

Section 3

Action Planning Guidelines

Who should read this

- Senior local officials at town/city level, including: programme directors; programme component managers who are responsible for developing and implementing action plans for improving services for the poor in towns and cities.
- Senior technical support staff on attachment to the programme including NGOs and local/international consultants.
- Managers of other concerned line departments and their staff.

Objectives of this section

To propose a framework for action planning to develop local neighbourhood plans and area service plans for networked infrastructure which focuses on the importance of linking these together through consensus building.

What this section tells you

The purpose of action planning is that it leads to **action** being taken which improves services for the urban poor.

The action planning process must **involve everybody who has influence** on what happens; local politicians can be of key importance.

Action planning is concerned with adopting a methodical approach to **find out what is already there** and to build on it.

The proposed **framework for action planning** has three components:

- developing Local Action Plans which respond to the demands and priorities of service users in urban poor areas (Section 3a);
- developing and coordinating Network Service Plans which deal with the supply of services from city-wide networks which is necessary to meet the local demand (Section 3b);

- bringing together the key people to adopt the Local Action Plans and Network Service Plans and agree a way forward which leads to implementation (Section 3c).

Support for the action planning process will be needed in two broad areas: firstly, developing participatory approaches; and secondly, institutional capacity building.

The **starting point** for action planning differs between neighbourhoods, user groups and communities, all of which are at different stages of development; action planning finds out and builds on what is already there.

The local context: where to use these Guidelines

These Guidelines for action planning make two very important assumptions:

- there is a commitment within municipal government to improve services for the poor which has higher level policy support from state/central government; and
- this policy supports a more decentralised approach to planning which accepts the importance of involving users in the process.

The extent to which these conditions exist is highly variable; yet without these ‘policy drivers’ it is very unlikely that the potential benefits from improved planning of services will be realised. The local institutional and political context is thus of central importance to what can be achieved.

There exist many situations in which a lot of preparatory work will be required in order to convince local officials firstly of the importance of involving users in local planning and secondly in developing a more integrated approach to city wide planning. This is beyond the scope of this manual and we make reference to other work which deals with these issues. These Guidelines for action planning are appropriate for situations where the above policy support is in place, including where there is external donor/lending agency support both for financing improvements and to provide technical assistance to local programme managers.

Basic principles

This section of the manual proposes a way of preparing Action Plans for improving services for the urban poor. The whole point of planning is that it

3: ACTION PLANNING GUIDELINES

leads to *action* being taken which improves services for the urban poor. Typically this is likely to include improvements to some or all of the following services:

- water supply;
- sanitation;
- drainage;
- access and paving;
- solid waste;
- power supply and security lighting; and
- community buildings.

The most effective way forward is to find out what is already there and investigate the best ways to improve services through better operation and maintenance of existing services and construction of new facilities. To do this successfully we must involve firstly the local people who are the users of the services, and secondly the officials of the municipality and other agencies who provide urban services. We are likely to need the help and support of others, such as local NGOs, consultants, and outside agencies in doing this.

Networked services require supporting infrastructure which is external to the household and neighbourhood. These can be classified into ‘feeder’ and ‘collector’ networks. Examples of feeder networks include :

- piped water supply; and
- power supply.

Examples of collector networks include:

- main drainage;
- solid waste collection; and
- sewerage sanitation.

Non-networked services at the neighbourhood and household level can be developed independently of municipal services through local action alone; these include:

- wells and handpumps;
- unsewered sanitation;
- local drainage to soakpits or ponds; and
- solid waste disposal in pits.

An important lesson from past experience is that action planning has rarely been effective unless it involves everybody who has influence on what happens. Like it or not, this includes locally elected representatives. Councillors can be powerful supporters of plans for improving services; on the other hand, if they are excluded, they can be in a position to make matters difficult. Always remember that the existence of a plan does not mean that action will automatically follow; the role of local Programme Managers is to make sure that the plans are implemented and that *action* is taken. They need to mobilise all the support they can get in order to do this successfully.

We must also be realistic in our expectations of what can be achieved; it is very unlikely that all of the points in the proposed framework will be adopted. However, we can at least move some way to improving the prevailing situation by taking up what proves possible and workable in the local situation.

Framework for action planning

Two distinct types of plan need to be prepared and coordinated, one representing the demand and the other the supply. The Local Programme Director and Programme Sector Managers (for example, Engineering, Community Development, Health) have a crucially important role to play in making sure that these two types of plans are prepared and co-ordinated. Table 3.1 describes a framework for the action planning process which has three components.

Table 3.1. Action Planning Framework	
Component	Description
Local Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This is how the urban poor articulate their demand for improved services. ■ Local action planning finds out what services the users want and the extent to which they are prepared to allocate the resources at their disposal. ■ From this, full details of improvements to tertiary (neighbourhood) infrastructure are developed, including who pays for what.
Network Service Plan	<p>Area Network Service Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This investigates how the networked infrastructure outside each neighbourhood can best supply services in order to match the demand which is expressed in the Local Plan.

3: ACTION PLANNING GUIDELINES

Table 3.1. continued	
Component	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Area Network Service Plans focus on the capacity of different parts of the secondary infrastructure networks, the demands which will be made, and on improvements to O&M and construction of new works. The Plans will also cover some parts of the primary networks. ■ The actual area covered by each Area Network Service Plan is determined by the 'command areas' of the existing networks. A good starting point is to use the area covered by the municipal Ward, as this often corresponds with the administrative unit for basic O&M services. Primary networks will extend beyond individual Wards, into Zones/Circles and to the town as a whole.
	<p>Co-ordination of Area Network Service Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Area Network Service Plans need to be coordinated to ensure that the demands made on the primary networks which go beyond the limits of the individual area plans can be satisfied. This will be relatively simple for small towns but complicated for larger cities. ■ This co-ordination is best organised according to specific local institutional responsibilities: for example, there may be specialist line agencies for water and power, whilst the municipality deals with drainage and solid waste management. ■ The concerned institution is then responsible for developing town/city wide proposals for the necessary improvements to the primary networks.
Consensus building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This is the key to the planning process; it needs to involve: urban poor residents; officers of the municipality and specialist line agencies; and political representatives of the municipality. ■ It needs to bring together the Local Action Plans and Area Network Service Plans in a local forum where they are discussed, amended and agreed by all concerned. ■ This becomes the basis for action, for following up on progress, and ultimately for monitoring operation and maintenance. In this way, the new approaches can be institutionally learned and absorbed.

Support for action planning

Many of the activities which follow on from the framework in Table 3.1 require a lot of support. Throughout the whole process of planning and subsequent implementation, local Programme Managers need to:

- define the support required;
- identify who can provide the support; and
- estimate and access the resources to fund the support.

Support will be needed in two broad areas.

- **Participatory approaches** to local action planning. See Tools 1, 2 and 3 which are associated with Section 3a of the manual; these will provide initial guidance on what needs to be done to prepare urban poor groups for local action planning and the potential support roles which NGOs can play.
- **Institutional capacity building** to support the more widespread adoption of innovative approaches within the lead agency. Table 2.2 in Section 2 of this manual can be used as a starting point to develop a capacity building agenda.

Where do we start from?

In practice it can take a long time to prepare the proposals for urban services improvement programmes. If the programme is funded by external donors or possibly national government it is highly likely that both national and international consultants will be involved. Project preparation involves initial survey work and discussions with the leaders and managers of local institutions and with some urban poor groups to build up an overview of the town or city and its problems. When the programme starts, we do have some information, although it will be of a very ‘broad brush’ nature. For example:

- urban poor areas to be targeted and their approximate population, identified on a city plan showing municipal Wards;
- some work using participatory techniques will probably have been done in a handful of urban poor areas; and
- an overview of city level infrastructure networks.

The key point here is that these initial studies will also reveal that different neighbourhoods, user groups and communities are at different stages of development, both in terms of the services available and the extent to which

they are already mobilised for other activities through CBOs and NGOs. There is no common baseline; we do not actually start from 'zero', which is why the whole focus of the action planning process is to adopt a methodical approach to find out what is already there and to build on it.

Timing/phasing action planning activities

The purpose of the Area Network Service Plans and the co-ordinated plans for networked services at the town/city level is to ensure that the town infrastructure networks are able to support the networked service improvements at the tertiary level as expressed in the Local Action Plans.

This creates a problem with regard to the relative timing of these planning activities because, theoretically speaking, we do not know the demands on the city wide systems until the Local Action Plans are complete. This implies that the Area/Municipal level planning starts after the local action planning is complete. However, this is not workable, as planning and implementing improvements to primary and secondary infrastructure can be complicated, particularly when it involves coordinating and negotiating with several different agencies. We therefore need to work out a programme which coordinates the Local and Area Network Service Plans. Table 3.2 suggests how activities associated with each component of action planning could be phased.

SERVICES FOR THE URBAN POOR

Table 3.2. Phasing of action planning

Local action planning	Action Plans for Networked Services
Decide on the structure and process for consultation in local action planning <i>See Tool 2 Participatory information gathering</i>	Set up the structure for Consensus Building <i>See Section 3c Consensus Building</i>
Identify a small number of project areas which broadly represent the range of situations likely to be encountered across the city <i>See Tool 1 Preparing users and community groups for action planning</i>	Identify the relevant Wards and commence work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ establish contact ■ find out what is there ■ identify future plans <i>See Tool 11 Initial groundwork</i>
Start work at a pilot level developing Local Action Plans in these areas <i>See Tool 4 Initial survey and groundwork</i>	Analyse capacity of existing systems <i>See Tool 13 Assessing system capacity</i>
Determine the typical demands for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ water supply ■ power supply ■ drainage ■ solid waste management ■ sewerage <i>See Tool 7 User demand for service improvements; also</i> <i>See Tool 8 Gender issues</i> <i>See Tool 9 Formation of user groups</i>	Take these demands as inputs to assessing additional demand for the Area Network Service Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assume they are typical for the city as a whole ■ Work out the additional demands across the city on this basis <i>See Tool 14 Preparing Area Network Service Plans</i>
Implement the Local Action Plans in the pilot areas; review any changes to the demands expressed in the Local Action Plan	Take note of any major changes to demand
Proceed with local action planning	Proceed with Area Network Service Plans and coordination of these across the town/city. Take note of any major changes to demand as local action planning moves ahead. Wherever possible incorporate changes as necessary.

How to use these guidelines

These guidelines cover the three parts of the action planning process described in Table 3.1 above and are structured as follows:

Section 3a: Preparing Local Action Plans: Framework and supporting tools.

Section 3b: Preparing Action Plans for Networked Services: Framework and supporting tools.

Section 3c: Consensus Building.

The framework is made up of a number of different components which address issues which are relevant to the plan; these are presented as a sequence of planning activities.

Associated with each component of the framework are one or more tools; these go into detail about what actually needs to be done with regard to each component of the framework, and hence to prepare the Action Plan.

Detailed technical issues about infrastructure planning for the different service sectors are dealt with in Section 4: Technical Guidelines.

