



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF LOCAL WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES



Ouagadougou

7-9 april 2014



Summary and Lessons learned



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Acknowledgements

IRC and pS-Eau are thankful to all the participants whose contributions provided inputs for this synthesis. The seminar team is also grateful to following partners for their valuable support:

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The seminar has been organised with the financial support of USAID WAWASH, PEA GIZ, African Development Bank, French Water Agencies consortium and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Foreword

From 7 to 9 April 2014 more than 200 people from around thirty countries met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to share experiences and ideas on the monitoring and evaluation of local water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in West Africa.

Seminar Objective: to discuss approaches implemented in the field and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the sector in this regard.

Target audience: local elected authorities, their technical staff, NGOs, consultancies and various support stakeholders.

This document presents the highlights, key issues and points in common that arose from the presentations and discussions. It is not intended to be a full transcription of all the discussions that took place.

Some Key Concepts

The definition of water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns

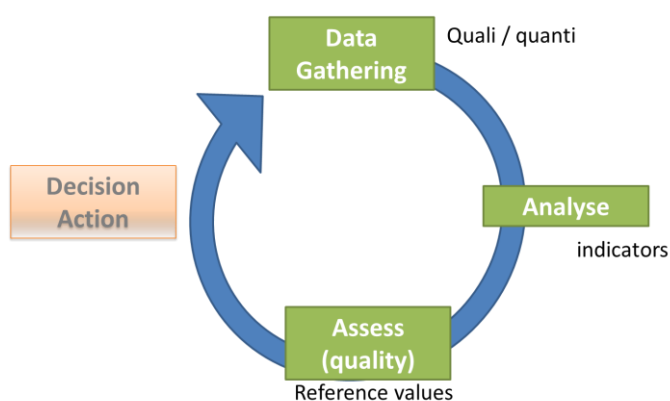
Water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns don't fall under the responsibility of the national water agencies operating in urban centres. In these locations, the local authorities (communes, municipalities, water boards etc.) are responsible for developing water and sanitation services and ensuring their on-going operation. The way these towns are organised and their size can vary greatly from one country to the next. In general, rural areas consist of hamlets, villages and small towns. Small towns

are those with between 10,000 and several hundred thousand inhabitants. Small towns are hubs of economic development (with markets, transport infrastructure etc.), and have access to local resources (a variety of local skills, significant financial resources etc.). The common denominator of these rural areas and small towns is that the local authorities are fully responsible for mobilising the resources and skills required to ensure their constituents have sustainable access to water and sanitation.

Defining monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation services

The terms monitoring and evaluation refer to the activities carried out regularly to:

- **Collect** data, whether qualitative or quantitative,
- **Analyse** this data to generate performance indicators and validate strict and agreed objectives,
- **Understand** water and sanitation services by comparing performance indicators with reference values and thresholds, thus making it possible to objectively measure service performance.



The data produced are then shared, depending on what they are and what they are used for, with local stakeholders, regional or national authorities, regulatory authorities etc.

These data are intended to be used as a basis for decision making or to trigger strategic actions (launch of specific activities, payments, sanctions etc.).

The different purposes of monitoring and evaluation

What is done with monitoring and evaluation data depends on the needs of the various stakeholders. As regards local services, four stakeholder categories can be identified, each with its own concerns and expectations:

- **Water users** expect first and foremost a high quality service that is affordable.
- **Local authorities** (the district or its equivalent) are responsible for providing water and sanitation services to their inhabitants. They must therefore ensure the quality of services received by their constituents, and guarantee technical and financial management transparency.
- The service **operator** is primarily concerned with optimising operations and recovering costs.
- The **Government** is more specifically concerned with ensuring compliance at local level with the standards it has adopted nationally.

In working towards these various and clearly distinct objectives (service quality, pricing, transparency, cost optimisation and compliance), monitoring and evaluation provide the data required to produce indicators that can rigorously report on the degree to which these objectives are being met.

Monitoring and evaluation of services VS monitoring and evaluation of projects:

Unlike projects, local services are not time limited. Furthermore, the activities, trades and stakeholders involved in service provision and those involved in projects are radically different. Nonetheless, monitoring and evaluation of services is very often mixed up with the monitoring and evaluation of projects. The former refers to assessing the technical and financial operation of equipment and the quality of service provided to the end user. The latter focuses in particular on the number of structures and equipment constructed and installed.

Monitoring and Evaluating Hygiene

• The current situation

Monitoring and evaluating hygiene is complex, in particular as regards measuring behaviour change such as hand washing.

The tools and approaches for monitoring and evaluation are limited to measuring project-led awareness-raising and communication activities which aim to encourage users to adopt good hygiene practices (number of communication campaigns, number of people trained, made aware etc.).

• What the sector is missing

Water and Sanitation projects have only recently begun to take hygiene into account, and the local authorities' role is not always clearly specified.

Behaviour change requires qualitative monitoring over the long term (five to ten years), which is often much longer than the length of a project. Long-term monitoring tools and mechanisms thus remain to be developed. Collaboration with health sector stakeholders should also be stepped up.

Monitoring and Evaluating Sanitation

- **The current situation**

In most contexts, the monitoring and evaluation of sanitation almost exclusively involves measuring the rate of household coverage. In other words, counting latrines is currently the predominant methodology.

- **What the sector is missing**

On the one hand, a way to measure the actual functionality of latrines, and on the other a way to measure to what extent they are actually used by the populations, need to be developed. This will enable the sustainability and quality of access to sanitation services to be measured.

Also, the monitoring and evaluation of the removal of waste water and excreta (manual and mechanical pit emptying) and the monitoring and evaluation of waste water treatment are two other essential components that are almost never taken into account by local authorities. It would appear that local stakeholders are sorely lacking in tools, technical

skills and financial resources, which prevents them from monitoring the entire sanitation chain, including access, removal and treatment.



Participants raise questions

- **Some inspirational experiences**

The cost and infrastructure monitoring table of SaniFaso, a programme implemented by a consortium in Burkina Faso (Eau Vive, IRC, Helvetas, WaterAid, PEA-GIZ), constitutes a particularly useful reference.

Monitoring and Evaluating Stand-alone Water Points

- **The current situation**

Most stand-alone water points (wells, hand pumps) are monitored through (often sporadic) national infrastructure inventories. As in the case of sanitation, current practice is to identify and locate water points. The quality of service provided by these water points is rarely monitored.

- **What the sector is missing**

The cash flow generated by stand-alone water points is very low, which partly explains their vulnerability (which often results for instance in long reaction times to breakdowns) and the difficulties in maintaining sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Pooling resources for instance in a region or among several communes would appear to be an idea worth exploring in order to optimise monitoring and evaluation costs. Financial equalisation between piped water systems (which mostly generate significant revenues) and stand-alone water points is also raised as a promising approach for financing and implementing sustainable monitoring and evaluation of these water points.

- **Some inspirational experiences**

Interesting experiences have been led by IRC through its Triple-S initiative in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Uganda. They are carried out in close collaboration with the local, regional and national authorities. They are, however, as is often the case, dependent on limited project-focused funding.

Monitoring and Evaluating Small Piped Water Systems

- **The current situation**

Small piped water networks are technical and complex to manage. Monitoring and evaluation of piped systems is indispensable for the operators because it enables them to optimise management costs, to ensure the financial viability of services and to be accountable to the contracting authorities. In this context, there are many experiences of monitoring and evaluation. Today they use proven tools and have clearly demonstrated their added value in terms of service performance monitoring.



The session on monitoring small piped systems

- **What the sector is missing**

Sector stakeholders are calling for greater commitment by governments to support and accompany the existing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate small piped systems. Despite the success of many experiences of monitoring and evaluation of small piped systems, they remain fragile and support (in particular financial support) from government is frequently necessary but also justifiable. Furthermore, at local level, many communes do not sufficiently or inappropriately take on board the potential offered by small piped system monitoring and evaluation, in particular as regards monitoring contracts and performance levels. Finally, national sector frameworks would do well to make the most of the field data provided by these mechanisms, particularly when updating standards and reference bases.

- **Some inspirational experiences**

The technical and financial monitoring developed in Mali, Chad and Niger, as well as the approach developed by the company Vergnet Hydro, both provide authorities with water service operational data, thus facilitating the maintenance of transparency.

Monitoring and Evaluating User Satisfaction

- **The current situation**

While monitoring and evaluation initiatives tend to cover issues relating to operations and service sustainability, monitoring of user satisfaction appears much more marginal. Those that do exist today are mainly pilot initiatives, implemented through projects.

- **What the sector is missing**

The challenge today is to develop simple methods that local authorities can use easily to measure these aspects and to take certain corrective measures if necessary. Furthermore, indicators to measure user satisfaction need to be refined, particularly as regards matters of ease of use, opinions regarding management structures etc.

- **Some inspirational experiences**

The commune of Dapelogo (Burkina Faso) together with its decentralised cooperation partners has managed to carry out some test approaches which offer multiple ideas for designing appropriate and realistic mechanisms.



The participants are also water users

Monitoring and Evaluating Water Quality

- **The current situation**

Unlike urban areas where operators (public or private) have both the responsibility and the resources to do so, water quality is not currently monitored systematically in rural areas. Nonetheless, when it is monitored (through pilot projects), the results are regularly alarming and indicate water quality problems right at the source, but also highlight contamination during transport and storage.

- **What the sector is missing**

While research proclaims to offer simple tools to measure water quality, it is important to adapt these methods to rural realities, to take into account their complexity and cost, and the human resources necessary to analyse and use the results.

- **Some inspirational experiences**

An encouraging strategy has been set up in Benin, enabling water quality to be monitored on a national scale and local management plans to be developed.

The Role of ICT in Monitoring and Evaluation

- **The current situation**

The water sector today is brimming with innovations based on mobile phone technologies (MWater, M4Water, AKVO-FLOW etc.), which make it possible to visualise service functionality in real time, reducing data gathering time, improving data transmission and reducing service outage times and monitoring costs (up to 30% in Senegal and Benin).

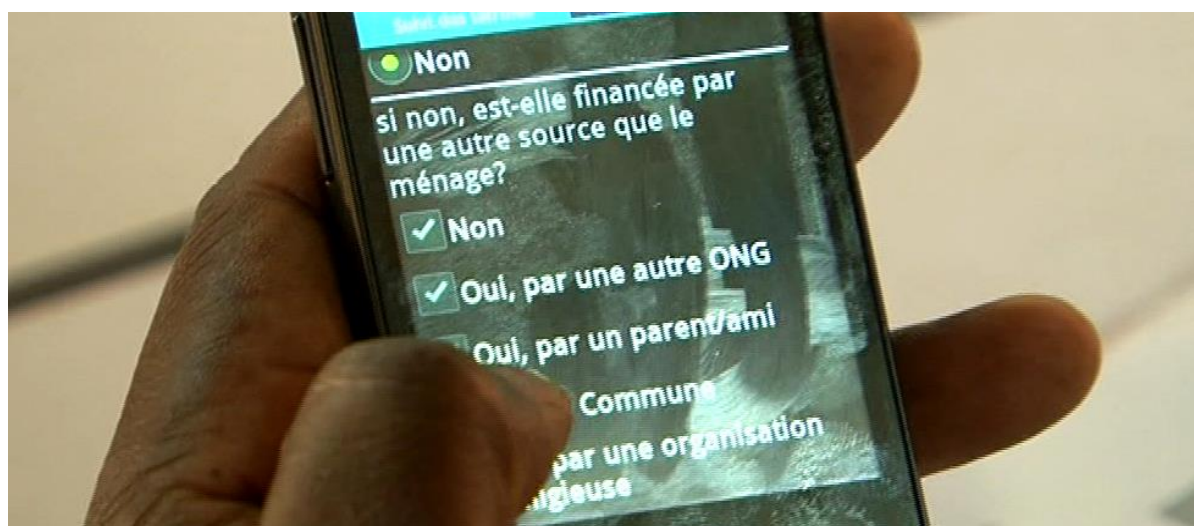
- **What the sector is missing**

However, the real benefits of using these technologies depends on i) the institutionalisation of a monitoring system and its tools, ii) the clarity of indicators and

iii) the analysis capacities of the competent authorities. Furthermore, recourse to such technologies raises various difficulties, in particular the need for access to the Internet, the centralisation and storage of the data gathered, the sharing of information among the different stakeholders etc.

- **Some inspirational experiences**

ICT for monitoring small piped water systems such as MWater in Senegal and Benin, integrated monitoring systems such as AKVO-FLOW led in particular in Benin and Liberia or the tool WASHIM in Nigeria are all precursors to new approaches to information management in this sector.



The Costs and Financing of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation clearly has a cost, which is very rarely systematically or completely understood. Usually, the initial implementation cost can be easily identified, unlike the recurrent, support and updating costs. Without specific knowledge of these costs it is difficult to identify sustainable sources of funding. Some considerations should be taken into account. Firstly, stakeholders who have a vested interest in monitoring and evaluation are more favourably disposed towards contributing to

financing it (users for transparency and the price of water; operators to better control operating costs; local authorities to better control service provision and; the government for regulation). Secondly, it is not reasonable to expect water fees to cover the cost of government's monitoring responsibilities, which should be covered by the public authorities. Finally, having external and intermittent sources of financing for monitoring and evaluation (projects, donors) goes against the very premises of sustainability.

Ideas for Further Consideration

Besides the themes covered by the seminar sessions, a certain number of cross-cutting issues arose from discussions. The issue of monitoring and evaluation in rural areas and small towns is quite specific because these areas often have rates of coverage that are well below that of urban areas, with human and financial resources that are often clearly inadequate to meet the needs.

In light of the contributions from the seminar, it would appear that the sector focuses primarily on the first phase of the monitoring and evaluation cycle, in other words the data gathering phase, to the detriment of the analysis and assessment phases which are not systematic. Far from being exhaustive, the following points have been identified:

The conditions for setting up a sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanism in rural areas

Generally speaking, some essential general principles need to be met to ensure monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can be sustainable. Firstly, monitoring can only be sustainable if it is responding to a demand, i.e. if it is useful for a minimum number of stakeholders and if it is actually used by them. Secondly, the sustainability of a monitoring and evaluation system is closely linked to how it is financed. Project-related funding is by definition unsustainable. Funding through local resources (water services, municipal budget, national

budget, various taxes and fees etc.) enables long-term projections to be made. Even so, the stakeholders concerned must be aware of their responsibilities, and must be able to mobilise the financial and human resources needed to enable enlightened decisions to be made based on... effective monitoring. In other words, unless the stakeholders concerned take full ownership, monitoring will remain an imposed exercise that is not used to help planning or the good management of water and sanitation services.

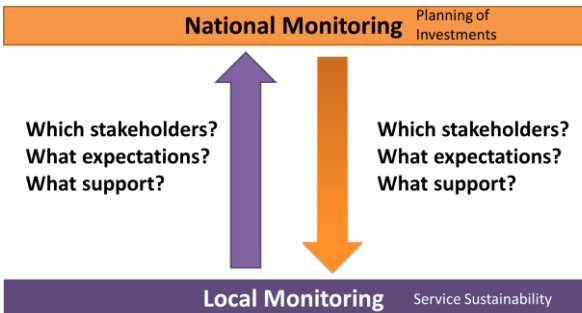
Link local expectations and national monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation as a data management process between local and national levels can be represented as a chain of stakeholders, each with specific expectations and each able to bring potential support.

At **local level**, the expectations of stakeholders, in particular the populations, but also the authorities and their partners are mainly focused on service quality, continuous water supply and cost reduction. A monitoring and evaluation approach able to meet these expectations could encourage acceptance and the involvement of local stakeholders (in particular the local authority and the service operator) in producing the necessary data and indicators.

At **regional level** (province, county, etc.) and depending on the country's legislation, the authorities can play a key role in sector supervision. The expectation of monitoring and

evaluation at this level often involves the aggregation of data from the field.



At **national level**, the Government's concern is above all planning the budget for investments in the sector, as well as the regular updating of sector frameworks (infrastructure design, service pricing etc.). Monitoring and evaluation on the ground which can provide data that respond to these concerns would be likely to obtain support from national government.

The Implications of the Post 2015 Context on Local Monitoring

A new generation of indicators will replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Discussions on these indicators show that sights are being set higher, with objectives that more clearly target services over infrastructure. After 2015, sector stakeholders will therefore be invited to strictly monitor services (continuity of supply, management performance etc.), but also to monitor the quality of water supplied.

Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that a “water goal” in the post 2015 context is not a foregone conclusion, and mobilisation around this issue will be necessary.

Several countries have already gone far in their consideration of the future frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. For example, Burkina Faso has already develop a plan for outlining the objectives for water and sanitation post-2015. At local level, monitoring and evaluation stakeholders are quite favourable to going further.

Nonetheless, for them, the monitoring of water quality is something new, which they are not all sufficiently equipped for.

As regards covering costs, it transpires that local services and the users of these services are in most cases able to contribute to the payment of

monitoring and evaluating service functionality.



M. Boukerrou, FIU, leading the session on post-2015 monitoring

However, faced with the presumably high costs of water quality monitoring, the question remains as to who will be able to finance it. Generally speaking, international and national stakeholders are showing greater ambition, but local stakeholders do not all have the capacity to assume the consequences, particularly as regards financing.

Conclusions

Monitoring and evaluation is different from reporting. While reporting consists merely in transmitting the facts, monitoring and evaluation proposes an analysis and understanding of a given situation with the aim of facilitating decision making and planning of actions.

Proven added value and co-financing; the keys for success

The conditions for success and sustainability of a monitoring and evaluation system lie first and foremost in the combination of interests that the various stakeholders have in such a mechanism. Stakeholders who will benefit from a monitoring and evaluation system will be that much more inclined to contributing to it and to mobilising the resources to make it work. Considering the technical and financial constraints and more generally the importance given to monitoring, the recovering of monitoring costs on the basis of several funding sources could be envisaged, in order to fairly share the financial burden. Firstly, a clear understanding of and control over the cost of monitoring and evaluation are essential, in order to be able to mobilise the necessary funding.

Moving towards service quality-focused monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

In many contexts, monitoring and evaluation is restricted to measuring and regularly updating the rates of access to infrastructure. The challenge is to move away from access-focused monitoring and evaluation towards service-focused monitoring and evaluation, which involves:

- For local authorities: assuming their roles and responsibilities in terms of monitoring and evaluation and mobilising the necessary resources,
- For support organisations (NGOs, consultancies etc.): accompanying and building the capacities of local authorities,
- For national authorities: implementing sector frameworks and planning tools that take into account the results and lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation carried out at local level,
- For donors: providing long-term support to monitoring and evaluation policies and strategies implemented at local and national levels.

At the dawn of 2015 and the end of the MDGs, and in light of mitigated results for water and delays experienced for sanitation, the monitoring and evaluation of services would appear to be a pivotal issue. The sector recognises the need to develop monitoring and evaluation tools and systems at all levels, both local and national. Such development will also require the stakeholders to be supported so they can master the monitoring and evaluation systems whether in terms of implementation, interpretation of results or taking the action and decisions that result from them.

For Further Information

Visit:

- www.ircwash.org - facebook.com/ircwash
- www.pseau.org - facebook.com/pSEau

You will find here all the presentations and videos from the seminar.

You may also participate in on-line discussions on the monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation services.

Watch and share the documentary that kicked off the seminar!

Title: Water and sanitation : monitoring and evaluation of services

Length: 16'56" | Director: Jean-Marc Bado | Produced by: IRC and pS-Eau

Audio Language: French | Subtitles: English | Release date: April 2014



In Burkina Faso, as in most countries in Africa, local authorities have been becoming increasingly involved in basic service provision in recent years, including water and sanitation. The municipality is now responsible for planning, organising, managing, regulating, monitoring and evaluating services. Regarding monitoring and evaluation, it cannot be ignored that this huge task is yet to be tackled. What exactly is monitoring and evaluation? What is its role in service governance? Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation at district level? What support do districts get to develop this aspect? The

film aims to answer this series of complex questions by handing the floor to those involved in water and sanitation service delivery in rural areas in Burkina Faso: local authorities, private operators, public administrators and NGOs. As well as sharing these experiences, the film aims to help provoke discussion on the issues and problems involved in district-led monitoring and evaluation which were examined during the international seminar on the monitoring and evaluation of local water and sanitation services in West Africa, held in Ouagadougou from 7 to 9 April 2014.

Available on-line

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ircwater> and

<http://fr.ircwash.org/>

They said...



Ali Traoré, MEAHA, Burkina

“If we want the local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities for water and sanitation services effectively and in the long term, our governments and donors should provide adequate support for developing their technical and managerial skills. These skills are essential for ensuring our vulnerable communities receive satisfactory services.

Monitoring and evaluation are part of the specific skills relating to water and sanitation service management. Indeed, how can we guarantee the expected effects and impacts of service delivery without the appropriate information to guide our actions?”



Akanda-Olouwa Arinloye, Mayor of Sakété, Bénin

“I am very happy to have participated in this three-day seminar. It has enabled us to realise everything that is happening in the field in terms of monitoring and evaluation in the water and sanitation sector, to meet local authorities and technicians from other countries. We have shared what we are doing at home, and looked at the interesting things others are doing which we haven’t tried yet.”



Innocent Ouédraogo, ECOWAS, Burkina

“ECOWAS pays particular attention to the sustainable development and management of water and sanitation services as an integral part of water resource use. The international seminar on the monitoring and evaluation of local water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in West Africa contributes directly to the ECOWAS objectives by offering a framework for the political, strategic and operational stakeholders of the sub-region to share experiences and discuss ideas.”



Dr. Lakhdar Boukerrou, USAID/WA-WASH, Burkina

“The seminar was an opportunity that brought together a number of stakeholders from African and other countries to discuss the important issue of monitoring of water delivery services and the infrastructure associated with it. The presentations from a wide range of experts and the discussions that ensued gave a good picture on the current situation and where to go from here. It is in such fora that I am confident that the participants took home the workshop message. A message that is not full of symbolize but of practical approaches designed to ensure the sustainability of the

water delivery services.”



Dr. Patrick Moriarty, IRC, the Netherlands

“Through this seminar we wanted people to share their knowledge of water and sanitation service monitoring. The participants came with open minds, with their knowledge and interesting experiences from the field that they were able to discuss and share. We are very satisfied with the results of the seminar.”



Christophe Le Jallé, pS-Eau, France

“We know that water services are only sustainable if we have a real technical and financial monitoring mechanism in place to ensure that there is a good balance of costs and that any technical or financial difficulties can be anticipated. This is why it seems to me to be the vital element for service sustainability. Beyond the construction of infrastructure, there must be professional management structures and the local authorities must have access to external skills if necessary to help them carry out this technical and financial monitoring.”



Didier Allely, WHO, Switzerland

“There were the MDGs which were adopted in 2000 and for which the deadline is 2015. We set ourselves a certain number of goals, targets and indicators. Today, we are realising that even if we are far from meeting the original goals, we have to start preparing for what comes next. We will certainly need to be more ambitious than in 2000, when we did not yet have all the elements to be able to set up all the monitoring systems. This seminar enabled us to better inform the local authorities on the post-2015 goals,

indicators, targets and monitoring and evaluation.”



Juste Hermann Nansi, IRC, Burkina

“Very often, the existence of a pump in a village does not mean that the people who live in that village each get 20 litres per day of good quality water or that the service is reliable. Yet, the authorities and technical experts continue to assume that once the pump is installed everything will work well for ever after. This is why we decided to organise this seminar which focuses on monitoring services at local level. Now that our local authorities are responsible for managing these services we felt it was judicious to bring them together from various countries in the sub-region to share their ideas and experiences of service

management and monitoring and evaluation.”



Désirée Nana, GIZ, Burkina

“There are investment measures which consist in building infrastructure to provide people with water or sanitation and hygiene. But besides that, the smooth running of the service must be ensured. What does it mean to have a good level of service? Of course we must know what type of infrastructure to build, according to which standards etc. But above all we must ensure

that what is set in place is well managed and well run so that it can be sustainable and guarantee lasting access. In short, at the same time as investing in infrastructure, or even before investing, while investing and after investing, local monitoring and evaluation is essential.”



Thomas Ten Boer, Liberia

“This seminar is important because everything we do we should monitor and evaluate to assess its effectiveness. What are the effects and impacts for the beneficiaries? To what extent has access to services improved? I think it is thanks to these discussions and the answers shared during the seminar that have made it very beneficial.”



Fadel Ndaw, WSP, World Bank, Burkina

“This seminar is very important because it focuses not only on access but on the service. I believe that a paradigm shift is underway. Today we are more interested in service quality, in the end user. The World Bank is particularly interested in the use of new technologies in monitoring and evaluation in the water and sanitation sector and in this regard we are going to launch a sub-regional study on the use of new technologies in the sector.”



Ali Traoré, MEAHA, Burkina

“I would like to confirm here the responsibility and commitment of our governments to effectively contribute to international debate so that the post-2015 goals reflect our national priorities and the lessons learned from MDG implementation in our countries both at national and local level.

Our people aspire to decent services. It is their right and we have, as professionals and decision-makers, the duty to ensure this right is upheld. Therefore, in addition to setting goals and targets which reflect the people’s aspirations, all the solutions for service management and monitoring and evaluation, all the innovations which can help us measure and check targets are met at local level, are a major contribution to the sector.

With regard to district authorities, I am particularly delighted to see significant changes in their skills and their level of ownership of the issues in our sector. Initial feedback from this seminar tells me they have gained a lot from it. As a national authority, this reassures us as to the pertinence of decentralising water and sanitation services. Following this seminar I urge all local authorities to explore all possible avenues with their collaborators and partners to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the water and sanitation services under their responsibility.”





We want every person in the world to enjoy their human right to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, in reliable manner and forever by 2030. We work with local and national governments, private sector and communities to achieve this ambitious vision. We are a think and do tank. Our approach is different and it is transformational. It involves everyone, in every part of the process, thinking and acting in new ways. We want to cultivate a new way of working: delivering sustainable services through a comprehensive approach to water and sanitation. Please join us in carrying out our mission at www.ircwash.org



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The international seminar on the monitoring and evaluation of local water and sanitation services in rural areas and small towns in West Africa received technical and financial support from the following partners:



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