

Reaching Universal Access:

Ethiopia's Universal Access Plan in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR)

January 2009



**Synthesis
Paper**



Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile region

Reaching Universal Access: Ethiopia's Universal Access Plan in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR)

A synthesis paper of recent research under the RiPPLE Programme's
Governance and Planning theme

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Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile region (RiPPLE) is a five-year research programme consortium funded by the UK's [Department for International Development](#) (DFID). It aims to advance evidence-based learning on water supply and sanitation (WSS) focusing specifically on issues of planning, financing, delivery and sustainability and the links between sector improvements and pro-poor economic growth. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not of DFID.

RiPPLE Synthesis Papers present a consolidation of case studies under a RiPPLE research theme to present an abridged version of case study findings, recommendations and how to go forward.

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Note about dates in this document

Ethiopia uses the Ge'ez calendar which is about seven years and nine months behind the Gregorian calendar used in much of the world. Some of the data used in this document were based on the Ethiopian calendar. Dates have been converted to the Gregorian calendar for the purposes of this international document. However, because the Ethiopian New Year begins in September, an annual figure from the Ethiopian calendar does not exactly match any exact Gregorian calendar year.

Contents

Executive Summary	viii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia	1
1.2 RiPPLE Learning and Practice Alliances and Action Research.....	2
1.3 RiPPLE Governance and Planning theme.....	2
1.4 Ethiopian decentralisation	3
1.4.1 Sustainable WASH service delivery.....	4
2 Case study methodology.....	6
2.1 The concept.....	6
2.2 Approach.....	7
2.3 Objectives and main research question.....	7
3 Water sector stakeholders in SNNPR, and how they work together to provide services	8
3.1 Sector policy.....	8
3.2 Roles, responsibilities and relationships of water service stakeholders in SNNPR	9
3.2.1 Government.....	9
3.2.2 WASHCo and end users.....	10
3.2.3 NGOs.....	11
3.2.4 Private sector.....	11
3.3 Resources for delivering sustainable services.....	12
3.3.1 Physical resources.....	12
3.3.2 Human resources.....	12
3.4 Finances	13
3.4.1 Budgeting and financial flows	13
3.4.2 Cost recovery.....	15
3.5 Progress towards achieving the UAP and challenges to be addressed	15
4 Mapping water schemes in Mirab Abaya and Alaba Special Woreda	18
4.1 Location of the water schemes and distribution points in Mirab Abaya and Alaba Special Woreda.....	19
4.1.1 Issues related to the non-functionality of water points.....	22
4.2 Features of the water service delivery: accessibility, quantity, quality, reliability from a users perspective	23
4.3 Summary.....	23
5 Implementing the Universal Access Plan in SNNPR – a SWOT analysis.....	25
5.1 Strengths – aspects of governance that make achieving the UAP possible.....	25
5.2 Weaknesses – regional level challenges to achieving the UAP in SNNPR.....	26

- 5.3 Opportunities – aspects of the wider environment that are likely to affect the UAP 27
- 5.4 Threats..... 27
- 5.5 Summary..... 27
- 6 Conclusions and recommendations..... 28**
 - 6.1 Summary: Full coverage is achievable, with significant additional effort and improved sector governance and planning 28
 - 6.2 Identifying priority areas for action..... 29
 - 6.2.1 Information use in the planning and delivery of services 29
 - 6.2.2 Coordination and harmonisation..... 30
 - 6.2.3 Management and accountability 31
 - 6.2.4 Capacity of service providers..... 31
 - 6.2.5 Financing SNNPR’s water strategy..... 32
 - 6.3 Summing up: rapid change and real improvement but with critical bottlenecks remaining..... 33
- Key references 34**
- Annex 1: Background to SNNPR and the two RiPPLE Woredas 35**
- Annex 2: Research objectives, questions and methodology..... 37**
- Annex 3: Research Teams..... 40**

List of tables and figures

Figure 2.1:	Linkages between different levels of governance.....	6
Figure 3.1:	Trend in Planned and Allocated Budget of BoWRD and safe water supply coverage in SNNPR 2000-2006.....	16
Figure 4.1:	Water schemes and distribution points in Alaba, with 1.5km radius 'service areas' for functioning water points	20
Figure 4.2:	Water schemes and distribution points in Mirab Abaya, with 1.5 km radius 'service areas' for functioning water points.....	21
Table 3.1:	Discrepancy between the planned (strategic and annual) and allocated budget (Channel I & II) of SNNPR Water Bureau (2005-2006) in Birr.....	13
Table 3.2:	Financial requirement (Birr) for SNNPR for the year 2005 as calculated in the UAP	14
Table 3.3:	Estimated annual costs for achieving universal access as stated in the UAP (in million Birr)	15
Table 3.4:	Number and type of schemes to be constructed in SNNPR (2006-2012) to raise coverage to 98%.....	15
Table 3.5:	Type and number of new water schemes constructed in SNNPR (2004-2006).....	16
Table 4.1:	Estimated number of people served by different water scheme technologies	18
Table 4.2:	Status water schemes and water points in Alaba and Mirab Abaya Woredas.....	19
Table 4.3:	Numbers of functional (F) and non-functional (NF) water points constructed in Alaba and Mirab Abaya by period of construction (E.C.).....	22
Table 4.4:	Findings on water collection, use and maintenance of the water schemes and users.....	23
Box 1.1:	Dissecting decentralisation.....	4

Acronyms

BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoH	Bureau of Health
BoWRD	Bureau of Water Resources Development

EC	Ethiopian Calendar; runs from September to September. Year 2000 EC corresponds with 2007/2008 Gregorian Calendar
FEDO	Finance and Economic Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GaP	Governance and Planning
GIS	Geographic Information System
IDR-AAU	Institute of Development Research - Addis Ababa University
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre, the Netherlands
Kebele	sub-district, similar to a ward or a neighbourhood
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practise
LPA	Learning and Practise Alliance
L/p/d	litre per person per day
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
NRWSSP	National Rural Water supply and Sanitation Program
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PSCAP	Public Sector Capacity Building Program Support Project
QIS	Qualitative Information System
RF	Regional Facilitator
RiPPLE	Research Inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region
RSP	Regional Strategic Plan (for water services in SNNPR)
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region
SWWCE	South Water Work Construction Enterprise
TVETC	Technical, Vocational and Educational Training Centres
UAP	Universal Access Program (for Water Supply and Sanitation Services)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASHCo	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee
WF	Woreda Facilitator
Woreda	district, smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia
WRMP	Water Resources Management Policy

WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation
WSSMP	Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan
WSU	Woreda Support Units
WSDP	Water Supply and Sanitation Development Programme
WWRDO	Woreda Water Resource Development Office
WWCC	Water Works Construction Company

Executive Summary

Ethiopia is committed, through its Universal Access Plan (UAP), to achieving full coverage of WASH services by 2012. The goals in the UAP are intended to be achieved in parallel with, and based upon, a process of *decentralisation*. This decentralisation is a combination of *democratic decentralisation* based, in part, upon Ethiopia's nature as a federal state; and a process of *administrative deconcentration* intended to make service delivery more equitable, efficient and effective.

This document synthesises research undertaken by the 'Governance and Planning' theme of the RiPPLE project, together with local stakeholders in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). The objective of the research was to gain insights into governance related challenges facing the region, and by extension Ethiopia as a whole, in implementing the UAP, as a precursor to more detailed action research aimed at identifying solutions to these challenges.

The research was carried out through three separate, but linked, case studies. While taking a broad WASH perspective, the main focus of the study was on water services. One study focused on understanding the governance and planning of WASH services at all administrative levels, from Region to Kebele, in particular, the roles played by various actors, the links between them and the challenges they face in meeting policy objectives. Two Woreda level studies focused on the coverage and sustainability of water service delivery in SNNPR. The objective of these studies was to ground the findings of the first study in the reality of service delivery as experienced by citizens. To this end, the studies examined the degree to which citizens in these Woredas had access to a sustainable and fully reliable water service meeting UAP norms of 15l/p/d within 1.5km of the homestead.

The research studies used a mix of surveys, interviews and workshops with sector actors at different levels to identify the main stakeholders in water service delivery; the formal and informal division of responsibility for service delivery from regional to community level; the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to service delivery in general and UAP specifically; and the resources (human, physical and financial) available to service providers. In addition, exhaustive mapping was undertaken of water schemes in the two study Woredas with the principal aim of identifying current levels of coverage and functionality.

The most important overall finding from the perspective of sector governance was a significant disconnect between planning and implementation. Planning is based on assumptions that are not in line with the realities on the ground, while channels for communication and information sharing that could better link planning to service delivery are non-existent or non-functional.

The research found that the implementation of decentralisation remains incomplete, with much remaining to be done in terms of defining the roles of actors at different levels and the links between them. Regional government still plays a major role in decision making and even in scheme implementation and follow up, while decentralised offices at the Woreda level are under-staffed and under-resourced. Much of the policy and legislation relating to decentralisation is new, and in the process of being applied. There remain considerable areas of ambiguity and lack of clarity.

An important finding was the strong improvement in both funding flows and pace of new service delivery over the past few years. While not yet enough to ensure the achievement of the UAP targets by 2012, there are positive indications that with increased efforts to meet some of the specific challenges identified in this report, the goal of full coverage in sustainable services remains achievable. However, findings relating to service delivery in the two study Woredas put some of the

more optimistic official data into doubt. Findings included an estimated use of safe water of 10-11l/p/d, well below the UAP target of 15l/p/d. Also of concern was data indicating that most people are travelling considerably more than the maximum of 1.5km targeted by UAP. Mapping strongly suggested unequal distribution of water points, with some areas having multiple services and others none. What is more, of the water points surveyed between 37% and 60% (depending on Woreda and definition) were not functioning. Repairs can take from two weeks (for minor repairs) to months or even years for major failures.

The findings are therefore mixed. On the one hand increased funding flows and increased construction of new schemes is broadly positive. On the other, the distribution of schemes and their sustainability give cause for concern. From a governance perspective, a particular concern relates to the lack of a solid information base upon which to make planning and allocation decisions, as indicated by important differences between official figures and those in our surveys and reported by many of the sector actors interviewed.

Underlying this observed disconnect between policy and practice lies a complex nexus of different factors, each of which represents a set of challenges to the sector actors working in SNNPR. These include:

Roles and responsibilities

Lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities, and lack of accountability of service providers to service users for operation and maintenance (O&M), implementation etc., poses a significant challenge, particularly to increased sustainability. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHCos) are supposed to take care of daily O&M. However they lack capacity, training and legal status, which is an important barrier to effective functioning, particularly to fee collection and transparency. There is considerable ambiguity in the respective roles and responsibilities of WASHCos, Kebeles, and Woreda Water Resource Development Offices in system monitoring and O&M. There are also large grey areas and areas of overlap in the roles of regional government agencies, NGOs and donor programmes in the provision of new schemes. In general there is a lack of management skills in government structures that are (at least in theory) accountable to service users, and a lack of accountability in NGOs and projects who have the ability to provide services. Several initiatives are underway to improve the situation, including a change process within the Regional Bureau of Water Resources Development (BoWRD) while the issue of WASHCo legal status is currently being addressed. Nevertheless, the wider issue of clarity of roles, mechanisms for coordination and accountability to service users is a very significant challenge to improving sector performance and increasing service delivery.

Monitoring and communications

At the heart of the UAP (and the SNNPR strategic plan) is a commitment to coverage based on a norm that defines access to services in terms of quantity and distance. Yet, government and planners have access to very limited Geographic Information System (GIS) capacity and hence little or no ability to assess in a meaningful way how far this target has been achieved. Systems for monitoring and reporting on how well schemes function are likewise rudimentary, with a lack of basic equipment

such as computers, printers, etc., and the skills to use them. There is, for example, no single database of schemes available at any level – Woreda, Zone or Region. Because of this material lack, planning is not based on real-time data, but typically on surveys carried out by consultants. Reported rises in coverage are not based on actual surveys of users, but rather on calculations based on the number of new schemes developed multiplied by the supposed populations served. This lack of an effective monitoring system and very limited communication between different administrative levels impacts not only planning, but also the ability to learn from experience. Mapping of water schemes in the case study Woredas of Mirab Abaya and Alaba had never been done before this study, although there is talk of increasing mapping in the region, by government and donors, and talk of setting up a database.

Communication and coordination between different organisations is also not optimal, particularly at regional level where despite the existence of platforms and coordination mechanisms that should bring different governmental and non-governmental actors together, the reality is a lack of well documented consultation or concerted action. At least in the two study Woredas, the situation seems better with good collaboration between WWRDOs and the NGOs that are active there.

Human resources

The human resource pool needs to continue to be strengthened in both quantity and skills. This broad area of challenge incorporates a significant group of different actors. The WASHCOs responsible for daily Operation and Maintenance often lack the proper skills to perform their daily tasks, and require support and training. The Woreda Water Development Offices are understaffed according to the SNNPR strategic plan and current staff lack practical skills and resources to perform their job. Ambiguity on the role of the zone means that the significant human resources available at that level are underutilised. Although the Water Bureau is relatively well staffed, the staff pool should be bigger to conform to the strategic plan. Currently, there are 76 vacant positions for technical staff. A general challenge is high staff turnover, especially at Woreda level, where there is a strong tendency for staff to move from government to NGOs because of better pay and working conditions. A number of ongoing initiatives are addressing these challenges. In particular, technical, vocational and educational training centres (TVETC) are playing an important role in training Woreda office staff.

Physical resources

Machinery for construction, vehicles and other equipment are not readily available within the region, with the situation being particularly acute for government at sub-regional levels. The WASHCOs have hardly any equipment for O&M, while the WWRDO in the study Woredas (and, it is understood, more widely) had no vehicles to go into the field or no fuel and no IT equipment. Spare parts are not readily available in the region or near schemes. Mitigating this – to some extent – are the large number of NGOs and projects working in the region, some of them relatively well equipped.

Despite real and significant progress in terms of financing flows to the sector and scheme construction, this research leads to the conclusion that Universal Access will not be achieved by

2012 without concerted action to address key challenges and blockages. Based on this analysis three priority areas for further research and learning emerge. These are:

- To identify appropriate and scalable solutions for improved information management and communication between different water service providers, and between service providers and users. In particular, to develop appropriate monitoring and information management tools and capacity for use at the Woreda level – together with channels for reporting and exchange with higher levels of government.
- To identify mechanisms for improved coordination and harmonisation between different service providers, at all levels, and with a particular focus on coordination of the MoU partners in WASH service delivery at the Woreda level; and between the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED), sector Bureaus and other actors at regional level. Linked to this, is a need to find ways to tackle the entrenched culture of secrecy regarding key governance information, particularly financial.
- To identify practical mechanisms for ensuring greater accountability of service providers to users and their democratic representatives.

I Introduction

This is a synthesis of research carried out on in Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Regional State (SNNPR¹) of Ethiopia under the thematic area of Governance and Planning (GaP) of the RiPPLE Programme – Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region (www.rippleethiopia.org). It is based on three separate but linked case studies. Two of these were focussed on coverage and sustainability of water supply services in two Woredas within the SNNPR, Mirab Abaya Woreda and Alaba Special Woreda². A third regional case study focused on the governance and planning processes relating to the implementation of the Universal Access Plan (UAP) in the SNNPR context. The focus of the research was on water service delivery since other studies carried out under the RiPPLE program provide a more detailed overview of the sanitation status (see the RiPPLE sanitation synthesis paper ³).

I.1 Water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's national coverage in safe water supply reached 42% in 2007 (41% rural and 78% urban) and the sanitation coverage reached 30% in 2007 (21% rural and 80% urban), according to the latest Water Sector Development Reports (MoWR 2007)⁴. However the Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR) estimates that 33% of rural water supply schemes in Ethiopia are non-functional at any time, due to lack of funds for operation and maintenance (O&M), inadequate community mobilisation and commitment and a lack of spare parts (*ibid*). In order to address the low coverage, Ethiopia has committed itself to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including target 10, on halving the share of people without access to water and sanitation by 2015. To reach and surpass the MDGs, the Ministry of Water Resources introduced a Universal Access Plan (UAP) in 2005 with the aim to reach full coverage in WASH services by 2012.

In SNNPR, overall water supply and sanitation coverage in 2006 had reached 48% (45% rural and 60% urban) and 22% respectively (BoWRD 2006). The Bureau of Water Resources Development (BoWRD) estimates that between a fifth and a quarter (22% to 24%) of water supply schemes are non-functional at any given time (*ibid*), with negative impacts on coverage and universal access. To address this SNNPR BoWRD set a target in its strategic plan to increase the sustainability of water supply schemes from the current 76% to 95% by 2012.

Understanding the governance and planning of water service provision is key to being able to identify challenges and opportunities for the achievement of both the UAP and the MDGs. The goals in the UAP are planned to be achieved in parallel with, and based upon a process of decentralisation of a range of state provided services. This process is a combination of, on the one hand a broad political process of *democratic decentralisation* linked to Ethiopia's nature as a federal and multi-ethnic state; and on the other hand a pragmatic process of *administrative deconcentration* aimed at making service delivery more equitable, efficient and effective. This combination of attempting to meet the ambitious targets of UAP while undertaking a wholesale reform of sector governance through

¹ See Annex I for background information

² See Annex I for background information

³ <http://www.rippleethiopia.org/documents/stream/20080908-synthesis-sanitation-hygiene>

⁴ Since Ethiopia adopted its own norms for water services which entailed relaxing the JMP norms, national coverage figures are no longer directly comparable to Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) figures.

decentralisation is resulting in a range of pressing challenges for stakeholders at all levels and scales - from the region down to the local level, the kebele.

1.2 RiPPLE Learning and Practice Alliances and Action Research

Working in three regions of Ethiopia, RiPPLE is developing a new body of high quality knowledge relevant to policy and practice in Ethiopia, the wider region and ultimately to a global audience. The mechanism used for delivering new and relevant knowledge (understood in the sense of the ability to do things) is through the establishment of Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs), at National, Regional and Woreda levels. LPAs bring together the different actors in government, civil society, donor agencies, NGO, private sector and other relevant organisations that work in the WASH sector. The aim is for LPA members to learn from each other, share experience and come up with innovative approaches that influence and shape policy change at national level. The LPAs guide the direction of action research according to local priorities, test and evaluate new approaches, and share experiences within and between districts and regions. RiPPLE coordinators were recruited to facilitate the process of linking the different actors with the action research activities.

LPAs lead the process of evidence-based learning by action research, which also has a strong capacity building component, and is an important component of RiPPLE. The Woreda, Regional and National LPAs are the channels for scaling up innovation from Kebele and Woreda to regional and national levels. For the Governance and Planning theme the focus of research and learning activities was on SNNPR. Results presented in this paper are based on sector cooperation through learning alliances and action research supporting RiPPLE's evidenced-based learning. While this document is presented to an interested global audience, it is important to underline that it has been developed in the first instance by and for the SNNPR LPA. Its objective was to present an overview of challenges and opportunities to achieving a commonly agreed vision (as set out in the regional strategy, itself referring to the UAP), and as an entry point to discussing further areas in which more detailed learning and knowledge development could take place to address the challenges identified. The aim of the paper is therefore to clearly identify and present challenges, rather than to dig deeply into the underlying causes for these challenges – work that can only be done by the SNNPR water sector actors themselves.

1.3 RiPPLE Governance and Planning theme

At its simplest, *water governance* is about how decisions are made regarding managing water resources, and providing water and sanitation services.⁵ Understanding local governance implies understanding local institutions and actors and the relationships between them. Strengthening local governance implies strengthening the processes and mechanisms that link the different actors, including their transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

Planning, in its broadest sense, is the framework and process by which a problem is understood, possible solutions identified and prioritised, actions undertaken, impacts assessed, and lessons learned. Planning is ideally cyclical, feeding lessons learnt back into further decision making. Participation in planning is believed to be important if service users are to feel a sense of ownership over services, particularly if they are expected to finance and manage their upkeep, as in rural

⁵ Please see section 3 in the GaP literature review for a more detailed definition and discussion.

Ethiopia. Participation by empowered citizens is also important if governance is to be truly decentralised, and if the desired benefits of decentralisation are to be achieved.

The central challenge for the RiPPLE GaP theme was to work with stakeholders at the national, regional, zonal, Woreda (district) and Kebele (sub-district) levels to identify appropriate and scalable approaches to strengthening local water governance and planning in the context of Ethiopia's Universal Access Program (UAP) for water and sanitation services. A particular focus within this was on mechanisms for ensuring effective and efficient participation by water users that lead to improved access to services by the poor. To meet this challenge, RiPPLE identified key requirements, as well as bottlenecks to effective governance and planning at Kebele, Woreda, zonal and regional level, primarily through action research working with local authorities.

1.4 Ethiopian decentralisation

Since the 1994 Ethiopian Constitution, Ethiopia has had a four-tier federal structure comprised of Federal, Regional, Zonal and Woreda levels. The decentralisation process in Ethiopia effectively began with this constitution and started with the division of Ethiopia into nine (ethnic-based) regions and two special administrative areas, the cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Decentralisation to the Woreda (district) level has been the latest phase implemented as of 2002. The process entails strengthening Woreda administrations as the main governmental bodies with the mandate to allocate the budget among the different line offices in the Woredas. In addition, to address capacity concerns, there has been a redistribution of some staff from federal and regional levels to the Woreda level. The point needs to be strongly made that Ethiopia's decentralisation is a work in progress, much remains fluid and there are important remaining areas of ambiguity in the division of roles and responsibilities, as well as a lag between the introduction of new policy and related changes in how things are done in practice.

Within the water sector, democratic decentralisation and administrative deconcentration are both reflected in the Universal Access Plan which aims to increase coverage of water supply and sanitation, following a bottom up, decentralised and demand-driven approach, rooted in the Woreda and Kebele levels. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that the UAP itself and the strategic plans based on it at regional level did not come out of a bottom-up process but were largely developed by consultants working for federal and regional government or donors.

It is within this context of ongoing decentralisation and changing relationships between sector actors that the GaP theme seeks to assess the progress and status of water service delivery and the challenges faced in achieving effective water and sanitation service delivery for the rural poor. This is particularly important given that 85% of the population resides in rural areas. Added to this, the GaP theme also focuses on water governance and the service delivery planning cycle with the objective of understanding how policy is linked to, or disconnected from, practice and how these links can be improved and made more effective. In this the GaP theme is guided by a vision of learning-focused sector governance that allows for constant monitoring, analysing, updating and improvement of service delivery throughout the planning cycle.

Box 1.1: Dissecting decentralisation

Political or democratic decentralisation

This occurs when powers and resources are transferred to authorities representative of and downwardly accountable to the local level. Democratic decentralisation aims to increase public participation in local decision making. Democratic decentralisation is in effect an institutionalised form of the participatory approach, it is a “strong” form of decentralisation from which theory indicates the greatest benefits can be derived.

Deconcentration or administrative decentralisation

This concerns transfers of power to local branches of the central state, such as préfets, administrators, or local technical line ministry agents. Deconcentration is a “weak” form of decentralisation because the downward accountability relations from which many benefits are expected are not as well established as in democratic or political forms of decentralisation.

Fiscal decentralisation

This is the decentralisation of fiscal resources and revenue-generating powers. It is often identified by many analysts as a separate form of decentralisation. While fiscal transfers are important, they constitute a cross-cutting element of deconcentration and political decentralisation, rather than a separate category.

Privatisation

This is the permanent transfer of powers to any non-state entity, including individuals, corporations, NGOs and so on. Privatisation, although often carried out in the name of decentralisation, is not a form of decentralisation. It operates on an exclusive logic, rather than on the inclusive public logic of decentralisation.

Adapted from: Ribot, J., C., (2002) African Decentralization - Local Actors, Powers and Accountability
UNRISD Programme on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Paper 8

1.4.1 Sustainable WASH service delivery

Two aspects of the sustainable delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene services are crucially important when analysing the ability of the sector in SNNPR to provide these services: the sustainability of services over time, and the extent of coverage (how many people access the service). Water supply and sanitation services are often confused with the hardware or systems that deliver them. A borehole and hand-pump are not a water supply service: a water supply service is access to a given quantity and quality of water within a given distance with a given reliability. Similarly a sanitation service is not just a latrine, but continued access over time to a safe means of excreta disposal. The need to maintain services – to ensure that once people gain access to 15l/p/d of safe water within 1.5 km of their house or a latrine they continue to have access indefinitely – is what makes water and sanitation services problematic. Simply building systems is not enough; they have to be maintained, upgraded and one day completely replaced. Appropriate hygienic behaviours have to be created and maintained as well. This calls for ongoing support to service users, even when, as is the case in Ethiopia, it is a key assumption that user communities will manage these services themselves.

WASH services are therefore unlike others – such as education or health – where a fairly constant level of expenditure and effort can be expected. They go through a clearly identifiable cycle of capital intensive infrastructure development followed by management intensive periods of operation, followed by new demands for capital during upgrading or replacement. Different phases of the cycle involve different actors (government, community, private sector). At the same time, the requirement for equity and for the delivery of improved WASH services – eventually – to every

member of the community requires the ability to systematically plan and prioritise investments to achieve this in space and time. In particular, it calls for the ability to identify where people are located in relation to services, and hence to target areas of need.

From previous research and literature reviews carried out within RiPPLE's GaP theme it is clear that achieving *lasting* universal access requires attention to the following elements:

- coordination between different levels of government and other actors involved in service provision: to build, operate and maintain water service delivery infrastructure;
- sustainability of the systems and services that have been put in place;
- coverage of the service provisions; and
- the ability monitor and to report the status of service and infrastructure for the people served.

2 Case study methodology

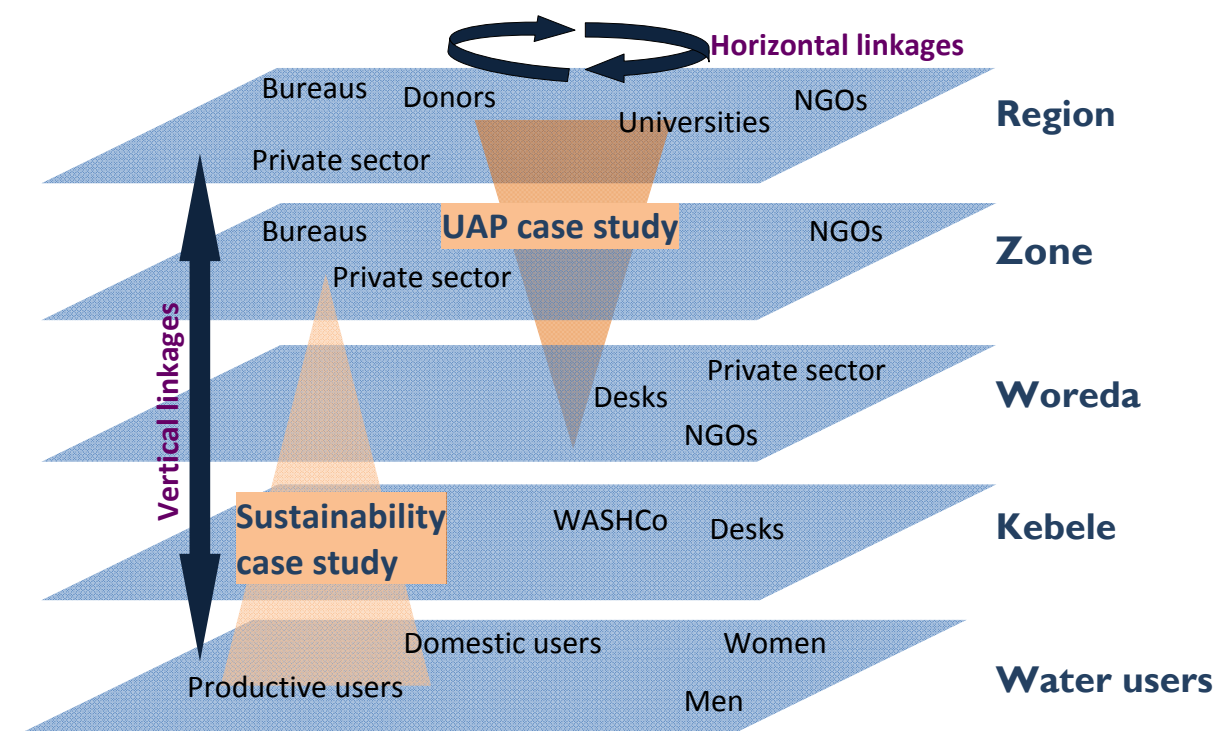
This chapter briefly describes the approach taken, objectives and main research questions that guided the research. More detail on methodologies and the composition of the research team can be found in Annexes 2 and 3.

2.1 The concept

Together with the LPA, the GaP team designed a series of studies that were intended to gain insight into the governance of service delivery in SNNPR and into the service delivery planning cycle as currently practised. It also sought to understand how planning was linked to action on the ground and how actors involved in service delivery related to each other and the policy environments (as expressed in the SNNPR strategic plan). The overall objective was to better understand the main challenges for the SNNPR water sector in implementing the UAP and achieving Universal Access in SNNPR, and to reveal potential areas for further and greater depth action research for the SNNPR LPA.

In order to narrow down and better define the focus, two research teams were formed to gain insights into the main challenges within the context of decentralisation. One research team was to follow a 'top-down' approach – from the regional level down to the zone and Woreda, mainly looking at capacities and knowledge around UAP of both governmental and non-governmental actors, and at finance flows, the characteristics of the strategic planning process and at the levels of coordination and communication.

Figure 2.1: Linkages between different levels of governance



The other research team followed a more bottom-up approach, starting with communities and water supply systems and following linkages up through the Woreda to the Zone, assessing the sustainability of water schemes and service delivery in the two target Woredas (Alaba special Woreda and Mirab Abaya). The main focus was on the functionality of the schemes and on user satisfaction levels, as well as on the human and financial resources available for service delivery. In this way the whole governance line from regional level planning down to implementation at community level and up again (Figure 2.1) was captured in a way that closely mirrors the observed reality of sector functioning.

2.2 Approach

Following the logic of the LPA approach, our initial intention was to have regional LPA members take the lead in case studies. This turned out to be impossible since, especially at regional level, staff could not make sufficient time available. Two local consultant teams were therefore hired to lead the work. For the regional level case study a consultant team from Hawassa University undertook the bulk of the work, with LPA member involvement largely limited to taking part in interviews. For the water system sustainability case studies in Alaba and Mirab Abaya, two local consultants led teams made up of Woreda LPA members from the Water Office, Health Office and a local NGO. The RiPPLE team's own Woreda facilitators were also intensively involved in the water point mapping exercise. Final analysis and write up of initial reports was done by the consultants, while the GaP team and Regional Facilitator provided back-stopping support throughout the case study activities.

2.3 Objectives and main research question

The overall objective of the case studies was to get a shared understanding by all actors (the LPA members) of the key governance and planning related challenges to achieving the shared vision of full coverage by 2012. To achieve this we felt it would be important to develop a shared understanding of the current status of WASH services in (at least) part of the region, and of the functioning of the WASH service delivery chain, the different roles played within it by different actors, and the links between them.

Based on this understanding the priority challenges to achieving the 2012 vision can be prioritised, and those most amenable to intervention through long-term action research identified.

To frame the research a number of questions were formulated under an overarching question: can the vision of full coverage with sustainable services by 2010 be achieved given the models of service delivery currently envisaged in the UAP and SNNPR strategy, and the existing political, social and economic environment; and if not, what adjustments are likely to be necessary to make this achievable?

3 Water sector stakeholders in SNNPR, and how they work together to provide services

Governance, as understood in RiPPLE, relates to the manner in which different stakeholders interact to achieve particular objectives. In the context of SNNPR, the defining framework for analysing governance is the UAP and the democratic decentralisation process. Achieving UAP within a framework of decentralised service provision makes a number of assumptions about the resources available and needed to achieve the objectives. It also makes assumptions about the way different actors in service provision will work together to provide services: their roles and responsibilities and the links between them. This chapter presents the main findings from the research work at both regional and Woreda level as it related to the identification of stakeholders, and the analysis of their roles, responsibilities and interactions. It is based on a mixture of policy review (to identify how things are supposed to work) and interviews with key sector actors (to find out how they are happening in practice). The main findings are presented in three sections dealing with:

- sector policy
- stakeholders roles, responsibilities and their interaction
- resources available and resources needed for sustainable service delivery

3.1 Sector policy

In policy terms, the sector is in a considerable state of flux. Interviews with sector staff showed that it takes time for national policy to filter down and be implemented at regional level and below. For example, knowledge of the most important recent policy, the UAP (and related Regional Strategy Plan – RSP) was limited almost exclusively to Bureau of Water Resource Development (BoWRD) staff.

A review of the last ten years of policy development gives a flavour of the constant stream of new policy and related pressure for change:

- In 1999 a national Water Resources Management Policy (WRMP) was adopted to deal with the absence of a comprehensive sector policy and strategy and sector program (WSP, 2002; ADF, 2005). The policy was particularly important in giving guidance to the decentralisation process and addressing the weak institutional capacity at Region and Woreda levels.
- In 2000, after a comprehensive review of the sector, sector strategies were developed alongside a 15 year Water Supply and Sanitation Development Programme (WSDP) for the period 2001 to 2015 intended to reach the MDG targets and increase the national rural water supply and sanitation coverage to 62% and 54% respectively by 2015 (WSP, 2002 and ADF, 2005).
- The WSDP was followed by a Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan (WSSMP) in 2003, in order to review the targets of the WSDP. WSSMP consisted of a prioritisation of development strategies with a focus on capacity building to strengthen management and implementation capacity in the sector.
- The latest national program developed is the Universal Access Program (UAP) for Water Supply and Sanitation Services (original Amharic version dating from August 2005) to be implemented from 2006 to 2012. The targets of the UAP are on the one hand more ambitious than WSDP as its aim is to increase coverage to 98% three years before the MDG deadlines. On the other hand the norm for coverage in water supply was relaxed to 15 litres per day (l/p/d) within a service

radius of 1.5km (as compared with the JMP standard of 20l/p/d within 1 km⁶), leading to an observable ‘jump’ in coverage statistics for that year.

- At the time of policy development there was considerable lack of clarity, and overlap, in the institutional responsibilities for domestic water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Subsequently a specific policy was developed for the sanitation sector (which was initially included in the UAP) the **National Sanitation Strategy of 2005**.
- In **2005** it was agreed that the **Ministry of Health** was **responsible for all sanitation issues**, including awareness creation, demonstrations, hygiene and health education (ADF, 2005). However, structures and frameworks still need to be adapted to this.

The SNNPR **Regional Strategic Plan** (RSP) for water services is based on the UAP and contains the same vision of total coverage by 2012, while providing detailed budget requirements for increasing water supply coverage to achieve this. An important strength, according to the plan, is the newly decentralised structure based on the Woreda, while the main challenges identified include the poor implementation record of previous strategic plans and poor information access and dissemination.

3.2 Roles, responsibilities and relationships of water service stakeholders in SNNPR

This section presents the main findings of the stakeholder analysis carried out in SNNPR, focusing in particular on the key governmental actors at different levels, it also identifies other major sector stakeholders as well as discussing briefly how the links between them function according to official policy, and in practice.

3.2.1 Government

The main governmental actors in the water sector are the Regional Bureau of Water Resources Development (BoWRD), the Zonal Bureaus of Water Resources Development and the Woreda Water Resource Development Offices (WWRDO).

According to the RSP, the BoWRD mandate includes studying, designing and constructing drinking water facilities as well as managing and maintaining the quality, a mandate that it shares with Water Departments at the Zonal level that are responsible for supporting development, implementation and regulation of water supply services activities in their respective areas. An important finding of this work is that (at least, in the surveyed zone) their mandates and roles continue to be ambiguous. Zonal level staff especially reported that they feel underutilised. According to the official decentralisation policy, the WWRDO is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating water supply activities in their Woreda; the surveys carried out for this work showed that they lacked the means to do so in a meaningful manner. Although they lack the resources to visit and monitor the schemes under their jurisdiction, their commitment and motivation is generally high. In general it was found that the commitment of government staff to decentralisation is clear, yet interviewees felt that the roles, mandates and accountability mechanisms are yet not well developed.

⁶ The JMP is the Joint Monitoring Programme set up by the World Health Organization and UNICEF to monitor progress towards the water and sanitation targets in the Millennium Development Goals. See: http://www.wssinfo.org/en/122_definitions.html

Formal reporting lines exist from Regional to Zone to Woreda, except in the case of special Woredas, where the link is directly from Woreda to Region. In theory, planning follows a bottom up process of needs identification starting at the Woreda, although in practice strategic plans are developed by consultants operating from the regional level. At Woreda level there is no systematic identification or monitoring of facilities – with or without GIS, and WWRDOs are generally not well equipped with IT hardware. For the water point mapping for this study, Woreda Water Officers were of great help in data collection and information sharing, and the officers involved expressed great interest and satisfaction in the work.

The strategic plan mentions as one of the main activities for the Drinking Water Supply Sector the development of partnerships for scheme construction and it became clear that the sector relies heavily on NGOs for scheme design, implementation and training of WASHCos.

At regional level interviewees in the different Bureaus reported feeling unable to coordinate between their Zonal and Woreda offices or between the non-governmental actors mainly because of lack of resources, mechanisms and priorities to do so. BoFED who are responsible for all monitoring and evaluation within the region, feel unable to do so adequately, due to limited staff capacity.

Contributing to the lack of ability to coordinate is the lack of a single linked information management system within government (and non-government) offices so that data and information on scheme development and functioning can be shared. While offices are increasingly equipped with computers, these are not generally networked. However, there is a GIS unit within BoFED which plans to set up a database accessible to all stakeholders, and there is also a small GIS unit within the Water Bureau.

3.2.2 WASHCo and end users

In Ethiopia's policy, rural water supplies are owned, operated and managed by their users. In this scheme, a critical actor is the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee or WASHCo. At sub-district (Kebele) level the Kebele council is responsible for mobilising communities to contribute in cash or kind to projects and to elect the WASHCos who are in turn responsible for daily O&M of WASH services. Interviews with service users showed that WASHCos demonstrate a wider range of competences, from excellent to very poor. They suffer from a number of important challenges, most important of which is generally recognised (by the WASHCos, Water Offices, NGOs and Regional Bureau) to be their lack of formal legal status. This issue is currently being addressed through new legislation that will provide them with a formal legal status. Indeed lack of clarity in the lines of reporting and oversight between WWRDO, Kebele and WASHCo was widely reported by all three actors. Evidence of this from our surveys included the lack of clear democratic election procedures – often WASHCos were appointed by the Kebele administration. In addition, many user communities interviewed complained about a lack of transparency with regard to financial management of WASHCos, poor coordination, supervision and reporting. WASHCo members talked of personal incentives to become a member, including social acceptance, receiving training and the satisfaction of providing people with water. However, in general these incentives seem insufficient to guarantee proper management of the schemes. Revenues are collected but are often misused, since there is no transparency or accountability towards water users, nor any formal oversight from Kebele or WWRDO. The WASHCos themselves reported lack of training and

ongoing support in carrying out their duties – and indeed lack of clarity as to what these were as a reason for malfunctioning.

In general women seem to play a small role in scheme development or WASHCo selection, which is striking since they are the main water collectors. Nevertheless, according to community members, women are perceived to be trustworthy and suitable for jobs like cashier and chairperson.

Despite the formal commitment in policy to user participation in service planning, in practice this seems limited to providing labour and local materials for construction, and to selecting a WASHCo and paying user fees.

3.2.3 NGOs

NGOs (and some donor projects which often function in a similar manner) are critical actors in service delivery, particularly in the construction of new schemes. In 2007, there were 21 international, national and local NGOs working in the water sector in SNNPR under an official agreement with BoFED⁷. Analysis of these agreements shows that more than 83 million Birr⁸ is allocated to Water Supply activities for the period between 2005 and 2012.

In both study Woredas, NGOs were the main actors involved at this time in the construction of new water supply infrastructure. While difficult to gauge accurately, due to lack of clear information on investment volumes, this seems likely to be the case for the region as a whole. While officially supposed to report their presence and activities to a coordinating office in BoFED, in practice most NGOs function fairly autonomously, implementing their own nationally (or internationally) determined agendas, and only sometimes formally consulting or coordinating with government. That said, at the Woreda level they often actively help and support WWRDOs. However the 'brain drain' from government to NGOs is a constant problem within the sector. Another critical problem area reported by both NGO and government staff interviewed is the lack of a commonly agreed set of standards or norms for the services they provide. This leads to a proliferation of different scheme design, different operating rules, and different post-construction support arrangements.

3.2.4 Private sector

The private sector has been identified as a key actor in the UAP and SNNPR RSP, as artisans, consultants and contractors as well as suppliers of spare parts. However, the findings of our research is that the private sector is not well developed with the absence of shops that sell spare-parts a particular problem for sustainability. Several different programs aimed at building capacity at Woreda level included the establishment of Woreda Support Units (WSU) made of private sector actors, which will assist the WWRDO in preparing Woreda Water Supply and Sanitation Programs. In addition, the parastatal South Water Works Construction Enterprise (SWWCE) plays an important role in scheme construction by delivering machines and expertise, as do several Addis based borehole drillers.

In general, while regional level mechanisms for information sharing and coordination exist (important examples being the Memorandum of Understanding between the national ministries of Health, Education and Water as well as the monthly WASH coordination meetings hosted by the regional Water Bureau), interviews with sector stakeholders suggested that they are not yet very effective in

⁷ All NGOs working in a region are officially supposed to register with the BoFED NGO office.

⁸ In late 2008, the exchange rate was between 13 and 14 Ethiopian Birr to one Euro making a million Birr worth about €72,000 or about US \$94,000.

practice and that both formal and informal coordination and information sharing is weak to non-existent. Of the people interviewed for this research, Government actors were the only ones who had a good level of knowledge of the UAP and SNNPR RSP and their overall aims, targets or strategies.

3.3 Resources for delivering sustainable services

To reach universal access the strategy within the UAP is to implement decentralised, demand driven and participatory service provision. Different types of resources are needed for planning, implementation, and daily operation and maintenance of sustainable services. The SNNPR RSP lists the annual budget needed for equipment and the human resources required to implement it, from regional level down to kebele.

Resource mapping revealed a significant gap between planned resources (human and financial) and their availability in the region and Woreda. As mentioned, due to limited government capacity, donors and NGOs play an important role in WASH service delivery and implementation. However, it was not possible systematically to map their resources.

3.3.1 Physical resources

Available physical resources for service provision were difficult to assess, but lack of equipment was a constraint at all government levels. WASHCos are equipped with little more than spanners and pipe wrenches, and therefore rely on external support for all but the simplest repairs. Yet at Woreda level resources are almost as limited. In Mirab Abaya (but not in Alaba) the Woreda administration has a car, while the line offices (health and water) in both Woredas have motorcycles to visit communities. However one or other is not working at a given point in time and there was a problem of not having the money to buy fuel. There is very limited availability of computers and printers and a lack of skills to use the few that were available. None was networked, nor were there electronic links to zonal or regional level. To make matters worse, the Woreda Administration can and does put a claim on what resources exist and use them for other purposes.

At regional level the Water Bureau had only 11 vehicles to travel to the 13 zones and 132 Woredas in SNNPR, while there were only seven drilling rigs available within in the region to support service delivery to more than 15 million people living in an area of around 113,000 km².

3.3.2 Human resources

Human resources are a key asset for service delivery. A major problem faced at all levels from WASHCo up to regional level was high staff turnover rates, which was particularly severe at Woreda level. Another problem is the lack of human resources, particularly people with the right qualifications to execute the strategic plan. Discussions with sector staff revealed considerable dissatisfaction among the large number of Woreda staff who had been reassigned, as part of the decentralisation process, from Addis and regional level to what are perceived as unattractive positions in remote areas.

In Alaba Water Office only 56% of the technical positions in the strategic plan were filled and in Mirab Abaya only 43% were filled. In addition, Woreda level water technicians were not properly skilled for O&M and often lacked practical training. The training received at the Technical, Vocational and Educational Training Centres (TVETC) had not provided them with the practical skills needed to fulfil their jobs.

The Regional Water Resource Development Bureau is also understaffed. There were 76 vacant positions, meaning that only 60% of the required positions were filled. Both the UAP and the regional strategic plan are based on a much higher staff pool for implementation. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, in general, staff at the regional level are highly qualified with MSc and BSc degrees, and that the staff complement has grown significantly in the past few years and is in general well motivated.

Another area of critical human resource deficiency is in WASHCos. According to the UAP, a WASHCo should comprise of seven members and have a good gender balance. In Alaba approximately half the members were female. However, in Mirab Abaya only a few women were WASHCo members. Most of the WASHCos received training on O&M only during scheme construction, typically by the implementing NGO in collaboration with the Woreda Water office. Lack of follow up training was mentioned by the WASHCos as one of the major elements hampering optimal functioning, even though the strategic plan lists training of WASHCos as an explicit and budgeted activity.

3.4 Finances

This section looks at both the financial flow of resources into the region (and the survey Woredas), and the revenue generated internally through cost recovery from service users. For a more detailed analysis of the nature, quantity and problems associated with funding to the sector in Ethiopia, see the RiPPLE finance working papers available online at www.rippleethiopia.org/page/ripple-outputs.

Gathering information on sector financing flow proved extremely difficult for a number of reasons discussed in this section. What was collected allowed a number of broad trends to be identified and some tentative conclusions to be drawn.

3.4.1 Budgeting and financial flows

In very broad terms the most important and positive finding was the steady increases in both allocation and spending in the sector. Less positively there are gaps between what was identified as necessary in the UAP and RSP; what is asked for in annual budget requests; what is released in response to those requests and what is actually spent (see Table 3.1). These gaps do not even take into account the effects of inflation on the actual costs incurred.

Table 3.1: Discrepancy between the planned (strategic and annual) and allocated budget (Channel I & II) of SNNPR Water Bureau (2005-2006) in Birr

Fiscal Year (EC)	Strategic Plan	Annual Plan	Allocated Budget	Percentage of strategic plan budget included in the annual plan (%)	Percentage of strategic plan budget included in the allocated budget (%)
2005	129,448,454	39,516,220	31,629,390	30.5	24.4
2006	133,822,518	113,820,630	63,211,270	85.0	47.2

Source: The five year strategic plan, annual plan and Secondary data from BoFED and BoWRD

Table 3.1 shows the combined budget by the state (BoFED – channel I) and development partners (channel II) to the sector. In addition to this, funding is supposed to come from NGOs and communities, as shown in Table 3.2 for the year 2005. The communities are expected to contribute about 244 million Birr for construction and maintenance and the largest amount, 1.35 billion Birr needs to come from non-government actors. Comparing the 2005 figures from Tables 3.1 and 3.2, the planned budget in the strategic plan for SNNPR (129 million) is only just over half (54.5%) of the planned Bureau budget in the UAP for SNNPR (238 million).

Table 3.2: Financial requirement (Birr) for SNNPR for the year 2005 as calculated in the UAP

Description	Regional level estimate SNNPR	National level estimate
New construction and maintenance (including community participation)	1,829,691,981	8,739,886,282
Community share for new construction	242,775,113	953,840,693
Community share for maintenance	1,259,145	38,178,082
New construction and maintenance excluding community participation	1,585,657,722	7,747,867,508
Bureau budget for 2005	237,622,925	1,106,838,215
Bureau budget based on 2003 national budget distribution formula	204,955,114	1,106,838,215
Difference between budget required and distribution formula	32,667,811	0

Source: UAP, (MoWR, 2006)

The contributions provided by NGOs have only recently been overtaken by expenditure from the government (Figure 2), and remain important, particularly as they include substantial amounts for constructing new hardware. The average annual budget of NGOs working on WASH in SNNPR was 27 million Birr from 1994-2004. For the coming five years (up until 2012) a total of 83 million Birr will be going into the sector through NGO support (based on data from official agreements between BoFED and 21 NGOs).

Budgets to WWRDOs are allocated by the Woreda Administration (which in turn receives them from BoFED), as part of the formal budgetary system. Interestingly however, the WWRDOs are accountable for their activities only to Zonal and regional Water Resource Development Bureaus. The budgets requested by both WWRDOs surveyed are consistently higher than the budget allocated. The WWRDO is not represented on the Woreda Cabinet and only in case of major problems like 'acute watery diarrhoea' are significant budgets released directly to the sector from the Woreda budget.

At regional level the budget requested each year was also systematically higher than the budget allocated, especially for the last three years. However, there was a trend of releasing more money into the WASH sector (Table 3.2). Over the next five years, the annual planned budget (for implementing UAP) is even higher and very likely not to be fully allocated (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Estimated annual costs for achieving universal access as stated in the UAP (in million Birr)

Region	Study & Design	Construction	Improvement and upgrading	Sanitation	Total
South	23.30	624.11	42.77	140.86	831.04

Once budgets are released to the different offices, they should in theory be used for implementation. However as mentioned before there is a human resource capacity constraint, which challenges the ability to spend the money.

3.4.2 Cost recovery

Among financial factors impacting on service sustainability is the ability of users to pay for services, finance for recurrent costs and capital investment. Our research at scheme and WASHCo level showed a wide range of practices and relative success in collecting money from water users.

A recurrent theme was the lack of good financial practice in WASHCos, part of the wider capacity problem at this level, with few WASHCos managing to maintain adequate financial records. In general, water users seemed prepared to pay the tariffs set, although there were differences in tariff level and user satisfaction in the two Woredas surveyed. Water users in Mirab Abaya stated that the tariffs were affordable (2-10 cents per 20 litre container or 0.5-5Birr /month), while respondents in Alaba felt that the tariffs (which ranged from 10-20 cents per 20 litre container) were too high. In general, while some of the WASHCos were able to collect enough money for daily operation and maintenance costs, including paying per diems for the technicians coming from town, savings were not sufficient to cover major replacements such as generator or pumps. Because of the generally very poor record keeping, it was difficult to gain a systematic insight into actual spending and income.

3.5 Progress towards achieving the UAP and challenges to be addressed

The UAP estimated the number and type of schemes to be constructed in SNNPR between 2006 and 2012 in order to raise coverage to 98%, as indicated in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Number and type of schemes to be constructed in SNNPR (2006-2012) to raise coverage to 98%

Hand dug well (community) Av. depth 10m	Modern hand dug well av. depth 15m	Spring (on site distribution)	Medium stream	Shallow well	Deep well	Large spring 1	Large spring 2	Total
3,410	3,224	9,685	438	4,516	676	1	1	21,951

Source: UAP (MoWR, 2006)

Comparing the plan (Table 3.4) with what was constructed (Table 3.5) over three years (2004-2006) indicates that the actual construction rate is lower than what is planned for in the UAP. If this rate continues this would mean that in the first half of the UAP period (2006-2009) only one third of the planned number of schemes will be constructed, rather than half the planned schemes.

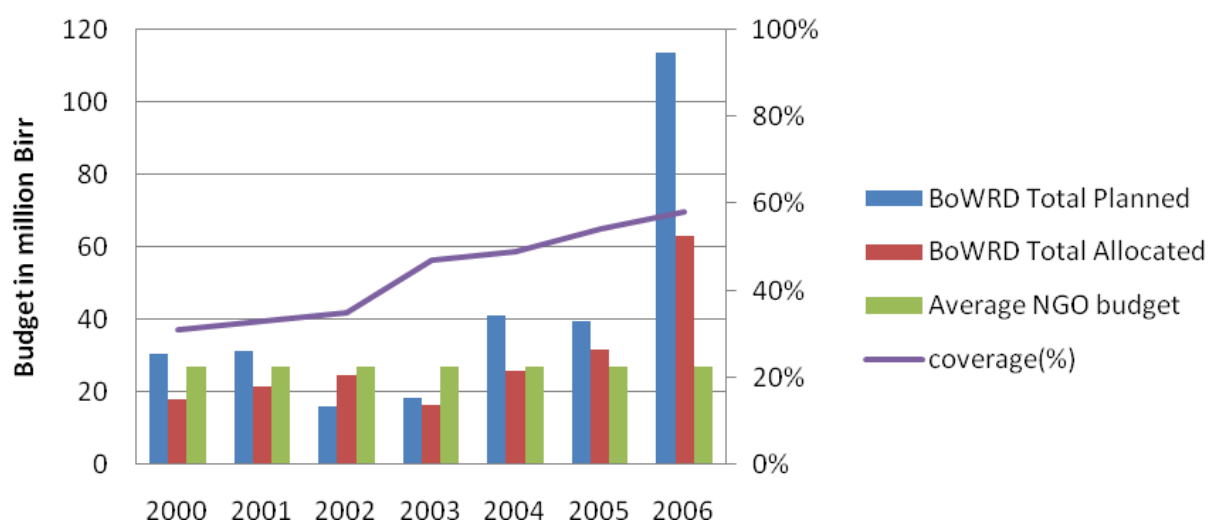
Table 3.5: Type and number of new water schemes constructed in SNNPR (2004-2006)

Year	Hand dug Well	Intermediate Deep well	Deep well	Developed Springs	Total
2004	1304	1678	421	2941	6344
2005	178	115	0	184	477
2006	48	118	13	223	402
Total	1530	1911	434	3348	7223

Source: Secondary data source BoWRD Training department.

According to BoWRD data, rural water supply coverage *did* increase from 2004 to 2006. However, the annual *rate* of increase actually declined in this period, from 8 to 4 percent. Equally, when looking at the number of water schemes constructed there is no clearly visible increasing trend, although this would be necessary to achieve UAP. In fact, more schemes were constructed in 2004, than in 2005 and 2006 combined. However, it is important to note that the number of schemes constructed does not necessarily reflect the number of people that are served.

Figure 3.1: Trend in Planned and Allocated Budget of BoWRD and safe water supply coverage in SNNPR 2000-2006



Source: Secondary Data from BoWRD.

Note: The jump between 2002 (1995 EC) and 2006 (1999 EC) was not caused by a sudden increase in scheme development, but followed the change in 2005 from using the JMP norm of 20 l/p/d within 1km to planning for a new Ethiopian norm of 15 l/p/d within a service radius of 1.5km, as described in 3.1 Sector Policy.

- No data was available on the absolute numbers of schemes constructed per year, so no direct evidence could be shown linking an increase in money to an increase in constructed schemes.

For achieving rural UAP by 2012, a coverage increase of 44% will be needed. At the current rate of average annual increase in coverage of 6% per year, 98% rural water supply coverage will be reached by 2016. That would imply that in absolute number of schemes to be constructed, twice the amount of schemes needs to be constructed in the final year than in the first year. When taking a slightly longer time-frame for analysis as in Figure 3.1, the average annual increase in total (urban and rural) coverage is about 4.5%. If this trend was continued, this would imply not reaching full coverage before 2020.

To sum up then, based on official data and if current rates of progress are maintained, SNNPR is on track to achieve its target of 98% coverage sometime between 2016 and 2020 – or some four to eight years behind schedule. Taken at face value, and given the undoubtedly ambitious nature of the UAP, this is encouraging. And, indeed, while there are many very real challenges to be faced the increase in funding and in ability to turn that funding into schemes, does give rise to genuine optimism.

However, this cautiously optimistic interpretation is based on official figures and needs to be questioned if the disturbing findings on functionality and coverage described in the next section at Woreda level hold true across the region as a whole.

4 Mapping water schemes in Mirab Abaya and Alaba Special Woreda

The previous chapter took a broad look at the policy environment and main stakeholders acting in the water sector in SNNPR, and at macro trends in financing and delivery of new water services. In order to root this initial analysis in the reality of service delivery on the ground, this section presents the results of an exhaustive mapping and surveying exercise that visited every water point within two Woredas. This activity was carried out in close collaboration with learning and practice alliance work groups made up of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from the two Woredas. The exercise allowed us not only to identify each water scheme and point⁹ in the two Woredas, but also to develop an understanding of their characteristics including reliability, functioning and user satisfaction.

In general terms, the findings of the surveys in the two Woredas offer a starkly contrasting view of progress in service delivery to those offered by official figures. The two most striking findings of the mapping were the high rate of non-functionality of water points and schemes; and a highly uneven spatial distribution of water points. Both raise questions about the reliability of coverage estimates.

Differences with official data can, partly, be explained by lack of clarity on norms and terminology used to describe water supply services, particularly what is meant by 'coverage' and 'functioning'. Discussions with sector stakeholders suggested that coverage figures are calculated using a mix of survey data (related to the elaboration of the Regional Strategic Plan) and simple calculations based on types of scheme and design population served. In practice this means that original data for the regional strategy came from surveys, and each time a new scheme is implemented the served population is increased by adding the number of people supposedly served by a scheme of that type (see Table 4.1). It is not clear whether this method also takes account of population growth. What is known is that it is not based on a detailed mapping of either schemes or users, as no such mapping exists.

Table 4.1: Estimated number of people served by different water scheme technologies

Hand dug well (community) Av. Depth 10m	75
Modern hand dug well. Av. Depth 15m	250
Spring on the spot (onsite)	300
Medium spring	5,000
Shallow well	500
Deep well	3,500

Source: UAP (MoWR, 2006)

We were unable to identify a formal description of what makes a water scheme functional or non-functional, and it is important to underline that the figures we present are 'raw'. That is, if a scheme was not functioning on the day it was visited by the mapping team, it was marked as non-functional on the survey. This undoubtedly gives a high figure for service breakdown, however, as is reported

⁹ In the terminology of SNNPR, a water *scheme* refers to the entire system of source, extraction and delivery hardware. A water *point* refers to the place where people collect water – a tap stand, hand pump etc.

waiting times for repair range from two weeks for minor breakdown to years for major breakdowns, so we feel the approach is justifiable.

4.1 Location of the water schemes and distribution points in Mirab Abaya and Alaba Special Woreda

The main work in the two Woredas was the mapping of all water schemes and water points, which as far as we know has not been done before. The focus of the mapping work was on publicly accessible water points, excluding water points at clinic and school compounds¹⁰ because they are not accessible to the general public, and not included in official coverage data.

Table 4.2 shows the provision of schemes and water points by type in the two surveyed Woredas. In Alaba all improved water sources are deep motorised boreholes, because of the groundwater depth (up to 300 meters). Boreholes are equipped with motorised pumps and connected to distribution networks with widely distributed stand posts. The reliance on mechanised systems arguably leaves populations in Alaba vulnerable to scheme failure – a broken pump leads to the failure of service at all attached water points.

Table 4.2: Status water schemes and water points in Alaba and Mirab Abaya Woredas

Alaba Scheme types	Functional	Non-functional	Abandoned ^a	Total	% non-functional ^b
Borehole (submersible pump)	10	8		18	44
Borehole (mono pump)	4	2		6	33
Total water schemes	14	10		24	42
Total water points^c	26	39		65	60
Mirab Abaya Scheme types					
Borehole	4	4	3	11	50
Hand dug well	8	5	7	20	38
Machine dug well	18	7	1	26	28
Protected spring (incl. 5 on site distribution)	10	3	-	13	23
Total water schemes	40	19	11^d	70^e	32
Total water points	66	38	12	116^f	37

Note: a schemes were characterised as abandoned on the advice of WWD staff. However, it is not clear how abandoned schemes are treated in the calculation of overall service coverage

b excluding the abandoned schemes

c Some water schemes have more than one water point; hence more water points than schemes

d 11 schemes were abandoned either because of resettlement of communities, ingress of Lake Abaya and because schemes had outlasted their design life and were not subsequently rehabilitated

e 51 of these schemes are on site distribution i.e. 46 hand pumps and 5 onsite protected springs

f the 116 water points include the on-site distribution (5 springs and the 46 wells) and 4 abandoned water points (of which no coordinates were taken).

Rates of non-functionality of water schemes in Alaba and Mirab Abaya Woredas were higher than the rates estimated by the BoWRD (42 and 32 percent compared to 37 and 26 percent), while the

¹⁰ These water points were mapped, but not taken into account into the analysis

rates of non-functioning water points (arguably of more relevance to users) were higher still (fully 60% for Alaba, and 37% for Mirab Abaya). It seems that for official monitoring purposes, as long as the source is functioning, the scheme is said to be functioning too. In the case of a borehole equipped with a single hand pump, this is indeed true. However, where schemes are based on deep boreholes with mechanised lift systems and extensive pipe networks, the difference can become important. Large schemes, based on deep boreholes with mechanised pumps (such as those in Alaba), have several stand posts spread along distributions lines that can be several kilometres long.

In terms of the location of the services, it is clear from the Alaba map (Figure 4.1) that most boreholes are developed near main roads, where the drilling rigs and other machinery have relatively easy access. Only the asphalt road is indicated on the Mirab Abaya map (though there are earth tracks in the Woreda for which no map was found). Most water points are again clustered around the asphalt road. Another reason for this, besides accessibility, may be that larger settlements are found near the asphalt road and thus these areas have a higher water demand.

Figure 4.1: Water schemes and distribution points in Alaba, with 1.5km radius 'service areas' for functioning water points

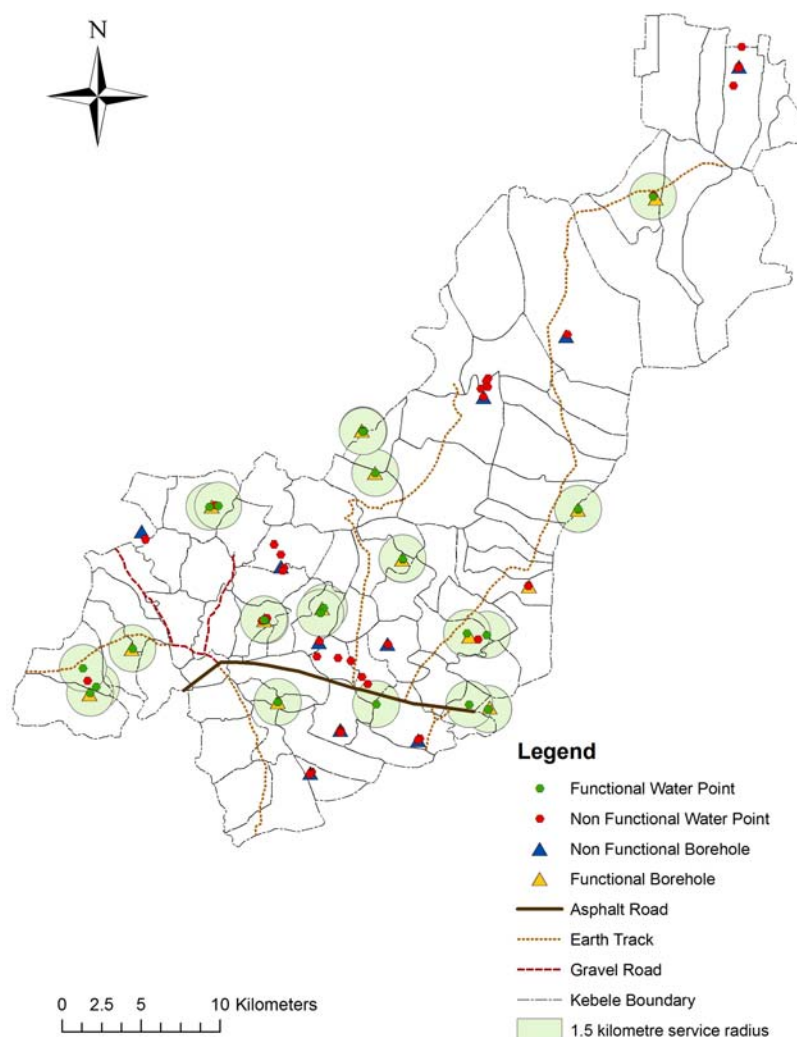
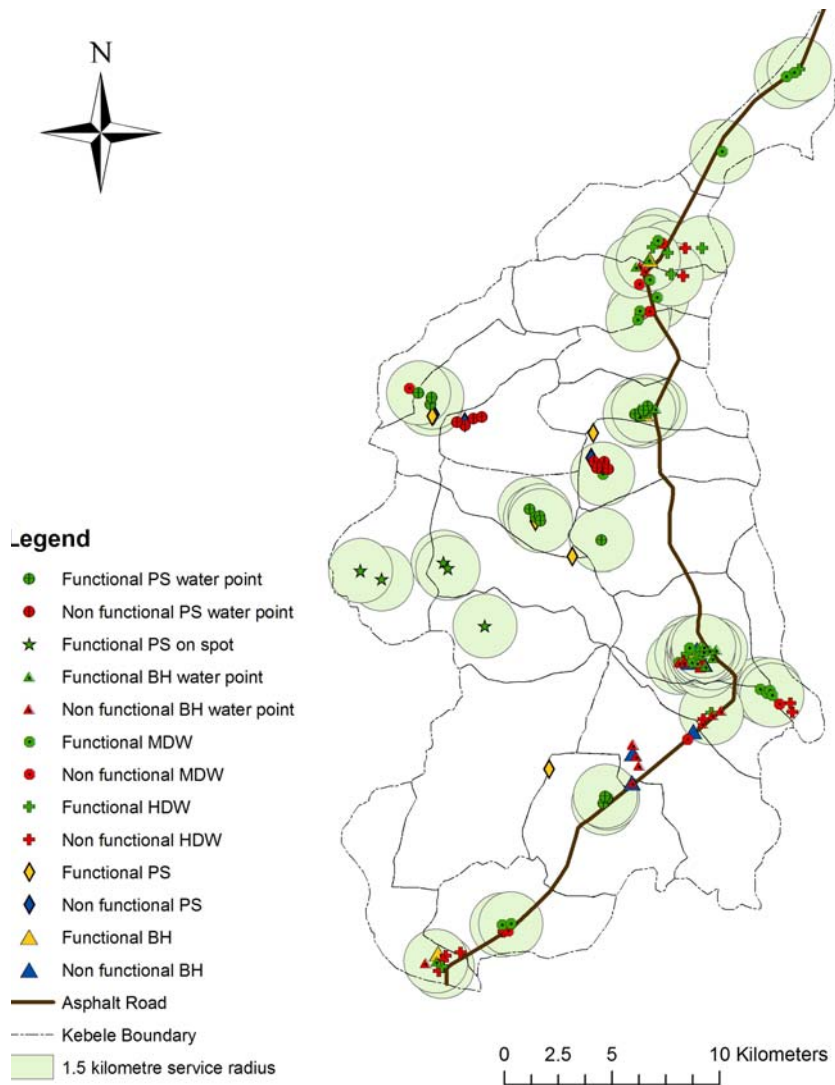


Figure 4.2: Water schemes and distribution points in Mirab Abaya, with 1.5 km radius 'service areas' for functioning water points



Note: The maps show the location of all mapped water schemes and points. These were located using GPS and are hence accurate in relation to other water points. However, problems with accessing accurate shape files of Woreda and Kebele boundaries mean that position is only indicative to these, with an estimated potential error of 1-2km.

The circles around each water points on the two maps (Figure 4.1 and 4.2) indicate a circle of radius 1.5 km, the UAP norm for water service delivery. In other words, according to UAP norms only those living within one of these circles should be considered as being covered. Therefore, at least in terms of physical area, the large majority of each Woreda remains uncovered, even where non-functioning schemes are taken into account. Data on population density (even at the Kebele level) was not made available (or does not exist), so it is impossible to categorically state, based on the maps alone, that coverage figures are below official figures. However, it does seem strongly likely, given the total population living in the Woreda, the number of water points and the average per capita water use.

4.1.1 Issues related to the non-functionality of water points

Previous chapters have already given some insight into the current level of development of the sector and factors likely to impact on sustainable service delivery, with very limited human and financial resources as key elements. To this can be added the more detailed findings of the survey work in the two Woredas.

One striking finding was the reliance of the sector, at least in these two Woredas, on NGOs and donors for construction of new hardware. Some schemes, especially the oldest ones, had been developed by government. In Alaba the schemes were constructed by 6, and in Mirab Abaya by 10 different agencies. All of these different actors have different norms, implementing procedures and technology choices.

Table 4.3 shows the functionality of the water points and the period of construction for both Woredas. Attention is drawn to the lack of services before 1998 in Alaba Woreda, as well as to the significant increase in scheme construction in the last 6 years. This may be related to the increased availability of equipment for drilling the deep boreholes required in the area. However, attention is also drawn to the very high level of water-point failure among the more recent schemes, perhaps indicating that pressure to rapidly increase construction is leading to problems with sustainability. In contrast, many of the functional water points in Mirab Abaya are older than 10 years and will need rehabilitation at some points (13 of functional water points have exceeded their original design-life). It is interesting to note that the failure rate of the most recent schemes in Mirab Abaya is far less than that of Alaba, perhaps indicating that smaller, less mechanised schemes are more sustainable.

Table 4.3: Numbers of functional (F) and non-functional (NF) water points constructed in Alaba and Mirab Abaya by period of construction

Period	-1987		1988-1997		1998-2002		2003-2007	
	Funct.	Non Funct.	Funct.	Non Funct.	Funct.	Non Funct.	Funct.	Non Funct.
Alaba	3	2	0	2	13	13	10	22
Mirab Abaya	13	27	31	12	4	8	18	3

In general, the main reasons listed for non-functionality of water points are breakdown (pump or generator), technical problem at the water point, water table draw down or closure by either Woreda Water Office or WASHCo. Of these the most serious tend to be the breakdown of pumps or generators on the deep borehole based schemes, where once a breakdown occurs water users are entirely at the mercy of regional level support for repairs.

What is perhaps more striking, despite frequent breakdowns and the high level of non-functionality, is that some schemes have managed to continue working for so long, far past their original design lives. Fuller investigation by LPA members of these schemes, and an effort to understand why they are so successful might lead to valuable learning opportunities.

4.2 Features of the water service delivery: accessibility, quantity, quality, reliability from a users perspective

As mentioned, the starting point for this work is a definition of water service that emphasises the supply of a given quantity and quality of water available within a certain distance with a given reliability. This section presents the results from a survey with service providers and (especially) users, to assess the level and quality of service being provided in the two Woredas.

Table 4.4 summarises a range of service indicators collected during mapping work. From the point of view of service delivery and achieving UAP norms they do not make for encouraging reading. Starting with the long average times recorded for collecting water, it seems clear both that the average water user is travelling considerably further than 1.5 kilometre, and that they are using considerably less than 15l/p/d. Neither of findings should give rise to surprise given the evidence of the maps (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2) and the well known relationship between distance water has to be carried and quantities used.

Table 4.4: Findings on water collection, use and maintenance of the water schemes and users

	Alaba	Mirab Abaya
Average daily water use per capita	10 l/p/d	11 l/p/d
Water collection time dry ^a season and wet season; (roundtrip + waiting & collection time)	9 hours ^b and 5 hours ^b	5 hours ^c
Average waiting time minor maintenance	2 weeks	2-3 weeks
Average waiting time major maintenance	3-12 months	12 months
Water quality	Good, except for high fluoride content	82% of water point are used without quality complaints
Time for which water points are open for use	5-12 hours; on average 8 hours	6-12 hours; on average 9 hours

Note: ^aThe large time spent on water collection indicates that the nearest water point is more than 1.5km away. It is estimated that a person carrying water can cover 1 km in 30 minutes (WHO, 2006)

^b Includes an average roundtrip of 2 hours with queuing time of 7 hours in the dry season and 3 in the wet

^c 2 hour roundtrip with 3 hours queuing – wet and dry season

No official figures or norms exist for what is an acceptable time to wait for a breakdown to be repaired, the 2-3 weeks for ‘minor’ breakdowns let alone the very long waiting periods for major repairs does not suggest good service. Factors impacting on the response time are accessibility from the road to the water source and water point, the distance from the scheme to the nearest town to buy spare parts (or ask for assistance) and the availability of spare parts which, in turn, is connected to the technology chosen. Major maintenance support needs to come from the region (the zone is absent in the Alaba case and has no clear role in the case of Mirab Abaya) and depends on the availability of experts and machinery as well as budget for major maintenance.

4.3 Summary

The picture that emerged from the mapping work in Alaba and Mirab Abaya shows that big steps need to be taken to achieve the UAP. Coverage levels, as far as they can be assessed, seem to be

considerably below official estimates, while failure rates are considerably higher, particularly when looking at failure at the level of individual water points. If the trends visible in the two Woredas hold for the region and indeed the nation as a whole, the implications for Ethiopia's ability to achieve the ambitious goals of UAP are worrying.

We would argue strongly that in addressing the spirit of the UAP, and adopting a service delivery approach, functionality of, and distance from the individual *water points*, and not schemes should be the basis for monitoring and estimates of coverage. Saying that a scheme is functioning because the pump and two out of six tap stands are functioning does not really address the definition of service delivery encompassed in the UAP – especially when the tap stands may be several kilometres away from each other.

The reasons for the poor service delivery found in the survey work revolve around a complex and difficult to disaggregate mix of technical and managerial capacity issues (in all actors, government, NGOs, communities and private sector); lack of spare parts and financing; insufficient cost recovery and management of funds from cost recovery; lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities; poor coordination and communication; poor (non-existent) information management; and (perhaps) inappropriate technology choice.

This said, much effort has and is being made to increase coverage, and this is visible both anecdotally in the perception of sector actors, and in documented progress in increasing rates of service roll-out. Nonetheless, all the evidence collected indicates that without considerable additional effort the UAP targets are unlikely to be met by 2012, or even 2020.

A number of organisations, in particular WaterAid have used mapping exercises to highlight inequitable distributions of water supply schemes and problems with official coverage statistics. The cases of Alaba and Mirab-Abaya once again demonstrate the power of being able to look – even very simply – at the spatial arrangement of water users and water supply services. We would argue that with hardware costs (computers and GPS) falling, a comprehensive service coverage and functionality GIS/database should be the starting point of any attempt to improve information management about service delivery in SNNPR.

5 Implementing the Universal Access Plan in SNNPR – a SWOT analysis

This section draws on the findings of the survey and mapping work presented in chapter three and four. It maps out the main challenges to achieving the SNNPRS RSP, as well as the UAP itself. A SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is used to pull together the different elements identified earlier. At the end of the SWOT analysis, a brief summary is provided of the most important barriers to achieving UAP.

In using a SWOT it is important to bear in mind that Strengths and Weaknesses relate directly to the sector stakeholders in SNNPR; whilst Opportunities and Threats relate to wider sector (and external) elements that affect outcomes but are not within the ability of sector stakeholders to act upon directly. This difference, whilst intellectually pleasing, can be difficult to achieve in practice. Whilst some issues clearly belong to one quadrant of the SWOT matrix, others blur the boundaries.

5.1 Strengths – aspects of governance that make achieving the UAP possible

The sector's biggest strengths are its human resources. The Bureau of Water Resources Development has a growing cadre of well qualified and dedicated staff. It is keen to be involved in learning activities (such as RiPPLE) and is willing to act on the basis of the results of research – for example the tabling of a new (regional) law that will lead to the creation of a legal status for WASHCos. While still below design capacity according to the regional strategy, human resources in regional and (where surveyed) zonal government are improving and provide a solid basis for further growth. Other actors are also committed to achieving either UAP or the MDGs, and there is considerable additional human resources availability within the Region and Woredas, particularly through NGO staff.

There is a real commitment to increased sector integration as evidenced by the Regional Bureau's efforts to establish a sector coordination platform. In addition there is commitment to inter-sectoral collaboration around WASH in the form of the MoU between the ministries of Water, Education and Health, which can be seen as a first step in coordination and strategic planning within the Water Supply and Sanitation sector.

Although data is confusing, uneven and sometimes ambiguous, there is some evidence that increased financing to the sector in SNNPR is leading to increased construction of new schemes, albeit not fast enough to achieve UAP by 2012. Perhaps most importantly, the indication that increased commitments to the sector are leading to both greater disbursement and use may suggest an improved absorption capacity at regional level.

Even though non-functionality rates are high, there is evidence that certain water schemes do function for a long time period, even beyond their design life (as e.g. Debeso scheme in Alaba Woreda has been functional for more than 34 years). These schemes can provide good lessons of successful practice.

Finally, although the private sector in general remains weak, there is some capacity for works (particularly borehole drilling) and software support (though the World Bank project Woreda Support Units¹¹, WSU).

5.2 Weaknesses – regional level challenges to achieving the UAP in SNNPR

In governance terms, the single greatest challenge to overcome in the sector is the observed disconnect between policy, planning and service delivery especially at the Woreda and Kebele level.

A mix of different elements facilitate this disconnect. Chief is poor communication and coordination at all levels – particularly regarding concerted action to achieve the UAP. Systematic knowledge sharing and channelling of information does not take place, partly due to lack of resources and capacity. This can be largely addressed by a change in the priority and resources given to information management. At the moment there is little systematic monitoring or reporting of data from Scheme to Woreda to Region. The result is that much of the information that should be used for decision making is missing or suspect. Data used for planning is not consistent and often based on estimations rather than then actual facts.

A major challenge to the sector is the critical lack of capacity and resources at the Woreda level. Under-capacity at Woreda level contributes to problems around coordination and communication as well as lack of accountability; mandates, roles and responsibility are often not clear e.g. around scheme rehabilitation. With major efforts to expand Woreda capacity by recruiting new staff and providing them with training, this problem is recognised and is being addressed. Nevertheless, flooding Woredas with new staff, who may have only recently graduated from the TVETC and thus lack practical experience, will not in itself solve the problem. Placing high reliance on the private sector for artisans and spare part supply in a context where the private sector is not fully developed is also a risky strategy. Spare parts as such are not (easily) available in the region for maintaining the systems, partly because there is no standardisation in material and technology used.

What is called for is a major effort of support and capacity building by *all* actors present in the Woredas, particularly NGOs and donor projects, to help the new Woreda staff to quickly gain the practical skills needed to do their job. In tandem, an important effort is required to properly equip Woreda offices and to align approaches (and technologies). Woreda Support Units have some promise as a model that could help to bridge the current gap between relatively well staffed Region and totally under resourced Woreda.

Besides capacity constraints there are also a number of behavioural elements that prevent efficient sharing of the data that does exist. These include: pressure on staff to present 'good news' to functional or political superiors; administrative and sectoral reporting lines that, despite decentralisation, still tend to send data more quickly vertically (within line structures) than horizontally; a (changing) culture of organisational secrecy that sees data as something that should be shared sparingly and only with those who have a 'right to know'; vulnerability of some funding streams that make sector bureaus reluctant to share all data on income with BoFED in case they see allocations reduced; different reporting standards – particularly between government and non-governmental actors; and priority setting at national level that cuts across regional planning (especially for NGOs and some donor projects). And this is not a comprehensive list of constraints.

¹¹ Though the World Bank programme to set up these Woreda Support Units is coming to an end, they were created to put in place private sector capacity building to support the government programmes.

5.3 Opportunities – aspects of the wider environment that are likely to affect the UAP

There are many opportunities for the sector in SNNPR, ranging from the current relatively high profile of the sector, reflected in increased funding coming into it from various sources, to increased speed of disbursement as donors harmonize their approaches. From outside the government there are initiatives that are likely to have a positive outcome on reaching UAP.

It is widely acknowledged by donors and NGOs that there is need for qualified and skilled people in the sector and capacity building is the main focal area of donors like UNICEF, WSP, WB, JICA as well as NGOs like SNV. There is also general acknowledgement of the need for radically improved information management. SNNPR has recently witnessed GIS units established in BoFED and BoWRD. This recognition needs to be built upon to create a solid information management capacity and strategy within the region to underpin the ability to plan more strategically and to learn from experience.

5.4 Threats

Achieving UAP in SNNPR faces many threats ranging from lack of transport infrastructure to lack of sufficient funding and donor bureaucracy. Some of the more important threats to the sector's progress identified by this work include:

- A general lack of sufficient and good (road) infrastructure which means that certain areas remain inaccessible, hampering extension of new water supply and sanitation coverage as well as current maintenance and service support to the existing schemes;
- Unpredictable (although improving) year-on-year funding flows into the sector from government as well as from donor funds continues to undermine efforts to improve planning and monitoring of activities;
- The high population growth of about 3% or half a million people per year, requires high speed construction to keep up with increasing water demand.

5.5 Summary

In summary, it can be seen that the water supply and sanitation sector in SNNPR faces a number of important governance challenges, with perhaps the most important being the need to rapidly increase the capacity of Woreda level actors and locate them within a more joined up system of monitoring, planning and management. The analysis of opportunities and strengths however suggests that there is a real basis for improvement in SNNPR, and that achieving this will have a lot to do with avoiding the negative impacts of the more important weaknesses and threats – by increasing (and making more predictable) funding flows, capacity, and overall improvement in SNNPR infrastructure – particularly roads to increase access for construction and maintenance.

6 Conclusions and recommendations for further action research

This chapter provides a broad summary of the results and discussions of the previous three chapters, and then seeks to draw together the results and discussion so far to provide an overview of the main lessons emerging from this work, and suggestions for the way forward. It identifies priority areas for action research, based on an analysis of the main challenges to achieving the SNNPR vision of 98% coverage by 2012.

6.1 Summary: Full coverage is achievable, with significant additional effort and improved sector governance and planning

The overarching conclusion of the studies carried out in SNNPR is that on current trends the goal of achieving 98% coverage of rural people with a reliable water service capable of providing 15l/p/d of safe water within 1.5 km of the homestead is unlikely to be achieved by the target date of 2012. Whether this will be a near miss (achieving full coverage by 2016) or rather wider of the mark depends to a large extent on the sectors willingness to tackle a number of deep-seated internal weaknesses.

The reasons that the target of full coverage by 2012 is unlikely to be met are diverse, but can be summarised in two broad sets of observations. Firstly, increased coverage through the construction of new systems is not increasing fast enough to close the gap, particularly once population growth is taken into account. Depending on the weight that is given to official coverage statistics, encouraging signs of increased funding into the sector, and increased ability to turn the funding into new services implies an earliest possible date to achieve the goal of 2016. However, if the findings of Woreda research are more widely applicable, and coverage figures are in fact considerably lower than reported, this target becomes much harder to meet.

Secondly, constructing new schemes will not lead to full coverage unless the currently very high rates of existing scheme (or water point) breakdown are somehow reduced. Although this point is recognised in the UAP and RSP, there is little indication on the ground that much is being done to tackle the problem of high breakdown rates. In the longer term, this is an even greater challenge than increasing 'first-time' coverage, and probably the Achilles heel of the sector in SNNPR.

The findings of this research are, at times, ambiguous and may even sometimes seem contradictory. We saw increasing numbers of schemes being developed, but with high levels of breakdown. We saw sharply rising budgets, but difficulties in spending them. We found a widespread commitment to meeting UAP norms and targets, but a lack of the basic data to be able to monitor progress. We found a genuine commitment to decentralisation (and heavy reliance on community involvement – especially in post-construction support), but underdeveloped mechanisms by which citizens can hold service providers accountable for their performance, and under-resourced decentralised levels of service provision. Perhaps most importantly from the perspective of improved sector governance and planning, we found a clear recognition of the need for enhanced coordination but few and poorly functioning platforms and mechanisms for coordination and information sharing. All of these can be explained by a sector in a state of considerable flux, where several important processes are being implemented in parallel and at great speed.

6.2 Identifying priority areas for action

Providing and governing water services calls for a complex web of interactions between different actors and factors. To a very real extent, improvement can only come when **all** of these function – are at least ‘well enough’ in place, and therefore any attempt to identify ‘priority areas’ should be undertaken with caution. This caveat made, this next section makes tentative suggestions for actions to address some of the more pressing challenges identified in this research, grouped under the following headings:

- Information use in the planning and delivery of services
- Coordination and harmonisation of sector actors
- Management and accountability of service providers
- Capacity of service providers
- Financing of the sector

In the following discussion, the authors’ basic assumptions as to what would constitute ‘good decentralised governance’ for each element are first stated, and then compared to the situation found in the surveys. For a more in-depth discussion of the concepts behind our understanding of ‘good governance’ see the GaP literature review available at the RiPPLE site.

6.2.1 *Information use in the planning and delivery of services*

The key finding of the research in SNNPR related to information management (and the linked area of monitoring) is that it is critically weak. Without timely and accurate information, strategic planning (or indeed learning) is impossible. For example, as service levels rise it will be increasingly important to be able to identify clearly where the remaining hard to reach communities with no access to water reside, as well as their position relative to existing water points. Currently the ability to access maps of water points, let alone population data, simply does not exist.

Similarly, if support services (however meagre) are to be planned for and provided to communities engaged in managing their water supply systems, some form of structured monitoring and reporting system is essential. Again, in practice we find that this is largely lacking with neither roles nor responsibilities clearly identified for reporting. This central weakness is compounded by confused lines of reporting and information sharing between Woreda, Zone and Region – with the result that there is no systematic use of data reported from the ground at the regional level. The lack of monitoring or information management is a particular problem for Woreda level staff if they are to play their roles as the key link between Kebele/WASHCos and the higher institutional levels, which are meant to provide support and investment. Neither Woreda studied had a basic Woreda level database of schemes, let alone a database showing of levels of functionality.

In practical terms, perhaps the most serious lack is some sort of standardised format for recording and reporting information about systems, their location, level of operation and the local communities’ ability access. The rapid development of such a format is a key recommendation of this work. So too is a systematic mapping of all schemes (including water points).

To make the development of Woreda level monitoring and reporting systems useful, attention also needs to be paid to simplifying and clarifying reporting lines from Woreda to higher administrative levels. Increasingly, this should be possible through primarily electronic means.

6.2.2 Coordination and harmonisation

For the government's commitment to decentralisation of service provision to happen in practice, increased coordination between a number of different state and non-state actors is required both explicitly (as stated in the UAP) and implicitly. Coordination and harmonisation are needed, in broad terms, between:

- different 'sectors' involved in WASH (notably between water, health and education);
- implementers and financiers;
- government, NGOs, donors, communities and, the private sector¹².

Each of these actors can play a variety of roles in service provision, added to which they may operate in geographically distinct locations. So, for example, in SNNPR, regional government is an implementer of some water services, while it provides support services to others. Similarly NGOs may construct systems which they then 'hand over' to the community, or to government. NGOs may, at times, continue to provide support for considerable periods after construction.

On the one hand, it was found that different arms of government need to work more effectively together, and that on the other, NGOs, donors and government also need to clarify their contributions relative to a common vision. Much of the formal structure for this exists, for example, in the form of quarterly reporting requirements for NGOs and other actors. However, the reality is that NGOs and projects operate with a large level of decision making autonomy, and often are not even meeting the minimal reporting requirements to BoFED. Several interviewed in the course of this research were not even aware of the UAP or the RSP. Although the regional strategy clearly identifies the aggregated contribution of all actors (government, NGOs, donors) to the strategic objectives of the RSP, it is far from clear that these actors (NGOs and other donors) are either aware or have agreed to follow the regional strategy: in essence they continue to implement the Regional or Woreda parts of their own national programmes independently. This is not just a problem of 'control' (in that the Regional government has a weak grasp of who is doing what where). It is also a critical problem of differing norms, technologies and approaches. The reality of water service provision is of a rather ragged patchwork of intervention – rather than a smooth blanket of coverage.

Clearly therefore, challenges to greater coordination and harmonisation of efforts take a number of different forms. Most important perhaps is the apparent lack of ability of the Water Bureaus at different levels to oversee, control or coordinate the activities of different development partners. Indeed, if knowledge of the UAP is accepted as a first step to concerted action to implement it, the fact that many potential stakeholders are not even aware of the UAP or of the specific regional targets identified in the regional strategy is itself a telling indicator of the challenge. Another good indicator lies in the absence of any formal or regularly convened platforms for coordination at regional, zonal or Woreda level. Effective platforms that bring together all active parties, to report to each other on progress and problems, to agree operational approaches, to agree financial planning and budgeting and to distribute important information and guidelines are clearly a necessary element in a more coordinated or harmonised approach.

¹² It can be argued that the private sector is not a truly independent actor as they typically work for a client who is one of the other actors identified.

6.2.3 *Management and accountability*

Management, both in the sense of the internal management of people working within sector organisations and of the formal management of contractual arrangements between organisations, is an essential part of service delivery. If management is understood as the formal mechanisms by which action is given to understandings about roles and targets, then it can be argued that management weakness lies at the heart of overall sector weakness. Most importantly, there is a nearly total lack of formal mechanisms for holding different elements of the service provision chain accountable for their activities or failure to perform duties.

Throughout the service delivery cycle there is ambiguity and fuzziness of roles and responsibilities, to the extent that it is seldom possible to identify these unequivocally. For example, the role of WASHCos, Kebele administrators and Woreda Water Offices in dealing with system breakdown was often not clear to either users or to staff of these different structures. Whether the reason for this lack of clarity is that (1) underlying legislation and policy is unclear or that (2) people are insufficiently trained is itself unclear. However, the issue of relationships between Kebeles and WASHCos, and the legal status of WASHCos were by June 2008 being addressed at regional level with a proposed law.

While requirements for reporting between government levels exist, these are often unfulfilled for reasons that are unclear but are likely to include lack of capacity, lack of demand (for the reports), lack of clarity as to what should be reported and when, unrealistic expectations and staff overload, all compounded by little or no effective process of sanction either for poor performance or for failure to report. Striking indicators of the existing problem were found in all case studies:

- At regional level: a large degree of disconnect between planning for service delivery under the regional strategic plan, and actual delivery of services; and a lack of felt need to comment on or draw conclusions from this disconnect.
- At Woreda level: very high levels of system failure, and patchiness of observed coverage, again with a lack of comment or discussion of these important challenges to effective service delivery.

An additional challenge lies in the lack of any formal mechanism for downward accountability. That is, no organisational or individual element of the WASH delivery chain is judged on their ability to provide acceptable services to users nor is there a mechanism for users to hold service provider to account for deficient services.

This failure is largely attributable to the lack of either an explicit social contract between state and people in the UAP, or managerial contracts between government and service providers. Looked at another way, there is no 'right' to a service: neither the right of a paying client; nor the right of an empowered citizen. What accountability does exist is upwards (i.e. to administrative superiors), and is linked primarily to output targets such as numbers of schemes implemented – not to the provision of a functioning service. Without formal accountability to users, be it in the form of legally enforceable management contracts with the private sector, or increase democratic oversight of government institutions, there is unlikely to be substantial improvement – particularly around sustainability.

6.2.4 *Capacity of service providers*

Capacity is a very broad term relating to human skills and behaviours but also to the physical and financial means available to the sector. In discussing capacity it can be useful to differentiate between absolute numbers of people, and their skills and behaviours. In this light, the most critical shortages

are found at the Woreda where there are neither enough people, nor people with the right qualifications. For Woredas to play their role there is no escaping the need for radically increased numbers and training of personnel. At the regional level, while there are still not all the people identified as required under the RSP, the skills of those who are there are generally good. At this level, the primary need is therefore related to attitudes and behaviours – particularly those relating to management, some of which is being addressed by an existing change programme, the Public Sector Capacity Building Program Support Project (PSCAP¹³).

An important aspect of the overall weak human capacity in the sector is the lack of an effective private sector. On the consultancy side the Woreda Support Units established by the World Bank, and nominally aimed at rapidly boosting sector capacity, remain largely invisible and little used outside the WB programme. On the contracting and works side, there are a number of private drilling companies, as well as the semi-state Water Works Construction Enterprise (WWCE).

Resource mapping indicates that the sector at all levels continues to lack the necessary hardware to fulfil its objectives. Be it in the form of drilling rigs at the region, or motorbikes and computers at the Woreda level, the build up of human resources is not being adequately matched by a parallel increase in physical resources. The end result is that, particularly at the Woreda level, even where the people are in place they are unable to do their work because they lack the means to leave their offices.

The most important finding of the work in SNNPR is the critical lack of capacity at the Woreda and WASHCo level. This is probably the single most serious challenge to the decentralised model of service provision being used in Ethiopia. Any attempt to improve the above mentioned elements of management or coordination must address this. In this respect the work of the TVETCs is important, just as is the quality and orientation of the education given. The recruitment of new staff to WWRDOs is equally necessary. However, major efforts at on the job capacity building and behavioural change, relating to accountability, as well as increased budgets for Woreda Sector functioning will be required before this critical bottleneck to improved sector performance is removed.

6.2.5 Financing SNNPR's water strategy

A good indication of the considerable remaining challenges in information sharing and overall coordination can be found in the great difficulty in putting together a clear picture of overall sector financing. Despite this, a number of clear trends were identified. Most important of these is that overall financing available to the sector in SNNPR is growing strongly, albeit not yet strongly enough to allow the UAP targets to be met. Linked to this growth in available finance is strong growth in spending- although not sufficient to spend all the additional money. In other words, there is more (but not enough) money available, and more (but not enough) absorption capacity, both leading to an increase in new scheme construction that, on present trends, will not be enough to meet the target of full coverage by 2012, but on an optimistic reading may only miss it by four years.

Because of the lack of a coherent sector overview for either financing or service delivery, it is very difficult to identify to what extent any of these perceived lacks in funding are 'real'. It could be that

¹³ See

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/ETHIOPIAEXTN/0..contentMDK:20210148~menuPK:3949964~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:295930.00.html>

once all NGO expenditure and all NGO construction activity is taken into account, SNNPR would find that it IS managing to create enough new coverage to meet targets. However, without a radical improvement in the transparency of financing information, and the collection and reporting of coverage information it is simply not possible to come to a more definitive finding. In this light, collaboration and sharing of information between BoWRD, BoFED, and NGOs and donors active in the region is an absolute prerequisite for improved ability to plan and monitor. So too is a greatly improved commitment by all actors to transparency of financial information.

At the other end of the financing story, it was clear from the sustainability case studies that there is significant ability to raise revenues from users but that the ability to turn this into improved sustainability is critically hampered by poor or non-existent financial management capacity in WASHCos.

6.3 Summing up: rapid change and real improvement but with critical bottlenecks remaining

Our research identified a nexus of challenges affecting the governance and delivery of WASH services in SNNPR. In broad terms these can be said to revolve around weak governance capacity, including: lack of adequate reliable information for strategic planning or learning; weak management and poor accountability of service providers, and overall lack of capacity at the Woreda level.

In summary, it can be seen that the sector in SNNPR is experiencing a time of rapid change in which greatly increased funding is resulting in an increase in service delivery. However, unless a number of critical bottlenecks are addressed, this increase in money available and schemes constructed will not result in increased access to services that are sufficient to meet the UAP targets. In particular, the problems of lacking sufficiently accurate data to estimate coverage needs, and the ability of keep existing infrastructure functioning, pose serious questions regarding optimistic coverage figures.

The most important bottlenecks are related to the coordination and harmonisation of sector actors; to the skills and behaviours of these actors in terms of management and accountability to end-users; to way that information is managed and used; and critically, to the capacity of the Woreda level to play its role as the foundation and linchpin of decentralised service provision.

Given the above analysis three priority areas for further research and learning emerge. These are:

- To identify appropriate and scalable solutions for improved information management and communication between different water service providers, and between service providers and users. In particular, to develop appropriate monitoring and information management tools and capacity for use at the Woreda level – together with channels for reporting and exchange with higher levels of government.
- To identify mechanisms for improved coordination and harmonisation between different service providers, at all levels, and with a particular focus on coordination of the MoU partners in WASH service delivery at the Woreda level; and between BoFED and sector Bureaus (and other actors) at the regional level. Linked to this, to find ways to tackle the entrenched culture of secrecy regarding key governance information, particularly financial.
- To identify practical mechanisms for ensuring greater accountability of service providers to users and their democratic representatives.

Key references

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Key features of Alaba and Mirab Abaya Woredas as stated in official documents

	Alaba	Mirab Abaya
Inhabitants (year 2006 estimation)	250,000	69,500
Woreda Capital	Kulito	Birbir
Distance from Woreda capital to Regional capital Hawassa	77 km	230 km
Area	974km ²	1613km ²
Population density	257 person/ km ²	43 person/ km ²
Climatic zone <i>Dega: highland</i> <i>Woina Dega: moderate to cool sub-humid – mid-altitude</i> <i>Kolla: lowland</i>	86% Woina Dega 14% Kolla	11% Dega 27% Woina Dega 62% Kolla
Total number of Kebeles	78	24
Number of rural Kebeles	76	23
Number of rural Kebeles with water schemes	24	22 ^a
Estimated water coverage by BoWRD	40% ^b	32% ^c
Estimated scheme non-functionality rate by BoWRD	37%	26%

- Notes:
- ^a The 1 Kebele without a water supply scheme, Dega Done is highly inaccessible and people resort to a small crater lake
 - ^b BoWR, 2007. Water Resource Potential Assessment Consultancy Service. Appendix II, Water Supply Final Report. AG Consulting Hydrologists and Engineers
 - ^c MAW-WRDO, 2007a. Mirab Abaya Woreda Water Resources Development Office 5 Year Strategic Plan (2007/8-2010/11)

Annex 2: Research objectives, questions and methodology

The specific objectives addressed by the two case studies were:

- To examine the links between participatory planning, social accountability, governance and sustainable service delivery
- To understand the current system for planning and delivering services and identify significant differences between what is planned for and what is actually delivered
- To deepen understanding of the key governance challenges faced by the WASH sector in meeting the demands of the Universal Access Plan
 - To develop an understanding of the network of actors, roles and linkages between them at all levels from region to system level.
 - To identify the necessary requirements for fulfilling such roles in service delivery
- To assess the sustainability of the existing water delivery systems in Alaba and Mirab Abaya, to get insight in the actual service delivery functions and the implications these have for UAP and where opportunities for improvement are. The study focuses on the hard systems, soft systems and finance factors that affect sustainable service delivery.

More specific questions were

- What are the formal roles and responsibilities in service delivery cycle of the different actors as their rights and accountability towards each other?
- What are the implications of these roles and responsibilities in terms of requirements for financial resource and KAP (capacities)?
- What are the main drivers for different stakeholders to take part in the decentralisation processes?
- How does the planning system work, in policy and practice; and did planning diverge from implementation over the last five years and if so how?
- Where are the current weak points and blockages in the service delivery system– and how can these be overcome?
- What are the incentives and barriers to different stakeholders engaging in decentralised WASH governance and what is the potential for more streamlined and coordinated provision of WASH services, given the different constraints affecting stakeholders?
- What is the functionality and service level of existing water supply schemes in Mirab Abaya and Alaba?
- What are the institutional, technical and financial factors impacting on sustainability of schemes and service delivery?

Main activities

Various activities were undertaken in order to answer the research questions and meet the objectives. A start was made with reviewing secondary data from the Regional Bureaux as well as

project documents related to the construction and monitoring of water schemes. This information was collected at regional, zonal and Woreda levels.

Institutional and stakeholder mapping was performed in order to identify the key-actors in WASH service delivery within the SNNPR region, zone and the Woredas; visualising the roles, responsibilities, mandates, accountability lines and interaction with each other, both horizontal as well as vertical linkages.

The water source and water point mapping of all the developed water points and their sources (see table below) in Mirab Abaya and Alaba Special Woreda was one of the core activities for the Woreda level research teams. The mapping exercise consisted of taking GPS coordinates of all the water points and their sources as well as gathering related information by the use of checklists and QIS (Qualitative Information System) on functionality, status, technology etc. Field observations were an important method to cross check information and map the status of the schemes and related water distribution points. For gathering more in-depth information 8 schemes in 8 Kebeles were selected (based on stratified sampling) in Alaba and 9 Kebeles with in total 38 schemes in Mirab Abaya.

Number of mapped water points and water sources

	Water schemes	Water distribution points
Alaba	24	69
Mirab Abaya	70 ^(incl. on spot distribution)	65

Note: In the Mirab Abaya case the 70 water schemes include 46 on spot distribution (hand pumps) and 5 on spot springs. So the total water collecting points is 116

Resource mapping was done consisting of human, financial and technical resource mapping of Woreda institutions (Water and Health office as well as the implementing NGOs) and WASHCos, at Zonal and Regional level mapping was done for the Water Bureau, the Health Bureau and the South Water Works Construction Enterprise (SWWCE).

A survey of Knowledge, Attitude and Practise (KAP) was also conducted with the objective of gaining insights into the different roles and responsibilities of the different actors, their attitudes towards theirs and others roles and how these are fulfilled. Getting a grasp of what motivates actors and what hampers them in performing their tasks. Different stakeholders at different levels, from region down to system level, i.e. WASHCos were assessed. Besides the KAP survey some general interviews were held with key-persons in the sector.

Several Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held as part of the sustainability case study. Some FGDs were women only, to discuss the functionality of the systems and their satisfaction levels. There were also discussions with WASHCos (Water Sanitation and Health Committees).

Number of interviews and KAP surveys

	Regional level	Zonal level	Woreda level		System/Kebele level	
			Alaba	Mirab Abaya	Alaba	Mirab Abaya
Interviews	11	2	4	3	16	18
KAP survey	11	2	4	3	16	18
FGDs			1	1	16	18
Resource mapping	3		4	3	8	9

Limitations and challenges

- The main challenge within this case study was to gain accurate secondary data from the different institutions at Woreda and Regional level.
- It was particularly difficult to get accurate maps with Kebele boundaries as there seemed to be considerable sensitivity about sharing these.
- The fieldwork for water point and water scheme mapping was very intensive. A lot of the water sources were only accessible by a long hike off road, which is itself an indication of limiting factors for receiving maintenance and other support to keep the water delivery system running.
- Bureau staff were difficult to reach at their offices due to other commitments at workshops and the like, which gave an indication of how much time people can spend on their jobs and follow up activities.

Annex 3: Research Teams

Different people contributed to the research activities, hereunder their names and roles.

Research teams

Research team			
Name	Institution	Case study	Task
Eden Mengistu	Hawassa University	UAP	Team leader
Nigatu Regassa	Hawassa University	UAP	Researcher
Ansha Yusufe	Hawassa University	UAP	Researcher
Samson G/Medhin	Hawassa University	UAP	Researcher
Habtamu Abebe	Private consultant	Sustainability (Alaba)	Team leader
Israel Deneke	Private consultant	Sustainability (Mirab Abaya)	Researcher
Aschalew Sidelil	RiPPLE WF	Sustainability (Alaba)	Researcher & logistical support
Tsegaw Hailu	RiPPLE WF	Sustainability (Mirab Abaya)	Researcher & logistical support
Tewodros Semungus	Alaba WRDO	Sustainability (Alaba)	Researcher
Engdayew	Alaba Health Office	Sustainability (Alaba)	Researcher
Melese Aragawu	Water Action	Sustainability (Alaba)	Researcher
Shebelaw	Mirab Abaya WRDO	Sustainability (Mirab Abaya)	Researcher
Habtamu Mandefrot	Mirab Abaya WRDO	Sustainability (Mirab Abaya)	Researcher
Getye Sheferaw	Mirab Abaya Health Office	Sustainability (Mirab Abaya)	Researcher

GaP theme		
Name	Institution	Task
Patrick Moriarty	IRC	Team leader, UAP case study leader; conceptual support
Belay Simane	IDR-AAU	Sustainability case study leader; conceptual support
Martine Jeths	IRC	On the ground methodology and analytical support
Workneh Negatu	IRD-AAU	Conceptual support
Bethel Terefe	RiPPLE-Policy officer	Support
Gossa Wolde	WaterAid	Technical support
Tamene Chaka	RiPPLE-NF	Support
Desta Dimtse	RiPPLE-RF	Logistical support & research team management

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recommendations.*

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