

**The research project on Community Managed Project (CMP) approach (ReCMP) has progressed as planned (30.05.2014)**

The CMP related research project, ReCMP is approaching its final stages. All the planned M.Sc. and B.Sc. thesis researches have been completed and are published in <http://www.cmpethiopia.org/page/500>. The reader is recommended to review the actual research reports.

Also the summary of the completed works, Evaluation of CMP Research Project 2012-2014 – Findings and Recommendations, can be found in the <http://www.cmpethiopia.org/page/184>.

According to all the research results so far, the CMP approach seems to be as efficient as the project reports from Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz have shown. This is mainly seeing in the implementation efficiency, strong ownership and technical functionality of constructed water points.

However, all the researchers are proposing several improvements to be taken into account in the future development of the CMP approach. Mebit Mitiku's thesis report is concentrating in the service level which the constructed water points have been delivering. This interesting point of view brought some very important results to be noted in the future development of the CMP approach.

*Some of the main conclusions from the completed theses can be summarized as below:*

- The findings show that due to increased community participation and leadership in the planning phase, and due to community management in the implementation phase, water supply schemes under the CMP modality tend to achieve higher reliability and functionality, better management performance, and optimum utilization, as compared to water supply schemes implemented under Woreda Managed Project (WMP) modality.
- The technical functionality rates of the water schemes in the studied woredas were 98.6 %. This reflects that the efficiency of CMP approach has spread deep roots in the rural communities and communities are willing to pay and have sense of strong ownership for the water supply service.
- Anyhow, Mebit Mitiku's thesis research showed that the technical functionality does not necessarily guarantee the best possible service level to beneficiaries. Water points might suffer of limited amount of water during dry periods, water quality might not be the best one all around the year, etc.

*The strengths of the CMP approach as presented in the researches are summarized in the following:*

- In CMP there is a progressive approach towards capacity building at the regional, woreda, and community level
- The CMP investment fund flow mechanism adopted (fund channeled to community via Micro-Finance Institute) is very efficient and ensures the timely delivery of resources

- In CMP there is strong empowerment of community members, also women, in terms of organization, management, control and supervision
- CMP has effective construction supervision and control by the beneficiary communities
- CMP creates increased sense of ownership among the beneficiary groups
- High functionality rates of constructed CMP schemes (higher than in the Woreda Managed Project approach)
- In CMP the procurement procedures are fast and efficient. Moreover some results show that direct community level procurement reduces project costs
- High budget utilization in CMP
- Increased community commitment in CMP for covering operation and management and cost recovery

*Weaknesses of the CMP approach as presented in the researches are summarized in the following:*

- The working procedures involve administration of a number of application and recording forms, which are difficult to be computed by the local communities
- There is too much paper work at the woreda water office
- In some cases, material suppliers take advantage of the local communities in matters associated with price and quality of materials
- Promising but unsatisfactory arrangements for O&M
- There is no emphasis given on water quality and the monitoring of water quality is inadequate
- There are no local spare parts suppliers and construction materials (cement, reinforcement bars) in remote communities
- Though funds are available in microfinance for operation and maintenance, the amount would not cover the cost if there was major breakdown of water points
- Even though the cost recovery system seems to be meeting program objectives (i.e. communities make financial contributions for O&M at the savings account in the microfinance institution), it is not moving towards a financially sustainable future which would allow the beneficiaries:
  - To conduct a major maintenance in case of sudden breakdown,
  - To replace the system when it reaches the end of its economic life, and/or
  - To expand the system so as to accommodate additional users with increase in population and demand.
- There are still some cases where only some households are paying the up-front cash contribution on behalf of all the beneficiaries and in some cases the construction of a well might stop before adequate amount of water is found, etc. These can be anyhow corrected with proper field appraisal and supervision.

*Some of the recommendations given by the researchers in order to improve the CMP approach are mentioned below:*

- Under CMP, the trainings should consider the concept of asset management rather than scheme management. Woredas should integrate asset valuation and costing in their training curriculums so as to capacitate WASHCOs in estimating the minimum monthly contributions required for O&M.
- Community management is a new concept with a progressive trend. Successful management practices are observed among some WASHCOs in the CMP Woredas. These practices would best disseminate among other WASHCOs if a continuous experience sharing forum is established.
- Caretakers need intensive and recurrent refresher trainings.
- Catchment protection works should be promoted together with woreda agricultural desk and follow up is required on its implementation. Coordinated efforts with woreda agricultural desk is essential prevent degradation of natural resources.
- During project field appraisals, more attention should be given to estimations on population growth to determine whether the proposed water point will be enough compared to water demand.
- To improve water safety, an alternative water source in the case of occasional diminishing yield of water in a well or spring should be considered. O&M activities of the provisional water source should be solved.
- Annual public auditing is required to improve transparency of WASHCOs' activities.