

# Public Private Partnership for Rural Water Supply: Experiences from Zimbabwe

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## Abstract/Summary

The Rural WASH Project was implemented in rural areas of Zimbabwe covering 33 of 60 rural districts aiming at improving access to WASH services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Under this project Private Public Partnership (PPP) models were tested leading to repair and rehabilitation of 10,361 of water points mainly hand pump equipped boreholes, and development of WASH PPP National Strategic Framework, a key policy and strategic framework to shape the future of PPP for Operation and Maintenance of rural water supply. The process also included a huge capacity building of the 33 districts, 5 provinces and national structures on various aspects of WASH; and community based structures on operation and management of water points. Overall the Rural WASH Project has achieved a great success with reaching over 3 million people with access to improved sources of drinking water mainly through repair and rehabilitation of non-functional water points.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

In the mid-1990s, Zimbabwe had attained a very high level of service delivery with respect to both rural and urban water supply. Water resources development also kept pace with demands across key sectors; irrigation, industry and mining among others. However, the economic downturn of 2000-2009 created not only a capacity gap to manage the aging infrastructure but also limited further WASH sector expansions. The collapse of water revenues that started in the late 1990s and continued during the last decade led to a decline in water supply services from 79% in 1990 to 77% in 2015. The collapse affected all parts of the country and all aspects of water supply, water resources management and development. This had a significant impact on the quality and reliability of services. The 2008-2009 cholera outbreaks which resulted in 98,592 cases and 4,282 deaths was the manifestation of deteriorated WASH services (UNOCHA, 2009).

In response to the cholera outbreak, the donor community invested in the sector for rehabilitation and provision of WASH services while the government with support from the development partners undertook major initiatives including development of National Water Policy (2012), strengthening coordination mechanisms, and piloting a WASH Information Management System.

In June 2012, Government of Zimbabwe, with support from UNICEF, initiated a four-year (June 2012 to June 2016) Rural WASH Project covering thirty-three (33) of the sixty (60) rural districts from five (5) provinces of Zimbabwe. Project districts and provinces were selected based on vulnerability criteria which included existing level of access to WASH services, prevalence of WASH related disease (e.g., cholera cases reported during the outbreak), and presence of any other ongoing WASH interventions (Government of Zimbabwe and UNICEF, 2012). The project had a total funding of USD 62 million provided by the UK Government (about USD 52 million), Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (about USD 6 million) and UNICEF (USD 4 million).

### 1.2. RWP Thematic Areas and Major Activities

Under the project, WASH interventions were implemented in the following four (4) RWP thematic areas

through government structures with support from ten (10) Civil Society Organizations (INGO/NGOs) referred to as Implementing Partners (Ahmad et al, 2016a).

- a. Rehabilitation and construction of new WASH infrastructure.
- b. Demand-led sanitation and hygiene promotion.
- c. Public- Private Partnership (PPP) for operation and maintenance (O&M) of water supplies.
- d. WASH Sector Governance.

The third component, which is the focus of this paper concentrated on building sustainable community based O&M systems for water supplies (hand pump equipped boreholes, deep and shallow wells and piped schemes) through private sector partnerships/participation.

This paper aims at sharing experiences gained from the Rural WASH Project implementation with special focus on improving the Drinking Water Supply, Operation and Maintenance Systems through promotion and community capacity building in Public Private Partnership approaches and models in community based WASH service provision, operation and maintenance systems. Improved WASH services provision, O&M system also aimed at increased sector potential to attain the water supply Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of improved access to and use of safe drinking water by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in rural areas.

### **1.3. RWP Implementing Partners**

Government of Zimbabwe and UNICEF Zimbabwe were responsible for overall Rural WASH Project management including managing project funds and provision of technical support. Project field activities were implemented through the ten (10) Civil Society Organisations selected through Government of Zimbabwe led transparent competitive processes from the initial thirty-two (32) CSOs who had expressed interest.

## **2. Moving away from Government managed systems to community based management system**

As presented above, traditionally, O&M of water facilities/systems had been the responsibility of the Central Government since independence. However, due to economic downturn especially during the 2000 – 2009 period, the government was unable to provide required support for the declining WASH coverage rates and service provision standards which were exacerbated by aging systems and had resulted in the 2009/2010 cholera outbreak. As reflected in the national water policy, services decline was triggered by the collapse of the economy.

Traditionally, community dependence on external assistance and inadequate mechanisms for sustainability perpetuated the vulnerability of water supply services, created a dependence syndrome and loss of sense of community ownership of communal water supplies. Rural WASH development had stagnated since 1990. Maintenance and repairs virtually ceased as government failed to provide financing for these activities including supply of operation and maintenance spares leading to inactivity/total collapse of the three-tier operation and maintenance system – the motorised district maintenance teams, ward pump minders and volunteer pump caretakers could not be retained (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012).

At the height of the challenges, reports were that at any given time approximately 40% of the estimated 47,000 hand pumps were non-functional due to the collapse of the three-tier O&M system. The need for a review and adoption of other sustainable O&M options was inevitable.

The Zimbabwe WASH sector witnessed a paradigm shift with the Cabinet approval of new Water Policy (2012) which stated that public and development partner finance for rural WASH would focus on capital development and behaviour change whilst user finance would cover O&M costs. Prior to approval of the 2012 Water Policy, the WASH sector had sought and secured Government support and approval of the Community Based Management (CBM) policy guide.

The CBM Guide emphasised the need for decentralised management of WASH service provision particularly the O&M of water supplies with community of users through the WASH coordination and man-

agement structures (Village Development Committees, Water Point Committees etc.) required to assume the water points O&M responsibilities.

The Water Policy and CBM provisions were further reinforced with the provisions of the current Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimASSET) – an economic recovery blueprint – which states that PPP approaches are an integral component of the sustainable economic recovery process and one of its broader key assumptions is the “increased investment in infrastructure such as... water and sanitation through accelerated implementation of the PPPs and other private sector driven initiatives.” In fact two of the ZimAsset key strategies for achieving the improved water supply outcome include “to mobilize local communities into water point management committees and engage private sector to maintain borehole equipment” (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

### **3. Why Public-Private Partnership Approaches**

Adoption, prioritisation and implementation of the WASH Sector PPP Approaches and Models was a move to address a complex set of water supplies O&M system *operational* challenges including the following major ones, chief among them being:

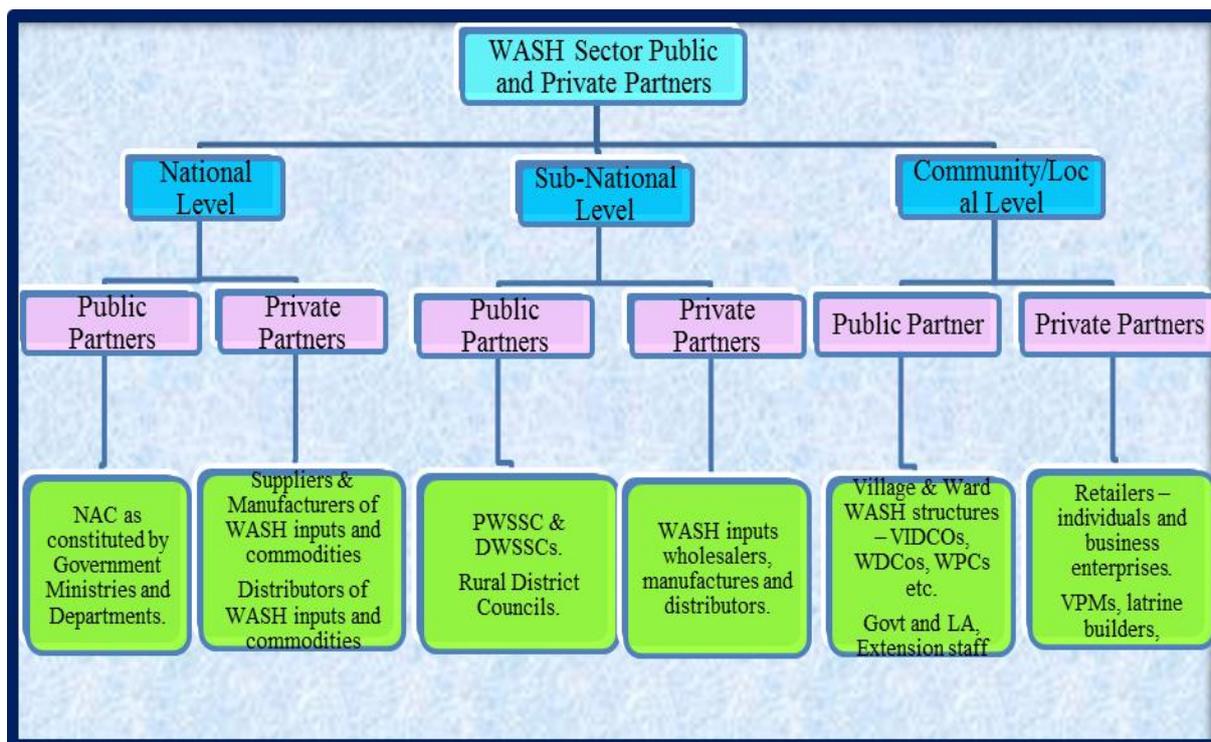
- a. Lack of a sustainable O&M strategy to address the unacceptably high hand pump breakdown rates as over forty percent (40%) of the more than 47,000 hand pumps were reported not functional at any given time. This translated to long water points’ down-times that could be more than a month and in extreme cases running to over a year.
- b. RDCs’ institutional weakness to comprehensively handle the O&M inputs supply chain.
- c. Weak WASH inputs supply chains due to a myriad of supply chain challenges.
- d. Weak community self-reliance systems in O&M of water points partly due the historical and inherent weaknesses of the three-tier O&M system.
- e. The increased demand for O&M costs investments as a result of the expanded adoption of traditionally rural water supply technologies (hand pumps) in urban settings - emerging and growing peri-urban areas.

At higher strategic levels, the Rural WASH Sub-Sector PPP objectives were to:

- a. Leverage private sector capital to fund rural WASH infrastructure O&M costs and address reduced sustainability of central government & local authorities financing.
- b. Unlocking a range of private sector skills.
- c. Leverage PPPs business planning practice that are depended on feasibility and strategic responsibility alignment.
- d. Applying the “*allocate risks to the party best able to manage them*” PPP principle on the assumption that community based private partners have the right skills to manage, operate and maintain water supplies on a more sustainable basis.
- e. Delivery of budgetary certainty as PPP approaches, principles and agreements address the need for clarity on the O&M funding sources – the users’ community.
- f. Apply the PPP principle of linking payment to quality of services provided. Where quality services are not delivered the private service provider is liable to pay penalties.
- g. Promote sustained community based demand and ability to pay for O&M stimulates WASH market growth - WASH inputs and commodities and inputs stocking by local retailers.

### **4. Who are the Public and Private Partners/Players at What Level**

The Figure below demonstrates the Public and Private Partners for the water point O&M as spelt out in the 2015 Zimbabwe Rural WASH Sub-Sector Public Private Partnership (PPP) Framework document. This figure shows Public and Private Partners at national, sub-national, and community/local levels.



## 5. PPP Focused Water Point O&M Systems and the Key Players

The PPP focused water supplies O&M system is district based – its structures are from the water point level up to the district level with the following key players whose roles, responsibilities and conditions of operation are explained below. Its key performance indicators is enhancing timely availability of affordable spares and water point maintenance services from locally accountable service providers.

### 5.1. Pump Caretaker

This is a Water Point Committee (WPC) member responsible for day to day routine preventive maintenance works of the respective water point. The cadre reports to the WPC that has the overall mandate of defining the O&M course of action e.g. the need for resources mobilisation from the community, engagement of the Village Pump Mechanic (VPM) etc.

### 5.2. The Water Point Committee

This is a community elected Water Point Committee (WPC) responsible for coordinating water point day-to-day management, operation and maintenance activities. Some of its key activities include ensuring water point users adherence to the provisions of the water point committee constitution, timely response to breakdowns, O&M resource mobilisation and accounting etc.

While WPC terms of reference may last longer, members’ term of office depends on community satisfactions with the WPC performance. Non-performing members or committees may be voted out following the provisions of the respective water point constitutions. WPC do not have legal ownership of water points but have usufruct rights. The respective Rural District Councils are the custodians of all communal water sources in their respective areas of jurisdiction. It should be noted that under the Rural WASH Project 10,338 WPCs have established and strengthened in the 33 districts through a massive capacity building exercise.

Efficient operation of WPC indirectly entails creation and development of a sustainable WASH input and spares market especially for the local retailers.

### 5.3. The Village Pump Mechanic

This is a community based, selected, trained and tool box equipped cadre responsible for water point

O&M on a payment basis. Unlike the former pump minders under the three-tier system, Village Pump Mechanics (VPMs) do not receive an agreed fixed stipend or allowance neither from central or local government nor the WPC but are paid an agreed service fees by the water point users for the respective services provided. The service fee may be dependent on a number of factors such as the amount of work, time taken, source of the required spares, community inputs during the performance of the maintenances works etc. In short, this is a mutually agreed business transaction that should attend to the transaction needs of the two parties i.e. quality service for the consumer and fair remuneration on the part of the VPM.

It is important to note that unlike the pump minders or caretakers who had responsibility over water points in given geographical area i.e. village or ward, the communities through the Water Point Committees are free to hire VPMs from different villages or wards depending on ones’ service delivery competitiveness such as affordability of charges and service quality. VPMs are therefore in a way freelance technicians who have to provide competitive services for them to realise meaningful returns from their work and enjoy a larger market share of the water points. It is practical that as part of the service competitiveness, VPMs can source and provide their own spares to enhance their competitiveness. It is therefore one of their strategic market objective to develop a sustainable WASH market.

Currently, the average VPM distributions is three per ward with an average of 50 water points per ward. This translates to a VPM water point ratio of about 1 to 17. During the implementation of the RWP, 2,560 VPMs were trained through two-week comprehensive field based practical training, and over 500 VPM tool kits were provided to the districts to be accessed by these trained VPMs. The VPM tool kits are placed at a central locations (e.g., school, with relevant government body at ward level) to be accessed by VPMs for repair and maintenance. Currently, discussion has been initiated to chalk out a strategy for cost recovery to the centrally managed systems for VPM tool kits particularly for replacement of damaged/lost items/VPM tool kit without any external support from donors or government. This may lead to fixing a minimal fee on use of this kits by VPMs to recover the capital cost, and also VPM buying their own VPM kits with the passage of time as the market condition improves.

#### **5.4. WASH Spares Retailers**

These are local outlets from whom WPCs or the VPM can source spares for maintenance of water points. Through the RWP, efforts were made to mobilise and provide business training on WASH inputs marketing, and promotion of business linkages between the local retailers and wholesalers. A number of RWP implementing partners also entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with local retailers. The MOUs covered mutual strategies and support mechanisms that would enable the retailers to acknowledge the business potential and develop interest in marketing WASH inputs in general and the water point maintenance spares in particular.

#### **5.5. WASH Inputs Manufacturers**

These usually operate at higher levels based in major urban areas. However, through project interventions, effort were carried out to strengthen their business operation and development of the spare parts distribution network. A national bush pump manufacturers’ capacity assessment was conducted to assess their production systems challenges, product quality, distribution systems etc. Provision of quality spares enables consumers to get value for money as quality spares reduce water point downtimes. A pre-delivery inspection mechanism of water supplies inputs by government have also been developed to ensure distribution of quality wash materials and spares.

#### **5.6. Central Government and the Local Authorities (Rural District Council)**

As highlighted above, the Rural District Councils (RDCs) are the custodians of all water points in their respective areas of jurisdictions. RDCs also have the responsibility of carrying out major rehabilitation/repair works and provision of new drinking water supplies. However, due to capacity challenges, major rehabilitation of water points are carried out by the District Development Fund’s District maintenance team. It is imperative to note that the District Maintenance Teams have their own challenges e.g. due to resource constraints most of them use tractors to cover the width and breath of districts. Construction of new water sources has also been widely outsourced from private drillers. Private

drillers are supervised by trained Government and RDC drilling supervisors.

Under the RWP, implementation and monitoring capacity of RDCs in the 33 districts, five provinces, and national government has been significantly enhanced and strengthened through various trainings including monitoring and supervision of borehole drilling, financial management, information management, water quality, pre and post-delivery inspection of supplies, demand led sanitation and hygiene promotion and through provision of 48 vehicles, 165 motor cycles, IT related equipment amongst others. In addition coordination mechanisms at district level (District Water Supply and Sanitation Sub-Committees-DWSSCs), provincial level (Provincial Water Supply and Sanitation Sub-Committee-PWSSCs) and national level (National Coordination Unit-NCU) were established/strengthened. These structures being fully functional played a critical role in the success of RWP in achieving the planned results.

## **6. The Public-Private Partnership Models**

As part of the implementation of RWP, various PPP approaches and models were tested and experimented for O&M and provision of water point O&M spares covering the following PPP roll out stages that led to improved water point maintenance, reduction of repair cost, and availability of WASH supplies and services close to the communities.

### **6.1 Stakeholder Mobilisation and Conscientisation**

The initial activity in PPP roll out was stakeholder mobilisation and conscientisation that involved implementation of the following actions:

- Community and stakeholder awareness and sensitisation meetings and workshops on the water point O&M system challenges and the Community Based Management (CBM) concept potential to address the challenges.
- Stakeholder awareness on the strategic roles of the private sector in water point O&M, emphasising the need for paradigm shift from centralised to decentralised systems that encourage private sector participation e.g. the VPMs and local retailers.
- Local retailers’ sensitisation on the business potentials and opportunities in WASH sector in general and the water point O&M systems in particular. These included establishing business linkages amongst WASH supplies wholesalers, local dealers/outlets, government, private WASH service providers for O&M (e.g., VPMs), and communities as ultimate consumers of WASH services. To formalise the business linkages mechanisms, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were entered into between the various Public-Private Partners. Most common MOUs were between the Civil Society Organization (CSO) organisations and the WASH inputs wholesalers and local retailers. Other existing business alliances/fora such as the Agro-Dealers Association were taken advantage of. In districts where local retailers were organised into Agro-Dealers Associations, business linkages including the MOUs were also entered into at that level. Households and communities through their representative WASH coordination and management institutions i.e. WPCs, also entered into service MOUs with local services providers - VPMs. These arrangements included determination and enforcement of agreed service fees and other contractual provisions.
- Marketing of the WASH sector PPP approaches through existing business linkages/associations or alliance such as the Agro-Dealers Associations.
- Reorientation of Government structures and officials at all levels of operation.
- Co-option of business representatives in Provincial, District and community level WASH coordination and management structures to ensure transparency and business confidence in market potential in water points O&M.

### **6.2 Demand Creation/WASH Inputs Market Development Strategies**

A matrix of reinforcing actions were implemented to generate or develop the local market for water point O&M inputs. These included:

- Formation of District PPP task forces of the DWSSC with a specific lead institution to spearhead the PPP component. In all Districts, the ministry responsible for Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development was appointed to lead.
- Revitalisation of existing and establishment of new WPC to spearhead O&M activities at water point level.
- Appointment, training and equipping of private VPMs who operate as freelance technicians and market themselves through provision of competitive water point O&M services.
- Community mobilisation and hygiene education through the demand led sanitation and hygiene approaches that emphasised adoption of positive hygiene behaviours and practices inclusive of safe use of clean water to trigger community willingness to invest in water point O&M costs for continued availability of safe drinking water.

### **6.3 Resource Mobilisation and Funding Procurement of O&M inputs.**

Community based structures mobilized household and community resources including financial resources required for procurement of WASH inputs and materials through the establishment of Water Point Funds. Evidence from field indicate that majority of the WPCs maintain Water Point Fund balances ranging from US\$30.00 to a US\$100.00 at any given time(National Action Committee,2015a). These amounts are at least adequate to finance a single water point repairs task allowing the WPC to mobilise for the next breakdown.

Some of the project implementing partners negotiated supply of O&M inputs to local retailers by wholesalers on consignment basis. This was in attempts to address one of the major challenges in the WASH input supply chain under the PPP approaches i.e. absence of appropriate financial markets that could enable WASH input supply chain actors (manufacturer, distributors, wholesalers, stockists, retailers, consumers etc.) to actively participate in the market. Besides the Water Point Funds and the few examples where local retailers accessed O&M inputs on a consignment basis from the wholesalers, there are no other major funding streams for water points repairs spares.

### **6.4 Market Size Estimation and Reporting - Mapping of WASH Services under Rural WASH Information Management System (RWIMS)**

Establishment of the Rural WASH Information Management System (RWIMS), a sector information management system is ongoing. It was established in 36 districts under the RWP while plans have been agreed to cover all the remaining districts in the country in the next 2 years. RWIMS is an automated system where designated focal persons at district (based at the RDC) and ward level, usually government extension workers, collect comprehensive information on mapping of WASH services through Village Based Consultative Inventory (VBCI) using smart phones. Through the smart phone, captured data is automatically fed to the national system via internet. The system allows generation of online reports on different aspects of WASH including GPS based mapping of non-functional water points.

Apart from other envisaged uses, RWMIS is expected to provide the required information especially on non-functional water points across the country creating potential and reliable source of O&M market information for private sectors planning under the current PPP framework. However, the RWIMS does not provide a platform to provide information on what action could have been taken to address the broken down water points.

Based on the PPP Framework (National Action Committee, 2015b), and lessons from field implementation, the government is also in the process of refining the PPP models for O&M by introducing an SMS based triggering system to report and facilitate rapid remedial action on repair of broken down water points. The designated focal person of the WPMC would send an SMS on breakdown of water points to a given number which will be captured through RWIMS and accordingly an automatic message with location of water point would be relayed to the nearby registered VPM and other focal government person at the district level (RDC). The registered VPMs, who have formal links with the supply outlets (local dealers of spare parts) through the respective WPMCs will repair the water points on agreed fees. The information management system will be updated on the functionality status of the water points. In cases where the reported water point is not updated the system will automatically send

reminder messages to the relevant focal persons.

## **6.5 Building Capacity of Community Based Structures for O&M**

Under the Rural WASH Project, as provided in the Water Policy, a major thrust was given to capacitating community based structures for community mobilisation in WASH services repair, rehabilitation and construction of new facilities as well as operation and maintenance of water points/facilities.

Through a massive exercise in the 4 years of project implementation, over 10,338 WPCs (comprising of over 68,500 members with 62% women representation) were established and strengthened. In addition, over 2,560 Village Pump Mechanics (VPMs) were capacitated through a 14-days comprehensive training on hand pump repair and maintenance and equipped with VPM tools to carry out repair and maintenance works. Over the years these VPMs were engaged by the WPCs to repair and rehabilitate over 10,361 water points. VPMs offered their services on a mutually agreed fee per water point or services provided.

## **6.6 Improving the Enabling Regulatory Framework**

Besides the provision of an enabling environment provided in the Water Policy and the ZimASSET economic blueprint respectively, Rural District Councils have passed resolutions making it mandatory for communities to pay for spare parts and other related costs required for water point operation and maintenance. This is done to discourage communities’ reliance and dependency on government for routine operation and maintenance of WASH services and to create an enabling environment to support PPP.

In some instances, MOUs have been reached between the RDCs and private sectors (e.g., wholesalers) for the supply of the WASH materials for local retailers at ward and community levels. However, these MOUs have many weaknesses including not covering all supply chain service actors down to community based retailers and the end-users such as water point management committees. Furthermore the MOUs are not secured or guaranteed. Community based WASH constitutions at village and water point levels were also developed and approved by the local Government structures such as the Village Heads, Headman and Chiefs.

## **7 Main Results**

Through implementation of the RWP, Zimbabwe moved away from heavily subsidized repair and maintenance system, which had failed, to community based O&M system. This was done through formulating revised policies, strategies, and creating enabling environment. The revised approach was adopted at district, sub-district and community level through continuous advocacy, awareness raising, and capacity building activities. In terms of statistical achievements, the RWP supported formation, training and equipping of cumulatively, 10,338 WPCs, and 2,560 VPMs at local level in 33 districts. As a first step, various models for PPP were tested at local levels to improve O&M of water points. These public and private WASH service providers demonstrated the strengths and possibilities associated with PPP approaches at local and community levels i.e. fulfilment of the private sector profit motive and client quality service provision expectations. This resulted in repair and maintenance of over 10,361 water points (mainly hand pump equipped boreholes) across the 33 districts (Ahmad et al, 2016a, 2016b). Some of the other tangible results are presented in below sub-sections:

### **7.1 Development of National WASH PPP Framework**

The national government with support from UNICEF carried out documentation of the initial learnings from PPP models/approaches experimented in different districts to provide strong footings for development of National WASH PPP Framework through:

- Documenting district based PPP experiences and best practices.
- Refining, improving and consolidating the various PPP approaches and models.

Through a wide consultative process, the PPP Framework for Rural WASH was developed in December 2015. Currently, this is being reviewed for formal endorsement by the government as a national PPP policy framework. The PPP Framework intends to assist the Rural WASH Sub-Sector in launching,

marketing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of Rural WASH Sub-Sector PPP approaches.

## **7.2 Reduction in O&M Fees**

Preliminary evidence from some of the RWP districts indicated that, training, equipping and deployment of VPMs resulted in reduction of borehole repairs costs down to as low as US\$20 from a high of US\$100 per repair. It is anticipated that achievement of targeted ten VPMs per wards would reduce the average service fees per breakdown as VPM competition increases.

Field based feedback indicate that most WPC operate Water Point Funds with majority of them maintaining a reserve balance ranging from US\$30.00 to a US\$100.00 at any given time. These amounts are at least adequate to finance a single water point repairs task.

## **7.3 Reduction in Water Point Downtime**

Field investigation from selected areas of 8 districts indicated that the average water point downtime had reduced by at least 67%. In many instances it reduced to single digit days compared to prior months if not years. However, there is need to carry out a comprehensive field survey to assess this further in all 33 districts.

## **7.4 Increased Product and Market Knowledge**

Increased product and WASH knowledge resulting in WASH input suppliers and retailers acting as quasi-WASH promotion agencies and increased commitment to WASH sector objectives.

## **8 Challenges**

Like any initiatives, a couple of structural and operational challenges including the following were experienced in introduction and piloting of the PPP approaches and models in water point O&M:

- Most water points had been recently rehabilitated under the RWP thereby distorting the potential water point O&M market size.
- MoUs entered into between the different stakeholders were not legally binding. In most cases they were more of gentleman’s agreements based on mutual understanding. They were also not secured or guaranteed against any risks. They were not within the protection from overall policy and legal frameworks such as the RDC Act or the Water Policy.
- Lack of ready market especially for local water point O&M retailers to offload proceeds from of spares sold in kind.
- Water point O&M spares are generally “slow moving commodities” especially if they are manufactured to standard, correctly fitted and the water point properly operated.
- There is no comprehensive, reliable and regularly updated water point spares market information. It is expected that the ongoing VBCI and RWIMS initiatives will address this information gap.
- Continued supply of free WASH related inputs, commodities and services to communities e.g. some NGOs are still providing free inputs and DDF offer free spares and boreholes repairs once it receives government funding under the Rural Capital Development Fund.
- The infrequent borehole breakdown and low VPM-Water Point ratio means trained VPMs do not realise meaningful rewards from borehole maintenance fees that can act as sustainable livelihoods.
- There is no financial support being extended to the local wholesalers and retailers which means that their operations are constrained and this in turn affects borehole spares stocking.
- There is no financial support to local retailers who have to buy the WASH inputs using their own resources that is usually from personal savings or remittances.

## **9 Lessons Learnt**

- One of the major lessons that was learned during the implementation of the project was the fact that communities are willing to embrace new approaches and make significant contributions once they are convinced of long term benefit of proposed interventions no matter how poor they

could be. This was demonstrated with significant contribution by the communities for WASH services especially for small scaled piped water systems, O&M of water points.

- Another major lesson learned was that there are no quick fixes for introduction of WASH sector PPP approaches. Due processes must be followed especially for interventions requiring attitudinal and behavioural changes.
- Transparent and effective rigorous monitoring systems involving systematic sharing of progress on monthly basis with all stakeholders increase accountability and performance.
- In addition, implementation of the project through government structures created an enabling environment with increased capacity which will be a key factor for sustainability of the WASH PPP replication beyond the RWP life.

## 10 Conclusions

Overall implementation of the Rural WASH Project in Zimbabwe is a great success with improving access to improved sources of drinking water to over 3 million people mainly through repair and rehabilitation of non-functional water points. This was done systematically by moving away from government led subsidized system for O&M to the community based system with a strong focus on PPP. Various PPP models that were tested demonstrated success of the new approach. However, Zimbabwe has to further improve and build on existing initiatives to cover the whole country and put in place a sustainable mechanism for PPP. One of strategic areas is to incorporate SMS based triggering and support mechanism into the Rural WASH Information Management System by linking communities to VPM, and VPM to private sectors for improved services.

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