Finance NSP implementation

What does this involve?

Once the NSP/NSS has been adopted and the action plans put in place, these need to be implemented. Here, it is essential that the finance be mobilized quickly, whether funds from the government budget or official development assistance. To ensure this happens in a timely manner, it is vital to communicate on the new sanitation sector documents, especially those aimed at the financial partners. This mobilization of financial partners should, in fact, be the culmination of the work conducted throughout the process to inform and raise awareness.

contribution to investment made by the users themselves.

► *Insufficient finance is mobilized at national and local level*

Sector financing cannot rely solely on external funding. It is, therefore, important to raise the awareness of politicians at national level to ensure both greater financial resources for sanitation are included in the national budget (not only for investment, but also for covering the administration's operating costs), and that decrees and bills are enacted that develop domestic and sustainable funding for sanitation through licenses, license fees, etc.

What activities need to be undertaken?

- a) Inform and raise donor awareness throughout the process.
- b) Define a communication strategy to mobilize finance for implementing the NSP.
- c) Implement the communication strategy. It is particularly important to hold regular events, such as roundtables, once the NSP or NSS has been translated into a finance plan.

What are the main difficulties that might arise?

► *The NSP/NSS lack clearly defined funding strategies*

Clearly defined strategic directions for sector financing and the division of financial contributions should be included in both the NSP and the various NSS. Where this is not the case, it will be necessary to rapidly develop a strategic approach to financing sanitation², without losing sight of the fact that a particular feature of sanitation is the significant

² Please refer to the guide: 'Financing the sanitation chain', available on www.pseau.org/smc.

Summary of the NSP/NSS development process

| Step | What does this step involve? | Indicative timescale |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| PREPARATION (cycle 1) | | |
| 1 Decision to adopt a NSP/NSS | The ministry/ministries in charge of sanitation decide to adopt guidelines aimed at improving sector performance. | - |
| 2 Rapid Sector Assessment | Very often there will already be one or more assessments in place and a simple review of this documentation will be sufficient. Where this is not the case, preliminary studies of 1 to 3 months should suffice. | 2 months |
| 3 Mobilize the stakeholders | A diagnostic of sector stakeholders provides information on 'who does what' within the various existing sanitation departments, both at national level and within the country's large urban centers, so that these can then be mobilized to participate in the process. | 2 months |
| 4 Create a steering group | As institutionally the sector is traditionally fragmented among different ministries, setting up an inter-ministerial coalition will facilitate completion of the remaining steps involved in NSP development. | 1 month |
| DEVELOPMENT (cycle 2) | | |
| 5 National Kick-Off Forum | The main aim of an initial national sanitation forum is to mobilize the different stakeholders identified at step 3 so as to involve them in actual development of the NSP. | 2 to 3 days |
| 6 Develop the NSP | NSP/NSS development involves drafting the sector's framework documents. This step should ideally be punctuated by theme-based workshops that bring together stakeholders based on their areas of competency. Consultants may be utilized here to help coordinate, consult, facilitate and, finally, draw up documents once consensus has been reached. Upon completion of this step, a single institution in charge of coordinating and monitoring the sector will have been identified and recommended. | 12 to 24 months |
| 7 National Validation Forum | As political approval of a NSP is a key institutional component, a second national sanitation forum enables the results of the various theme-based consultations to be shared with those stakeholders mobilized during the development phase. At the same time, media coverage will help give national exposure to the new strategic directions. | 2 to 3 days |
| 8 Political validation of the NSP | The NSP/NSS is adopted by the Ministerial Cabinet which ratifies the institution charged with coordinating the sector. | Varies widely between countries |
| PROMOTION & IMPLEMENTATION (cycle 3) | | |
| 9 Promote and extend awareness of the NSP | To ensure maximum awareness, dissemination of the sector documents (in a simplified format, if necessary) to national stakeholders (national directorates, ministries), local stakeholders (local authorities, NGOs, consultancy firms) and development partners is a key step in the NSP process. | 6 to 12 months |
| 10 Define an action plan for the NSP | The action plan contains a sustainable funding strategy for the sector, a stakeholder capacity-building strategy, a strategy for prioritizing activities and overall costings for the action plan. It translates the NSP into concrete actions. | 6 to 12 months |
| 11 Define a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the NSP | An M&E system measures advances made in the sector. This information is then relayed to stakeholders, political bodies and development partners through progress reports. Ideally created prior to implementing the NSP, the M&E system should be based on indicators that are both easy to use and understand. | - |
| 12 Mobilize funding | Involving financial partners throughout the process will ensure funds are made available in a timely manner when required. | Varies between countries |

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National hygiene and sanitation policies and strategies are essential to sector development: by defining the sector objectives and priorities, they facilitate negotiations with technical and financial partners and enable funding contributions to be allocated more appropriately.

This document sets out a **methodology for conducting processes aimed at developing or improving national policies and strategies**. Broken down into 12 steps, the methodology provided in this guide is intended for those sector actors, and ministries and technical departments responsible for sanitation in particular, wishing to improve the framework for action of all sanitation stakeholders.

This publication is the result of lessons learned from a support program undertaken by programme Solidarité Eau to improve national sanitation policies and strategies in several countries in West and Central Africa.

