

Research into Use Summary

- 1. Research project:** An investigation into district level sanitation monitoring interventions as tools for empowerment, advocacy and evidence-based decision-making
- 2. Lead researcher:** Joseph Pearce, WaterAid
- 3. SHARE partners:** WaterAid
- 4. Research budget:** £50,090
- 5. Location:** Global

Research description:

This research aims to develop a low cost and participatory sanitation monitoring tool (including a spreadsheet and map-based outputs), to be known as the Sanitation Mapper. A literature review of water and sanitation monitoring tools and their application will be carried out in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and possible problems that could arise with a new monitoring system. International development and research organisations will be consulted to obtain feedback on experiences using mapping tools such as the Water Point Mapper (developed by WaterAid, www.waterpointmapper.org), as well as to get an understanding about district level sanitation monitoring, techniques and requirements. Based on this information, two sanitation mapping tools will be developed, one for area-based mapping (village level coverage) and another for point-based mapping (individual sanitation interventions). Both will be tested in a pilot study.

What is the relevance of the research to national and/or global sector challenges?

Appropriate monitoring mechanisms are crucial to generate the evidence needed for good policy, planning and implementation in the sanitation sector. Country data must be accurate, available and regularly updated so as to inform the decision-making process and encourage the equitable allocation of services. However, due to a lack of technical capacity, present district level monitoring is either non-existent or insufficient. Moreover, existing sanitation mapping technologies are based on expensive and complex databases. Therefore, an improved tool is needed, one which requires simple operational skills, is independent of internet connectivity, and offers low cost data collection methods to make the monitoring of sanitation systems more sustainable.

Who are the intended users of this research?

The Sanitation Mapper will provide evidence on sanitation through a series of maps, and the tool will be freely available from online sources, including www.waterpointmapper.org and www.shareresearch.org. The tool will be aimed at district and sub district levels for policy-makers and planners. Communities and local NGOs involved in the implementation of sanitation interventions will also benefit from this system since the tool will provide information for advocacy and accountability. Technical support will be provided by WaterAid through training sessions with local partners, community groups and government staff, thereby improving the sustainability of this monitoring mechanism. The Sanitation Mapper will be accompanied by a user guide to enable an effective use of the technology. A summary of the research findings will be made available on the SHARE website and will be disseminated within the SHARE consortium and to a broad range of users.

