

# Building government capacity to implement market-based WASH



## An innovative approach to training delivers scalable results

**BACKGROUND** Vietnam has made great progress increasing WASH access in recent years. However, more remains to be done, especially in remote and rural areas, where access to sanitation and clean water lags behind urban coverage. The government of Vietnam is highly engaged in WASH and has begun moving away from a subsidy approach to promote the private sector's role in addressing these gaps. While the government has embraced this approach at the national level, local officials have little practical experience engaging businesses or applying market-based approaches. Provincial, district, and commune government workers need support and training to effectively collaborate with the private sector to reach Vietnam's WASH goals.

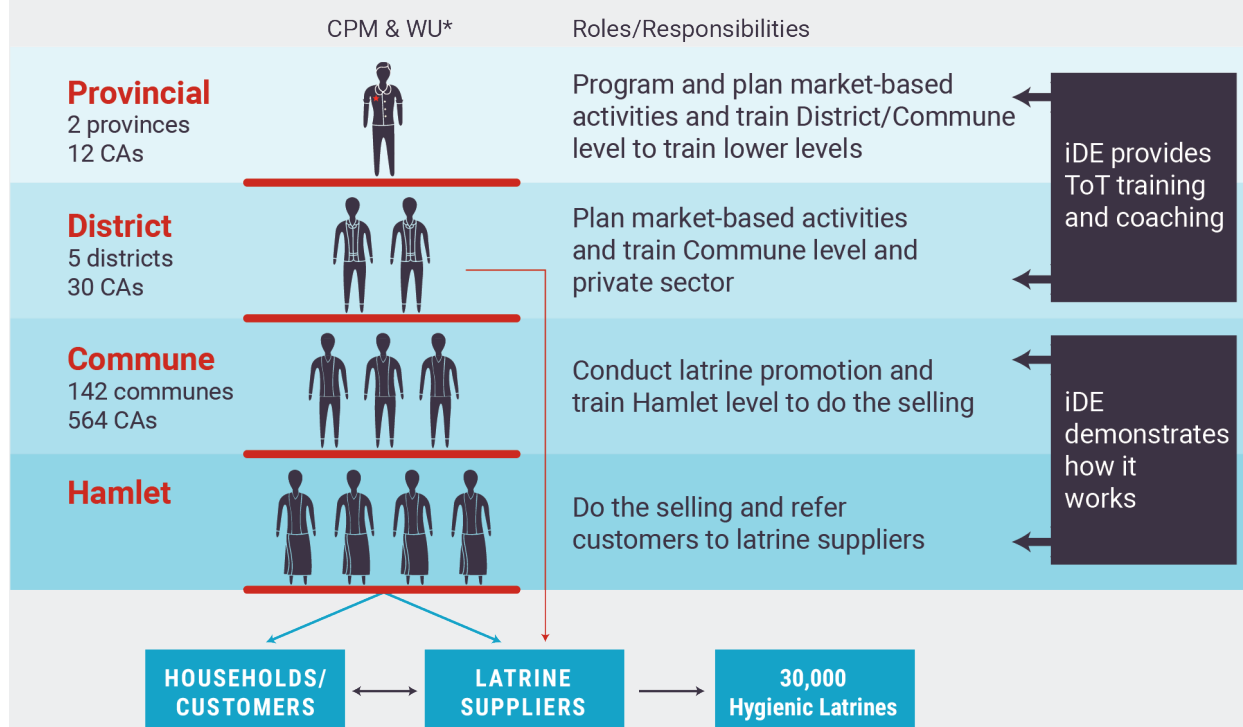
The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Scale Up Project (WASH-SUP), funded by DFAT, is a four-year program

focused on building government capacity to implement market-based WASH programming. Working in two rural provinces, iDE uses an innovative approach to train the government to encourage customers to purchase improved latrines, promote handwashing, and ensure local businesses know how to produce and install affordable, hygienic WASH products. The Vietnam government's active engagement in WASH, coupled with its wide reach at the local levels, makes it a critical partner in scaling WASH outcomes. Households trust government recommendations on hygiene and believe that government-approved latrine designs are safe and hygienic. For this program, iDE has partnered with the Center for Preventive Medicine, which has a WASH mandate from the government, and the Women's Union, which supports WASH as it is generally perceived to be an area of interest to women. Both partners have extensive networks at the commune and hamlet level to effectively stimulate demand among last-mile customers.

## The Approach— Training of Trainers

iDE Vietnam builds government capacity through a Training of Trainers approach. Under this model, iDE trains and coaches government partners at the provincial level, who then train their district counterparts, who in turn train staff working in communes. Partners at each level learn different skills and are responsible for different aspects of implementation, ranging from overall planning (at the province and district levels) to demand creation and engagement with local latrine producers and masons (at the commune and hamlet level). This approach quickly establishes a broad grassroots network with the skills needed to reach last-mile customers.

### Strengthening Government for Scaling Up Market-based Sanitation



\*CPM: Centers for Preventive Medicine; WU: Women's Unions

iDE's Training of Trainers curriculum involves several key stages to build capacity over time, in alignment with our partners' ability to dedicate time to training and comprehension of new skills and concepts. Training is based on Charles Jennings' 70-20-10 framework: 10 percent of training is structured classroom learning, 20 percent is informal and peer learning, and the remaining 70 percent is practical on-the-job training and feedback.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the 70-20-10 framework, see the 70:20:10 Institute's website: <https://702010institute.com/>.

## Structured Training (10 percent)

### **Sanitation Marketing Language Adapted for Government.**

Taking a market-based approach to sanitation and hygiene is very new to local government partners. While the national and provincial government staff were familiar with market-based approaches, many at the district and commune level were skeptical that households would purchase latrines without subsidy. Furthermore, many were uncomfortable with the idea of conducting sales presentations or believed that promoting product sales was not an appropriate role for government staff. To overcome these barriers, iDE adapted the language it usually uses to train private sector partners, revising “sales presentations” to “consultative promotions” and emphasizing the focus on how the latrine will solve customers’ problems or meet their desires (such as a desire to fit in with their neighbors) rather than just health benefits. Since many rural households already have unimproved latrines, this is a critical step in encouraging them to invest in and use improved sanitation.

**Refresher Training.** Following the initial training, iDE offered annual refresher trainings for government partners to ensure skills are retained and new approaches incorporated. By building this into the project work plan, iDE was able to keep current government partners up-to-date and also have a regular schedule for training new partners as they were hired or began collaborating with the program.

## Informal and Peer Learning (20 percent)

**Exposure Visits.** At the beginning of the project, iDE arranged for new partners to visit areas where iDE had previously trained government staff on market-based WASH. Hearing firsthand from other government representatives that consultative promotion and private sector engagement were effective ways to reach WASH targets had a powerful effect on new partners.

**Sharing Best Practices.** High performers are invited to share their experience and new ideas with other government staff working on the project. Hearing firsthand how to apply new ideas and concepts from the structured training into field-level activities has proven helpful in accelerating learning.

**Field Coaching.** iDE staff regularly schedule trips to the field, during which they are accompanied by local government partners. Staff take advantage of these field visits to provide partners with customized coaching, informed by the successes and challenges they see on the ground.

**Periodic Meetings.** Commune-level government partners share experiences about applying newly learned knowledge and skills at monthly meetings in district offices. In addition, partners organize larger-scale conferences every six months to share lessons learned. These regular check-ins provide partners with a forum for learning from their peers and seeing how their own experience compares to others’ experience.

**Project Review Meetings.** iDE brings partners together annually to discuss the successes and challenges of the past year and plan for the coming year. As part of these meetings, partners who are performing well are invited to speak about what approaches they have taken, results they’ve achieved, and suggestions for others working within the program.

**WASH-SUP builds government capacity to engage the private sector in sanitation and hygiene.**



Photo: Pham Van Ky / iDE / 2015



## On-the-job Learning (70 percent)

**Hands-on Practice and Coaching.** In order to build lasting competence, partners spend the majority of their time learning by doing, with iDE providing feedback and reinforcement as needed. Once formal training is complete, partners immediately begin applying their new knowledge. To reinforce these skills, iDE observes partner staff while they implement activities, providing them immediate feedback on how to improve training delivery, conduct consultative promotion, and discuss problems that households experience from poor sanitation and hygiene. As partners become more competent in existing skills, iDE shifts to provide more coaching on newly learned techniques and approaches.

**Start Small, Build Skills and Responsibilities Over Time.** Market-based approaches are new for most government staff, and it would be challenging to build their skills in every area at the same time. Instead, iDE introduces new skills over regular intervals, reinforcing previously covered material while adding new techniques and areas of emphasis. At the outset of the project, partners were unprepared to engage in consultative promotion, train others, or develop an annual plan for market-based engage-

ment. As the project has progressed, government partners have taken on a greater share of project planning, management, and implementation with each passing year; now, government staff are able to develop annual plans, including commune-level targets that take into account existing market size as well as staff capacity. Partners have also begun coaching poor-performing peers to keep the project on track towards its overall targets.

### TRAINING OF TRAINERS BENEFITS

- **Change agents get up to speed more quickly.**
- **Time spent on capacity building can be shortened, with more time for hands-on application of learning.**
- **Top-level trainers can reach a larger group of learners by empowering initial training participants to train and coach others.**
- **Trainers can customize content to the needs of each commune during district/commune training and coaching, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.**



After completing the initial training, government partners spend 70 percent of their time on field-based learning and on-the-job skills building.

Photo: Quang Nguyen / iDE / 2015

Photo: Nguyen Dong / iDE / 2016



## How We Know It's Working

### RACE™

**(Results = Attitude + Competence + Effort)**

To assess whether provincial and district partners are ready to begin training lower level staff and managing activities on their own, iDE uses a method developed by Whitten & Roy Partnership called RACE™ (Results = Attitude + Competence + Effort).

#### ATTITUDE:

**ARE PARTNERS WILLING TO FULFILL THEIR ROLES?**

#### COMPETENCE:

**ARE PARTNERS ABLE TO IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES?**

#### EFFORT:

**ARE PARTNERS FULFILLING THEIR ROLES?  
ARE SALES INCREASING?**

By assessing partners in each of these areas, it is easier to understand where additional support and coaching may be needed. For example, if Attitude is challenging because partners are disappointed by not seeing immediate results, iDE can create opportunities to recognize higher-performing communes as an inspiration to others.

**Capacity Assessments.** iDE also developed a rigorous methodology for rapidly assessing partner capacity to promote WASH through the private sector. The method evaluates technical and planning skills as well as how partners would behave in hypothetical situations. iDE evaluates its key government partners — The Center for Preventive Medicine and the Women's Union — at the provincial, district, and commune level to determine the efficacy of capacity building and coaching efforts. At the commune level, each government representative is assessed individually on demand creation and WASH promotion skills, and ability to engage with the private sector to strengthen the supply chain. At the higher levels (province and district), partners are evaluated at the institutional level based on political ambition, program management skills, and knowledge about WASH products and the existing market. Additionally, these partners are scored based on how well those in the communes they oversee are performing, since their ability to build capacity in lower-level staff is critical to the long-term sustainability of the program's approach. Initial assessments comparing current capacity to baseline capacity indicate partners are better able to explain the role the private sector can play in achieving WASH goals, better able to identify potential customers, and more skilled in supporting capacity development in staff below them.



**New Initiatives.** With iDE's encouragement and guidance, the Women's Union has proactively identified new ways to reach poor households, including revolving savings groups and community labor campaigns to install latrines. These initiatives prioritize latrine installation for poor households that might otherwise have difficulty saving enough to pay for the full latrine cost in one lump sum. Other approaches, such as short-term promotions targeting poor households, are also being tested. Although iDE emphasizes the importance of targeting poor and vulnerable households, partners have designed and implemented these pro-poor initiatives on their own. This indicates an increasing commitment among partners to delivering inclusive WASH outcomes, as well as greater confidence in testing and refining new approaches.

**Government Using Program Materials Outside the Project.** As the program continues, iDE has seen several instances of government applying the program's approaches, training materials, and technical guidance outside existing project areas. At a recent national hygiene conference, Center for Preventive Medicine leadership from Nghe An province shared their experience working with iDE, emphasizing the effectiveness of the unsubsidized market-based approach, capacity building, consultative promotion techniques, and the technical support provided to ring producers and masons as a way to encourage other districts in their province to adopt this approach. Center for Preventive Medicine staff in the other project province Tuyen Quang have also begun using the program's consultative promotion training materials in support of projects funded by other donors, including the World Bank.



The Women's Union has developed new initiatives to reach the poor, including savings groups and labor contribution campaigns.

Photo: Trang Bui / iDE / 2017

THE  
VIETNAM  
EQUATIONUNDERSTAND  
CONSUMERS'  
NEEDS

+

GOVERNMENT APPROVED  
LATRINE OPTIONS

X

WRITE THE BOOK  
ON SANITATION  
MARKETING  
+  
GOVERNMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION

=

SANITATION  
MARKETING  
PIONEER

## Lessons Learned

### UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT PARTNER MOTIVATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS.

While the government is focused on increasing WASH access, many partners were accustomed to the quick wins delivered by traditional subsidy programs, and skeptical that the market-based approach could deliver results. It's necessary to acknowledge these beliefs and explain how market-based implementation can contribute to WASH targets in a sustainable manner in order to ensure partner support and buy-in.

### BUILD GOVERNMENT PARTNER CAPACITY FROM THE DISTRICT LEVEL UP.

Staff at the provincial level are more removed from implementation, and that makes it harder for them to pass what they've learned in training to district and commune-level staff. It's better to engage higher-ups in advocacy and efforts to support the program from above.

### PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT STAFF TURNOVER.

Government staff may move on to other jobs or retire, and implementers have no control over who will be appointed to replace them. It's important to build in time and resources to train new partners, even at late stages of project implementation. Having to train new partners who may not be familiar with the program's approach takes a significant amount of time.

### ALLOW TIME FOR OTHER GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES.

Government staff may be taken away from project implementation for other activities, such as electioneering or priorities like a national vaccination campaign. Unless the project timeline has some flexibility, interruptions like this will slow down project implementation.

## Impact

Under the current project, government partners have sold over 21,000 hygienic latrines by engaging local businesses. By mid-2018, the program will have reached 30,000 latrines sold, with 15 percent purchased by poor customers and 22 percent sold to ethnic minority households. Over the past two years, improved latrine coverage rates have increased 10 percentage points in project areas, compared to 1 to 1.5 percentage points annually in other areas. The project will also reach 90,000 people with handwashing facilities and improve hand hygiene knowledge for 100,000 individuals.

The Training of Trainers approach is applicable beyond the current sanitation marketing project and is a promising method to build government capacity in market-based approaches. For example, some government partners, such as the Women's Union, anticipate budget cuts in the coming years, so they are exploring ways to generate revenue. Using the Training of Trainers model to build in-demand, transferrable skills like consultative promotion would help them shift to income-generating ventures.



Photo: Quang Nguyen / iDE / 2017

**RACE™** — (Results = Attitude + Competence + Effort)

This formula, developed by Whitten & Roy Partnership, examines learners' attitude, competence, and execution of new skills. By identifying which of these areas need more focus after the initial training, it is easier to tailor follow-up support to deliver stronger results.

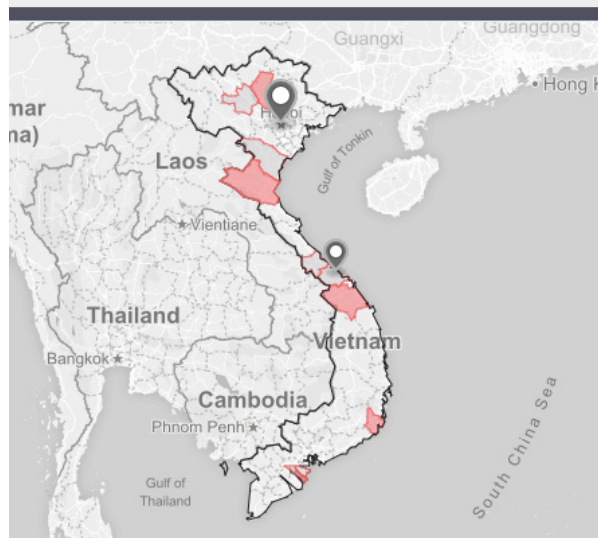
**70-20-10 Model** — This framework, developed by Charles Jennings, recommends that the majority of training time be spent in practical, on-the-job skills building and peer learning, following a brief, structured introduction of new skills.

 Read More: **Read about iDE Vietnam's work building government capacity to engage private sector actors:**

<https://www.ideglobal.org/country/vietnam>



Photo: iDE / 2017



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**iDE**

iDE creates income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. iDE builds markets in a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene, and access to finance.

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