

METHODOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT (MPA)

MPA was developed by the Water and Sanitation Program's (WSP) Participatory Learning and Action Initiative, and a comprehensive guide was authored by the WSP and IRC. MPA looks at the link between demand responsiveness, gender sensitive approaches, and sustainability. MPA provides a framework for self-assessment by stakeholders at various levels (community, project, and policy) with the goal of understanding how their actions contribute to sustainability of services. It links outcomes at the community level to institutional arrangements and national sector policies. An assessment using MPA is carried out by a multi-disciplinary team including community members, representatives from the project agencies, field extension staff, a sociologist, participatory development specialist with gender training and orientation skills, and water or sanitary engineer. A sample of communities from the project is selected so that the communities selected are representative in terms of environmental and social conditions. The sample size and rigour are dependent upon the final objectives of the MPA study. Focus groups are established by dividing the community into economic categories (e.g. 'rich and 'poor') through participatory processes such as social mapping. The results of an assessment using MPA can be beneficial for designing for sustainability, monitoring, local capacity building, institutional and policy reform, and gender and poverty mainstreaming. Although the scale and scope of an assessment using MPA can vary, in general, because the wide range of data collection techniques used, the time and level of effort required can be significant – as much as six days per sample community.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Target: Communities, project staff, project managers, sector policy formulators, and project designers and donors.

Objective: To understand the links between demand responsiveness, gender sensitive approaches and sustainability and how the actions of different stakeholders contribute to the sustainability of services.

Areas: Four areas or 'variables' for sanitation and seven for water. The areas include: sustained services, effective use, demand responsiveness projects, equity for women and poor, community management, institutional support, and policy support. These variables are arranged into two phases: service establishment and management/use.

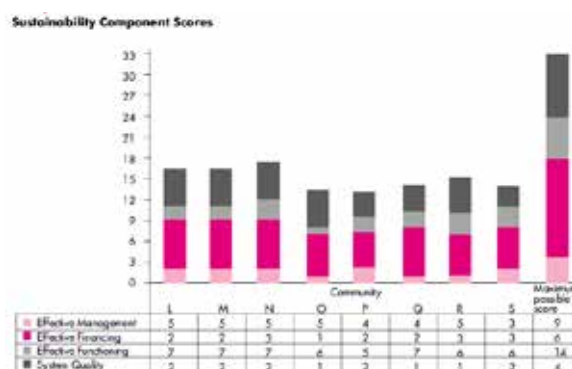
Indicators: The framework includes a total of 19 indicators each with 1-5 sub-indicators (total of 47 sub-indicators).

Methodology: Physical inspections, focus group discussions, stakeholder meetings, and key informant interviews.

Outputs: There are many potential outputs of an assessment with MPA. One example is the sustainability component scores shown at right (i.e. the 4 indicators of 'sustained services' area).

Tool format and language: PDF; English.

Resource Links: <http://www.ircwash.org/news/quantified-qualitative-monitoring>



IMPACT AND FINDINGS

MPA has been used to assess over 24 large projects or programmes in 18 countries. It has been used to identify key factors associated with sustained services in 151 rural and small urban communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The World Bank highlighted the MPA (as applied to a WASH intervention in India) as an influential and cost effective assessment. MPA has also been linked with GIS at district level to monitor and improve WASH coverage.

Strengths	Limitations
Social assessment method integrating qualitative and quantitative data	Requires specialist trained in participatory processes and facilitation skills
Stakeholders analyse information and therefore are more likely to internalise information and apply lessons learned	High level of effort required relative to other tools reviewed
Specifically targets marginalised groups	The validity of the data depends heavily on the quality of the underlying work, but can also be influenced deliberately