An Aid for Planning Water and Sanitation Projects

Water and sanitation projects are notoriously difficult to plan and implement because of the numerous parties involved and the divergent interests and beliefs the different groups have. This is a particular problem for slums in urban areas. The aim of the approach outlined here is that it should ensure that sectors, individuals and groups are not overlooked in the process of planning water and sanitation projects.

The methodology is based on a number of previous approaches, but differs in the format and in emphasising the importance of inhibiting factors as well as drivers in developing the project strategy.

It consists of three parts:
- The development ‘dartboard’;
- An analysis of drivers and inhibitors; and
- Consideration of the interactions between services

This example is based on slum upgrading through a water and sanitation project, but the approach could equally be applied to other types of project in other settings.

Drivers + Inhibitors

Having used the ‘dartboard’ to identify the various actors at each level, the likely motivations, policies and opinions may be guessed at, or preferably ascertained by more reliable means. At the lowest level, the family is most probably more interested in privacy and convenience than health specifically, while at the international level, treaty obligations, Millennium Development Goals and the country’s international reputation may have an influence on domestic policy.

This table summarised some typical drivers and inhibitors.

Interaction Between Services

The first two stages of the process do not consider the technologies or the service levels that may be appropriate for upgrading the particular settlement, but this will have some bearing on the problem. For instance, standards may dictate technology options that are completely unaffordable to the residents, but this could have some bearing on the problem. For instance, standards may be used. Similarly, the number and type of sectors could be considered from the various viewpoints of those affected or in a position to influence the outcome. The most important of these groups being that of the individual households that are intended to benefit from the project. At each boundary between the various administrative and social domains, there are possible divergences in perceptions, motivations and policy objectives and by considering each level and sector, the parties involved and the drivers and inhibitors can be identified.

The range of levels in this example stretch from the individual household to the international level. However, fewer or more divisions could be used. Similarly the number and type of sectors could be adjusted.

By working logically through a process, such as that proposed here, it should give greater confidence that the relevant actors, issues and potential solutions have been identified. This would then form a sound basis for developing a project strategy that will satisfy the majority of groups and, most importantly, to deliver services that the residents want and are willing to use.