

# SNV Nepal: Case Study of the Sanitation Café, step towards strengthening sanitation supply chains

## The challenge

The sanitation coverage in Mahottari and Sarlahi districts were reportedly 28% and 30% respectively (NMIP 2014) which were far below the national as well as the *Terai* averages of 70% and 57% (NMIP 2014). A number of district line agencies and development partners are working together in coordination through the District WASH Coordination Committee (DWASHCC) to increase awareness about and demand for sanitation. Nevertheless, the situation still remains challenging. The majority of agencies working in districts mostly focus on demand creation and triggering people for latrine adoption. Currently, there are around 75,000 and 85,000 households defecating in the open in Mahottari and Sarlahi districts. To achieve an open-defecation-free (ODF) status by March 2016 as per the self-defined target of both districts, at least 312 latrines need to be constructed per day in Mahottari requiring approximately 1250 concrete rings per day; for Sarlahi the figures are 352 latrines requiring 1420 concrete rings per day.

iDE Nepal (International Development Enterprises) is the only agency working on development of a sanitation supply chain but its work is limited to the supply chain of a single product, the "easy latrine". Other agencies are supporting some specific aspects such as supplying moulds for ring production and providing mason trainings. Not surprisingly, the engagement of the private sector remains very low despite the recognition of the role of the private sector for the success of the sanitation campaign by the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011. Poor rural sanitation market network and inadequate technical and business skills of small and medium enterprises are other issues. Any delay in supply of sanitation materials to interested consumers for latrine construction can have an adverse impact as it with great difficult that people are overcoming their traditional and social practices of open defecation and moving towards the desire to construct a toilet.

SNV Nepal is implementing its Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A) programme in two *Terai* districts, Sarlahi and Mahottari, of the Central Development Region of Nepal through funding from the Australian Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), the Netherlands. The programme aims to support the Government of Nepal in achieving an ODF nation by 2017 with no subsidy approach emphasised in the national master plan.

## The method

Evidence-based planning was demonstrated as a means of district-wide strengthening of the supply chain in both districts.

The first step in this process was conducting a study to understand consumer preferences and to analyse the sanitation supply chain existing in the districts. The study was carried out with different consumer segments, including latrine non-users and users, and different supply chain actors including wholesalers and retailers, ring-producers and masons.

Following the situational analysis from the study, a one-day "sanitation café" was organised in both districts with the lead of the district line agency, the Water Supply and Sanitation Division Office (WSSDO). The objective of the workshop was to share the findings of the Consumer Preference and Supply Chain Analysis Study with all stakeholders and to use these findings as well as other district related information (presented by WSSDO and iDE Nepal) as a basis for discussion and developing district-specific strategic action areas to strengthen the supply chain in the district and meet the demand for sanitation sustainably.

The sanitation café was an interactive workshop format that enabled different stakeholder groups to share their perspectives with each other and thereby learn about the challenges and opportunities related to sanitation supply chain strengthening from different angles. The stakeholders were placed into groups according to local government agencies (district line agencies, VDC secretaries), small and medium entrepreneurs and private sector (concrete ring producers and hardware suppliers), cooperatives and micro-finance institutions, and development partners.



*SNV Market Development Advisor Facilitating Sanitation Café at Sarlahi.*

Each group used the information presented earlier to identify action areas based on their respective in supply chain strengthening. Following this exercise, the group members except the team leader visited other groups and discussed with the other team leaders about the action areas they had developed. At the end, all actions were brought together in plenary.

## The Result

The major achievement of the sanitation café was the realisation created about the importance of the sanitation supply chain to achieve and sustain ODF status in the district. Moreover, each stakeholder group was able to clearly recognise its respective role in the process. Importantly, the private sector actors were able to envision the demand for sanitation and the preparations needed to meet that demand.

Both the chairperson and secretary of the DWASHCC from Sarlahi district and the secretary of the DWASHCC from Mahottari district expressed their commitment to integrate the strategic action areas into the district sanitation strategies and support their implementation.



*Sanitation Café in Mahottari*

Most of the identified action areas were in line with recommendations that had been proposed in the Consumer Preference and Supply Chain Analysis Study for Sanitation. The action areas included:

- Mapping of supply chain actors at the village level
- Enhancing technical and business capacities of SMEs
- Integrating local cooperatives in the sanitation business and providing loans to households for latrine constructions
- Increasing the number of masons (for ring production) and SMEs
- Developing network of ring producers and increasing business outreach in the rural community
- Increasing awareness about different latrine options suitable for all segments of the community
- Reviewing the existing rules and regulation on gravel and sand collection to be able to continue concrete production during the monsoon season
- Provision of quality assurance and transportation guarantee by ring producers
- Identifying potential new entrepreneurs in rural communities and developing their business skills

## Lessons Learnt

Strengthening of the sanitation supply chain requires evidence-based planning at the district level with the participation of different stakeholders including the government, development agencies, the private sector, and financial institutions. The Sanitation Café provided an interactive forum for different stakeholders to be able to engage with each other and develop and share action areas needed for addressing challenges and opportunities related to the sanitation supply chain for the district.



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