

## 2.0 DECIDE TO DO A PROJECT AND SET PROJECT OBJECTIVES

### Tasks:

- Consider the major steps and resources required to begin and sustain a project
- Specify overall goals of a Safe Water System
- Select target population, appropriate pilot project site and area for later expansion
- Specify measurable, specific objectives of the project



Every country's resources for health and development are limited. It is crucial that each country use its own and donated resources in ways that will have the greatest benefit. It is unwise to invest in projects that are unsustainable or that provide little real benefit. Therefore, before deciding to undertake a Safe Water System project, decision makers must realistically assess the work and resources required and the likely benefits of the project.

## **2.1 Consider the major steps and resources required to begin and sustain a project**

A Safe Water System project requires careful planning and coordination of a broad range of activities. The Safe Water System is a potentially useful tool to improve water quality and reduce diarrhea. It is flexible and adaptable to a variety of conditions. It consists of:

- hardware – the products: locally produced disinfectant solution and the safe water storage vessels
- software – the project components: promotion, education, motivational interviewing, and/or community mobilization designed to create behavior change, that is, the purchase and use of the products

Safe Water System projects will differ considerably from country to country and from region to region within a country. There are significant possible variations in each of the components of the intervention, such as:

- type of water storage container
- method of manufacture of the disinfectant
- infrastructure to distribute the containers and disinfectant
- approaches to behavior change.

Planners should study the background information (collected in step 1.0) and the rest of the guidelines presented in this manual to plan a project. The project design should:

- address the need for improved water in households
- suit the socio-cultural characteristics of the population
- build on available infrastructure
- be appropriate for the level of funding and other resources

- be creative so as to best engage persons who need the intervention
- enable the target populations to obtain the necessary products
- effectively change key behaviors of the target populations.

If plans or resources are inadequate or short-sighted, the intervention will be short-lived (for example, if it is based on donation of water storage vessels and disinfectant to a population in need). In that situation, decision makers should wisely decide to postpone a Safe Water System project until adequate resources are available and a plan is in place for full or partial cost recovery.

It is recommended to begin with a pilot project, in order to test the best products and procedures while working in a small area. The intention should be to expand later to include more families and other areas needing safe water.

Base a decision to undertake a project on a realistic consideration of the major steps and resources required to start and sustain the project and the results possible. Plan an approach to the major components of the project, so that you have an idea of the work and resources that would be involved. Then make a final decision whether to proceed.

Resources required will vary according to the approach to the project. For example, a social marketing project budget for 22 months (total population of 200,000 in Madagascar) was about \$175,000 (in 2000).

## **2.2 Specify overall goals of a Safe Water System**

The goals that you set for the project will help guide decisions. The overall goals of the project are:

- to improve water quality in homes by means of a sustainable technology
- to decrease death and diarrhea from contaminated drinking water
- to improve hygienic behaviors related to water use

### 2.3 Select target population, appropriate pilot project site and area for later expansion

Broadly, the target population will be a group of households that do not have safe water. The specific project site and target population should be a particular group of households that need improved water storage and disinfection in the home. This might include one or more of the following groups:

- a population with surface water sources (river, lake), or unsafe ground water sources, especially shallow wells
- an urban population with piped water where flow is intermittent and storage is required, or piped water source is of questionable quality (contaminated)
- a population that must store water because the source is outside the home
- a population that stores water in wide-mouthed containers



Select an appropriate pilot site. Possible criteria for a selecting an appropriate pilot site and target population include:

- There is a need for safe water in homes, as evidenced by waterborne diseases and/or observed unsafe water handling and storage practices.
- Community leaders recognize that drinking water safety is a major problem.
- There are government or NGO infrastructures to build on. (Whenever possible, it is better to use and strengthen existing systems than to establish separate structures which are project-dependent and which may not be sustainable in the long term.)
- Local population has interest in participating in the pilot project and is motivated to help with preparatory work.

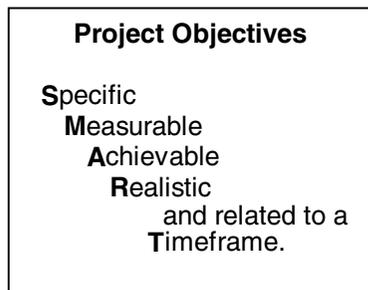
- There is a functioning neighborhood organization, such as Neighborhood Health Committee, with active and effective health promoters.
- A pilot project is feasible (i.e., includes a number of households that can be supplied with vessels and disinfectant and can be reached with education, promotion, and behavior change activities consistent with levels of funding, staff and other resources).
- Local authorities give permission to implement the pilot project.

The project may also choose an area for later expansion. This may be an enlargement of the pilot area, or a different area with similar characteristics as the pilot area.

## 2.4 Specify measurable, specific objectives of the project

The objectives will depend on the overall goals and information available regarding the transmission of waterborne diseases, local infrastructure, socio-cultural factors, and economic factors. Objectives should be **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic, and related to a **t**imeframe. These criteria for good objectives are easy to remember if you think of the acronym SMART.

The objectives should contribute to achievement of the overall goals but will be more specific and limited, so that they are feasible to achieve during the pilot project. You must have a rough plan for the major components of the project, so that you can estimate key areas of progress and feasible levels of achievement.



The objectives should be measurable with specified time frames. They should be measures of progress, not merely process (actions that do not necessarily produce results). For example, a radio campaign is a process, favorable recognition rates in the target populations are progress. Examples of objectives for a pilot project's first year of operation include:

- 60 retail shops in the target area will have a consistent supply of vessels and disinfectant
- Sell 1,200 vessels to households in the target area
- 7,500 bottles of disinfectant will be produced
- 25% of homes in the target area will use an approved water storage vessel
- 70% of target population will recognize the brand name of the Safe Water System products

Objectives must be feasible to monitor or evaluate. For example, possible objectives state desired levels of sales of vessels, sales of disinfectant, acceptability of products, water quality, reduction of diarrheal diseases. Of these, sales and acceptability are easier to measure. Water quality is somewhat more difficult. Change in the level of diarrheal diseases in a population is difficult to measure. Consider monitoring and evaluation of the project before specifying the objectives (see section 11.0).

Below are some example objectives for a Safe Water System project. Objectives are specified for 4 areas: access to the intervention, water treatment and storage behaviors, improvement in health, and satisfaction with the intervention.

**Figure 2: Example Objectives For a Safe Water Project**

**1. Increasing access to the intervention (products)**

- 1.1 Sell 20,000 bottles of disinfectant in first 3 months
- 1.2 Sell 1,000 water storage vessels in first 3 months

**2. Changing water treatment and storage behaviors**

- 2.1 70% of target population will recognize the brand name of the Safe Water System products (vessel and disinfectant) after 6 months
- 2.2 30% of households will report use of approved water storage vessel and disinfectant after 6 months
- 2.3 25% of households will have knowledge of correct dose of disinfectant after 6 months
- 2.4 25% of households will have observed safe water storage practices after 6 months
- 2.5 10% of households will have measurable residual free chlorine levels >0.2 mg/liter after 6 months
- 2.6 10% of households will have zero *E. coli* colonies in stored water after 6 months

**3. Improving health**

- 3.1 Reduce diarrhea rates in target population by 20% after 1 year

**4. Achieving satisfaction**

- 4.1 80% of users in target population will report satisfaction with products after 6 months

In later steps, you will plan activities to be done so that the project will achieve these objectives. (See sections 7.0, 9.0 and 10.0.) If you then find that some objectives are too ambitious, modify them to be consistent with activities planned.