

# Beyond political commitment to sanitation:

Navigating incentives for prioritisation and course correction in Ethiopia, India and Indonesia

## **Synthesis report**



Front cover image: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressing the participants of the Ministerial Dialogue on Sanitation and Water, Washington DC, USA, April 2012.  
Photo credit: Sanitation and Water for All



Delegates at the High Level Meeting, Washington DC, April 2012.

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The research also includes these publications, which can be accessed at [www.wateraid.org/commitmentsintoaction](http://www.wateraid.org/commitmentsintoaction)

*Good intentions, so what next? Turning commitments to sanitation into action. Policy brief.*

*Beyond political commitment to sanitation: Navigating incentives for prioritisation and course correction in India. Case study report.*

*Beyond political commitment to sanitation: Navigating incentives for prioritisation and course correction in Indonesia. Case study report.*

*Beyond political commitment to sanitation: Navigating incentives for prioritisation and course correction in Ethiopia. Case study report.*

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## Executive summary

This study examines how high-level political commitment for sanitation is translated into progressive outcomes through two processes: prioritisation through different layers of government; and course correction to tackle existing and emerging obstacles.

The study seeks to explain the role of incentives in these two processes, and how aspects of the wider context condition the ways in which those incentives play out. It references three case studies: urban sanitation in Indonesia; rural sanitation in Ethiopia; and rural sanitation in India at national level and in the state of Chhattisgarh.

Regarding how incentives shape the translation of high-level political commitment into prioritisation of sanitation through government machinery, the study finds that:

- Two main types of incentives are at play in the case study countries: on one hand, values-based messages around modernity and cultural heritage; on the other, more instrumental incentives such as career progression and political return.
- Identifying these positive incentives is a necessary first step, but to make use of them it is important to be sensitive to the competing incentives and power differences:
  - To cascade prioritisation from higher to lower levels (that is from national to subnational tiers of government), legal and political ‘rules of the game’ are just as important as is delegating the authority and resources to prioritise sanitation.
  - In increasing prioritisation across government (that is among responsible ministries or departments at the same level), subtle differences in power and status affect the willingness of key entities to respond.

Considering how incentives enable or hinder course correction to tackle existing and emerging obstacles in the sector, we find that:

- Opportunity for political advantage seemed to increase the likelihood that stakeholders at lower tiers will contribute proactively to evidence-based course correction (but can also have perverse effects, for example encouraging overreporting).
- Involving key decision makers in analytical and diagnostic processes can increase ownership and the incentives to make evidence-based policy reforms.
- Verification is key to building a culture in which data can be trusted and users incentivised to make it the basis for course correction decisions.
- Learning and review mechanisms can play an important role for course correction, but incentivising the right people to get around the table, make commitments and act on them means confronting power differences.

Considering the relationship between prioritisation through government machinery and course correction, we find that the two functions can be mutually reinforcing. However, top-down prioritisation can also undermine effective adaptation at local levels.

Based on the findings, lessons for stakeholders seeking to improve prioritisation and course correction in the sanitation sector include the need to:

- Map the values and priorities of key stakeholders at different levels to understand what types of instrumental and values-based incentives are likely to work for different audiences.
- Evaluate how legal and political ‘rules of the game’ affect the decisions of lower levels of government, and how these can be harnessed to sanitation’s advantage.
- Increase the authority of those tasked with driving prioritisation horizontally across government ministries and departments, for example by enlisting senior figures.
- Increase opportunities for learning and review processes to provide officials with exposure to more senior figures – including through greater use of communication technology.
- Involve senior decision makers in the design and interpretation of sector learning and research.
- Invest in verification processes to build trust in data for course correction, whether undertaken by peers or external agents.
- Encourage follow-up on course correction decisions, by supporting key platforms to attract and retain active and influential members, and providing resources to implement government-owned course correction decisions.
- Ensure top-down prioritisation does not undermine local adaptation and course correction, by allowing flexibility in guidelines and providing supportive supervision.



Nigerian Finance Minister  
Hon. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala  
being interviewed at  
the High Level Meeting,  
Washington DC, April 2012.

WaterAid / Dermot Tallow / Panos Pictures

# Introduction

Advocates for sanitation argue that a lack of high-level political commitment has been the key blockage for progress in the sector. The 2006 Human Development Report characterised the problem clearly: ‘Even more than water, sanitation suffers from a combination of institutional fragmentation, weak national planning and low political status’.<sup>i</sup>

Internationally, political commitment to sanitation has increased remarkably over the past 15 years. Sanitation was included as a specific Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target in 2002,<sup>2</sup> and 2008 was made the International Year of Sanitation.<sup>3</sup> The agreement of a human right to sanitation in 2010 represents an important milestone.<sup>i</sup> The Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meetings and numerous regional sanitation conferences have also stimulated competition

and learning.<sup>ii</sup> Most recently, the sanitation and hygiene target under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 represents a significant deepening of ambition, aiming to ‘achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation’ by 2030.

At country level, the picture is more mixed, with only a few countries displaying commitment at the highest levels of government. Building on the international momentum, the impetus of the SDGs and competition between countries, we are likely to see such political commitment in more and more countries.

However, not enough attention has been given to what happens when high-level political commitment (see box) is in place. Existing effort to translate high-level political commitment

## What do we mean by high-level political commitment?

By ‘high-level political commitment’ we mean commitment at senior levels of government, which can be demonstrated by an individual champion who makes sanitation their priority, or by several individuals in different positions, in a more diffuse way. Political commitment needs to be considered in the context of each country’s political system. For example, commitment from a senior elected politician can be a powerful driver and is perhaps the ‘gold standard’ for political commitment in democratically accountable political systems.

India is the only case study country where commitment is evident from the Prime Minister (head of Government), who has made sanitation central to one of his flagship programmes. This builds on previous strong commitment by a senior minister, and seems to have substantially galvanised effort on sanitation within Government and society at large.

In Ethiopia, meanwhile, commitment is demonstrated by a number of senior stakeholders, including ministers at national and regional level as well as senior staff within the civil service. Ethiopia identifies as a ‘developmental state’,<sup>4</sup> which implies the Government is strongly driving development priorities. In this context some clear successes are evident, such as the inclusion of sanitation as a major component of the national Health Extension Programme.

In Indonesia, meanwhile, strong commitment from senior civil servants within the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) seems to have been sufficient to translate into major gains, such as increased central government budget allocations for sanitation.<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Sanitation was recognised as a human right alongside drinking water in 2010, with UN Resolution 64/292, and given further recognition as a distinct human right in 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> Including the Panama Declaration at the 2013 LATINOSAN conference, the Ngor Declaration at the 2015 AFRICASAN conference, and the 2016 Dhaka Declaration at SACOSAN.

<sup>iii</sup> See Indonesia case study report.

into outcomes has focused on the institutional ingredients that underpin a functioning sanitation sector, such as the presence of dedicated targets and policies, and clear institutional roles and budget lines for sanitation.<sup>5,6,7</sup> However, it does not sufficiently consider questions of how and why those institutional elements are likely to be put in place, or blocked.

There is a need to understand how and why high-level political commitment translates, or fails to translate, into positive outcomes. This research aims to bridge this knowledge gap with lessons from three countries where there is some evidence of high-level political commitment, leading to significant progress, even if there is some way to go to ensure universal, sustainable services.

In doing so, this research builds on WaterAid's previous investigation of the political economy of sanitation and hygiene services that delivered total coverage within a generation in a number of South-East Asian states, particularly Singapore and South Korea.<sup>8</sup> That study identified two crucial functions in how commitment on sanitation translates into outcomes: permeating commitment to improve sanitation throughout the government machinery; and progress chasing to ensure course correction to address blockages and emerging challenges. In addressing 'how' and 'why' questions, we also build on a limited but growing number of studies that use applied political economy analysis and related techniques to understand specific issues of incentives and power that affect the sanitation sector (see Annex 1).<sup>9,10</sup>

Drawing on case studies of rural sanitation in India and Ethiopia, and urban sanitation in Indonesia, we consider how political commitment has translated into prioritisation through different layers of government, and how course correction occurs to tackle obstacles. The countries provide a diversity of geographical contexts (Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and South-East Asia); subsectors (urban and rural sanitation); and sanitation challenges (from reducing open defecation in Ethiopia and India, to providing integrated systems for managing faecal waste in Indonesia). In each, we look at different levels, and the interactions between them, including national, subnational

(with a dedicated subnational case study of Chhattisgarh in India), sectoral and individual.

The study, and this report, are organised around three overarching research questions:

1. How do incentives shape the translation of high-level political commitment into prioritisation of sanitation through government machinery?
2. How do incentives enable or hinder course correction to tackle existing and emerging obstacles in the sector?
3. How do prioritisation through government machinery and course correction interrelate?

The research was commissioned by WaterAid and carried out by the Overseas Development Institute. We undertook a short review of relevant publications to prepare the analytical framework of the research. Field work was conducted via five-day to ten-day visits in the capitals of the three nations, except in India where a dedicated subnational case study was conducted in the state of Chhattisgarh. We consulted 85 people via interviews and focus group discussions, with desk-based research either side of field work.

The research has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Although we triangulated findings wherever possible, the number of respondents in each country was limited (21–42). The fact that most were working at the national (or international) level means it was difficult to verify assertions about the situation below this level (or, in India, in states other than Chhattisgarh). The choice of countries also means that the extent of political commitment to sanitation, of prioritisation throughout government, and of effective course correction, was not always clear. This is, however, likely to be the case too in other countries that are trying to provide adequate and equitable sanitation for all.

We start with a context section to characterise the case study countries, as well as major policy and programmatic milestones in their sanitation subsectors. This lays the ground for the main findings sections, in which we address the three research questions. In the conclusions section we consider the broader story, and draw lessons for those seeking to translate high-level political commitment into sanitation outcomes in other countries.



# Context

## Characterising the case study countries

Although it is impossible to summarise the political landscape for each country in a few paragraphs, certain aspects are important for qualifying how political commitment on sanitation has (or has not) emerged, and subsequently for addressing the research questions.

In Ethiopia, single-party dominance is a crucial feature – the current ruling party, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has been in power for more than two decades and won 100% of the seats in the Federal Parliament in 2015. Party structures provide an important, mainly top-down conduit for translating priorities and instruction to local levels, and allegiance and progression within the party are important motivators for officials.<sup>12</sup> In its social and economic policies, Ethiopia has made strides in poverty reduction and broad-based growth.<sup>13</sup> However, violence is sometimes used to suppress dissent, and there are recurrent accusations of restrictions on and intimidation of opposition parties, the media, and civil society.<sup>14</sup>

In Indonesia, there has been impressive progress since 1998 in transitioning from the authoritarian regime of former President Suharto. The current coalition government has placed a strong emphasis on economic development, poverty alleviation and reducing corruption.<sup>15,16</sup> A major policy success is diverting billions of dollars in fuel subsidies towards infrastructure projects. However, less democratically accountable interests still play a role in Indonesian politics, such as oligarchs who have been able to buy policy influence with financial support to political parties.<sup>17</sup> Although incorporating and neutralising these elements often happens through negotiation and brokering, rather than violence, it can slow the pace of socially progressive reforms in all sectors.

In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) commands the first single-party majority government at national level, following many decades of multi-party coalitions. The BJP is also the ruling party in Chhattisgarh. Outwardly, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has set a raft of time-bound targets across an apparently broad and inclusive set of socio-economic priorities.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 1: Demographic and economic snapshot for case study countries**

	India	Indonesia	Ethiopia
<b>Population in millions (2015)</b>	1,311 (Chhattisgarh: 25)	258	99
<b>Population density (people per km<sup>2</sup>, 2015)</b>	441	142	99
<b>Rural population (% of total)</b>	67%	46%	81%
<b>GDP per capita (2015, purchasing power parity, current international \$)</b>	\$6,089	\$11,035	\$1,627
<b>Approx. range in annual GDP per capita growth since 2005</b>	3-5%	2-8%	6-10%

Source: data.worldbank.org<sup>11</sup>

However, critics allege an increasing tendency towards more divisive populist and religion-based politics.<sup>19</sup> Patronage remains a pervasive feature of Indian electoral politics.<sup>20</sup> Violent insurgency, for example that by Maoists in several states including Chhattisgarh, and the military response of the Government, are among the more severe signs of exclusion of some groups within India's current political system.<sup>21</sup>

On the administrative side, an important feature across all countries, with implications both for prioritisation and course correction, is the extent and manner of decentralisation. India and Ethiopia are federal republics, with explicit demarcation of powers between the central Government, and governments of states (India) and of regions (Ethiopia). Indonesia is a unitary, rather than federal, state, and although there has been significant decentralisation this is not quite equivalent to federalism – the delegation of powers is arguably clearer for the smaller sub-units of regencies and cities than it is for the 34 provinces. All three countries have decentralised responsibility for provision of basic services, including sanitation. See Annex 2 for further details.

## The sanitation trajectory for the case study countries

### India



Of the three countries, India shows clearest commitment to sanitation from the very top of the ruling elite, notably from Prime Minister Modi himself, rather than line ministers and their senior civil servants. The way in which sanitation is being prioritised as part of a wider mission for 'Clean India' is also unprecedented. Combined with the party politics described, backing from the BJP leader could imply that sanitation becomes a politically polarising issue, driven by the governing party but ignored or even resisted by opposition parties. However, as we go on to explain, this was not yet evident from our research, although we did concentrate on one state which is also BJP-led.

The current situation reflects a lengthy and incremental journey. A shift from supply-driven approaches occurred in 1999, with the launch of the Total Sanitation Campaign. This attempted to introduce a more demand-led and community-led approach. An award scheme initiated in 2003, the 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar', further sought to incentivise collective action at community level by

rewarding achievement of full sanitation coverage and open defecation free (ODF) status.

Despite the evolving approach and large-scale national programmes, however, progress in terms of sanitation outcomes was slow. The 2011 census provided an important reality check when it showed 31% of people in rural India had access to toilets, whereas the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) had reported coverage to be 68%. Spurred in part by the new data, a greater degree of commitment from senior leadership came with MDWS Minister, Jairam Ramesh, who rebranded the Total Sanitation Campaign as 'Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan' in 2012. Ramesh was outspoken on sanitation issues and led important initiatives, including a baseline report on sanitation access, shifting attention from ODF status to achievement of 'Nirmal (clean) Status' and recruiting celebrities to publically endorse the programme.<sup>22</sup>

Despite backing from a senior political leader, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan was insufficient to trigger a major upturn in sanitation progress. In 2014, newly elected Prime Minister Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM; Clean India Mission), aiming to achieve 100% access and usage of sanitation by October 2019. Much of the responsibility for designing implementation mechanisms has been delegated to state level, and Chhattisgarh has set an even more ambitious target of 100% sanitation access and use by December 2018.



Logo of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

It is too early to say conclusively how far SBM's rural component, SBM-Grameen (SBM-G), is succeeding. Our interviewees did imply that there has been greater prioritisation of sanitation from political leaders and officials at both national level and in Chhattisgarh – especially when compared with previous programmes. As we shall see, there is some evidence of course correction

too. In terms of outcomes, the Government reports an impressive increase in sanitation coverage since initiation of the programme from 42% to 55% in September 2016. Chhattisgarh has reportedly increased coverage at a slightly higher rate, from 42% at the start of SBM-G to almost 57% in September 2016.<sup>23</sup> The only survey available from that period, conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation in mid-2015, seems to confirm this national upward trend, which is yet to be reflected and corroborated by the Joint Monitoring Programme data (Table 2).

## Indonesia



In Indonesia, political commitment for urban sanitation is shown by ambitious targets and major funded programmes, and the sector is reportedly rising up the agenda of a number of Provincial and District leaders. Overall, high-level political commitment is evident in the national ministries directly involved, but does not seem to be prioritised above other social and infrastructure sectors.

Compared with India's rural sanitation trajectory, interviewees in Indonesia gave less prominence to individual leaders when describing political commitment to urban sanitation. One expert attributed this to cultural attitudes that emphasise the group over the individual, and



Sanitation and Water for All

Sanitasi Award ceremony  
in Indonesia

equate individual prominence with arrogance. Nonetheless, several developments indicate gradually increasing commitment by successive administrations. Early efforts in the post-Suharto context since 1998 tended to transfer responsibility for sustainability to communities. For example, the 2003 initiation of SANIMAS (Sanitasi Oleh Masyarakat; Sanitation by Communities) emphasised small-scale, community-managed decentralised wastewater systems as a means by which to improve sanitation in poor, dense urban communities. Although such forms of urban sanitation provision remain part of the overall approach, they now fit within a wider context that increasingly takes a more balanced approach to government responsibility, especially local government.

The Indonesia Sanitation Sector Development Program (ISSDP) was a crucial factor in prioritisation by national Government, and in increasing understanding of the sector by local government within Indonesia's rapidly decentralising context.<sup>24</sup> Initiated as a pilot in 2006 involving six and then twelve cities, ISSDP focused on increasing local governments' understanding of their current situation and responsibilities for sanitation, and supported cities to develop Citywide Sanitation Strategies (Strategi Sanitasi Kota/Kabupaten or SSK). The SSK approach to develop coordinated urban sanitation planning and investment remains a hallmark of the current main sanitation programme, the Accelerated Sanitation Development for Human Settlements Program (PPSP). In its first phase to 2014, PPSP supported

development of SSKs in 446 districts. The current second phase, PPSP II (2015–2019), focuses on implementation of SSKs and expanding the programme to 506 districts.<sup>25</sup>

In 2014 a presidential decree (PERPRES No. 185/2014) was issued on 'accelerating water and sanitation development'. The decree provides a strong legal basis from which central Government can push local government to fulfil its responsibilities, and called for a cross-sectoral task force directly under the president's remit. The task force is not yet operational, and, although the decree indicates engagement at the highest level of government, there are many such decrees each year. In perhaps the clearest indication of high-level commitment to date, the current Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN 2015–2019) includes an ambitious target for 100% access to sanitation in both urban and rural areas by 2019. The RPJMN runs to the same five-year cycle as presidential terms and signals the leadership's priorities for their term in office. As we will explain, the programmes and targets do seem to have some influence on prioritisation at other, more local levels, and there is evidence of important course corrections and the mechanisms for these to happen in future. The picture is not conclusive, however, and, like the other case study countries, Indonesia is in an ongoing process to turn commitment into outcomes.

Around three quarters of the urban population were using improved technologies in 2015, reflecting steady progress from 1990 (Table 2). However, the picture is not universally positive, and serious problems persist in turning commitment into outcomes. High rates of urbanisation are leaving some people behind; in absolute terms, open defecation is increasing. Moreover, and crucially, the high levels of access to improved technologies for containment do not yet translate into safely managed sanitation chains for faecal sludge and wastewater. Septic tanks and cubluks (wet pit latrines) are common but rarely emptied, and less than 2% of the population is connected to a networked sewerage system.<sup>26</sup>

## Ethiopia



In Ethiopia, as in Indonesia, high-level political commitment to rural sanitation has been more visible among leaders within responsible line ministries (or their equivalents at regional level). Although such individuals can be influential as party members, for example in securing targets and developing major programmes, there was less evidence of high-level political commitment on sanitation within the upper echelons of the wider EPRDF.

The launch of Ethiopia's Health Extension Programme in 2003 by the Ministry of Health provided a foundation for promotion of sanitation, backed by the presence of two female health extension workers in each kebele (the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia, similar to a ward). Regional leaders such as Dr Shiferaw, head of the Bureau of Health in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region, were instrumental in the years that followed in piloting more demand-led approaches to sanitation. These efforts informed the development of an overarching strategic framework in 2009 under the label Community-Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene (CLTSH).

Looking beyond health sector leadership, the One WASH National Programme (OWNP) has been an important conduit and focal point for commitment by several line ministries, at least for rural sanitation. In addition to Health, the key Ministries are Water, Irrigation and Electricity; Education; and Finance and Economic Development. Launched in 2013, the OWP and associated WASH Implementation Framework are backed by a memorandum of understanding signed by the different Ministers.

Despite these important advances, some of our interviewees questioned how far political commitment expressed by individual sector leaders was translating into prioritisation within the wider sector machinery and effective course correction. For example, within the Ministry of Health sanitation sits under the portfolio of a case team, below directorate level. The case team itself has a broader agenda covering a wide range of Hygiene and Environmental Health issues. Also undermining the idea that commitment has been sufficient, or easily translated into prioritisation, are the succession of targets which have been missed, most notably for universal access by 2015. The 2015 Health Sector Transformation Plan presents a further set of targets, which,



Melal and Meti, students in a school with gender-segregated toilets in Woliso, Ethiopia.

WaterAid / Behailu Shiferaw

Table 2: Key sanitation statistics for the case study countries based on JMP data

	India				Indonesia				Ethiopia			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015
<b>Rate of open defecation</b>	91%	61%	29%	10%	50%	29%	19%	13%	100%	34%	39%	6%
<b>Access to improved sanitation</b>	6%	29%	49%	63%	24%	48%	61%	72%	0%	28%	21%	27%

Source: www.wssinfo.org

although still highly ambitious, are more pragmatic and cover a wider range of sanitation priorities than did previous targets: 82% to have access to improved latrines and handwashing facilities by 2018/19, from a baseline of less than 28% in 2015; and 82% of kebeles to be verified ODF; and for all health facilities to have functional sanitation by 2019/20.<sup>27</sup>

Despite struggling to meet its sanitation targets, Ethiopia has seen rapid reductions in rates of open defecation, from very high levels in 1990 (Table 2). In this context, several interviewees highlighted the inclusion of sanitation and

hygiene promotion in the Health Extension Programme as being the most influential among the various initiatives signalling high-level commitment. The system is arguably well suited to increasing coverage of basic latrines, self-constructed by households using locally available materials. However, for reasons we consider further in the next sections, it is less well suited to achieving sustained use of improved latrines across the board. A recent UNICEF evaluation, for example, found that open defecation rates ranged from close to 90% in the Afar Region, to less than 1% in Benshangul-Gumuz.<sup>28</sup>



Mr Alipui, UNICEF, chairing the morning session of the meeting, Washington DC, April 2012.

WaterAid/ Demot-tatlow/ Panos Pictures

# How do incentives shape the translation of high-level political commitment into prioritisation of sanitation through government machinery?

In responding to this question, we first identify what broad types of incentives seem to be at work for prioritisation of sanitation through government machinery. We then consider how these play out in relation to other, competing incentives.

**We found two main types of incentives: (i) values-based messages around modernity and cultural heritage; and (ii) instrumental incentives such as career progression and political return.**

Across the three case study countries, a wide range of incentive mechanisms are in evidence, suggesting that leaders are responding to the specifics of their contexts to persuade politicians and public servants at different levels to prioritise sanitation. We highlight four general categories. The first two harness ideas around economic competitiveness and modernity on the one hand, and historical-cultural heritage on the other, and seem more values-based (attempting to encourage buy-in by aligning with individuals' world views). The second two are more instrumental (creating buy-in via the prospect of personal reward), tapping into the desire for political and career advantage.<sup>iv</sup>

## Values-based incentives

Taking economic competitiveness and modernity first, economic arguments have long been part of the international advocacy strategy for increasing high-level commitment on sanitation. For example, in both India and Indonesia interviewees referenced the Economics of Sanitation Initiative, undertaken by the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, which sought to quantify the economic costs of inadequate sanitation (6.4% of GDP for India, and 2.3% of GDP for Indonesia).<sup>30</sup> However,

in translating commitment into prioritisation through lower tiers of government a more generic and less technical approach was apparent, taking advantage of broader ideas of economic competitiveness and modernisation. In Ethiopia and Indonesia, interviewees referred to sanitation as supporting the broader national ambitions to reach middle-income and high-income status, respectively. In India, sanitation is linked to the Government's vision for global economic competitiveness under the banner 'New Age India', which rests on economic governance and wider development.<sup>31</sup> This motivator was also apparent at the subnational level – in Indonesia, one interviewee reflected that “at the local level it is not the economic cost... that drives the agenda forward; instead, it is linked to the image of the smart/modern city that [Mayors] want to portray”.

In India, the largely forward-looking messaging around modernity and competitiveness is matched by more retrospective attempts to harness cultural heritage. Appeals to these more values-based forms of incentives include setting the programme deadline to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth, while the ubiquitous mission logo features the distinctive Gandhian spectacles. Chhattisgarh and the national Government have each designated nine public figures from different areas of expertise as champions, under the label *navaratnas* meaning 'nine gems'. The *navaratnas* have significance in Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism, and are also suggestive of the semi-mythical courtly advisors of India's emperors. In Chhattisgarh, the way in which these efforts to co-opt cultural and religious motifs were referred to made them seem relatively uncontentious, although this kind of historical-cultural appropriation may be a difficult line to tread.

<sup>iv</sup> See Hickey (2013)<sup>29</sup> for a discussion of values-based versus instrumental incentives.

## Instrumental incentives

India provides examples of how the prospect of personal and political return is used to encourage prioritisation down to local level. In Chhattisgarh, a state policy directive requires electoral candidates to have a toilet. More broadly, SBM is constructed around a broader narrative of cleanliness which is linked into daily domestic and community life, rather than sanitation alone. As such, some interviewees regarded prioritising the programme as a potential route to win votes among a broad spread of rural constituencies – as one interviewee put it, the programme is visible ‘across every corner of India’. However, instrumental incentives seemed to be at work beyond electoral candidates. Within India’s hierarchical bureaucracy, it seemed the wider ‘Mission’ may be imbued with sufficient political importance for being involved in the SBM to be seen as an important route for career progression and personal renown for appointed officials. In the words of one of the officials we interviewed: “by doing something new you will get your fame and promotion”.

In Ethiopia, a current emphasis on sanitation marketing is reportedly gaining traction across a range of agencies, including those responsible for enterprise and microfinance. This is being achieved by the Ministry of Health, with support of the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, linking sanitation marketing to the politically salient priority of reducing youth unemployment. This is a live policy concern for the Government of Ethiopia, perceived as vital for social stability and growth. Linking sanitation to this agenda has reportedly increased the political importance and prestige associated with the sector.

In Indonesia, meanwhile, use of inter-city peer competition has played a part in encouraging local leaders to prioritise sanitation. Since 2014 awards have been offered for city leaders (Sanipura) – to recognise, for example, increasing budget allocations or service delivery innovations. The incentive effect is reportedly more due to prestige among peers than the award’s intrinsic value.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, on the financial side, we found several mechanisms that seem to achieve their incentive effect not so much via personal financial return, but via a political return associated with being able to control budgets and make investments. In Indonesia, making Citywide Sanitation Strategies a prerequisite for accessing national investment funds for urban sanitation has resulted in hundreds of districts developing strategies over a short timeframe, as mayors spot an opportunity to bring funds to their constituencies. Meanwhile in Chhattisgarh, under the Chief Minister’s Rural Development Scheme, local government entities are eligible for financial schemes if they become ODF. Funds can be spent on non-sanitation activities (for example beautification of ponds and extension of village buildings), which might make the scheme more politically attractive to local elites.

**The positive incentives identified for prioritisation of sanitation are necessary, but not sufficient. Peoples’ perceptions about autonomy and authority shape how they respond to incentives to prioritise sanitation.**

Incentives to prioritise sanitation do not take effect in a vacuum; individuals are subject to many competing incentives. Perceptions about autonomy to take action seemed crucial to how incentives operate from senior to junior levels, or from national to subnational levels (for example: Will this have negative repercussions? What other things am I being pressured to do?). Here, an important insight is that the legal and political ‘rules of the game’, under which government representatives at lower tiers operate, can shape their willingness to prioritise sanitation, as much as being delegated administrative authority and financial resources. In considering prioritisation ‘through’ government machinery, how incentives take effect between ‘peers’ (for example among responsible ministries or departments at the same level of government) is also important. Here, perceptions about relative status of institutions and programmes were identified as important factors (for example: Is the person/organisation driving this agenda important? Is it aligned with my current strategic priorities?).



Although this area concerns how incentives operate between peers, subtle differences of power and status are at work.

### Autonomy

At the simplest level, it might be expected that cascading prioritisation from senior to junior, or from national to subnational, is largely a matter of assigning responsibilities and providing resources. Within the WASH sector, this is reflected in the well recognised importance of administrative and fiscal aspects of decentralisation, for example the need to match delegation of service delivery responsibilities with finance.<sup>33</sup> However, examples from Indonesia and Ethiopia underscore how legal and political dimensions of decentralisation can also shape the ability of lower levels of government to respond to any incentives to prioritise sanitation.

Considering legal aspects first, Indonesia's districts are distinct legal corporate entities which can own assets and in theory can borrow finance. But the pace of Indonesia's decentralisation has left gaps and tensions in the legal framework that obstruct effective working. For example, infrastructure for sanitation and water is often constructed by line ministries (particularly Public Works) using national budgets, and notionally transferred to district government ownership. However, legal status is not always fully clarified and, in a context of strict public expenditure rules, district government officials can be reluctant to take on ownership and operation and maintenance responsibilities. In theory, national legislation provides the framework for local legislation. However, a key national law (7/2004 on water resources) was annulled in 2015, further reducing the limited guidance this had provided on sanitation.<sup>v</sup> A wastewater law has been drafted but has been waiting for approval for two years, and, although a presidential decree on 'accelerating water and sanitation development' (PERPRES No. 185/2014) has been approved, such instruments are subsidiary to framework legislation.

Considering the political aspects, findings from Ethiopia suggest that prioritisation at woreda (district) and kebele (ward) levels is subject to several pressures and perverse incentives associated with party politics. Ethiopia has local elections but in a context of single-party dominance. Party membership is a pre-requisite for most officials, and party commands were seen by several interviewees as being more important for local (woreda/kebele) priorities than line ministry policy and instruction. Health extension workers can be co-opted into seasonal party-orchestrated campaigns for other health issues such as deworming or immunisation. At the same time, when sanitation does become a campaign priority, other extension staff without necessary expertise are enlisted to support. Where sanitation is prioritised at local levels, the effect of these competing incentives is rapid, compressed campaigns that may not be suited to stimulating lasting behaviour change. In the words of an interviewee: "[Health Extension Workers] are not in a position to implement the guidelines properly. When you talk about CLTS [Community Led Total Sanitation], it's not one day's work."

### Relative status

Sanitation is a multi-sector issue. Without clear designation of responsibilities across ministries and their subnational equivalents it risks becoming no-one's priority, or being isolated within a single ministry. This is implied in the 2006 Human Development Report's<sup>1</sup> identification of institutional fragmentation as a key problem for the sanitation sector.

Yet, as in the case of prioritisation between different levels of government, ensuring prioritisation across 'peers', for example different government ministries or departments at the same level of government, is not simply a matter of assigning responsibilities. Subtle power plays and vested interests can act as powerful disincentives for the agencies involved to prioritise sanitation in a coherent manner. Evidence from the case study examples suggests

<sup>v</sup> Mainly over concerns on clauses relating to private participation.

that such issues of power and interest can arise over control of financial resources, or the relative status of departments and programmes.

In Indonesia, designated responsibilities for coordinating and enforcing prioritisation by different ministries within Government are not backed up by the implicit power associated with control of budgets. Responsibility for coordinating the urban sanitation sector rests with the Ministry of National Development Planning, Bappenas. In theory, Bappenas should take a leading role in encouraging different Ministries – including Public Works, Home Affairs, Health, Environment, Finance, Education and Culture – to prioritise their respective contributions to the urban sanitation agenda. Bappenas plays this kind of role in other sectors and is ordinarily seen as a powerful entity, but the research suggested that it faces challenges. In the words of one interviewee: “because its power has decreased over the years [Bappenas] now needs to work much harder to convince different ministries to respond to sanitation needs and work together”. The Ministry of Public Works, meanwhile, controls much of the investment in centralised and decentralised urban sanitation infrastructure from the national budget (giving it *de facto* control over spending priorities), the Ministry of Home Affairs exerts much influence over subnational government affairs, and the Ministry of Finance approves budget disbursements. These different forms of more implicit power are at work alongside Bappenas’ on-paper authority to coordinate and direct the urban sanitation sector.

Our findings from Ethiopia, meanwhile, highlight the importance of relative status of departments and programmes in how far the lead ministry can encourage others to prioritise

sanitation. In Ethiopia a single ministry, Health, is designated as lead for rural sanitation at federal level. As noted, sanitation is somewhat buried within the architecture of a ministry with a much broader portfolio, overseen by a Hygiene and Environmental Health Case Team below directorate level. Above and beyond the questions we raised about what this implies about the extent of current high-level political commitment, it might also reduce the Ministry of Health’s ability to drive prioritisation of sanitation within the wider WASH agenda. The relative rank of representing staff reportedly means the institutional champion for sanitation can have a weaker voice when WASH stakeholders come together.

Imbalances in the status of programmes can also be detrimental to effective horizontal prioritisation. The Health Extension Programme remains a flagship programme for the Ministry of Health, implemented in all woredas. By contrast, the OWNP is coordinated from the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity and is implemented in a subset of woredas each year. The perceived lower status of the OWNP reportedly means the Ministry of Health is less inclined to get behind it and thus to push the sanitation agenda within it. This kind of institutional territorialism remains a significant challenge for the sector, despite the commitment at the 2014 Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting: ‘The Ministry of Health will work with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, and Ministry of Education to ensure that sanitation and hygiene – as a subsector of WASH – is well recognized and resourced.’<sup>34</sup>

## How do incentives enable or hinder course correction to tackle existing and emerging obstacles in the sector?

Addressing the second research question, we identify a range of incentives which underpin course correction by encouraging information to be shared, and then acted on. The examples touch both on day-to-day adaptation (which may occur at more local levels) and wider review and reform of policies, strategies, and guidelines.

**Incentives that create opportunities to gain political advantage seemed to increase the likelihood that stakeholders at lower tiers will contribute proactively to evidence-based course correction.**

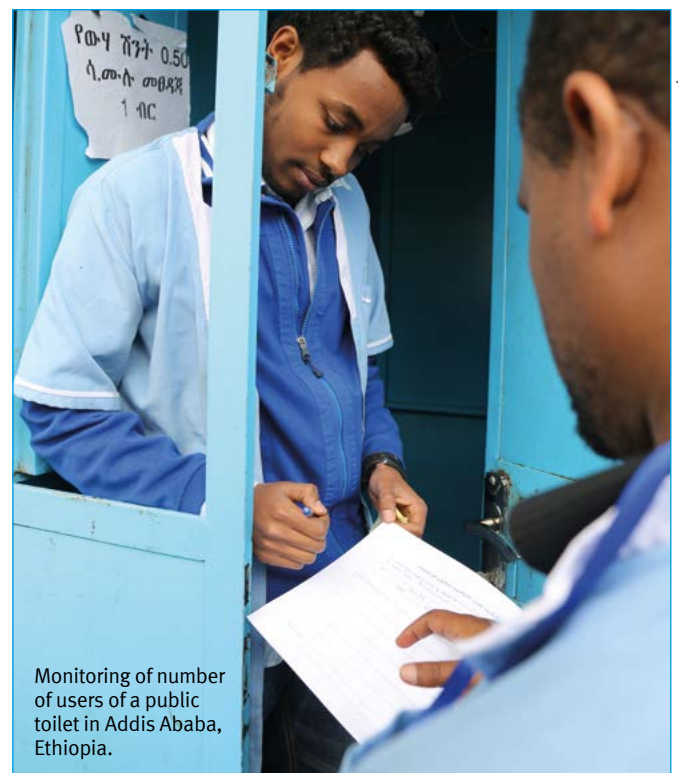
The way information is generated and exchanged can itself be political, pointing to a first set of incentives affecting how likely it is to be made available for policy review in the first place. The case studies highlight two examples that suggest proactive sharing of information and ideas to support course correction can be incentivised where there is an opportunity to gain political capital, either with electorates or senior figures within the institutional hierarchy.

In Indonesia AKKOPSI (Asosiasi Kabupaten/Kota Peduli Sanitasi; Association of Cities which Care about Sanitation), a network for district heads such as mayors, was viewed as one of the more effective platforms involved in facilitating course correction. At the time of research, AKKOPSI was reportedly playing a role in discussions around tapping provincial and health budgets to fund sanitation-related projects by local government. Part of its success, despite voluntary membership and high contribution fees, seems to lie in its effectiveness at linking mayors to political bodies at higher levels such as line ministries.

In India, the digital communication platform WhatsApp is facilitating interaction between lower and higher level officials. The exposure this gives juniors to their political superiors can enhance willingness to participate actively in

information sharing on a more recurrent, day-to-day basis, outside formal reporting lines. SBM-G's Mission Director in Chhattishargh was reportedly reviewing district-level progress on a daily basis by tapping into the different WhatsApp groups. In the districts visited for the case study research, officials were actively engaging with monitoring and reviewing activities by deploying staff to produce daily reports and uploading them onto a designated WhatsApp group. WhatsApp was also reportedly playing a key role in keeping information flowing in Indonesia, although it was not clear whether this also created incentives by allowing more interaction between traditional hierarchies, as in India.

It should be noted, however, that the political disadvantage associated with information can also limit the extent to which it is shared and taken on board to inform policy review and reform. India's 2011 census was not the first time that household survey data questioned the numbers presented in administrative reports.



Monitoring of number of users of a public toilet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

WaterAid / Behailu Shiferaw

It took the engagement of an energetic senior leader in MDWS, Jairam Ramesh, for the evidence to be taken seriously.

**Involving key decision makers in learning processes can increase ownership and the incentives to act on evidence.**

The importance of giving participants a direct stake in the generation of new evidence, making it harder to ignore the results, is illustrated by two examples from Ethiopia. This suggests that although research and learning activities can be facilitated by development partners, they will be much more effective when they give a central role to national stakeholders in the evidence-generating process.

In Ethiopia the Hygiene and Environmental Case Team has developed a new focus on the links between WASH and neglected tropical diseases. This was attributed to officials’ participation in a global disease burden mapping study, which highlighted high burden of conditions such as trachoma.<sup>vi</sup> With an emphasis on low-cost adaptation of current hygiene and sanitation

promotion activities, a baseline assessment is reportedly now being piloted by Regional Bureaus of Health.

A similar effect was highlighted by a process review of the CLTSH approach (against the CLTS Rapid Assessment Protocol developed by Kamal Kar) in which national and regional government representatives played a central role. At the time of research, preliminary results were being presented to sector stakeholders by the Director of Health Extension and Primary Health services, highlighting challenges and making specific recommendations. Direct participation in the subnational case studies had also reportedly prompted the President of Somali Region to demand a separate budget line for sanitation.

**Verification is key to build a culture in which data can be trusted and users incentivised to make it the basis for course correction decisions.**

Efforts are underway in all case study countries to improve routine monitoring systems and build in regular review and learning mechanisms to support course correction.



A disabled student is helped away from the WASH facilities at Bruh Tesfa Primary School, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

WaterAid/ Guilhem Alandy

<sup>vi</sup> See [www.washtnds.org](http://www.washtnds.org)



Verification is critical to address the problem of poor functionality of toilets, like this one in a health centre in Burie, Amhara, Ethiopia.

WaterAid/ Behailu Shiferaw

India has grappled with the problem of over-reporting of sanitation data, incentivised by ambitious targets and programmes, for many years.<sup>35</sup> SBM-G ostensibly features improved monitoring mechanisms and a stronger emphasis on multi-tier verification mechanisms to counteract these tendencies, incorporating peer review – village to village, block to block, and district to district. It is too early to tell how effectively this is working, but the only comprehensive survey available – conducted in May – June 2015 by the National Sample Survey Organization and published in September 2016 – seems to confirm Government data. The yearly independent verification mechanisms included in the recent World Bank loan for SBM-G, which will reward states' performance, is likely to further increase the level of scrutiny.<sup>vii</sup>

**Learning and review mechanisms can play an important role in course correction, but incentivising the right people to get around the table, make commitments and act on them means confronting power differences.**

However, these are a work in progress and interviewees pointed to the perverse incentives created by a lack of verification.

At its most extreme, a lack of verification means no government body is willing to trust or make decisions based on data. In Ethiopia several interviewees expressed doubt about the veracity of sanitation data, for example quarterly reports of health extension workers on existence and latrine use being completed without actual observation. In Ethiopia, an interviewee recounted a meeting in Oromia Region in which regional, zonal and woreda stakeholders successively admitted they couldn't trust the data they were presenting. Perverse incentives reportedly operated in both directions, although not to the extent of cancelling each other out – some officials try to game the system by over-reporting, to accrue prestige or career advancement, and others under-report to attract resources.

The case study countries feature many sector learning and review mechanisms. These can be informal and ad hoc, such as regular review of SBM-G progress by the Mission Director in Chhattisgarh, via phone calls and visits to districts and WhatsApp. They can also be more formal, such as Ethiopia's cycle of joint technical reviews and multi-stakeholder fora.

Since 2006, Ethiopia has been attempting to hold biannual technical reviews of WASH sector progress, conducted jointly by Government and partners, and accompanied by a multi-stakeholder forum. Although these have been held intermittently, at least one of the two processes has occurred in most years. Major advances to which these processes have contributed include the establishment of Community-Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene (CLTSH) as Ethiopia's overarching approach to rural sanitation in 2009, and the One WASH National Program launched in 2013.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>vii</sup> The SBM-Grameen Performance Incentive Grant Scheme. The grant component is worth US\$1.475 billion, with accompanying technical assistance worth \$25 million.

However, several interviewees commented that follow-up was a major problem. Beyond the main joint technical review and multi-stakeholder fora, there are many technical committees, task forces, and working groups that meet sporadically and have unclear and overlapping mandates. Indonesia has a similar wealth of working groups (pokja), and networking platforms (jejaring) formed to address different sector-related issues such as data management.

Part of the challenge is practical – the sheer number of learning events and crowded agendas. One interviewee in Indonesia diagnosed that this is “dispersing attention and focus, with most stakeholders limiting their level of participation due to time limitations and a sense of effort duplication.” However, subtler issues of power and status could also be discerned, resulting in the mechanisms lacking the sufficient authority to incentivise follow up or hold people to account for their commitments.

In Ethiopia and Indonesia, some review platforms seemed to be impeded by institutional territorialism, similar to that which hampers horizontal prioritisation, and restricts collaboration between the different entities needed for coordinated and well informed course correction. In Indonesia, at the time of research, discussions were ongoing around which ministry should lead a presidential task force under Presidential Decree 185/2014,

delaying implementation. In Ethiopia two key coordination and learning platforms for sanitation are notionally one and the same, but are claimed, and given different names, by the Ministries of Health and of Water, Irrigation and Electricity. The separation runs to different agendas, participant lists and terms of reference, and can mean key entities needed to make commitments and follow up on them are not always at the table. A further issue is where the individuals convening learning and review mechanisms lack the power to push for or make commitments, and follow up with responsible individuals. This was identified in Indonesia, where many fora are chaired by more junior ministerial staff.

In the face of these challenges of differential power, external pressure was sometimes needed to get all the people, with the right levels of authority, around the table. In Ethiopia, key donors were reportedly refusing to discuss smaller individual projects attached to different ministries, as opposed to the larger programmatic concern of the OWP, and the Consolidated WASH Account which supports the Programme and is managed by the Government. In the view of one interviewee, this was encouraging senior leaders up to Ministerial level to engage with the OWP and the Consolidated WASH Account, since by ignoring it they would not be able to interact with some of the key providers of sector finance.

## How do prioritisation through government machinery and course correction interrelate?

In answering the final question we take a step back to consider how processes of prioritisation through government machinery and course correction can interact, reflecting on the evidence already presented. The processes can be mutually reinforcing, but there is also risk that underlying incentives work counterproductively.

Prioritisation through government machinery and course correction can be mutually reinforcing, but top-down prioritisation can also undermine effective adaptation at local levels

On the reinforcing side, participation in effective review processes may give those unfamiliar with the sector an interest in challenges facing sanitation, prompting prioritisation. For example, the Somali Region President specifying a budget line for sanitation followed from participation in a CLTSH review. Considered from the alternative angle, the case studies contained hints that sufficiently inclusive and pervasive prioritisation may increase willingness to contribute to course correction. In Chhattisgarh the same incentives that are encouraging prioritisation – prestige and career advancement associated with being seen to support a priority issue – also seemed to incentivise lower ranking officials to proactively share data and new ideas with higher-ranking ones.

There are, however, examples of the current mode of prioritisation undermining course correction. One of the more apparent tensions is between the incentives created by top-down, target-driven or campaign-driven modes of prioritisation, and those needed for course correction. In India, pressures to deliver coupled with weak verification have historically impeded adaptation, evident in the over-reporting of toilets under SBM-G's predecessors. Ethiopia's Health Extension Programme provides strong implementation capacity down to the local level through Health Extension Workers. However, competing priorities determined by party-political campaigns, upward reporting and recurrent delivery pressures mean there is little opportunity to monitor and evaluate long-term outcomes, and therefore to course correct at more local level. Some interviewees in Ethiopia pointed out that top-down prioritisation may not be completely counterproductive to local learning, where guidance is clear, available, and allows flexibility to adapt to context. However, in Ethiopia's rural sanitation sector the impressive range of sanitation guidelines and manuals at national level is reportedly yet to be rolled out (and in some cases translated into the relevant language) for audiences in the woredas and kebeles of several regions.



New ventilated pit latrines are being constructed at Babich Health Center, Babich, Toke Kutaye, West Shewa, Oromia, Ethiopia.

WaterAid / Behailu Shiferaw

## Conclusions

In Ethiopia, Indonesia, and India there has been relatively strong high-level political commitment to sanitation. We have attempted to go beyond an emphasis on high-level commitment, however, to shed light on the incentives underpinning processes of prioritisation and course correction for sanitation. These two processes are crucial in translating high-level political commitment into sector outcomes, and appear as a ‘work in progress’ in the three case study countries. In our closing section we consider the overall picture from the analysis, and the lessons that emerge for improving prioritisation and course correction in the sector.

### Prioritisation

We found prioritisation of sanitation across the countries to be driven by a mix of incentives. In some cases, the articulation of sanitation as integral to values around modernity and cultural heritage fostered buy-in. In others, the perception of sanitation as a means for career progression or attracting politically useful resources – funds or votes – increased its prioritisation.

**These findings can help decision makers and their partners to map the values and priorities of key stakeholders at different levels, to understand what incentives are likely to work when and where.** In doing so, findings point to the need to recognise that values-based incentives, which address the question ‘How does this option align with my world-view?’ may be as relevant as instrumental ones, which respond to the question ‘What’s in it for me?’ Furthermore, instrumental incentives can be indirect – ‘What’s in it for me?’ may be an opportunity to gain power or advancement that will provide benefit in the longer term, rather than an immediate or material reward.

We also argued that competing incentives, to do with people’s autonomy and perceptions about authority, power and status, shape how positive incentives to prioritise sanitation play out. Here we looked, first, at how signals for prioritisation cascade through subsidiary tiers of government. From the case study evidence it seems that legal frameworks (or their absence) and political structures are important ‘rules of the game’, conditioning the freedom that subsidiary tiers of government have to prioritise any issue. These are less often emphasised in relation to WASH provision than is delegation of administrative responsibility and financing to discharge those responsibilities.

**It is possible, and useful, to recognise these ‘rules’, and evaluate how they play out and can be harnessed to sanitation’s advantage.** For example, in a single party context like Ethiopia, can party authorities be persuaded to emphasise and cascade sanitation as a priority issue? In a context of unclear legislation, as in Indonesia, can technical assistance and advocacy help to clarify legal frameworks that inhibit the response to positive incentives at local level?

The second set of competing incentives relate to the power and authority of different departments at the same level of government and what this means for prioritisation between apparent peers. Relative power and status differences exist between these peers, and affect how far the entities and individuals mandated to drive sanitation prioritisation can do so. **Those tasked with driving prioritisation horizontally across government ministries and departments need the authority and backing to do so.** In a hierarchical context this may imply advocating for more senior figures to participate in key meetings or issue directives, or even for a transfer of responsibility up the chain of command.



## Course correction

Turning to course correction, we first considered incentives for sharing and evaluating information, on which evidence-informed policy review and reform is necessarily based. The case study evidence points to the importance of giving protagonists a stake in the process of generating and interpreting evidence. For government representatives at lower levels, we found that proactive participation in learning platforms offered a positive incentive to contribute, where it enabled them to interact with superiors. **This points to a need to ensure learning and review processes provide officials with exposure to more senior figures.** Technologies that can accelerate the flow of information and expand audiences may be useful in this regard, as use of WhatsApp has enabled in Chhattisgarh.

For those making decisions to course correct, ownership of evidence gathering and learning processes, as well as analysis of information, was found to be important. This suggests that **involving senior decision makers in conceptualising research and analysing the results can increase the likelihood of it being used for course correction.**

A further pair of findings considers how evidence translates into course correction decisions and actions – centring on the importance of accountability and verification.

First, there is the need to build trust and confidence in the evidence. Increasing the political priority and prestige attached to sanitation performance could create perverse incentives. **Verification systems, whether external or relying on peer review, can provide an important complementary set of incentives for sharing accurate information.**

Second, mechanisms for follow up are needed to ensure course correction decisions are acted on. **This may require external pressure to encourage key decision makers to get around the table and subsequently be held to account for their commitments.** External agencies could support this by helping key sanitation platforms (and their secretariats) to attract and retain active and influential members, or providing financial and technical resources to follow up on government-owned course correction decisions.

## Interplay of prioritisation and course correction

Last, in considering the interplay between prioritisation through government machinery and course correction, we found that the relationship can be reinforcing, but care is needed to avoid top-down prioritisation restricting space for local adaptation, or encouraging over-reporting and thus undermining course correction. This risk is arguably more pronounced for sanitation, as a sector where strong government intervention, driven from senior levels, is required because citizen demand can be limited (in the absence of promotion) and externalities are high. In this context, it is perhaps inevitable that top-down prioritisation is the norm, and tensions arise with local ability to steer or course correct.

**A final lesson here is on the need for sensitivity to the potential negative interplay of top-down prioritisation with course correction.** This could imply carefully designing guidelines to allow for locally relevant adaptations, and ensuring that verification does not become another top-down pressure without a commensurate investment in supportive supervision, and positive rewards for (verified) outcomes.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: How the technical characteristics of the sanitation sector may have political implications

Previous ODI work maps common arrangements in different service delivery sectors, which might initially seem technical – for example, patterns of infrastructure, markets, delivery systems, even spatial distribution of providers and users.<sup>37,38</sup> The research suggests that these ‘sector characteristics’ can nonetheless have political significance – conditioning relationships between service users, government and service providers. They may include:

- **Nature of the good/ market characteristics.** Can the market deliver the service or does it require public provision? This characteristic has important implications for how governments see their roles and responsibilities. Inadequate sanitation has high negative externalities, which implies a case for public intervention. At the same time, sanitation, particularly household-level containment of faecal waste, can be construed as a classic private good – one that is excludable and rivalrous – which can therefore be left to the market to provide. This duality is reflected in the often-polarised debate around use of subsidies for sanitation, although in practice narrow public–private good definitions can rarely be applied cleanly; the externalities may be very different between, say, an urban slum in Indonesia and a pastoral region of Ethiopia. Income and socio-cultural norms might also significantly differ between individuals, meaning that targeted use of subsidy may still support the public good of an excreta-free environment, without undermining markets.
- **Demand-related characteristics.** How does the nature of the service provided affect the form of user demand and provider control? Expressed user demand for sanitation is often limited, due to engrained behaviour and socio-cultural factors like taboo. A broad shift to community-scale promotion and mobilisation, especially in rural sanitation and exemplified by CLTS, suggests that predictable, frequent interactions between users can be harnessed effectively to ‘trigger’ demand – people experience the service (or lack of it), making it more likely that they might identify with each other and act collectively. This contrasts with, for example, curative health care. The default mode of provision for CLTS and related approaches is, however, one of self-supply (self-constructed latrines); once demand is ‘triggered’ it therefore might not translate into greater citizen voice for better services.
- **Task-related characteristics.** How does the way a service is produced and delivered affect relationships of control and accountability? The promotion functions involved in stimulating demand for sanitation in the first place are transaction-intensive and tend to leave a lot of discretion to front-line service delivery agents (such as health extension staff). They rely on human interactions that are not easily measured, making it potentially harder for higher levels of government to supervise and enforce performance. In this respect, sanitation is arguably more similar to education than are infrastructure services such as water supply and electricity.

## Annex 2: Key features of decentralisation in Indonesia, India and Ethiopia

As noted, decentralisation is a key feature of the governance system in all three case study countries, with important implications for how political commitment translates into prioritisation, and the scope and manner of course correction. This annex provides a more detailed summary of the key features of decentralisation for each.

Indonesia is characterised by a rapid and extensive decentralisation initiated in 2001, in which much responsibility for services (including sanitation) was transferred to the predominantly rural regencies and more urban cities (Kabupaten and Kota in Bahasa Indonesia, although both are often referred to in English as districts). The intermediary layer of provinces is meant to play an oversight and intermediary role. Each district has a local government with political devolution in the form of directly elected executive leader (mayors, in the case of cities). Much investment planning is still determined by central government, but districts have powers of revenue raising and expenditure, and can legally own assets and engage in financial transactions.<sup>39</sup>

In India, efforts to enhance democratic participation below the state level have been ongoing for more than two decades. The 73rd constitutional amendment in 1993 was a landmark, transferring power and emphasising accountability in formalising the Panchayati Raj system of village government, arranged at three levels – village, block, and district – with elections down to the lowest level. Much of the detail for implementation is nonetheless

left to states. In Chhattisgarh and other states with higher populations of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (official designations for historically disadvantaged hereditary classes of Hindu society and indigenous groups), the 1993 amendment is supplemented with the 1996 Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. This emphasises respect for customary law, social practice, and religious practice in how the Panchayati Raj system is implemented in such areas. Sanitation is a state responsibility and implementation is delegated to Panchayati Raj institutions, although there is a high reliance on volunteers and civil society organisations.<sup>40</sup>

Ethiopia has experienced decentralisation in two waves: first to regions with the 1995 constitution, and then to districts (woredas and below these, kebeles) from 2002 onwards.<sup>41</sup> Responsibility for service delivery has followed this pattern. An additional tier – zones – is in place above the woreda level in the most populous regions. Governance at each level is structured on similar lines, with an elected head and council. Local councillors are, however, both elected officials that are meant to respond to demands of their electorate, and functionaries responsive to and dependent on the bureaucracy at higher level, and, as noted, any reference to political devolution needs to be seen in the context of single-party dominance. Local government in Ethiopia has both revenue-raising and expenditure responsibilities, but own-source revenue is a small percentage.<sup>42</sup>

## Annex 3: Organisational affiliations of interviewees

### Ethiopia

- CARE Ethiopia
- Co-WASH
- Dutch Water Alliance
- Ministry of Education, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Ministry of Finance, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Ministry of Health, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Oxfam GB
- UNICEF
- United States Agency for International Development
- WaterAid Ethiopia
- World Bank Water and Sanitation Program
- World Health Organization
- World Vision

### India

- Ambagarh Chowki Janpad Panchayat, Rajnandgaon District
- Ambagarh Chowki Janpad Panchayat, Rajnandgaon District
- Block/ Janpad Panchayat, Chamar Block, Kanker district
- District Administration, Dongargaon sub-division, Rajnandgaon district
- District Administration, Kanker District
- District SBM Cell, Rajnandgaon District
- District Swachh Bharat Mission Cell, Dhamtari District
- Doma Gram Panchayat, Dhamtari District
- Dongargaon Janpad Panchayat, Rajnandgaon District
- Lok Shakti Sangathan
- National Service Scheme Unit, Bastar University, Kanker

- Panchayat & Rural Development Department, Government of Chhattisgarh
- Samarthan
- Shahiwada Panchayat, Chamar block, Kanker district
- State Swachh Bharat Mission Cell, Government of Chhattisgarh
- UNICEF, Chhattisgarh
- UNICEF, India
- WASH Institute
- WaterAid NGO partners in Chhattisgarh
- WaterAid, India
- World Bank Water and Sanitation Program
- Zilla Panchayat, Kanker District
- Zilla Panchayat, Rajnandgaon District

### Indonesia

- Accelerated Sanitation Development for Human Settlements Program (PPSP)
- Association of Cities which Care about Sanitation (Akkopsi)
- Ministry of Public Works
- Bappenas
- Indonesia Infrastructure Initiative (IndII)
- Indonesia Toilet Association
- Indonesia Urban Water and Hygiene (IUWASH)
- Oxfam
- Secretariat, National Water Supply and Sanitation Working Group (Pokja AMPL)
- Spatial Planning & Environment, Jakarta Capital City Government
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Urban Sanitation Development Program (USDPA)
- Water and Sanitation Program – East Asia and Pacific Region
- World Vision
- Yayasan Tirta Lestari



Meselech and her neighbours use their newly built toilet. Woliso, Oromia, Ethiopia.

# Beyond political commitment to sanitation: Navigating incentives for prioritisation and course correction in Ethiopia, India and Indonesia

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UK: Registered charity numbers 288701 (England and Wales) and SC039479 (Scotland)

US: WaterAid America is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization