

BEST PRACTICES

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

The project “Vivre avec l’eau | Live with water” is designed to make people of Senegal more resilient to urban flooding and to ensure effective flood preparation and prevention at the community, local government and national levels, in keeping with the project motto “live with water”. It therefore implements an integrated solution to address the multi-faceted causes of urban flooding which is composed of three interlinked axes of intervention including infrastructure, policy and capacity-building components.

The project’s development phase, funded by UKaid’s BRACED programme, has been used to pilot the infrastructure and capacity-building components of the project and to analyse the national flood policy and its integration at community level. By doing this, lessons learnt and best practices could be identified.

They have been collected

- a) to improve the full project phase and
- b) to inform other actors which work in the field of DRR.

This document aims to share these lessons learnt beyond the project. First, *main lessons* are described to show general best practices which contributed to the success of the project development phase. In addition *specific best practices* are described to highlight those and share learnings with the wider development community.

MAIN LESSONS

Economic viability

Adopting infrastructure solutions that are economically feasible and profitable is a key factor in achieving sustainability. Community members welcome those economical solutions because they provide opportunities for them (easier to self-organize, easier to own and maintain in the long-term). These options, which are financially sustainable, also draw attention and support from policy-makers. Regional and national policy-makers show high interest, since these solutions can be maintained either by SME businesses or the local community itself and do not rely on finance from donors.

Participation and collaboration

Inclusion and sharing of various know-how and expertise also has been identified as crucial, be it in collaborative expert meetings or during participatory community processes. Knowledge sharing and exchange ensures that developed solutions are tailor-made and adapted to context and recipients. This strengthens financial sustainability, e.g. in the context of flood prevention the community members identify and prioritize feasible solutions; or when professional experts from different disciplines and with diverse approaches share knowledge and create innovations.

Womens empowerment

Active empowerment and involvement of individual women and women associations do not only strengthen project's impact, but at the same time ensure both equity and sustainability of the project. In this way the project reaches out to people which are most vulnerable to hazards caused by flooding and at the same most crucial for building resilience to flooding. Women can help to solve issues more effectively on the quartier level, e.g. regarding logistics or in case of blockages between e.g. project and public authorities.

Strong partnership

Building a vital collaboration amongst partners is the basis for an integrated project approach. In this way synergies can be build and used. This can also help in case of conflicts with stakeholders or between partners. Individual partners can serve as mediators. Moreover, the multitude and diversity of project partners ensures that different stakeholders' needs and capacities are integrated into the project.

Context-sensitivity

Strategies and technologies are tailored to the situation and conditions on the ground. This ensures that these are adapted to people's needs and can be sustained beyond the duration of the project. Iterative project planning throughout appraisal, monitoring and evaluation process helps to cater for the whole project cycle.

BEST PRACTICES

I. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP

Tailor-made project management

The project's internal communication strategy, knowledge management strategy as well as value for money approach have specifically developed for the project and in close cooperation with all partner organisations. This has proven to be a success factor within project management, because it ensures that internal processes

- a) fit to the needs and context of the project and partnership
- b) and that they include best practices from all partners.

In this way, the internal processes and strategies of the project are aligned with the overall community-based and sustainable approach of the project. This allows that the way the project and partnership is managed contributes to the implementation and impact of its activities and outputs.

Oral communication

Constant inclusive, oral communication within the project partnership has proven to be another crucial aspect of an effective project management. Regular meetings between partner organisations ensure that the internal communication strategy, knowledge management strategy as well as value for money strategy

- a) is not only preached but also put into practice
- b) is understood, informed and supported by all partners
- c) is being improved and adapted throughout the course of the project.

A combination of virtual and face-to-face meetings on the ground and professional moderation by the coordinating partner ensures that the continuous communication processes are at the same time economical and effective.

Task sharing between partners

The differentiation between the project's *lead partner* and *operational partners* proved to be another success factor of effective project management. In this way the lead organisation can serve as an authority which administers and coordinates the partners. It can even undertake processes of arbitration or mediation in cases of conflict. The collaboration with *strategic partners* allows to work with stakeholders whose contribution is not funded by the donor programme but still is closely connected to the project activities.

Collaboration among operational partners

The collaboration among the operational project partners in interdisciplinary working groups is also important for effective project management. Different capacities as well as limitations regarding capability and capacity can be identified early on. This allows that conclusions and actions, which are necessary to ensure an effective partnership, can be taken in due time and in accordance with all partners.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

Collaborative expert groups

Interdisciplinary collaboration between experts from different sectors as well as from the local, national, regional and international level proved to be crucial for effective implementation of the activities. It allows that high quality processes and solutions can be developed in a very short time.

A combination of different cost-efficient communication formats contribute to the effectiveness of this collaborative working process. We combined for instance virtual meetings, online file hosting and sharing, mailing lists as well as face-to-face short expert workshops on the ground.

The combination of experts from different tracks and sectors facilitates a holistic, integrated understanding of the flooding situation. It also ensures that the problem solving process is as creative and innovative as possible.

The inclusion of local entrepreneurs into this collaborative expert process has turned out to be helpful as well. They ensure that practical economic and market aspects of the technical solutions are considered and that the solutions are timely and technically adequate for the situation of the respective communities.

Participative review of expert plans

For the development of urban master plans a participatory review with the community is a key process. This ensures that the plans consider and includes knowledge on

- a) the communities' situation and needs and
- b) locally tested approaches and solutions and
- c) that Value for Money is delivered, since the communities are interested in solutions which are financially sustainable.

For the participatory process it has been proven essential to invite all relevant stakeholders from the community.

Action days

Action days at the beginning and during the implementation of each local intervention significantly add to the approach of ensuring the implementation of both economic and sustainable solutions.

Those action days that are organized for the both for the waste management and the urban greening component, allow that a large part of the component can be implemented at low cost. At the same time, they help build awareness of problems and solutions, create ownership and facilitate mobilisation on the part of the community members.

Furthermore, the action days ensure the commitment of the communities prior to the start of an intervention. In this way, the danger of donor mentality can be prevented from early on.

Tailor-made and ecological technologies

To select innovative technologies that are tailor-made for the topographical and economical situation of the local intervention areas proved to also be crucial for the project's success. It ensures that the technologies are truly capable in addressing problems on the ground (e.g. the simplified sewerage system and anaerobic baffle reactor). At the same time, tailoring technologies to the specific context, helps to take into account the ecological needs of the area (e.g. forwarding sludge to strategic partner who generates energy from it or avoiding the pollution of waste water).

On the other hand they ensure that in the end the community members themselves can maintain the component, which placed a big emphasis on feasible and sustainable solutions.

Interactive capacity building

Like the action days, the trainings in the communities contribute to the strategy of combining short-term cost-efficiency and long-term effectiveness of the project. They are conducted for instance on the topics of waste management & recycling, urban gardening & greening as well as urban resilience.

This capacity building instrument creates highly capable workers that implement infrastructure and policy solutions in a very cost-efficient way, right from the beginning of the practical training. At the same time, those trainings give the trainees the opportunity to earn a significant part of their living/earnings/livelihood. Furthermore it allows them to build capacity that is meaningful for their long-term economic situation. This is especially important for women who have a disadvantaged position in the society and enjoyed the waste management training designed especially for them.

For an effective capacity-building process it proved essential to invite all relevant stakeholders from the community (e.g. experienced gardeners) and to give them space to contribute and share their know-how (e.g. regarding local plants or shoreline protection) in a peer-to-peer training process. This ensures that the trainings provide skills and knowledge that are truly relevant, adequate and feasible for a sustainable implementation of the project.

On top of that, trainings that are designed in this way, make it possible to identify committed and active members of the community. Those can later undertake the maintenance of the self-organized interventions.

Business-model approach

The combination of project components with intelligent business models is another major success factor for ensuring the sustainability of the project beyond its actual duration.

The business-models allow that the solutions are self-sustaining and thus not reliant on the donor system. In order to avoid a “donor mentality” people from the communities pay for the service they get. Community members were very interested in the idea to put the money into a community fund and spend it later for equipment the community needs and selects themselves (e.g. sports equipment).

These business models can also be used to create synergies between interests of community members and private actors. During the pilot for instance, the community of Bene Baraque wanted the quartier to be cleaned from waste and were ready to pay for it. At the same time private actors could gain money from investing into waste management and recycled materials. In this way, the responsibility for those components is successfully transferred to private and community actors on the ground.

Another effective strategy is using public spaces as profitable spaces. This allows community members to create income for themselves, their family and the whole community. At the same time those spaces can make them capable to undertake responsibility for particular project components (e.g. through renting urban spaces to urban gardeners who use them for planting vegetables and are responsible for the maintenance of those spaces).

Both, guidelines on sustainable buy-in approaches and the interdisciplinary expert working groups ensure that those intelligent business models can be developed.

Community Advisory Board

The establishment of Community Advisory Board (CAB) in the local intervention area is a further strategy that turned out to be essential.

Thanks to the Community Advisory Board, community members are throughout the whole process of the intervention. This means, that their participation is not reduced to the process of participatory situation analysis and review of urban master plans.

The Community Advisory Board turned out to be an effective format for the communities to solve conflict themselves which arise during this process.

Exchange with policy-makers

A close cooperation with ministries and other public institutions proved important for the effectivity of the project's policy component. It ensures that

- a) needs of policy-makers (e.g. for economic and sustainable solutions) are integrated into the project
- b) previous policy strategies (e.g. resettlement, pumping water) are reconsidered and
- c) potentials and impulses of the community-led project (e.g. restructuring, participatory infrastructure, living with water) are demonstrated and flow into national policy.

Other results of the exchange with policy-makers about their interests and the project's potentials were

- d) the creation of synergies with relevant public institutions active in main flood prevention and
- e) the generation of requests/offers for similar community-led projects and participatory strategies.

III. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Community assessment of resilience indicators

A collaborative workshop with community members at the beginning of the Project Development Phase has proven important for an effective M&E process. It allows the community members to share

- a) experiences they have with flooding and
- b) a range of different aspects that support them in dealing with it.

This process ensures that the framework for building and measuring resilience at the project level meets the beneficiaries' needs. Basic project assumptions can be reconsidered, verified and improved, e.g. regarding conditions, vulnerable and most active groups as well as support systems relevant for building resilience to flooding.

Mobile-device based data collection

The collection of baseline data with help of a mobile-device based data collection software turned out to be another best practice of the M&E process. The use of this tool ensures that costs are reduced over the duration of the project. Data that is collected by different members of the team is accessible for all project partners. The software moreover simplifies the storage of the data and finally also the documentation of the results.

Multi-perspective approach

Another M&E best practice is to combine reporting activities of different project actors throughout the full monitoring and evaluation process of the PDP. These are senior team leaders, project managers, administrative staff and project coordinators as well as external evaluators.

This combination allows for a multi-faceted perspective on the project's progress and impact. It includes the perspectives from both the operational and administrative side as well as from different project management levels of the project.