

Internal Mid Term Review

*Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed
Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Shebedino
Woreda, Sidama Zone of the Southern Nations
Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR)*



April 2007

Internal Mid Term Review of the Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Service project

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1 Introduction

Plan Ethiopia asked Ton Schouten of IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre to carry out an internal mid term review of the Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services project (hereafter called the scaling up project). Plan Ethiopia has provided the ToR for the internal review. The results of this internal mid term review and the outcomes of discussions based on this internal review, will be used for a formal evaluation on the scaling up project in the course of 2007.

Main activity for the mid term review was the execution of 18 interviews with people who have been actively involved in the scaling up project. The interviews took place in the week of 30 November to 3 December 2006. The findings coming out of these interviews were discussed in the NSC (National Steering Committee) and after that in the learning workshop that was held from 11 to 13 December 2006 in Nazareth. The outcomes of the discussions in NSC and in the learning workshop have been integrated in this report.

This is an internal mid term review because the author of this report has been participating in the scaling up project from the start. Some bias in favour of the project can therefore not be excluded. However, the close insights in this project have also helped to better understand suggestions and remarks made by the interviewees and have contributed to relevant recommendations.

1.1 Terms of Reference for the Mid Term Review

The purpose, scope and activities of the mid term review are described by Plan Ethiopia in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The purpose of the mid term review is stated as follows: to review and document the past processes and activities and to analyse the future plan of Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services and recommend future directions and activities.

The main activities described in the ToR are:

- Review the activities carried out since the start of the project and see the gaps in the process of Scaling Up.
- Assess the performance of the NSC, NTAG, RSC, RTAG and WART activities as outlined in the project document.
- Assess the performance of the Secretariat in coordinating the activities of the Action Research.
- Discuss Action Research with Government (Federal and Regional) and other stakeholders and record observations.
- Outline activities of Action Research for the remaining period of the Project and prepare a Road Map for the future activities.

The full ToR have been attached to this report as an Appendix.

1.2 The water supply and sanitation sector in Ethiopia: current state of affaires

In order to understand the possible contribution of the scaling up project to sector developments in Ethiopia, it is important to describe the current state of affaires of the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia.

The water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia is going through dynamic and challenging times. The investments in the sector have increased over the last years, in particular investments by international donor agencies and there are still other donors with plans to support the further development of the Ethiopia water sector. Under the EU Water Initiative a major effort is being made to increase the coordination of stakeholders in the sector. Also national and international NGOs have increased their coordination. The water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia has attracted a multitude of different projects and initiatives ranging from direct investment in infrastructure, to capacity building, research and policy development.

The Government of Ethiopia has put efforts in strengthening the institutions and policies to accommodate for the diverse initiatives and investments coming to the country. This started already with the master plan some years ago and has culminated in the Universal Action Plan (UAP). The UAP has become the mantra for sector development. It is not only an inspiring policy document it also sets the concrete targets for the coming years for all sector stakeholders. The UAP also puts an enormous challenge to all sector stakeholders i.e. achieving universal coverage of water supply and sanitation services in the year 2012. This would imply that in the year 2015 an additional 8.3 million people in urban areas and 70.9 million people in rural areas have access to safe water and that an additional 15.8 million people in urban areas and 74.6 million people in rural areas have access to improved sanitation. This would also imply an additional US\$ 317 million in annual investment cost during the next five years. Some will say this is absolutely not achievable, others would say that if you don't set the targets high and you don't believe in your dream you will never achieve your targets. Others again would say nothing else than full coverage – water and sanitation for all – can be the target of the water and sanitation sector and if this can not be achieved than the constraints should be removed.

There are elements of the UAP that are in line with the objectives of the concept of Scaling Up.

- Universal coverage.
- Community management as the management model for rural water supply.
- Appropriate and effective technologies such as hand dug wells in rural areas.

Sustainability is a part of the UAP but more implicit than the above elements. However, the UAP and the Scaling Up concept line up to a large extent.

The Government of Ethiopia has undertaken far reaching reforms, including the decentralisation of responsibility for the provision of public services to the lowest possible level. The Government of Ethiopia has also outlined a demand responsive approach to put in place Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHCOs) and Autonomous Boards. Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed among the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) outlining the basic mandates and responsibilities for each ministry with regard to the provision of sanitation services. All these elements are vital for the achievement of the UAP.

Finally, with the support of the World Bank, the Government of Ethiopia has developed the modalities and procedures for implementation of infrastructure. It encourages other donors to follow the same modalities.

Despite the encouraging developments in the water and sanitation sector, a lot remains to be done.

- Sustainability does not get enough attention. In particular the details of how to achieve sustainability in the current policy framework and with the current institutions is not thought through well enough. The risk is that in the rush to achieve universal coverage, not enough investments are being made in securing sustainability.
- Much has been achieved at national level in terms of improved coordination and improved policies such as the MoU, the decentralisation policy and the UAP itself. However, implementing these policies and applying stakeholder coordination at lower institutional levels is far from being perfect. In fact, improved coordination has not yet resulted in more effective financing of services, planning of services or implementation of services at regional and woreda level. The same applies to the MoU. There is still a long way to go to actually doing at the lowest level, what is being proclaimed at the highest national level.
- There is a gap between the national level and the lower regional and in particular woreda levels. This gap has different forms.
 - It is a communication gap i.e. what is being discussed and decided at national level does not trigger down to the lowest level.
 - It is a capacity gap i.e. government staff working in woredas lack the education and do not have the incentives to work in the spirit of the UAP. But also the capacity of the private sector to deliver services is lacking. Furthermore, there are no figures about the amount, type and quality of capacity needed to implement the UAP.
 - There is also a planning gap i.e. what is being designed at national level is often not taking into account the lower level capacities and infrastructure; the risk is that national level designs become too much of a dream.
 - There is also still a cooperation gap between the different stakeholders working in the sector. Although the desire may be to coordinate and cooperate, at the level of implementation and operation this often does not take place. Organisational agendas and rules and cultures inhibit effective joint planning and implementation.
- Lessons learned are not systematically documented, exchanged and then synthesised to use them for improving policies, implementation and institutions. Many sector professionals know and discuss where the strengths and the weaknesses of sector development are, but this remains at an anecdotal level. There are not sufficient efforts undertaken to gather experiences, institutionalise the debate on lessons learned and make sure that synthesised lessons are put into practice.

Many in the water and sanitation sector would acknowledge the above gaps to exist, many sector professionals and decision makers are trying their best to address the above gaps, however overcoming organisational agendas, overcoming opportunism and keeping the overview of activities in these dynamic times is very difficult.

The Scaling Up project in its own, modest way tries to address some of the above constraints. As we will see in the remaining of this report, it has succeeded partially.

2 The project: “Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Shebedino Woreda, Sidama Zone of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR)”

2.1 The Scaling Up concept

In December 2001 sector agencies met in a conference in The Hague in The Netherlands. The name of the conference was: “Scaling Up Community management: From System to Service in Rural Areas”. The leading statement of the conference was that small rural communities cannot be left completely on their own after construction of their water system. They would need some kind of support to overcome technical and social problems with the management of their water services. Cases from South Africa, Uganda, Switzerland and the US were presented to show how the support to rural communities could be organised and provided. All conference participants agreed that strengthening the community management model was a prerequisite to make water service delivery sustainable and to achieve full coverage of water services. The project-driven community management model, creating some successful communities but leaving many more communities to struggle is not the way forward, conference participants concluded. Community management must be a respected, full fledge management model with institutional, financial and policy back up to make it effective and successful.

Scaling Up was defined as:

- Expanding coverage from the current “islands of success” to larger areas, reaching **entire populations**
- Ensuring that community managed water services are sustainable and that adequate institutional support and policy arrangements are put in place to support community management **indefinitely**

The principles underlying scaling up were formulated in a Joint Vision document.

Community management: the model for sustainable universal coverage

Based on our collective experience we have little doubt that, particularly for rural areas, community management will be the predominant model for those striving to reach this goal. With adequate support, communities can and should be expected to take responsibility for their own water service management.

We therefore call upon all stakeholders to concentrate on “scaling up” the community management model to bring concurrent successes to many more communities at the same time. In practice this means:

Scaling up in time and space

- Expanding coverage from the current "islands of success" to larger areas, reaching **entire populations**
- Ensuring that community managed water services are sustainable and that adequate institutional support and policy arrangements are put in place to support community management **indefinitely**

Delivering services – not projects

Replacing current project based approaches with a service delivery model which sees planning, operation and maintenance, and eventual upgrading or replacement of water supply systems as part of a single continuous management cycle. In such a model rural communities and their service management needs are no longer viewed in isolation, but are part of a supportive policy and institutional environment – facilitating service delivery at scale.

Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach

Drawing upon the experiences in community management of all stakeholders with the objective to:

- move from fragmented and individualistic project approaches to a coordinated and jointly planned programme approach;
- strengthen government and make it accountable in leading the sector;
- work with the energy, motivation and power of local communities, in particular those of women.

Focusing action at the intermediate level

Moving interventions away from the single village and towards the (decentralised) intermediate level: the province, the district, the department or the municipality. It is here that support to community managed water services is needed. Planning at this level must be responsive to local (community) conditions: socio-economic and physical. It is therefore at this level that all stakeholders must come together to coordinate actions and harmonise approaches.

Seeing water as a motor for poverty reduction

Focusing on the fact that communities need water not only for domestic use but also for other, productive, uses such as vegetable gardening and livestock rearing. This will contribute to the empowerment of communities, increase the likelihood of financial sustainability of water systems and will support an approach that sees communities as partners, invests in their assets and capabilities and increases their access to opportunities.

2.2 Past activities

2.2.1 International Thematic Group Scaling Up Rural Water Services

One of the most positive outcomes of the above conference was the creation of an international Thematic Group Scaling Up Rural Water Services Through Support to Community Management. Different organisations joined the Thematic Group and agreed to advocate for scaling up, to develop a better understanding of scaling up and to provide guidance to the sector in its efforts to scale up service delivery to entire populations and for indefinite time. Members of the Thematic Group are: IRC, Plan, RCAP, SKAT, Streams, Umgeni Water, UNICEF, UNDP, WaterAid, WEDC, the WSSCC and a range of experts participating as individuals. Since 2001 the Thematic Group has developed a range of products on scaling up, most importantly a framework for putting scaling up in practice, has advocated for the scaling up principles and has brought together many different sector professionals from all over the world to discuss the details of scaling up.

2.2.2 From learning workshop to project in Ethiopia

One of the off springs of the Thematic Group was the cooperation between Plan and IRC to promote scaling up in Plan countries jointly with Plan offices. Learning workshops were organised in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

The scaling up learning workshop in Addis Ababa took place from 26 to 30 April 2004. Some 50 – 60 people from different organisations participated. The debates and outcomes were of high quality and motivated participants to try to put the scaling up concept in practice in Ethiopia. Directly after the workshop IRC and Plan staff visited the Shebedino woreda in SNNPR to assess whether this could be the pilot district for the scaling up efforts in Ethiopia.

In August 2004 Plan Netherlands agreed to finance a three project to do action research into scaling up rural water and sanitation services in Ethiopia. The project was later extended to four years.

2.2.3 Project objectives

The overall goal of the scaling up project in Ethiopia was defined as: to do action research (reflect and act) to learn what is needed in particular how to strengthen institutional support mechanisms for community managed rural water supply and sanitation services to be able to provide indefinite sustainability and 100% coverage to rural populations. The specific project objectives are:

- Create an action research unit to coordinate and lead the action research programme.
- Document sector experiences, evaluations, strategies and master plans to consolidate experiences to date with community managed water supply and sanitation services.
- Create and maintain the national steering group for national stakeholder learning and coordination.
- Create and maintain the regional steering group for coordination and activities in the action research programme.

- Facilitate the core group that will do the actual action research on the district level with the inclusion of all major stakeholders e.g. communities, local government, NGOs, private sector etc.
- Document the process of the action research and the lessons learned.
- Disseminate outcomes of the action research and make sure that the knowledge gained is shared and discussed in the sector.
- Improve sector coordination, improve communication between the levels and promote a learning environment.
- Come up with discussed and agreed upon proposals and recommendations for strengthened community managed water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia.
- Make sure that past experiences and lessons learned in the action research are documented and made accessible to all sector stakeholders.
- Enable exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the action research on scaling up with other Plan country offices and with other international sector stakeholders.

The project document explains why the method of action research was chosen to scale up water supply and sanitation services.

Action research

Learning from success and failures in the past, learning from community management models in use in the country, investigating key factors for success and failure, analysing the strengths and weaknesses of a country's water and sanitation sector, knowing the gaps in terms of capacities, policy and legislation, investigating the country's institutional set up, these are some of the aspects that need to get attention. Action research is an appropriate model to dive into these questions, reflect on the outcomes, design actions to overcome problems and gaps, test them and monitor their impact. Action research combines critical reflection, with acting, testing and trying things out. Action research enables learning.

For scaling up all relevant stakeholders in rural water supply and sanitation must be involved. They must all be part of the learning process, because they can all provide lessons learned and they can all profit from the outcomes. Bringing the stakeholders together and creating platforms for reflection, discussion and action is a crucial part of action research. Action research is not only for the academics, it is predominantly for those with a stake in solving the problems. Together they search and test.

The action research will take place in a pilot district – to learn how to strengthen institutional structures to support community managed systems in a specific, representative setting – by relevant stakeholders in a so-called action research core group. But an important part of the action research will also take place at the national level, to disseminate the lessons learned in the district, to make sure that the action research links to ongoing programmes, strategies and policies. On that level a national steering group will be created. In Ethiopia a steering group will also be created at the regional level, since this government level plays a major role in water and sanitation provision to communities.

2.2.4 The institutional set up of the project

For effective learning, sharing between institutional levels and for scaling up innovation steering committees were created at different levels. The National Steering Committee brings together the major national stakeholders; the NSC is chaired by the MoWR with UNICEF and WaterAid as co-chairs. At the SNNPR regional level a Regional Steering Committee was set up under the leadership of the Water Bureau and with the participation of stakeholders working in the SNNPR region. At the level of the Shebedino woreda a Woreda Action Research Team (WART) was created, also with the participation of stakeholders active in the water and sanitation sector in the Shebedino woreda. Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) were set up at national and regional level to support the work of the NSC and the RSC. Plan Ethiopia provides the secretariat and facilitation of all these entities. A national senior researcher and a woreda level researcher jointly facilitate the execution of the action research project. Later, a communication officer was added to this core team. After one year the research officer working in Shebedino was replaced, but apart from that the team has been stable. Terms of Reference were written for all committees and groups working in the scaling up project.

Plan has been implementing water and sanitation services in the Shebedino woreda for some years now. A programme unit is operational in Shebedino. It actively supports the action research project. The aim is to implement lessons learned in the action research project directly into Plan's implementation work. To enable this Plan Ethiopia appointed a water and sanitation advisor working in Shebedino. Also the water and sanitation advisor working at national level actively supports the scaling up project.

2.2.5 Activities

The scaling up project follows a well thought trough rhythm of cycles of five months research and one month to share the outcomes of the research, most notably in a workshop and to plan the next cycle of five months of research. This rhythm has proved to be successful.

The first workshop took place in December 2004 – four months after the start of the project. It aimed at developing the capacities of major stakeholders at regional and woreda levels in action research techniques. The workshop participants also formulated the first activities to undertake in the following cycle of five months: a Meta Evaluation of Project and Programmes on Community-Managed Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Ethiopia and a Situational Analysis of Water Supply and Sanitation Services in Shebedino. These activities started in January 2005.

In April 2005 the Inception Workshop took place in Awassa in SNNPR. Regional and woreda stakeholders participated actively, but also many national stakeholders had come to Awassa to help develop a better understanding of scaling up community management and to support improvements to the community management model in Ethiopia. The work in the sub-groups on identifying major problems in community management was facilitated by using the principles that were developed by the above mentioned international Thematic Group:

- universal principles
- enabling environment principles
- institutional principles

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- financial principles
- social equity principles
- environmental principles
- monitoring and learning principles
- technology principles

The last day of the workshop was used to jointly plan the activities for the next cycle of research. This way of working was maintained during all workshops that followed. The following came out of the planning exercise:

- To write an extensive case study on the Midre Genet water supply scheme which was visited during the Awassa workshop
- To do an assessment of existing and needed capacities at woreda, regional and national level
- To make an inventory of all training manuals that are being used with the aim to select or compose the best training approach (manual, programme, staff requirements)
- To do a study into the legal status of the water, sanitation and hygiene committees (WASHCOs) and to find out how to legalise the WASHCOs
- To do a household survey in water uses
- To study the functionality of water points in Shebedino
- To start an investigation into the possibility of creating a Documentation Centre at Woreda level
- To start the publication of a Newsletter for the scaling up project
- To create a website for the scaling up project

After the Inception Workshop, three learning workshops were organised. The first one in December 2005 in Nazareth, the second one in May 2006 in Awassa and the third one in December 2006 in Nazareth. Every workshop attracted some 40-60 participants. Research findings were presented and discussed, experiences from other regions and organisations were presented and activities were planned for the following half year.

In between the workshops there were regular meetings of NSC, RSC, NTAG and RTAG. At the level of the Shebedino woreda, the Woreda Action Research Team became more an more active in the course of the project.

2.2.6 Outputs

The scaling up project has produced a number of valuable outputs.

First of all there are outputs related to the organisation structure of the scaling up project:

- The formation and well-functioning of the National and Regional Steering Committees.
- The formation and well-functioning of the National and Regional Technical Advisory Groups.
- The establishment of the Secretariat for the scaling up project in Plan Ethiopia with all office and transport facilities.
- Hiring of staff at national level and woreda level, and building the capacities of staff.
- Capacity building at woreda and regional level.

Outputs related to research done:

- Meta evaluation of country experiences with community management of water and sanitation services; this was the first time an overview was made in Ethiopia.
- Situational analysis of Shebedino water supply and sanitation services; this has provided the stakeholders in Shebedino with a powerful tool for planning.
- Midre Genet case study – including a plan for upgrading Midre Genet water scheme.
- A study into the legalisation of WASHCOs and a series of meetings with NGOs and government representatives at regional level to put this in practice.
- Institutional capacity assessment.
- Water quality analysis – including a plan to clean water points.

Workshops and meetings

A series of five workshops was organised bringing together different stakeholders from the water and sanitation sector. The workshops have been dynamic podia for discussions on the aspects of community management and have included the participants in actively planning the research activities in the scaling up project.

Other outputs:

- A series of Newsletters
- Flyers and folders
- Articles for conferences a/o WEDC conference in Uganda
- A website as part of the website of Plan International Headquarters

3 Findings of the Mid Term Review

The following chapter presents the findings from the interviews that were held with some 18 people directly involved in the scaling up project. The findings have been organised in paragraphs. After some general observations, the report looks into the research and learning component of the project. The action component follows right after. Two paragraphs have been dedicated to the question if the research has resulted in action because this was a major issue in all interviews. One paragraph presents suggestions for improving the action components of the project and one paragraph looks into the challenges for improving the action component. A small paragraph is written about dissemination. The report also looks into the structure of the project and the functioning of the secretariat. A special paragraph has been written about the impact of this project on Plan Ethiopia.

3.1 General observations about the scaling up project

This paragraph documents some of the more general observations about the scaling up project that were made by the interviewees.

Most interviewees say that the project is good. They mention different reasons. They say that the project is good because:

- It is interesting to discuss these issues in so much detail and to be with colleagues.
- The scaling up project contributes to the government strategy.

- The project came at the right time because the dynamics in the WASH sector are so much bigger now than 5 years ago. We now need this deeper understanding of how things work at the grassroots.
- The scaling up project aims to identify practical ways to meet the MDGs.
- We need to know what really works. So the project is relevant.
- The project aims to help us learn. And that is what we do. We learn a lot.
- The project brings all actors together.
- The project helps us to have a look at different experiences: RWSEP, WaterAid, WaterAction.
- The scaling up project offers an opportunity to communicate with many people. Also in the NSC and the NTAG. It is very good for networking.
- The scaling up project is very useful, because we have a big problem in the WASH sector that we need to tackle. Many water schemes have been abandoned. For different reasons. Because no community capacity building was done, because no post-implementation support was given, because most agencies do not look into replacement. So we have a problem and we need to address that jointly.
- It is a good project because we all have problems with sustainability.

In conclusion: sharing experiences with a wide group of agencies and people is appreciated by all interviewees. The scaling up project has created the platform for stakeholders to meet and it satisfies a need in the water and sanitation sector to know from each other's experiences, to discuss the critical issues of community management and to help improve community management of water supply and sanitation. All interviewees recognise that sustainability is big problem in the sector and that sustainability can only be improved by tackling it jointly. The scaling up project has provided the forum for doing this.

3.2 The context of the Ethiopia WASH sector and the scaling up project

This paragraph looks at current developments in the Ethiopia water sector. Does this project come at the right time? Is it good to have this project now? Why? Should the project support the recent developments in the WASH sector in Ethiopia? How? Some general observations from the interviewees.

Some say that the scaling up project fits very well with current developments in the sector. They highlight that the UAP focuses on community management and appropriate technology and the scaling up project does that too. Some 150,000 schemes must be built. So some 150,000 communities are going to manage those schemes. They must bear full responsibility, they must pay the O&M. That can only be done by excellent preparation, and by support from woreda water desks. That is true scaling up. The UAP is true scaling up. How must that be done? What works? Are the manuals good? Are the national programmes operating well? How is scaling up working at grassroots level? That is what we need to know to do a good job in the UAP. The UAP must be updated based on the outcomes of the scaling up project. The outputs of the scaling up project should be phrased in an updated UAP. The multi stakeholder forum should discuss outcomes of the scaling up project; make it part of the agenda of the multi stakeholder forum.

The scaling up project enables us to learn how to do community management in detail. Because everybody talks about community management, but intensity, quality and purpose are different. In some projects tasks are just thrown to the community. That is not good. Communities should be enabled to make their own decisions and to accept water schemes in full knowledge of the advantages and the consequences.

Related to the above is the concern that the big money coming to the sector will increase the dependency of people. They say, this is a gift from a donor. Parallels were drawn with the famine crisis. In the end people were asking for food. They got used to a donor passing by to help them. They have got used to international NGOs and donors that come here for charity. What happened in the famine, might happen in water. People must do something for getting their water. They must be empowered to accept responsibility. People must earn it.

Some interviewees also expressed their concerns about certain developments in the sector. The run for coverage may take away the attention for the sustainability of the services. Once the big programmes have started, it will be difficult to influence their direction. They need to achieve their targets; sustainability may be pushed aside. Some of the implementing donors are giants and it is difficult to influence their policies.

There is also a concern that the absorption capacity to implement these big programmes and to achieve the targets of the UAP may not be good enough. The number of skilled people is still limited. Is the impact of interventions on local capacities considered well enough?

Many say that the sector has come a long way over the last years and that at the moment there are good opportunities to improve services in Ethiopia. There is one national programme, coordination is being addressed, the stakeholders are involved both government and non-government, the different opinions are converging and so on. The scaling up project is already contributing to these developments.

In conclusion: for realisation of the UAP high quality implementation and support to community management is needed. The UAP for rural areas fully builds on community management. The scaling up project is a chance to improve the guidelines and the enabling environment of community management. It is a chance to improve sustainability of water schemes by looking into the details of community management, synthesise the lessons learned in community management and recommend to all implementing agencies the best way to implement and support community management. That is in line with the current developments in the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia.

3.3 The research and learning component

The following paragraph looks at the learning and research component of the scaling up project. It highlights the opinions of the interviewees on the learning component. In the next paragraph the action component will be addressed.

The research and learning in the scaling up project is highly valued by all interviewees. In the following some of the reasons for appreciating the research and learning are highlighted.

Most of the interviewees mention the different studies as valuable inputs for learning: the inventory, the capacity assessment, the water quality assessment, the legal study and the meta evaluation. Most of these studies have shown where the problems are in detail and that is valuable. The fact that they were also done with scientific rigor has contributed to their value and their credibility to convince the stakeholders. Most interviewees are looking forward to the upcoming studies such as the one on management at community level and the school WASH assessment.

This project has the ability demonstrate. Knowing why things work and don't work. In this project we are checking how things can be perfect.

The legal study was mentioned as a good example of a good quality study and a study that has given immediate impact. This is also an example of an activity of the scaling up project that has triggered the interest of other stakeholders. It is not anymore only the work of the scaling up project, others have now also taken over.

The scaling up project is looking in detail at sustainability. In the past nobody was interested in sustainability. We have a lot of physical work, but sustainability is questionable. The scaling up project enables the water sector to discuss all basic issues of sustainability in detail. Shared learning is the best way to that. You need the experiences of all. And one interviewee adds to this: *"Mental wise things have changed. Before it was only about constructing schemes and nobody bothered about demand, or hygiene, or sustainability. Only technical parameters counted. The action research shows that people do not get safe water. Now they start to think differently."*

The scaling up project has pushed national learning. In the EUWI multi stakeholder forum the scaling up project was mentioned several times. What the EUWI is proposing now, is already being done by the scaling up project. The scaling up project has also contributed to civil society now being part of the multi stakeholder forum. The NGOs have become stronger. They are acting as a group. All kinds of developments have contributed to this, the scaling up project was one of them.

The scaling up project is an example of how stakeholders can work together. In the NSC we sit with all stakeholders. That is important for Ethiopia.

The scaling up project has enabled exchange visits and these are important learning events. The Hitosa, Dalocha and Midre Genet schemes were visited. Government people of SNNPR went to Amhara and Tigray to learn about the legal issues. As one interviewee said: *"We recognised that others do a good job and we went there to learn from them. That is important."*

Also at the level of the WART the learning is mentioned as very valuable for all stakeholders. In the WART the outcomes of the studies are being discussed. The different implementation projects are being presented and discussed. Very important is that staff of the water desk visits sites of Water Action to see how they do community mobilisation. Also the Community Facilitator Teams of the World Bank programme go to sites of Water Action. And this happens also vice versa: Water Action staff going to observe how the CFTs work with the communities. This kind of learning is one of the prerequisites for improving implementation.

In conclusion: the research and learning component is valued highly. Sustainability problems have not been addressed sufficiently in Ethiopia and in this project they are. The scaling up project enables a detailed look into community management, the weaknesses, the challenges and the good experiences – and there are many good experiences with community managed water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia. The scaling up project has generated many different exchanges between people at different levels, which has contributed to the learning. In particular at the level of the Shebedino woreda, but also at regional and national level, the institutional set up for the learning, the WART, the RSC and the NSC, have provided good settings for joint learning.

3.3.1 Suggestions for further research

The interviewees mentioned a number of issues that they consider to be relevant for more research by the scaling up project.

Scheme management and administration would be an important study. One interviewee said: *"Now that the WASHCOs will get legal status, we must ask ourselves: what is the most viable management structure. Because we want to give legal status to something that is viable."* Another interviewee stated that we must avoid to construct alien monuments. And someone else said that related to the study on management forms, the issue of support to WASHCOs after construction must be clarified.

At woreda level in Shebedino the above was emphasised as well. They said that the situational analysis is not yet completed and that looking into management forms and their successes and problems in Shebedino should complete the situational analysis. When the situational analysis is completed, we can better act.

Another outstanding issue for research is the harmonisation of training manuals. However, this is not only a matter of research, but also of cooperation by all implementing stakeholders and their willingness to look into this matter and adapt their manuals.

The tariff setting was brought forward as an issue to investigate in more depth. How are tariffs being set, are they realistic, which costs do they cover, are there big differences between tariffs being paid in one community and in another, why is that, how could tariff setting be improved?

An important condition for effective community management is not only to improve management, tariffs, capacities etc. but also to help community people to accept their responsibilities. So the following questions could be subject to research. How do we really get communities vocal? So that they demand, they request, they express opinions, they have access to information, they take responsibilities, make their own proposals knowing where to go. How to help communities to become mature, to be fully involved in society, to be vocal?

Last suggestion is not so much related to research as well proposed as an activity that the scaling up project could undertake. That is to present the modalities of implementation that are being used by the Woreda Support Group working in Shebedino. This is for different reasons. Because they are interesting e.g. the approaches being used by the Community Facilitator Teams and also to see if other implementing agencies can learn from these approaches.

In conclusion: although the scaling up project has already addressed many different research topics, there remains a whole list of research topics to be taken up. This shows that learning about scaling up community management is not time-bound, but should be done continuously.

3.4 The action component

Did the scaling up project change anything? Was there more than only research? Was there action?

First of all, research is action in particular the way in which the scaling project is doing research i.e. action research. All studies done are being shared with all stakeholders allowing them to have better insights in the ways aspects of water and sanitation service delivery are functioning. Reflection and discussion are crucial parts of the scaling up project. Research is not reserved for a small group of academics, but is being fed back to the sector. That in itself is an important action. But the project has also given direct results according to the interviewees.

The representatives of Plan and WaterAction clearly stated that the scaling up project has helped to improve their implementation. That is on the positive side. They also ask themselves if other implementing agencies with whom these studies are shared are also using the results of the studies to improve their implementation.

The Water Action office in Shebedino declares: the project is good. It gives us feedback on our projects. So we change things in our projects. An example is the water quality assessment. We now teach the community how to handle the water from source to and into the house. We also have started to give the communities tools for maintenance. Before we maintained ourselves. But people should maintain the systems by themselves and they should have the tools to do so. And they added to that: In the past it was simply construction. Boreholes, sanplats without asking people if they wanted them. Sustainability was not an issue. The scaling up project has had an impact on sustainability. It has improved the development of schemes of WaterAction and Plan.

At the level of the Shebedino woreda research outcomes have been put in place. All stakeholders cooperating in the WART confirm this. The Woreda Water Desk confirms that for rehabilitation it uses the Shebedino situational analysis. They now know where rehabilitation is needed. When others come, the desk can give them the data. They can send them to places for rehabilitation. E.g. the Water Desk uses the inventory now that IRC (International Rescue Committee) is coming to the woreda and wants to rehabilitate. Through the inventory they know all about the schemes, also their functionality. Through the scaling up project and the WART the desk has more oversight and more influence on what happens in Shebedino. That is a big improvement. However, there is also a shadow side, because, as the woreda water desk says: we may now know where rehabilitation is needed but we do not have the money to do it. So, we know more, but we have budget limitations to carry out what we know. The same is for the water quality assessment. *"We decided that disinfection was needed and the regional Water Bureau promised to do this, but they do not have the money."*

The WART in Shebedino has increased its activities. The Community Facilitator Teams are now part of the WART and they are participating actively. Also the health desk is

included. There is a new person who is more motivated. There is cross learning between the CFTs, Water Action and the woreda water desk. They learn from each other's approaches and visit each other's sites. Now there is interaction between the Woreda Water Desk and Water Action. In the past this was not so. The woreda water desk asked the CFTs to bring their experiences to the kebeles in which Plan is working. So they will work in more kebeles than the three that are part of the World Bank programme. Another example of research put to action is the School WASH assessment that is being carried out. The outcome is that the situation is bad. This was discussed in the WART and the Education office representative in the WART proposed to use the school health clubs for improvement.

Midre Genet is mentioned as the place where the scaling up project should prove its impact. Not only financing has improved, also the legal issue will be put in place in Midre Genet. They are working hard on improving hygiene and sanitation in the community. However there were also concerns raised about the hardware part in Midre Genet. Because this is still not been arranged to the full 100%.

The legal issue was given as an example of action by this project by many interviewees. The project presented an excellent study. They study was used to mobilise the stakeholders and get the legal issue on the agenda of the government. Government responded positively. The project helped to organise exchange visits to other regions to learn about they ways these regions deal with the legal issue. The project organised a workshop in which this was discussed and actions were proposed and agreed to indeed allow WASHCOs to have legal status. This is a good example of how research, advocacy, mobilising stakeholders, discussion and reflection and finally action can all come together for effective change. The realisation of all stakeholders that the legal issues is important, has helped in the process. As one interviewee said: with legal status, no longer there is dependency. The committees and boards can act on their own behalf.

Finally one of the interviewees expressed what the ideal final result of the scaling up project could be. That is:

- Recognition of community management including legislation
- All actors speak the same language and advocate the same approach
- Guidelines for community management and administration structures
- Guidelines for hygiene and sanitation
- One training manual
- Rules and requirements to be signed before a project starts to guarantee quality and also to enforce agencies to support communities after implementation
- Have a clear idea on how to implement
- Continuation of this project to keep on learning and networking in the sector

In conclusion: the research outcomes have given important insights to all stakeholders which they can use immediately. The scaling up project has improved the quality of implementation of Plan and WaterAction. The scaling up project has created an important platform in Shebedino, not only for learning, but also for strong coordination and joint planning. The situational analysis is used as a planning tool for the water desk in Shebedino. Finally, the legal issues has been pushed and the project is actively contributing to the legalisation if the WASHCOs.

3.5 Research put to action: suggestions

Many interviewees said that the scaling up project should concentrate on the action part. Many said the risk is that the project does not translate its studies into action. One interviewee said that the action research cycle is not full, showing that the principle of action research is very well understood. After all, the final goal of scaling up is indefinite sustainability of water schemes and 100% coverage. Have we come closer to that final goal and what do we need to do to make that come true?

This paragraph focuses on the suggestions that were given by interviewees for more concrete action. The next paragraph will look into the bottlenecks to come from good research and good insights to the final goals of indefinite sustainability and 100% coverage.

Many interviewees emphasised that you must understand the situation first, before you can act. E.g. first you must know what the situation is with water quality, and then you know that you have to plan intensive hygiene promotion. The study revealed things that were shocking. *"It is ridiculous that 50% of the water is contaminated between tap and use in the house. Why are we investing money if that happens? We have proved now scientifically that 50% is contaminated during transport and in the house, and that is important. The same with the non-functionality of schemes. We now know which schemes do not function so we will now act by rehabilitating schemes. Also the legal study has resulted in clear action. And a legal status for WASHCOs and boards is crucial. So the action will come step by step."*

For most interviewees it is clear that the research must be put into action in Shebedino. Shebedino is where the direct implementation takes place. That is close to the woreda level. The learning must be done with people who are close to implementation. That is where the project must concentrate. At the woreda level you will also encounter problems for which you need the support of higher levels e.g. the problems with spare part supply, the legal issue, the problems with management set ups etc. But the woreda level is where the project must concentrate to get to action. There are also problems at the woreda level. The staff turn over, the lack of budgets etc. These hinder putting research into action.

The question is also being asked who is really taking up the results of the studies. It is clear that the direct stakeholders are doing that: Plan and Water Action offices in Shebedino, the woreda water desk. But what about other organisations participating in the steering committees and the workshops? Do they use the outcomes of the studies? How, and if they don't do, why not?

One important remark was also made and that is that accelerating the actions is for a large part: promotion and advocacy to the bureau and the woreda desk. Because in the end they must do it. It is a learning project. The idea is not to enforce uptake of lesson learned. You can not use force. Awareness raising and promotion are part of the action that you can undertake.

Some interviewees also made good remarks about the process of this project and of action research in general. They said that this takes time. For research, for applying lessons learned and then testing those applications again. It is a continuous process and in this project we are actually in the first phase. The legal issue must still be tested. The

solutions to solve the water quality problems must be tested. The solutions for better management and administration of WASHCOs need to be tested. All the tests must be properly documented and then discussed again to be able to make adaptations. So you need time. As one of the interviewees said: "the project is only a short time running. From now onwards there should be a lot more coming out of it. It is a process, you need to know each other, you need the research. Now we go to action."

Suggestions were made for action in the direction of synchronisation and harmonisation. Interviewees said that putting the research outcomes on the ground should be done by all stakeholders working in Shebedino. They asked themselves if it would not be better to have joint planning systems and harmonisation. Synchronised action is needed. They also say: **what sense does it make to study the tariff setting if different agencies still use different rules for community contribution to scheme construction.** Sometimes this is 5%, sometimes 10%, sometimes 0%. This should be the same. One interviewee said: "There are packages here and there. Sometimes they are far too complicated. We have not made life easy for the communities." So the research must evaluate different approaches and the outcomes must be implemented by all. As another interviewee said: "Maybe you have to give up something to gain something." Most interviewees emphasise the role of government in the synchronisation. In the end it is government that need to put the scaling up into full operation, they say. The role of NGOs is different. Their role is to demonstrate how things can be done, to speak for the users vis-à-vis government, to advocate. It is clear that this is an important issue. In the next paragraph there will be some more on this.

Interviewees also expressed clear ideas of how the sector should function. Someone said that the WASH sector has multi dimensions:

Soft component:

- That is the **project management cycle; the community must be there**
- Legal aspect (in 2007 SNNPR has the proclamation)
- Capacity building of communities how to manage the schemes
- Integration among stakeholders: sharing experience, plan together, use resources optimally, using inventory for planning

Hard component:

- Appropriate technology
- Availing spare parts in nearby areas
- Revolving fund for communities to be able to buy spare parts
- Build more schemes

Another interviewee said that a lot needs to be done to increase coverage and sustainability: implementation manuals must be refined, the implementation strategy must be refined, there is a need for a package of appropriate technologies, for the staff in woredas and for communities, IEC materials are needed for which Health must be responsible, a menu of participatory approaches for community management is needed and finally it is needed to scale up the training capacity of vocational training centres.

Another idea for action was to put in place a requirement for agencies in their planning and that is to look into continuity beyond design life. Guaranteeing continuity beyond design life must be a rule for every agency who wants to implement.

In conclusion: action should concentrate on Shebedino. That is where the goals of scaling up must be put into practice: 100% coverage and the conditions for indefinite sustainability. Not all participating agencies put the outcomes of the research into practice. Much more could be done by agencies to act on the lessons learned in the scaling up project. However, action can not be enforced, it can only be triggered by continuous advocacy and explanations. A scattered sector with agencies working in parallel of each other also hinders uptake of lessons learned and harmonisation of approaches. All in all, there is a long way to go to improve community management and to scale up water and sanitation services. The scaling up project has made a start, much more work needs to be done. The work must be taken serious and must have an impact on all sector agencies.

3.6 Research put to action: challenges

This paragraph looks into the challenges for having impact. Will the scaling up project indeed change some of the ways in which the WASH sector is operating? Before getting into the details of the answers of respondents, first we will present the account of the chairman and the secretary of the Midre Genet water committee. Did the project have any impact n what they do?

The account of Midre Genet

The Midre Genet representatives tell that they learn from the learning workshops, for example from the presentations of other WASHCOs. They had discussions with another WASHCO during the legal workshop. Other committees come to learn from Midre Genet and that has proved to be very satisfactory. Thus, the inter-committee exchange is very helpful.

Midre Genet also has changed things in their operational activities. They have taken the lessons in the workshops on sanitation and hygiene to the church gatherings. They use religious leaders to reach out to the community and they say that this is very effective. They do this in coordination with health extension workers. They take flip chards to the religious leaders to explain what it is all about. Hygiene education is now also given at the water point. Sanitation and hygiene education have been introduced to the school parent committee and also to the kebele committee. They have taken a completely different approach. Emphasis is now on sanitation. They educate people about hygiene, so that people want water. So they do not tell people to construct latrines, they give hygiene promotion. They have also started constructing facilities for washing and bathing.

Every time they have been to a learning workshop they report what they learned to the full committee. They say that they try to do what they learned. One of the simple things they learned was how to use posters, flip chards and cards. They use them now for the hygiene education and also in meetings.

Now let us look into the challenges for putting research into action and what the interviewees had to say about this.

A lot is happening and small things are changing. However, one could also take a more pessimistic standpoint and sometimes in the interviews this pessimism was noticed.

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Everything that is being done (training, workshops, exchange visits etc) falls on barren soil. People learn and enrich their thinking, but nothing happens. There is no follow up, it looks as if things do not improve. Why is that?

In the sector in Ethiopia there are many lessons learned e.g. those from Hitosa, from the RWSEP project. All of this has been presented in the scaling up project as well, but also many times before. The uptake is slow. Is the learning only taken place with individuals. For real change should the learning not take place in institutions? Is the learning in the scaling up project adopted by institutions in the way they implement, the approaches they use, the way they cooperate. Why is it difficult to achieve this stage of institutional learning?

Many interviewees emphasised the roles that the different stakeholders, in particular government and NGOs, are playing and how this determines if and how lessons learned are adopted.

Many say that indeed government is the first one to take up the lessons learned. Ultimately government can make it happen. Final scaling up is in the hands of government. The government must bring it all together. Why is that sometimes so difficult? What are the challenges for government? The interviewees mentioned a number of them:

- Everybody says that the government must lead, but the government depends on the World Bank and other donors for funding. That creates dependency in relationships –and decreases the amount of leadership government can take.
- The stability of government structures and policies is a challenge. Too often structures and policies change.
- There is often lack of accountability towards the rural users of water services. Why is that? Is it lack of incentives? Is it lack of budgets and capacities? Why do often government officials take communities less serious than NGO staff does? One interviewee said: "You need consistent and persistent capacity building of government staff to make woreda staff more accountable and committed.
- Although decentralisation in Ethiopia is well advanced, there are often problems of cooperation and communication between the levels of federal, regional and district government. Responsibilities are not always clear and there often is a pushing tasks to lower levels instead of real cooperation with lower levels.
- Government might be more interested in hardware, because hardware is the way to show that you have done a good job as a government official.
- Government must coordinate, everybody says, but the question is not only if government has the capacities to coordinate but also if all the agencies allow government to coordinate them?
- Government does not always do the robust community management approaches, of which the whole sector says that is needed. We must put more money in building the capacities of government implementing staff. And capacity building should not be equal to training, because nobody checks if the training has had effect, there is no follow up. So we also need monitoring of the quality of implementation. For that quality you need standards, not only for government, for all agencies implementing water schemes.
- There is a lack of capacity in government:
 - Everything must be done in a rush
 - People are trapped in routine things.

- Often the training is not tailored to practice
- People do not always have the right professional background
- The motivation of people is challenged because they do not have budgets and a lot is being done and decided by others (iNGOS, World Bank, higher levels etc)

In particular at woreda level the challenges of putting research into action are big. Woreda desks do not have a budget. There are no incentives, no capacity building. Woreda water desks need capacities. They need training. They need equipment. They need attention. They don't have a coin to buy paper. Only salaries are being paid. In the past the water desks were often side lined by NGO projects etc. Even the World Bank is not investing in the Water Desks. In Shebedino through the WART they are integrated better. The Woreda Water Desk uses the WART to solicit funds. But still they struggle.

The role of donors and NGOs also is not always supportive for full scaling up:

- some of the NGOs and donors act on their own and do not comply to policies
- often government staff move to NGOs and donors because of better remuneration
- in NGO, bilateral and multilateral programmes capacities of government staff are not consistently built

If government indeed should have the lead in scaling up, than the question must be asked if the gap in terms of capacities, incentives, logistics and equipment between those who have the funds for implementation but not the long term presence on the ground and those who have long term presence the ground but lack the funds is not too big.

All the above may be reasons why full scaling up is a real challenge. Scaling up is not only about finding the best technical solutions for problems, it is also about cooperation, joint learning and joint planning, about joint funding and harmonisation. For that some level of trust is needed.

The question is also what the best model is to go to full scaling up. Maybe going for the big changes as presented in the above is not the right model. You could distinguish three different models for this project to support the achievement of the scaling up objectives:

1. Keep on doing studies and share the results, stimulate learning, and discussions in the sector.
2. Do the above studies and shared learning, and then take one study out and implement the recommendations, experiment with actions, test and evaluate. This model can be found in the way this project handled the legal issue.
3. Do the above but also try to address the challenges for having impact as described above. These are the more fundamental problems in the sector such as lack of harmonisation, the backlog in capacities, the inequality between government and non-government structures, capacities and incentives. Etc.

All three models are viable.

In conclusion: people are sceptical about the uptake of lessons learned in the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia. There are already so many good examples in Ethiopia of excellent and effective community management, but nobody is willing to replicate these models. The government has the key to scaling up. Others, NGOs, can provide the

platforms for research, learning and sharing of experiences, but in the end the government must put it into practice. That is not always happening, due to a range of factors a/o donor dependency, capacity problems, no incentives for staff at lower levels, lack of interest, lack of respect for community empowerment. But also the role of international agencies is not supportive to scaling up. They operate in parallel, they do not invest sufficiently in building government capacity, they do not harmonise or plan jointly and are driven by agendas set in other places than Ethiopia. Lack of uptake of lessons learned is a critical issue in the scaling up project.

3.7 Dissemination documentation

Some interviewees called for more and better targeted dissemination of outcomes of the project. Dissemination should not only be done on central level, but also be in the woredas and zones, in particular Shebedino woreda and Sidama zone. One idea was also to start exchanging experiences in this project with other zones in SNNPR. Some kind of a tool book for how other woredas could do similar work as being done in Shebedino would be helpful. The book should include the best outcomes of the work in Shebedino.

In conclusion: dissemination should be increased also at regional and woreda levels.

3.8 Programme structure

The programme structure and set up is assessed as good by the interviewees. The structure of WART, RSC, NSC and TAGs is useful. It enables replication of lessons learned in all pockets of the country. The legal issue is a good example of something that has an impact on all levels, regional, federal but also in other regions. The structure of this project helped to make that come true. A suggestion is to cooperate with the multi stakeholder forum for sharing of lessons learned. The good thing of the structure is that local issues become national issues: the quality of community management, the supply chain, water quality problems, the legal issue, management set ups for WASHCOs etc. Also for the government to think about these issues.

It is very important and contributes to the credibility of this project that the project and its outcomes are being owned nationally through the NSC.

Someone suggested to set up these structures in other regions as well, to also build good learning and sharing opportunities in other regions.

It was also noticed that people are very busy, in particular people participating in the steering committees and the technical advisory groups. They not always are able to come to the meetings. They like to come! They are committed to the sector and they like the sector to grow. But there is not always the time. The group of high quality sector professionals in Ethiopia is not very big and the challenges are enormous and there are many new programmes that ask their attention and support.

Frequent replacement of staff is another problem. Not only for this project but for many other projects and initiatives in the water sector. It takes time for new members of the steering committees and advisory groups to get into the discussions and participate fully. Often, once they are at that level, they are called to work somewhere else and the process of introducing people into the project has to start all over.

One suggestion made was to make sure that if people cannot come to the meetings, they are being replaced by someone else from their institution. This can also be a more junior colleague. For them it will be important to learn from the meetings and the discussions.

There is a potential problem of different structures operating in parallel. At the woreda level there is now a woreda WASH team and the WART. The question is if there is not too much overlap. More projects will come to Ethiopia and many of those new projects will also aim to set up structures for coordination and meeting. The risk is that there is overlap and that this will take too much valuable time of people.

One interviewee remarked that the government levels should take more ownership of the different structures i.e. the NSC and NTAG, RSC and RTAG and the WART. High commitment is needed. The NTAG is for them! So government involvement should be improved and more chances should be given to government staff to be involved. Most of the studies were done by consultants and experts. Why not include government staff? Being part of the studies will increase their awareness and capacities. In the end they should say: this is ours!"

The above points to the fact that the scaling up project has done a lot of its studies with consultants. Although that has also resulted in good quality research, it has hampered the involvement of the stakeholders in doing the research. Involving the stakeholders more directly in doing the research could also increase their sense of ownership for the research outcomes and their commitment to implementing the outcomes.

Finally, the statement of one interviewee: *"We have done a lot. People are committed to go through this. The NSC, the RSC, the secretariat and the TAGs. People believe in the importance of this. They are sad because systems do not work and they want to do everything that is possible to make that better."*

Positive is the good cooperation with the university of Awassa. It helps the university because it enables students to do good research. It also supports this project. The university lecturer said: this is a win-win situation.

In conclusion: the institutional set up of the scaling up project is satisfactory and people see the value of it. They recognise that this structure contributes to doing things better and to keeping water systems working. Time is often a problem. People active in the NSC, RSC and other committees are often already very busy. And with more projects coming to Ethiopia the pressure in them will only be bigger.

3.9 The impact of the project on Plan Ethiopia

Special word is given to the impact of the scaling up project on Plan Ethiopia. It was noted by the interviewees representing Plan Ethiopia that the impact has been very positive. Some of the positive outcomes are mentioned here.

- Through the scaling up project Plan Ethiopia has been able to be an active member in the sector, particularly at regional level. The network of agencies is now very strong. The regional level became the national level (Ato Asfaw Dingamo) which is good for the project and for Plan Ethiopia.
- Plan Ethiopia has provided a niche for stakeholder action and Plan Ethiopia is happy to have offered that opportunity.

- The cooperation with other NGOs has improved. The legal study was done by three NGOs. Now there is good cooperation with WaterAid and joint projects are undertaken in different areas and locations. Also the NGOs have committed to take up the legal issue in the regions. Each NGO in one region.
- The project was presented at the EUWI Multi Stakeholder Forum. So the project has good visibility and because of that Plan Ethiopia also.
- Plan is a recognised voice in Ethiopia and that is Plan's motto.
- In this project Plan Ethiopia developed the relationship with Water Action. Both Plan Ethiopia and Water Action have profited from this cooperation.
- Because of the cooperation with Water Action Plan Ethiopia has improved the quality of its implementation.
- The scaling up project has received a lot of interest from donors. In Norway they were very interested. Plan Ethiopia will invite the ambassadors of Norway and the Netherlands to come and see. The image of Plan Ethiopia has improved.
- Also the cooperation with government has improved. The Amhara region encourages Plan Ethiopia to come and implement schemes in that region, using the lessons learned in SNNPR. WaterAid will be a partner. Also in Lalibela there will be cooperation with government. Plan has also proposed to create a Regional Steering Committee for better implementation. And in Oromiya we want to work in an entire district, not only in part of it, so there will be full scaling up in that district.
- We embrace the principle of acting locally and advocating regionally.
- The project has improved our documentation and dissemination. In many newsletters there is report on the scaling up project.

In Plan Ethiopia there are also concerns. Some of them are:

- The outcomes of the work in Shebedino must have an impact on Plan project implementation. We have learned much about the gaps and the quality problems and the consultative process is good, but we must look into the details of implementation. One of the suggestions is to create a Management Information System (MIS) on water.
- At the country office they do not know about the scaling up project. We need to improve that.
- It is important that we demonstrate success on the ground. Not only theoretical. We all have operations, we must make it come true. Other NGOs must bring their experiences to make it a true platform. Must advocate for a research component in all projects.
- We, all stakeholders, must constantly ask: why are we not covering 100%? What are the constraints. Why are we not reaching all? This must be asked in every development effort. Answering these questions is action research and learning.

In conclusion: the scaling up project has had a positive impact on Plan Ethiopia. In particular, it has made Plan Ethiopia a recognised voice and it has put Plan Ethiopia on the map of the water and sanitation sector. Plan now is a valued stakeholder in the water and sanitation sector and appreciated for investing in the scaling up project and providing a platform for sector stakeholders in Ethiopia.

3.10 Performance of the secretariat

In general there is satisfaction with the way the secretariat is managing the scaling up project. Plan Ethiopia is valued for its efficient way of managing this project and for its dedication and support to this project. Some interviewees asked questions about the

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involvement of Plan Ethiopia in the implementation of the hardware part that came out of the Midre Genet case study. They would like Plan Ethiopia to take that up.

The role of the research coordinator is being appreciated highly. He plays a good role. He brings people together, he is very senior in the sector and that is important. He has also contributed to the better cooperation between Plan and other NGOs in the sector. He has the capacity to bring people together and create a positive environment for learning.

After some initial problems now the situation in the WART in the Shebedino woreda has improved. A more senior research officer was appointed who, together with the new watsan advisor in Shebedino, has given the WART a push and is now delivering results. Also on other levels Plan Ethiopia has boosted its capacity in water and sanitation That has all contributed to the well functioning of the scaling up project.

For some it is not clear how long the project will take. When will it end? Is 3 years enough to learn, to experiment, to achieve 100% coverage? What will happen after 3 years?

In conclusion: the role of the secretariat is appreciated by all.

4 Conclusions

The following conclusions have been mentioned already in the text above, but are summoned up below.

1. Sharing experiences with a wide group of agencies and people is appreciated by all interviewees. The scaling up project has created the platform for stakeholders to meet and it satisfies a need in the water and sanitation sector to know from each other's experiences, to discuss the critical issues of community management and to help improve community management of water supply and sanitation. All interviewees recognise that sustainability is big problem in the sector and that sustainability can only be improved by tackling it jointly. The scaling up project has provided the forum for doing this.
2. For realisation of the UAP high quality implementation and support to community management is needed. The UAP for rural areas fully builds on community management. The scaling up project is a chance to improve the guidelines and the enabling environment of community management. It is a chance to improve sustainability of water schemes by looking into the details of community management, synthesise the lessons learned in community management and recommend to all implementing agencies the best way to implement and support community management. That is in line with the current developments in the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia.
3. The research and learning component is valued highly. Sustainability problems have not been addressed sufficiently in Ethiopia and in this project they are. The scaling up project enables a detailed look into community management, the weaknesses, the challenges and the good experiences – and there are many good experiences with community managed water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia. The scaling up project has generated many different exchanges between people at different levels, which has contributed to the learning. In particular at the level of the Shebedino woreda, but also at regional and national level, the institutional set up for the

learning, the WART, the RSC and the NSC, have provided good settings for joint learning.

4. Although the scaling up project has already addressed many different research topics, there remains a whole list of research topics to be taken up. This shows that learning about scaling up community management is not time-bound, but should be done continuously.
5. The research outcomes have given important insights to all stakeholders which they can use immediately. The scaling up project has improved the quality of implementation of Plan and WaterAction. The scaling up project has created an important platform in Shebedino, not only for learning, but also for strong coordination and joint planning. The situational analysis is used as a planning tool for the water desk in Shebedino. Finally, the legal issues has been pushed and the project is actively contributing to the legalisation of the WASHCOs.
6. Action should concentrate on Shebedino. That is where the goals of scaling up must be put into practice: 100% coverage and the conditions for indefinite sustainability. Not all participating agencies put the outcomes of the research into practice. Much more could be done by agencies to act on the lessons learned in the scaling up project. However, action can not be enforced, it can only be triggered by continuous advocacy and explanations. A scattered sector with agencies working in parallel of each other also hinders uptake of lessons learned and harmonisation of approaches. All in all, there is a long way to go to improve community management and to scale up water and sanitation services. The scaling up project has made a start, much more work needs to be done. The work must be taken serious and must have an impact on all sector agencies.
7. People are sceptical about the uptake of lessons learned in the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia. There are already so many good examples in Ethiopia of excellent and effective community management, but nobody is willing to replicate these models. The government has the key to scaling up. Others, NGOs, can provide the platforms for research, learning and sharing of experiences, but in the end the government must put it into practice. That is not always happening, due to a range of factors a/o donor dependency, capacity problems, no incentives for staff at lower levels, lack of interest, lack of respect for community empowerment. But also the role of international agencies is not supportive to scaling up. They operate in parallel, they do not invest sufficiently in building government capacity, they do not harmonise or plan jointly and are driven by agendas set in other places than Ethiopia. Lack of uptake of lessons learned is a critical issue in the scaling up project.
8. Dissemination should be increased also at regional and woreda levels.
9. The institutional set up of the scaling up project is satisfactory and people see the value of it. They recognise that this structure contributes to doing things better and to keeping water systems working. Time is often a problem. People active in the NSC, RSC and other committees are often already very busy. And with more projects coming to Ethiopia the pressure in them will only be bigger.
10. The scaling up project has had a positive impact on Plan Ethiopia. In particular, it has made Plan Ethiopia a recognised voice and it has put Plan Ethiopia on the map of the water and sanitation sector. Plan now is a valued stakeholder in the water and sanitation sector and appreciated for investing in the scaling up project and providing a platform for sector stakeholders in Ethiopia.
11. The role of the secretariat is appreciated by all.

5 Recommendations

The recommendations are grouped into categories.

Recommendations with respect to the project itself:

1. In the NSC and RSC a discussion needs to start about the question if the two goals of scaling up (universal coverage and indefinite sustainability) are still the goals of the scaling up project in Ethiopia and how these can be achieved in Shebedino. I.e. will Shebedino achieve full coverage by the end of the project and will all institutional arrangements and capacities be in place to guarantee indefinite sustainability? Although these targets are hard to achieve, discussing them and accepting compromises to the targets must be done.
2. If possible, involve government and NGO staff working in Shebedino and in the SNNPR region more directly in the research instead of consultants. Doing research by the stakeholders themselves is an important goal of action research and increases the ownership of the research.
3. Stimulate exchange visits, in particular strategic exchange visits e.g. visits of recently constructed community managed schemes in Shebedino to Midre Genet, to learn from the experience of Midre Genet.
4. Explain to all involved in the scaling up project what the closing date of the scaling up project is. Also discuss if there is a need to continue with the project after the closing date, in which form and how that can be done.
5. Use the partnership approach for putting research outcomes into action as was done with the legal study. The outcomes of the legal study were put into practice by different stakeholders acting together. This could also be done for other research outcomes e.g. the outcomes of the study into administration and management of community services.
6. Make sure that the outcomes of the study for improvement of the Midre Genet water scheme are put into practice.
7. Look into the question if the WART and the WASH team in Shebedino overlap and what can be done to avoid overlap. What are the distinctive roles of WART and WASH team in Shebedino?

The following recommendations highlight additional studies to be done by the scaling up project.

8. Start a study into scheme management and administration.
9. Start a study into the support requirements for WASHCOs after construction of their water and sanitation schemes. What is needed in terms of long term support?
10. Finalise the study into the harmonisation of training manuals.
11. Start a study on tariff setting: how is this being done, what are good examples, what tariff is needed to keep water schemes running for the long term?
12. Start a study into how to increase community ownership for their water and sanitation services. What must be done to make communities a full and responsible part of the water and sanitation service delivery chain?
13. Look into the WSG implementation modality and start the discussion about improvements.

Hereafter are recommendations to accelerate uptake of research findings

14. Discuss and decide about measures to move from personal to institutional learning. How can the scaling up project make sure that what people learn in the project on a personal basis also is being discussed and taken up in their organisations?

15. Formulate and discuss the structural constraints to scaling up and present these in the Multi Stakeholder Forum of the EUWI for a general debate among all sector stakeholders.

Recommendations with regard to dissemination.

16. Promote and advocate project outcomes in woreda (Shebedino) and region (SNNPR), also other zones and woredas. In particular water desk staff working in other zones and woredas in SNNPR should get the information of the outcomes of the project. The WART could be instrumental in dissemination by visiting other zones and woredas or by organising an inter-woreda learning event.
17. Write a tool book explaining in practical terms to other woredas what the factors of success were in Shebedino and what they can do to replicate the success.
18. Write a flyer on the 5 key outcomes of the scaling up project and actively disseminate the flyer to national stakeholders and stakeholders in other regions.
19. Much more actively disseminate the successes of the scaling up project to national stakeholders.

The following are recommendations for how the project should have impact on national policy.

20. Find opportunities to refine and update the UAP with the outcomes of the scaling up project.
21. Discuss the outcomes of the scaling up project in the EUWI multi stakeholder forum, using key successes of the project and also presenting the key challenges for scaling up (see recommendation 20.).
22. Start discussion with the big donor infrastructure programmes coming to the country e.g. the DFID programme, African Development programme and try to influence these programmes with the targets of scaling up.
23. Actively stimulate others or to use the results of the studies to improve their implementation.
24. Look into the possibility to start regional steering committees (RSC) and woreda action research teams (WART) in other regions and woredas; document the model and actively advocate the model.

The following recommendations are for the long term and will need the involvement of all stakeholders.

25. Work towards one approach for community management. Now, different agencies use different approaches for management, cost recovery, hygiene promotion and sanitation. For scaling up and effective service delivery harmonisation of these approaches is needed. What should be done to make this come true?
26. What must be done to achieve joint investment and joint planning in particular at woreda level by all stakeholders working in a woreda?
27. Look into the packages that have been developed for woreda level staff for implementing community management in line with the UAP and see if these should be improved. Together with government and donors work towards one manual for implementation and management of schemes. Make sure that experiences of all stakeholders are included, government, donors and NGOs.
28. Start the development of a system and a structure to monitor the quality of implementation of water schemes and create a committee that overlooks the quality and can act if quality lags behind.

29. Start the discussion about how to institutionalise the outcomes of the scaling up project. Will the situational analysis be institutionalised in the whole of the SNNPR? Who will do that? How? Will the situational analysis be updated in the future? Etc.
30. Discuss the roles of government and NGOs. This may not be opportune for this project, but in general in Ethiopia it would be good to start the discussion about the distinction between the role of government and the role of NGOs. Now the roles are largely overlapping and the question is if that is good.

6 Appendix 1

Terms of Reference for Internal Review of Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services

1.1. Background

Plan Ethiopia, with national and regional stakeholder institutions including local and federal Government, has embarked on Action Research for Scaling Up of Community Management of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Services [to be referred to as "Scaling Up"] with close collaboration of the International Reference Centre for Water and Sanitation (IRC) at Shebedino Woreda of Sidama Zone in the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) with the Secretariat role of Plan Ethiopia. Plan Ethiopia has assigned a Research Coordinator and a Research Officer to coordinate and follow up the Action Research.

The purpose of the Research Project is to conduct Action Research (reflect and act) to learn how to strengthen social, institutional, financial, technical etc, support mechanisms for Scaling Up community managed rural water supply and sanitation services to be able to provide sustainable services and accelerate coverage to meet the Universal Access and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

1.2. Overall objective

- To secure long-term sustainability of community managed rural water supply and sanitation services, not for the lifetime of a project or a system, but indefinitely.
- To rapidly serve more people with sustainable rural water supply and sanitation services, bringing coverage up to 100%.
- Enable exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the action research on Scaling Up with other regional and international stakeholders including Plan Country Offices.

1.3. Project Strategy

The strategy employed is involving national, regional and local stakeholder institutions at the different levels of Steering Committee meetings to lead the Action Research with the Secretariat role of Plan Ethiopia and documenting and sharing of the experiences gained from the Action Research and other stakeholders in the sector through the periodical workshops organized and conducted with the participation of international, federal, regional and local sector stakeholder institutions. The forum enable to create a learning and coordinating environment for local and national stakeholders about improved community management of water and sanitation services through Action Research.

1.4. Activities Accomplished

- Formation of the National and Regional Steering Committees
- Organizing National and Regional Technical Advisory Groups
- Mobilizing financial support from donors
- Establishment of the Secretariat with all office and transport facilities
- Recruiting the required staff and building the capacity of the Secretariat
- Building the capacity of local Government and local NGOs
- Several meetings and decisions of NSC & RSC

- Technical support of TAG according to its mandate
- Capacity building workshop conducted in December 2004.
- Meta Evaluation Study conducted to learn from previous country experiences in the management of water supply and sanitation services.
- Situational Analysis of Shebedino, the pilot Woreda for the Scaling Up.
- Inception Workshop conducted in April 2005.
- Learning Workshop # 1 conducted in December 2005.
- Learning workshop # 2 conducted in May 2006.
- Well functioning steering committees and technical advisory groups.

1.5. Lessons Learned

- The need to give more attention to sustainability issues by sector stakeholders,
- People use contaminated water even if they take water from safe sources due to contamination at the household level,
- The legal issues of WASHCO was found as a critical factor for sustainability of water supply services,
- A number of water supply schemes are not functional due to management problems,
- Operation and maintenance especially spare parts availability and weak watsan committee remain as critical factors for sustainability of services,
- Action Research for Scaling Up water and sanitation services is a timely project to meet the Universal Access and the MDG Targets,
- increased awareness of sector partners about sustainability issues,

1.6. Future Activities

- Actions on the ground, observations and documentation.
- Identify and document best practices.
- Learn and share experiences.
- Promote and advocate research results and outcomes.

2.1. Purpose and objective of the Review

To review and document the past processes and activities and to analyse the future plan of Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services and recommend future directions and activities.

2.2. Scope of Work

The review will assess and document the process of Action Research at Country Office, Regional and Woreda levels and outline future actions.

2.3. Activities/tasks

- Review the activities carried out since the start of the project and see the gaps in the process of Scaling Up.
- Assess the performance of the NSC, NTAG, RSC, RTAG and WART activities as outlined in the project document.
- Assess the performance of the Secretariat in coordinating the activities of the Action Research.
- Discuss Action Research with Government (Federal and Regional) and other stakeholders and record observations.

- Outline activities of Action Research for the remaining period of the Project and prepare a Road Map for the future activities.

2.4. Research Questions:

2.4.1. To establish a short institutional history of the project:

1. What has happened since Plan Ethiopia (late 2003) came forward to declare its interest in scaling up and September 2006?

2.4.2. To establish the achievements of "Scaling Up" (outputs, outcomes and impacts) since its inception:

1. Are the achievements of "Scaling Up" consistent with the original vision? If not, what happened?
2. How can "Scaling Up" be re-aligned? Is the Vision of "Scaling Up" still relevant to the operational context in which it works? Are certain adjustments needed?

2.4.3. To analyse the extent to which the structure and modus operandi adapted for the implementation of the initiative might have influenced its outcomes

1. Has the structure of "Scaling Up" enhanced or impeded the operations of "Scaling Up" (governance, accountability, service delivery, resource mobilization, advocacy, technical exchange, partnership development etc.)?
2. How can the operations of the organizations be improved?
3. How should the structure of "Scaling Up" be adjusted to enhance achievement of future strategic directions?
4. How have the stakeholders supported the growth and evolution of "Scaling Up" Do they have concerns that need to be addressed?
5. What are the specific concerns of various stakeholders and how have they (or can they) be addressed?
6. Are there other strategic competencies that would be essential for the success of this vision? If so, which or how can they be identified?
7. The intra-sectoral as well inter-sectoral integration of water supply and sanitation

2.4.4. To capture the lessons that have emerged from the implementation of the Scaling Up Program:

1. What lessons have "Scaling Up" learned along the way?
2. What worked well and what did not?
3. What were the main challenges?
4. How can the operations of the organizations be improved?

2.5 Methodology

The reviewer will use primary and secondary sources at Country Office and Regional levels. The Reviewer will interview with members of the different Steering Committee members at Federal and Regional levels. Focus group discussions and other methodologies may be used when appropriate.

2.6. Output

A report of up to 30 pages, with a record of the past activities, issues raised and lessons learnt and a Road Map of Activities for the remaining period of the Project.

2.7 Time Frame

Internal Mid Term Review of the Action Research for Scaling Up Community Managed Water Supply and Sanitation Services project

The Review will be conducted in September 2006 and the time allocated for the review is 8-10 days including report writing.

A draft report should be circulated and presented to NSC/NTAG and RSC/NTAG and WART in October.

Finalize the report integrating all the findings, recommendations and feedback from the stakeholders and hand it over to Plan Ethiopia.

A Final Report in hard and soft copy should be presented at Learning Workshop #3 in 11-13 December 2006.

Reviewer: Since IRC has a partnership agreement with Plan Ethiopia to build the capacity of the Secretariat, reviewing the process is part of the mandate of IRC. Mr. Ton Schouten will conduct the review on behalf of IRC.