

CMP approach



Effective and
sustainable
WASH services

Community Managed Project (CMP) approach is a way to do rural water supply differently. It is an innovation in community managed water supply that aims to retain and strengthen some of the better aspects of community management while addressing certain key weaknesses, especially a lack of local government capacity to support communities and poor sustainability.

Are these challenges common to areas where you work?

- **An urgent need to increase rural water supply access**
- **Funds available for investment are underspent**
- **Low capacity within local government hinders progress**
- **Existing community managed schemes failing into disrepair**

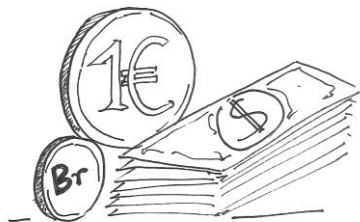
Traditionally, the development and maintenance of water schemes in Ethiopia has been seen as the government's responsibility. The introduction of the CMP approach in the mid-2000s was an attempt to enable communities to manage the scheme construction process and to circumvent the challenges created by the bureaucracy and limited capacity of local governments.

The major innovation is to transfer funds for physical construction directly to the community. Communities are then responsible for the full development process, through planning, implementation (including procurement) and maintenance. This approach avoids any 'handing over' of schemes.

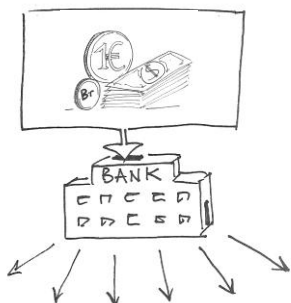
External support and capacity building is provided by local governments and the approach is helping local government to achieve more by drawing on the additional capacity of micro-finance institutions and the private sector. The success of CMP is helping to dispel the myth that communities cannot manage funds for such development processes.

This note highlights how the approach works. It is based upon experience in Ethiopia, but is targeted at other countries that may want to experiment and adapt the approach as a way to develop rural water supplies. The approach could also be adapted in other development sectors.

How CMP works: 10 steps from money to services



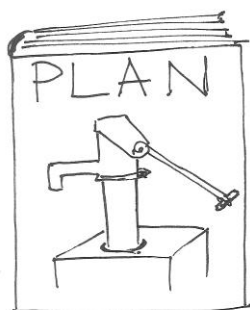
1. **Funds committed.** Funding commitments are needed from government and its development partners. This requires an enabling environment with policies and guidelines in place for the CMP approach. In Ethiopia, CMP was piloted at regional level (starting in Amhara) before being scaled up nationally eight years later. Funds were originally from the Ethiopian and Finnish governments, but more development partners like UNICEF and regional governments are now investing this way.



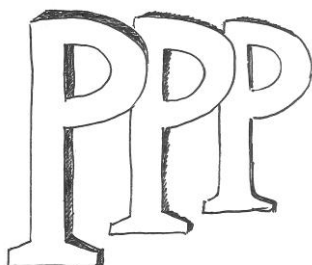
2. **Financing channel established.** CMP routes money directly to communities requiring an appropriate financing channel to be established. In Ethiopia, funds are routed through the government's finance bureau at regional level to a Micro-Finance Institution (MFI). With their extensive branch structure in all districts (called woredas) and sometimes sub-district branches these banks can quickly and efficiently disburse money to communities.



3. **Approach promoted.** Communities need to be informed about the approach, the opportunities it provides and the responsibilities. In Ethiopia, district level government staff (woreda water officers) promote the approach and generate interest. Capacity needs to be developed to undertake this role, and in Ethiopia, regional support units were established to support districts in this and other tasks.



4. **Communities organize and plan.** Where communities are interested in developing a water scheme through the approach they need to organize themselves. In Ethiopia, communities elect a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASHCO). Each WASHCO takes responsibility to develop a plan for their water scheme. Technology choice is left in the hands of the community, but most schemes to date involve a protected hand-dug well and handpump, or simple spring protection.



5. **Training and private sector development.** In parallel to the organization and planning of communities, training is organized for communities and local artisans. Support is given to develop local private sector enterprises and the supply chains upon which they depend. This includes well diggers, masons that line wells and build headworks or spring protection works, and suppliers of handpumps and materials.

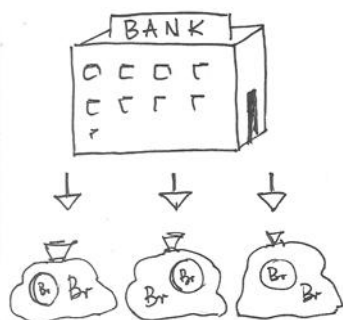
10 key steps in the Community Managed Project (CMP) approach to rural water supply



- Approval.** The plan developed by the community is assessed at district level with an initial desk appraisal followed up by a field visit and appraisal. Any revisions needed to the design are negotiated and the design estimate revised. After approval by the district council, a funding agreement is signed where the district formally approves the plan, a necessary step for funds to be released to the community.



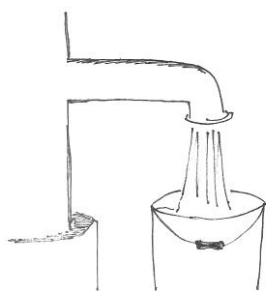
- Community contribution.** Communities are required to raise a cash contribution that is equivalent to one year's maintenance costs of a handpump (approximately 100 USD) which is then placed in a savings account at the MFI. This cash contribution is not used for construction costs but provides an initial fund for operation and maintenance.



- Construction funds released.** Funds are released to the community by the MFI in instalments to a separate construction account. There are typically 3 instalments: a first instalment to start works, a second to procure a handpump and the third for the purchase of the remaining construction materials needed.



- Construction.** Communities construct their own systems purchasing the materials and contracting the services that they require such as local artisans to dig hand-dug wells and masons to line the wells and build the headworks. Communities can drive a hard bargain with local providers and suppliers, keeping down costs and ensuring good quality construction.



- Completion.** Once the water scheme is complete, a point is made of celebrating the achievement of the community. A public audit is carried out focusing on transparency and accountability of the WASHCO. Further training and awareness raising is organised at this time especially to learn about protection of the water scheme, and promoting sanitation and good hygiene practices at household level. WASHCOs operate and maintain the schemes with support from district level.

Results

CMP is all about accelerating Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) services development:

- Utilisation of the available investment budgets in Amhara region increased from an average of 53% between 1998-2002 (pre-CMP) to close to 100% by 2006-2007.
- The rate of construction of new water supply schemes in Amhara region increased five times from an average of 200 water points per year (1994-2003) to over 1000 per year in 2008/9. This means 70 new schemes per district per year.
- The management of construction by communities has not led to poorer outcomes in terms of build quality, functionality, or sustainability. There are encouraging signs of operational and financial sustainability, and community management structures are being well sustained. Functionality rates are high with 94% of schemes constructed under CMP approach still working.

Why CMP works

Unlocking and building capacity: It is possible to do things faster by harnessing new and underutilized capacities. The use of MFIs provides extra 'banking' capacity to route funds down to where they are needed. The empowerment of communities to plan and build their own individual schemes, with products and services being procured by communities from the expanded private sector, means that officials can focus on the vital planning, capacity building and technical support activities. With all these capacities being coordinated, more can be achieved and faster.

Ownership for life: Sustainability of schemes is higher because of high levels of ownership and community involvement at all stages. This is 'not community participation, but government participation in community initiatives'. CMP is very much about communities implementing a WASH project throughout its life cycle in contrast to other approaches where the community only manage the operations and minor maintenance.

Simplified implementation arrangements: Clear policy, guidelines and implementation arrangements underpin the approach including simplified and transparent accounting of funds.

Investments in piloting and capacity building: The approach was extensively piloted in Ethiopia with long-term investments being made to increase capacity. Where there was resistance to doing things differently this has been addressed. Together with efforts made to integrate the approach within the policy and programmes of the national government, this is enabling CMP to ultimately be scaled-up as the foremost mechanism for rural water supply in Ethiopia.

More information

In Ethiopia, the current scaling-up of the CMP approach to more regions will surely reveal new challenges, constraints and solutions. For more information and to follow the progress made see www.cmpethiopia.org

Comments are welcome at the CMP website. We would like to hear from you about your experiences to speed up the development of sustainable rural water services.

*Text summarised by John Butterworth, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre.
Drawings by Agnieszka Urbaniak-Butterworth. Photo by Zelalem Lema.*

