

# RWSSP: Technical Advisory Note 1.7 Needs Assessment for RWSS Project Proposal Preparation.



## Introduction

In order for an NSA to be able to prepare an appropriate project proposal that can be recommend for funding, it will need to collect relevant information about the local current situation in partnership with the proposed beneficiary community. Without this information it will not be possible to complete the various sections of the proposal application form in an accurate and sufficiently comprehensive way. Proposals that are vague, incomplete, illogical and suggest a lack of understanding of the type of project that the RWSSP is seeking to fund will not be recommended. Needs Assessments should therefore be conducted as one of the early stages in the project proposal writing stage, and certainly before the RWSSP proposal form is submitted.

Some NSAs may already have developed a very good understanding of the communities they work in through their association over a number of years. Others may be new to an area and have less understanding. In both cases however a detailed needs assessment should be conducted for three main reasons. Firstly, this assessment is specific to the water supply, sanitation and hygiene needs of the community, and it requires particular information. Secondly, collecting this information from and with the community ensures a shared mutual appreciation of the needs and challenges and develops ownership of the project and its expected results from the very early stages. Evidence shows that remotely designed projects often struggle to get implemented or sustained, despite their potential benefits, if communities are not involved in their design at the earliest stages. Thirdly, a detailed Needs Assessment gives a good picture of the current situation in the community, and can be used as a Baseline for measuring impact of the project over time.

A needs assessment requires committed facilitation. There should be at least one woman to help ensure women's voices are heard and recorded as well as someone with some expertise in latrine construction and identifying water supply options and costing. The RWSSP proposal form does not require detailed technical information regarding the proposed water supply scheme, but it does require a broad outline of the proposed scheme and a maximum cost for the budget. More detailed planning, such as the location of tap

stands, showers etc can come later once the project had been approved and the technical expert can spend more time with the community and water supply.

RWSSP has produced a Needs Assessment form which is attached to this TAN. This helps document the outputs from a needs assessment and assists you to identify appropriate communities. The information collected will be used to complete your project proposal, so it is well worth completing. It can also act as a useful Baseline. Alternatively you may have already developed your own format. Whilst it is not necessary to actually include a needs assessment form in your proposal it does help demonstrate that you have chosen an appropriate community

The following sections are intended to provide a basic understanding of how to go about undertaking a needs assessment for developing an RWSS project proposal.

## Needs Assessment Objective

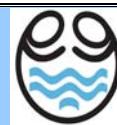
To identify suitable communities for inclusion in an NSA RWSS proposal and collect the key data to allow the preparation of a clear, sufficiently detailed proposal for a water supply and sanitation project proposal. Some of this information will need to be collected from the community itself, whilst some can be collected from other sources such as the local health centre, government statistics, LLG etc.

## Methodology

If you are new to the community it is likely that a number of visits will be required to complete the needs assessment. If you already have a presence then the work can be completed much quicker.

The first visit will need to be an initial courtesy visit, to meet key people in the community and to arrange to do some meetings and group discussion at a future date. It is useful if someone relatively senior from the NSA attends this meeting since it helps demonstrate respect and commitment. You should at all times try to ensure that you have a suitable gender balance in your team. This helps portray from the start that your team listens to and respects the views of women. During this courtesy call explain that you would like to return to find out more about the living conditions of people in the community. It is

# RWSSP: Technical Advisory Note 1.7 Needs Assessment for RWSS Project Proposal Preparation.



probably not a good idea at this stage to mention that you are investigating the possibility of a water and sanitation problem. Before you leave set a date for your return.

Before and during the Needs Assessment process it is worth always bearing in mind the following questions:

- 1) **What questions would you like to ask the community** (including about health, hygiene, sanitation and water supply) . Be prepared.
- 2) **What are your expectations from the meetings.** What do you hope to gain; answers to question? a consensus on hygiene and sanitation standards? a list of priority development needs? What?
- 3) **Are you in the right community.** Why this one and not another one?
- 4) **Why do they think you are there.** Have you explained adequately?
- 5) **What are the communities expectations?** What do they feel is in it for them, will they be disappointed? Have you been honest and realistic?
- 6) **What are the significant “axis of difference” in the participants?** Gender, age, wealth, clan, religion, language?
- 7) **Who are the marginalised and excluded members of the community.** Are they at the meeting, how can you help give them a voice?
- 8) **Who are the dominant members of the community.** The wealthy, men? How can they be managed so as not to dominate? How well do they represent the community
- 9) **Who are you meeting and who are you not meeting?** Who has been left out? Why and how can they be included?
- 10) **What are you being told and shown-** and what are you not being told and shown?
- 11) **Is your behaviour empowering people or disempowering them?.** Are you giving the marginalised a voice? Are you creating a better realisation of their situation?
- 12) **What questions would they like to ask you?**
- 13) **What happens next?**

## Your Team

During subsequent meeting always ensure that you have a good balance of men and women on your team, a team of 3-5 should be adequate. Assign each team member a key role, these could include for example:

- **Chief facilitator** – someone who takes the lead in discussions, suggesting methods and clarifying responses.
- **Recorder** – take more of a backseat, but records key discussion points and observations.
- **Monitor** – keeps the chief facilitator updated. How is the time doing? are certain people dominating? who is not speaking? Assesses the mood of the participants, reminds the facilitator if required what information has yet to be collected.
- **Facilitators** – helps in discussions with smaller groups – may be assigned one particular group, ie women, men, young, old etc

## How to collect information.

It is generally best to avoid large gatherings where you stand at the front asking questions. All you will get is a few loud voices shouting back, and many bored people who will slowly disappear. You need to engage the community, make the process fun if possible, and informative for them.

Below are some suggestions on how information can be collected (in some sort of order)

- 1) **Introduction.** Always start with a very clear introduction of your whole team. Who are you? Why are you there? (remember, not at this point to design a sanitation and water project, but to learn more about the development issues in the community) Who do you work for? Where are you from? Ask them to ask you questions.
- 2) **Village /transect walk.** A great way to start off. Ask gathered community members to take you for a walk around the village. As you go along ask them about what services they have (schools, clinics etc ) whether they have had any previous projects in the area, how people earn a living – ask them to show you examples. As you proceed ask them about where they get their water from, again if it is possible go and see the site. Ask them about latrines, if they use them, if not where do they go to the toilet? As you walk people will

## RWSSP: Technical Advisory Note 1.7 Needs Assessment for RWSS Project Proposal Preparation.



naturally form small groups, use this as an opportunity for the team to talk to particular groups, eg women, children etc.

- 3) Village map.** Can be great fun as long as you involve as many of the participants as possible – try and encourage everyone to get involved, including the children. Draw in the village boundary and then let the participants take over; mark on individual houses, which ones have latrines? buildings such as churches and schools, gardens, water sources, latrines, roads, rivers etc. This exercise is best done on the floor, either outside or in a meeting hall. Use different coloured card, sticks, leaves, sawdust – anything you can, as materials to make the map. Your job as facilitator is to keep the energy high, provide and encourage people to use a variety of visual materials, ensure all information is recorded on the map, include everybody.

Once everyone is satisfied the map is complete ask them questions about what you see. Where are the different clans/tribes situated, do they have separate areas or do they all live together? What are the better areas to live in and why? How long does it take to collect water and can they use the same source all year? Do people here use latrines or not? When you have finished transfer the map onto a large piece of paper for future reference – this paper should be left in the community. If you need a copy, make and extra one.

*Figure 1. Collect information about current water sources & uses in target communities*



- 4) Group interviews.** Organise small groups of participants. Separate men's and women's groups work best. Try not to have more than about 10 in a group since any more than that and most people will not be able to talk. Refer back to information you have gathered during the transect walk and village map, and the information you need to complete your situation analysis. Ask the group about their attitudes to hygiene and sanitation. How long do they spend collecting water each day? How much do they collect? What is this water like? Do they have separate sources for drinking, washing? Is improved hygiene and sanitation seen as a priority by them, or are other development issues of more concern? How do they feel about their current sanitation arrangements? How could they be improved. Group interviews really allow you to investigate issues in some detail. Remember that your role principally is to listen, so let the group do plenty of talking.
- 5) Health analysis.** Again this works best in smaller groups of either men or women. Draw a picture of the health centre, or a nurse or a Dr. Ask participants what the principle illness' are that effect the community. What are the range of illness' and what are the most common illness'. How do they treat the most common illness'
- 6) Stakeholder analysis.** A stakeholder in any individual or organisation that has an interest in the project. It is important to look at

## RWSSP: Technical Advisory Note 1.7 Needs Assessment for RWSS Project Proposal Preparation.



relationships between stakeholders, and to know who should be involved in the project if it happens. This could be done in mixed groups, though you need to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak. Try and identify key groups of people in the community, individuals and key organisations, This might include listing different clans and tribes, churches, community groups, local level government. Talk to the community about the relationship between these groups – do they all get on together, do some fight? Make a note of the key stakeholders and the nature of their relationships.

*Figure 2. Collect information about current sanitation facilities and hygiene practices in target communities*



- 7) **Village observations.** When you visit a village and hold discussions, make a note of your key observations afterwards – this all contributes to developing a clear picture of the communities needs and aspirations.
- 8) **Secondary data sources.** If you have kept an eye on what information you wanted to

collect, and asked lots of questions, and recorded the answers, you should by now have quite a lot of information in order to identify whether the community has a need for improved sanitation and water supply. You should be able to complete most of the questions of a Needs Assessment survey. There will however be blanks, or areas that require further information and these should be collected from secondary data sources. For example, you may need to know additional details about the health status of the community, details about the current District plan etc. This will require arranging meetings with the relevant stakeholders. Try and get as detailed and as accurate information as you can.

Further information on participatory approaches to data collection can be found in the RWSSP Toolkit series

### Concluding Comments

This Needs Assessment will tell you, and the community, if a water and sanitation project would be of benefit, and is a priority, to the community. Ultimately it's about identifying a community where health issues are seen as a problem, and where improved hygiene and sanitation are seen as a solution. This process is very different from just talking to a few village elite and asking them if they want a water project.

Once you have identified that a community could benefit from a water and sanitation project it is then time to start planning and developing a proposal with that community. This is dealt with in another TAN.

We have listed some of the useful PRA tools above which can be used for a Needs Assessment. Please contact RWSSP PMU if you would like more information/guidance on these tools as we have additional training resources available.

Good Luck!!

This programme is funded by the European Union



<b>Community Needs Assessment for RWSSP village selection</b>	<b>Province:</b>

1. Attach relevant documents or organization contact details where information can be verified, if necessary.
2. Suggestions have been made regarding ways in which information can be collected in a participatory manner. Further details on techniques are available from the RWSSP programme management office

<b>Community Profile</b>		
<b><i>Community Name, District</i></b>		
Given names of prominent members living in the community, their relationship or title within the community & signatures (preferably recognised as being able to make decisions on behalf of the community)		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Signature</b>
<b>Number of households and Total Population</b>	<b>Population under 5</b>	
<p><b>Describe access to the village How long does the journey take from the nearest Provincial town? Can it be reached by car all year round, or only during the dry season? Does the village need to be reached on foot? If so how long does it take to walk from the nearest road? What challenges will be faced to transport materials into the project site (please note that an isolated community does not disqualify them from the project, it just means that during the planning you can make allowances for this challenge)</b></p>		

<b>Describe key services available in the proposed project site. eg schools, hospitals, health centres. (Village walk)</b>	
<b>What cash crops are grown in the proposed project site? What percentage of households receives an income from this cash crop? (village map, transect walk ,community meeting)</b>	
<b>What other economic activities exist in the project site, such as small business'(Community meeting, transect walk)</b>	
<b>Do the community feel confident that they can collect the required 10% contribution towards the projects material costs? (community meeting)</b>	
<b>Needs Identification</b>	
<b>Provide quantitative and qualitative statistical data on key health issues Make it clear the extent of the issues and <u>who</u> it effects. Include incidences of water related diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid, scabies, grille, malaria, dengue etc.(this can be obtained for example from local government sources, NSAs available data, National Office of Statistics ,local health centres, community members)</b>	
<b>How many households currently have their own latrine? What style of latrines are present and numbers of each(Community meeting, village mapping)</b>	
<b>Assessment of latrine condition (Village walk)</b>	
<b>What are the views of women on the sanitation situation in their community? Record general observations and specific quotes? (Focus group meeting).</b>	
<b>What are the views of men on the sanitation situation in their community? Record general observations and specific quotes (Focus group meeting)</b>	

---

	Wet Season	Dry Season
What are the current water sources for drinking and cooking (Focus group meeting, village map)		
Who collects the water, and how long is spent each day collecting water? (daily time use charts, focus group meeting)		
How many litres on average are collected each day for drinking and cooking? (Focus group meeting, participation in water collection)		
Current water sources for laundry (Focus group meeting, active participation in process, village maps)		
Current water sources for bathing for <u>Men</u> and time to get there? (Focus group meeting, village maps)		
How often do men bathe? (Focus group meeting)		
Current water sources for bathing for <u>Women</u> and time to get there? (Focus group meeting, observations, village maps)		
How often do women bathe? (Focus group meeting)		
Current water sources for bathing for <u>Children</u> and time to get there? (Focus group meeting, village map)		
How often do children bathe? (Focus group meeting)		
Record observations from the community on the quality, taste and colour of this water, and whether there is a seasonal variation. (Focus group meeting)		
Comments from Men;		
Comments from women:		
Record comments from those responsible for collecting water on any hardships this causes.(remember that this may well include interviewing children). Record names so that their opinions can be followed up after the project (Focus group meeting)		
Record peoples observations on the practice of hand washing after using the latrine and before cooking/eating? (Focus group meeting, PHAST)		

## Sustainability

Describe the major clans in the village, their distribution and approximate populations of each. (Village map, community meeting)

What is the general relationship between these clans? Are there examples of co-operation in the past? (Venn diagram of clan relationship, Focus group meeting)

What have been the sources of conflict between these clans in the past? (Conflict timelines, Focus group meeting)

How does the community expect to deal with any clan issues in designing/managing any proposed water supply? (Community meeting)

What community based decision making structures exist in the community e.g., Village development committees, community groups etc (Community meeting)

Is there a District Development plan for the community? (Meeting with LLG, WDC, Village leaders, community group meeting)

How would an RWSS project compliment the District Plan?

What activities have been implemented by NSAs in the past? When was this and what was the long term sustainability? (Community meeting, historical timelines)

Specifically, have there been any water supply projects in this community in the past (Community meeting)

YES

NO

If YES, provide justification for considering this village again. (Community meeting)

What development partners exist in the area that could support the community once the project has been completed? (stakeholder analysis)

How does the community intend to finance maintenance of the scheme? (Community meeting, focus group meetings)

How will the community regularly maintain the water system (Community meeting, focus group meetings)

## **Community Commitment**

**Identify individuals with skills that could contribute to the; planning, implementation and monitoring of a water supply, sanitation and hygiene project (for example natural leaders, carpenters, plumbers, village organizers, existing groups etc) (Community skills assessment)**

**Is there sufficient labour available and willing to provide the in-kind labour contribution required for implementation? (Community meeting)**

**Identify the availability of any local natural resources such as sand, gravel that could be provided in kind by the community.(village map, focus group meetings)**

**How will the community raise the 10% contribution towards the material costs? (community meetings)**

---

## NSA use only

<b>Assessors Name</b>	
<b>Position within organization</b>	
<b>Overall assessment of suitability of this community</b>	
<b>If this community has already benefited from a water supply project in the past please provide a justification why they should be considered for an additional project</b>	
<b>Overall recommendation</b>	

If the community is recommended for project activities:

**Signed**

**Date**

---

---

---