



## Low cost sanitation programme in Mozambique



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DURING THE 21ST WEDC Conference, we present a paper entitled Sustainability of the National Low Cost Sanitation Programme. The paper enhanced some aspects which have been affecting the National Programme in terms of reaching a sustainable implementation, such as:

- Absence of a clear national policy for sanitation.
- Inadequate institutional integration of the subsector in the long term.
- Highly centralised political-administrative system.
- High levels of dependency on foreign aid, contributing to distortion in national priority setting.
- High level of absolute poverty of the target population “peri-urban and rural” demands high subsidies.
- High rates of urbanization of peri-urban areas brings problems of high density areas, causing problems for extension of the Programme due to plot physical space dimensions.

So, in order to reverse this situation or to minimize the impact of this problems, the PNSBC, have been worked in order to overcome this constraints.

### Approach to innovations

#### Absence of clear policy for sanitation

In respect of this constraint, the PNSBC defined in 1996 the national policy for low cost sanitation, which was approved by the central government. The national policy gives a clear mandate to PNSBC to provide low cost sanitation to poor peri-urban communities. In addition, defines Programme targets, institutional arrangement, establish adequate integration and coordination linkages between sanitation provision and other critically related services and activities (be these water supply, health education, housing.). Such linkages are essential taking into account the rational use of investments and intersectoral development of strategic planning. The national policy also defines the development of human resource, community participation, private and informal sector involvement in the Programme activities. The decentralization of the programme activities to the local government through the city council, is a key element of the policy in order to play in the long-term sustainability of basic urban infrastructure and services.

#### Institutional integration of PNSBC

With respect to inadequate institutional integration of PNSBC, have been agreed (in 1997) between the Na-

tional Institute for Physical Planning “INPF” and the National Directorate of Water “DNA” the need of transference of PNSBC from INPF to DNA, in order to allow integrated planning, implementation and evaluation of water and sanitation activities. Note that PNSBC since its creation, was part of INPF despite of working in close coordination with water and health sectors. For coordination of the key sector agencies, was established an appropriate national sector coordinating committee, which is responsible for facilitation and follow up of this process.

#### Highly centralized administrative system

In respect to this, was decentralized the productive and administrative system of the Programme, using the following alternative models:

##### *Contract for exploration of production units*

Using contract, the PNSBC is testing in pilot basis the management of the Xai-Xai production unit by a private operator. In this model, the PNSBC transfers temporally the production unit as a all to a private operator. The operator will pay a monthly rent to PNSBC related to amortization of the infrastructures and equipment in use. The private operator receives on trust construction materials (cement, irons etc.) during the first 3 months. This credit, must be paid from the fourth month on instalment basis. These funds are used to promote and finance local operators.

##### *Local private operators*

This alternative lies on the following strategy:

The PNSBC promotes and support local communities establishing and training local operators using the funds paid by private operators for a mortization of equipment, tools, workshop and infrastructures etc. These local operators will work among the communities, basically constructing complete latrines. These operators are mainly formed by unemployed people with technical skills living in the peri-urban areas. Those people are trained and supplied with basic equipment to be paid on instalment basis to PNSBC.

##### *Transference of responsibilities to municipalities*

The PNSBC works closely with local governments “City Councils” to develop a common understanding of the direction and pace of decentralization of responsibilities

in relation to sanitation. In respect to this, the PNSBC included a component of capacity building of the city councils in aspects of coordination, planning, management and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure and service provision.

**High levels of foreign aid dependency and absolute poverty of target population.**

Mozambique is highly dependent on external aid both for its investment and recurrent budgets. This level of dependence makes the PNSBC extremely vulnerable to shifts in donor funding patterns, not only in terms of direct financing, but also through central Government. As indicated, the target communities of the Programme live in conditions of extreme poverty, where there is limited number of household that can afford some expenditure on improved latrine. Given existing high level of poverty in peri-urban communities, it is impossible to extend coverage substantially in the current economic climate, without government subsidies. This means that government and donors should continue providing support to PNSBC.

**High density areas**

The lack of space for construction of latrines, motivated by disorderly agglomerates of people displaced by war that up to the present have not returned to their origin places, have been causing problems of extension and Programme development. In order to resolve this problems the National Programme for Low Cost Sanitation prepared terms of reference of a research study of appropriate technologies, that will meet the local condi-

tions in terms of plot physical space, density of population and soil conditions. The main objective of this study is to equip the government with solid instrument of recommendations and suggestions of low and intermediate cost sanitation technologies for high density areas.

**Conclusion**

- The decentralization and a sustainable implementation of the PNSBC, are of primary concern to government of Mozambique.
- The private contractors must be involved in production and construction of sanitation infrastructures.
- The programme should also involve local private operators, through recruitment of local artisans, unemployed skilled labour living in peri-urban areas. This should be supported by PNSBC.
- The Programme should gradually gave up the productive responsibilities in favour of health education, training, technology research and implementation of pilot projects.
- Equally, the PNSBC should return back to local governments 'City Councils' aspects of coordination, planning, management and maintenance of sanitation infrastructures.

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