



## Community Based Monitoring Systems (CBMS) (Facilitator notes for sharing)

### Definition of Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS)

A Community Based Monitoring System is a system in which the community will monitor the activities taking place in their community. The CBMS is developed in such a way that the community can monitor the activities without external help and take action where needed.

### Importance of CBMS (*Allow participants to brainstorm on these issues*)

- Helps to keep track of ongoing activities
- Checks for early warnings in a project
- Is a way of controlling quality of activities
- Ensures that things are done according to plan
- Determines success and/or failure of ongoing activities
- Enhances learning of the context in which the activities are being implemented
- Helps in improving the monitoring system itself
- It increases ownership by the communities of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) results
- And thus the communities will take up responsibility of monitoring development activities
- Communities own the results of the M&E
- Improves quality/accuracy of data collection
- It is cost saving.
- Action can be faster under CBMS, since the planning lines are shorter

### Steps in designing a CBMS

- Identify the monitoring issue/objectives of monitoring
- Identify the activities to monitor together with the community
- Agree on the indicators for identified activities/ things to be checked
- Agree on data collection procedures
  - Identify the source of information
  - Identify methods of data collection
  - Identify who is going to collect data
  - Identify who is going to own the data
  - Identify how to take action
- Develop checklists/tools/forms (mostly pictorial tools) with the community.
- Train/ teach the people on using the checklist, report writing and taking actions
- Follow up and support the community
  - Document the system issues.
  - Identify information/issues that the community can address and those they have to refer to higher authorities for action.

### Role of the Community in CBMS

The communities are the drivers of CBMS and the community extension workers are the facilitators. Hereby the community:

- Is part of the team that identifies the monitoring issues/activities



- Collects data
- Analyses the data
- Acts on the data/ agreed action points with support from extension workers

### **Who should participate in CBMS?**

- Community members who have the activity to be monitored
- Extension workers who are the facilitators for the whole process.
- Management, donors, M&E staff, users and champions who initiate the M&E system

### **Procedure of developing a CBMS in the community**

- 1) Introduce the topic by giving a brief and clear background to the session
- 2) Give the community members the opportunity to ask questions and clarifications
- 3) Ask the participants to select a secretary who will be responsible for recording whatever will be agreed upon in the plenary discussions
- 4) Divide the participants into two groups with equal representation of men and women.
- 5) Each group should select a chairperson and a secretary
- 6) Assign one broader issue to each group to be discussed in detail. I.e. sanitation facilities, hygiene or water facilities
- 7) Assign tasks to the groups as follows:
  - a) Identify the 5 most important issues/aspects regarding your water facility (or sanitation) which must be continuously followed up/checked to ensure that the facility is functioning well (or household sanitation is maintained)
  - b) Develop the indicators for each of the 5 issues/aspects you have identified above that will be used to find out whether the water facility is functioning well (or households are maintaining sanitation). (Note: be very specific and do not collect too much information)
  - c) Identify the persons who will do the follow-up/check on each of the 5 issues/aspects identified above
  - d) Propose the simplest and cost-effective methods that will be used by the persons you have identified above to collect the information when they go for follow-up/checking on the water facility (or household sanitation)
  - e) Suggest the persons who should receive the report for action on each of the 5 issues/aspects identified above
  - f) Propose which action should be taken by each of the persons who will receive the report to solve the problems of the water facility (or household sanitation)
  - g) Suggest the persons who should be referred to in case no action has been taken by the person who got the report on a problem affecting the water facility (or household sanitation)
  - h) Propose who should spot check once in a while to ensure that the people assigned to follow-up/checking are doing their work and water facility and household sanitation are well maintained
  - i) Suggest the best interval for follow-up/checking on the water facility (or household sanitation)



8) After finishing all the tasks, each group should present in the plenary. The presentation should be in tabular form:

Issues/ aspects	Indicator	Who collects data	Method for data collection	Who receive report for action	What action does/he take	Who should be referred to	Who should spot check	Frequency of follow-up/checking
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

9) Each presentation should be discussed and the secretary and Social Mobiliser should record whatever is agreed upon in the plenary

10) After the discussion, the secretary should read out the agreed version of the monitoring system

11) Give the participants the opportunity to correct, clarify or rephrase anything read to them

12) Wrap up the session

13) Set a date for training the people to be involved in the collection and management of data

### How to sustain a Monitoring System

- Monitor the monitoring system
- Check on completeness of the tools or format
- Review the roles and responsibilities of the concerned persons periodically
- Check that the objectives of the system are being met
- Review the monitoring system periodically

### FACILITATORS NOTES

Facilitating a community to develop a system for monitoring which will work and stand test of time is not an easy task. It requires a lot of skills, commitment and preparation. Once the system is up and running, the work of the Social Mobilisers will be reduced to occasionally checking. Below are some of the tips which will assist you in handling this activity.

#### Pre-visit to the community

Pre-visits to the community are important because of two reasons:

a) It will enable you to meet key leaders (LCs and WUCs) to introduce the subject and secure their interest. (Remember people only want to go to meetings they know the purpose/agenda off)

b) It will also enable you to make appointments for the meeting on a date and time agreeable to the community and you.

Avoid sending letters or messages as they always do not reach and when they reach, they are not properly understood and/or taken seriously.



### Preparation

- Confirm two days to the scheduled date with the community whether the meeting will take place
- Once the meeting is confirmed, prepare all the materials you require at least a day in advance. Check whether you have enough markers, flipcharts, notebooks, pens and a copy of your guide
- Rehearse how you will handle the session. Remember a trainer is always learning; build on the experience of the previous session
- Arrive at the venue for the meeting at least 1 hour early. If possible, start mobilising the participants so that you start on time. Remember that most participants will start coming when they see you or they are told that you have arrived.
- Do not start the session until **two thirds** of participants are present

### Conducting the session

**Brief background and objective:** the idea of communities establishing a system for monitoring their installed water and sanitation facilities came about because management of these facilities is a responsibility of communities and not government or projects/NGOs. However, most communities are not aware of the basic tools of management like monitoring. As managers, communities require some **basic reliable information**, which they can use for planning, and decision making. The main objective is to ensure that the installed water and sanitation facilities continue to function for a very long time at a minimum cost.

Therefore it is within the interest of the community members to develop a good system which will help them to detect problems regarding their water facility and household sanitation early enough and address them accordingly. This will save them a lot of resources involved in late detection of the problem, and will ensure good service at all times.

If all members actively participate in the discussions, it will be easy to come up with a good system, since nothing is new other than documenting what they are already doing.

At the end of the briefing, ask the participants their opinion about what you said and whether they agree to proceed develop the system.

When they agree to proceed, ask them to select a secretary for the session who will record whatever will be agreed upon in the plenary. Give the selected person a book and a pen and guide him/her on what to record.

### Group work

As a facilitator, your role during group work is to provide sufficient guidance to the groups to ensure that they are on the right track. Do not influence their discussions but ensure that whatever they agree upon is clear and consistent with the objectives of the session. Before you give out a task to the group, explain clearly what you want them to discuss and agree upon.

As a facilitator, you are expected to move between the groups and ensure that the participants are well controlled and concentrating on the assignment. Do not allow



long arguments by dominant persons and always remind the group of the time left. Ensure that all members participate in the discussion.

**Task (a) most important issues/aspects to be followed up/checked:** this task requires that one group dealing with water facilities and another with household sanitation to come up with only 5 issues/aspects to monitor. For example, preventive maintenance, repairs, cleanliness of the water facility, O&M funds etc. (water facility), and use and maintenance of latrines, cleanliness of household compounds, hand washing after latrine use, cleanliness of containers used for collection and storing water etc. (household sanitation).

It is advisable that the groups come up with issues which covers many smaller sub-issues like preventive maintenance, covers sub-issues like greasing, tightening bolts, replacing washers, servicing etc. Cleanliness covers, drainage channel, soak way, fence, apron, grass around the source etc. Ask groups to come up with main issues but not sub-issues. Sub-issues will be specified in the indicators.

**Task (b) indicators:** participants should come up with the indicators for each of the issues/aspects identified. The indicators should be very simple and very easy to observe/check. For example indicators for preventive maintenance may include greased chain and bolts, tight bolts, replaced washers, completed service forms(?) etc and for cleanliness indicators may be clear drainage channel, absence of flooded waste water, presence of a fence, absence of mud on apron etc.

One main issue/aspect may have many indicators. What is important is not the known book indicators but what the community agree as the indicators for a given issue/aspect to be monitored.

**Task (c) persons to collect data:** here we are not interested in names but titles like caretaker, LCI chairman, treasurer WUC etc. The persons suggested must be those that are readily available and usual residents of the area, and are active and will to do voluntary work.

**Task (d) methods of data collection:** the groups should propose very simple and easily applied methods like observation, use simple forms/checklist etc. Difficult methods like questionnaires should not be encouraged for regular monitoring.

**Task (e) who person to receive the report for action:** here the focus is with people with authority to take action like chairman WUC or LCI, Caretaker, Hand pump mechanic etc. depending on the nature and type of issue. Avoid everything going to one person and caution the group of the possible danger of no action if the person holding the office is a non-performer.

**Task (f) action to be taken:** the groups should specify the type of action that should be taken to solve a problem related to each of the indicators identified and in what time frame. For example if the Hand pump broke down, what action should be taken by the WUC to rectify the problem, and within what time period.

**Task (g) who should referred to:** the group should identify a higher authority who might help to over come the problem in case the person who received the report has failed to act intentionally or the problem is beyond his/her means to do anything. Caution must be taken for the group to identify only one person to be referred to for all the problems related to each of the 5 issues.



**Task (h) who spot checks:** the group should identify the persons they trust will always spot check to find out whether things are going on well.

**Task (l) interval of follow-up:** the group should suggest the frequency of follow up for each of the 5 issues identified. Caution must be given of not making it too frequent to over burden those involved in the follow up and not after a very long interval that things may run out of control without being detected.

**Presentations and discussions**

**The presentation should be in tabular form as below:**

Issues/ aspects	Indicator	Who collects data	Method for data collection	Who receive report for action	What action does/he take	Who should be referred to	Who should spot check	Frequency of follow-up/checking
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

During the plenary presentations and discussions, make notes of whatever they agree upon. Ensure that every thing is clear.

After the plenary discussion, go to the secretary and reconcile your notes before reading the final version to the participants.

After reconciliation of your notes, the secretary should read out the draft version of the monitoring system. Take notes of any queries, clarifications or paraphrasing they may suggest to be incorporated in the final version.

Wrap up the session by thanking the participants for the hard work and job well done. However, it remains their responsibility to ensure that what they have designed in implemented accordingly. Stress that they stand to gain if they implement what has been agreed upon. Ask them to call a bigger community meeting in which the system will be introduced to them and solicit their support. End by setting a date for training those to be involved in data management.

**NB. Before you leave get a copy of the monitoring system, after typing out, return to the community a copy.**