

# Hybrid management models: blending community and private management



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A clear distinction is generally made between community and private management of water and sanitation services. This distinction reflects the different motivations, values, attitudes and approaches generally associated with each type of provider. In WSUP programmes, the local context is often suited to community or to private management models. But in practice, WSUP often seeks to go beyond this “community” versus “private” dichotomy, to try to get “the best of both worlds”. For instance, CBO operators are often encouraged to adopt commercial practices and achieve business efficiency. Similarly, entrepreneurs are encouraged to be more supportive of the needs of the community, and more responsive to poverty and gender issues. In this Topic Brief, the approaches used by WSUP in Nairobi, Kumasi and Antananarivo under the African Cities for the Future (ACF) programme are examined from this perspective of blending community and private management models. The Topic Brief concludes with practical guidance on this issue for programme managers.

## 1. Hybrid management models

### 1.1. Hybridising: a current trend in the sector

WSUP’s current thinking around blended or hybrid management models stems largely from its experience in Kumasi, Nairobi and Antananarivo (Tana), and can be viewed in the wider context of recent efforts in the water and sanitation sector to experiment with “traditional” models. As generally observed in Ghana, Kenya and Madagascar, as in other developing countries, the failure of states to maintain and expand water and sanitation services led in the 1970s to the development of the community management model, initially in rural areas, then gradually in growing urban and peri-urban zones. This is generally the case in WSUP’s areas of intervention in Kumasi, Nairobi and Tana, where community management of water and sanitation services has emerged as a response to the inefficiency or absence of public services. However, despite its numerous merits, the community management model has not been found to be the “silver bullet” hoped for by many. Not only has it proved hard to scale up, but it also often struggles to guarantee sustainable services for all.



“Increasing interest in hybrid management models reflects a shift to more pragmatic solutions”

As a result, the 1990s saw a much greater emphasis on full cost recovery and commercialisation of water as essential prerequisites for sustainable service provision and expansion. Although pure private management models have generally been revealed to be poorly suited to the particular social, cultural and political dimensions of the water sector, instilling more business principles to the sector has helped to improve service provider viability and efficiencies. Likewise, the key role played by the smaller private sector, and its distinctive qualities, have been increasingly recognised. In response to the low levels of sustainability or viability achieved by community-based management, private sector involvement is now being promoted at a national policy level in more than a dozen African countries.<sup>1</sup>

The last decade has been marked by attempts to successfully mix values, principles and practices from distinct management models. This is exemplified by the privatisation of public utilities, the introduction of business-like management practices in community structures, the rise of multi-sectoral or multi-stakeholder partnerships and the promotion of social entrepreneurship to achieve total sanitation. This mixing or blending approach is also pivotal to WSUP's own emergence and strategy.

### 1.2. Focusing on urban and peri-urban settings

The task of addressing hybrid management models is no small undertaking and requires specifically focusing on the aspects most relevant to WSUP's work. This paper thus focuses on peri-urban and urban zones inhabited by poor populations. Some of these populations have no access to the networked services of the main provider (i.e. the utility), while others have indirect access through a partnership between the utility and a local provider. Within this type of geographical area, a series of projects led by various stakeholders (NGOs, public authorities and private initiatives) has in the past commonly produced a patchwork of water and sanitation service delivery models. These various service providers can be categorised as macro-, meso- and micro-level actors:

- At the *macro* level are the utilities. Hybrid management models at this level (i.e. macro-scale private sector participation and privatisation) lie beyond the scope of this paper.
- The *meso* level is that of alternative water and sanitation providers, including community-based organisations (CBOs), community water committees, water user associations and small-scale entrepreneurs.
- At the *micro* level are individual actors, essentially domestic resellers.

This paper centres primarily on meso-level actors engaged in hybrid management models for water supply and communal sanitation services, though in all cases macro- and micro-level actors are also involved.

### 1.3. The best of both worlds?

Arguably, the increasing interest in hybrid management models reflects a shift from idealised approaches to more pragmatic, context-specific solutions. WSUP contributes to the pioneering of such hybrid models with the fundamental aim of developing models that combine the best features of community and private management. WSUP projects also include public service provision in that blend, via partnerships with the local formal provider/utility.

Nairobi (Kambi Muru, Kibera)	Kumasi (Kotei)	Antananarivo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The public utility supplies bulk water to a scheme, which includes a storage tank, two ablution blocks with faecal sludge disposal points and kiosks for water resellers</li> <li>■ The scheme is operated by a commercially-oriented CBO which hires a manager for daily operations and reports to the CBO</li> <li>■ A neighbourhood committee helps select the CBO through negotiation with other stakeholders and oversees the management of the facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The public utility owns the asset (a decentralised network on a borehole) and deals with all technical aspects including O&amp;M</li> <li>■ A Community Management Committee (CMC), closely tied to the formal local government structure, is in charge of commercial aspects. It includes members from the Kumasi Metropolitan Authority (KMA), the Sub-Metro Council and the utility</li> <li>■ The CMC recruits water vendors for each standpipe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The public utility supplies bulk water to water kiosks</li> <li>■ These facilities are operated by water user associations (WUA) following a cost-recovery approach; WUAs operate almost as small businesses</li> <li>■ The surplus revenue is reinvested into community sanitation activities</li> </ul>

**Table 1**  
Hybrid management models  
pioneered by WSUP under  
the ACF programme

WSUP works in places where community management is often dominant. As mentioned above, despite its merits, this model often fails to ensure the provision of sustainable services. Some attribute this failure to a series of myths about community management, including: (i) the notion that users' motivation to manage their system effectively can be sustained; (ii) the idea that technologies are available that can totally free communities from external assistance; (iii) the wishful view that fees set by users will generally be sufficient to cover O&M costs; or (iv) the opposite view that users are too poor to pay realistic water charges.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> For a complete discussion of these myths, see Carter 2009.<sup>2</sup>

Volunteering has repeatedly revealed its limitations while community management models are exposed to local social dynamics and political interference. They may reflect local social structures that are less equitable than envisaged, or fall victim to seizure of power by a handful of self-interested individuals exploiting the vulnerability of fragile CBOs or water users' associations. This latter weakness motivated WSUP to develop an alternative, hybrid management model in Kibera. Lack of revenues, failure to implement preventative maintenance and the lack of general technical, managerial and financial skills are further frequent shortcomings of the community management model. According to WSUP programme staff, these elements are also very commonly observed in WSUP's areas of intervention in Kumasi, Tana and Nairobi.

**Box 1: Tenets of community management**

Through sustained community participation and (a sense of) ownership, community management aims to put the community in control over the management of its facilities. Community control as well as the financial resources, material input, and voluntary workforce leveraged at community level are meant to ensure sustainability.

**Box 2: Instilling business-like practices in Kibera**

Instilling business-like management practices is one of the key underlying motivation behind WSUP's hybrid management model 'experiment' in Kambi Muru: setting a new standard in WASH service quality in contrast with the generally mediocre quality of the services provided under the traditional community management model.

<sup>b</sup> This assumption was made by the WSUP team in Nairobi, who sought to entrust the management of ablution blocks to private operators or commercially-oriented CBOs.

#### 1.4. Introducing business practices through more complex institutional arrangements

Generic strengths and weaknesses of community management are presented in the table below. Experience worldwide suggests that the sustainability of this model hinges on a number of prerequisites, among which two particularly stand out in the context of this analysis:

- The need to create demand and achieve financial sustainability, which calls for some ‘business realism’.
- To envision community management as part of a larger institutional arrangement that provides external support, which calls for a more precise delineation of roles and responsibilities.

The first requirement –instilling business-like management practices into community water and sanitation services– is a significant aspect of WSUP’s work on hybrid models, as in the ACF projects in Kumasi, Nairobi and Antananarivo. Private management is typically profit-driven, prioritising efficiencies and cost-recovery. Private management, which in competitive markets is generally grounded in customer satisfaction, adapts services to existing demand. Competitive environments theoretically foster innovation, effectiveness and value for money for users. A common assumption is that private operators of ablution blocks or water kiosks will often distinguish themselves from their CBO counterparts through more effective decision-making, greater operational responsiveness and greater willingness to sustain the quality of services and expand them (as long as revenues follow).<sup>b</sup> However, fees for private management are generally higher and there is an understandable trend for private operators to “cherry-pick” and neglect the less profitable areas. Private management is generally perceived as less responsive to poverty than community management. Also, there is a greater risk of monopolies –common in water and sanitation services– with private operators. Nevertheless, community and private management display some seemingly complementary characteristics nevertheless. Hybridising them theoretically means that features from both models can be combined in a coherent way, taking the best from each.

#### Box 3: WSUP envisions community management as part of a larger institutional arrangement

WSUP tends to structure management models in the form of partnerships involving official service providers, generally a public utility, and meso-level operators (CBOs, CBE, private operators etc.). In Kumasi, Tana and Nairobi, the management models set up by WSUP put the public utilities in charge of production, supplying bulk water to these meso-level operators. In Naivasha, the private owner-operator of the borehole likewise works under an agreement with the utility.

With this approach WSUP demonstrates the viability and scalability of partnership models building on the complementarities of public service provision and community management (and sometimes private management) along commercial principles. A blend of actors, skills, practices and styles that have not succeeded independently may well prove effective when carefully integrated.

The second requirement – envisioning community management as part of a wider institutional arrangement where external support (or alternatively, additional skills and resources) is made available – highlights the point that while aspects of community management are highly desirable in the context of water and sanitation services for the poor, community systems are rarely self-reliant. Major repairs (e.g. pumps, networks), for instance, may require quickly mobilising significant financial and technical resources that will often be beyond the reach of the community.

Table 2

Typical characteristics of management models with CBO operator and private operator

Water user associations can come together under umbrella organisations that carry out certain functions (bulk water supply, contracting, procurement, capacity building) and partnerships with the local utility can be formed to face these challenges.

Management model	Weaknesses / risks
<b>CBO Operator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vested interests threaten cohesion and management</li> <li>■ Inefficiency and risk that individuals usurp ownership of the facilities and run them in a self-interested way</li> <li>■ No motivation/drive for successful management</li> <li>■ No clear separation of functions</li> <li>■ Weak formal regulation on quality and prices</li> <li>■ Denies community right to be served by government</li> <li>■ Lack of capacity to manage facility</li> </ul>
<b>Private Operator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Profit motive overrides service provision motive (social dimension)</li> <li>■ Danger of creating monopolies</li> <li>■ Unsustainable business plans result in lack of service provision</li> <li>■ Unfulfilled obligations by partners affect sustainability of business</li> </ul>

From BPD-WSUP workshop in Naivasha, Kenya, May 2010

## 2. Blending options

In WSUP projects hybrid management models combine characteristics of community management, private management and often public service provision. Many blends are possible, and they generally reflect one of three main goals: i) corporatisation of community management organisations; ii) specialisation and the delegation of functions; or iii) social entrepreneurship.

### 2.1. Corporatisation of community management organisations

Hybridisation can be framed as “the progression of the community management model along a gradient of increasing formalisation and professionalisation.” At one end of the spectrum we find communitarian models relying strongly on community participation and volunteering, the quality of which tends to erode over time. Meeting attendance and frequency decrease as a result, and communities often informally delegate decision-making to a community management committee whose internal cohesion is fragile. A few individuals (often with higher social status) generally end up managing such committees, although management practices and governance remain rather informal, with an ad-hoc approach to maintenance. Here, hybridisation occurs partly through formalisation and professionalisation:

**Formalisation** processes include: (i) adopting an appropriate legal status to foster engagement with external actors; (ii) formalising governance, roles and responsibilities; (iii) formalising agreements with partners such as employees, operators, government, utilities and regulatory bodies.

**Professionalisation** processes include: (i) instilling a culture of performance (e.g. financial, service quality, coverage, user satisfaction, non-revenue water); (ii) adopting business practices (e.g. planning, budgeting, financial reporting, asset recording, accounting systems); and (iii) building capacity and incentivising staff to achieve objectives.

Water User Associations and community water committees undergoing these processes will often demonstrate an increasing commercial orientation, a greater concern for cost recovery, and possibly service expansion and diversification (as observed, for example, with the WUAs supported by WSUP in Tana, which are capable of funding sanitation activities). Their practices and the degree of formalisation at play in their relationships will in many ways make them comparable to private

organisations: cooperatives typically show these characteristics.

Such processes are seen in WSUP's programmes in Kumasi, Tana and in Nairobi, where the option of a 'commercially-oriented CBO' to operate an ablution block in Kambi Muru neighbourhood has been envisioned.



Figure 1 Water kiosk in Naivasha, Kenya.

#### Box 4: Formalising relationships

In Naivasha, the contract between the private operator and the utility is no secret to the community committee. This level of formalisation and transparency is very good for the oversight of the operator, as the committee knows the obligations of each actor.

In Kambi Muru in Nairobi, the utility expressed far more reluctance to formalise the set of relationships.

In Kumasi, this formalisation process is regarded as critical to prevent political interference.



Figure 2 Separation of roles

### 2.2. Specialisation and the delegation of functions

Hybrid management models often involve a redistribution of functions. The clarification of roles and responsibilities and the performance objectives entailed in professionalisation generally go hand in hand with some specialisation and separation of functions. Management models then evolve towards institutional arrangements with more specialised entities fulfilling a limited set of functions more professionally. In a community management model, the community often owns and manages the infrastructure and combines three key functions: ownership, operation, and oversight. Separation of these functions is needed to promote sustainable and accountable services.

**Asset ownership** frequently poses a problem, particularly in the context of sector reform that grants government bodies ownership of public service assets, partly built and financed by the community on land they made available for the project. This role needs to be clarified so that the environment is conducive to further investment.

**Operation and oversight** handled by one entity can lead to a neglect of users' needs. When the community management model fails to sustain the active participation of the community and self-interested individuals take overall control of the facilities (through operation and oversight), service performance with accountability subsequently declines.

Separation of the ownership, operation and oversight roles reduces political interference and enables each role to be matched with the best skill-set and attitudes available locally. A CBO may be best qualified to oversee an operator and ensure services meet community needs, and correspondingly an entrepreneur may be the most appropriate party to dynamically operate services, seek customer satisfaction and strive to expand services. Small water user associations will often employ local staff such as clerks, accountants, mechanics and operators. However, without separating oversight from day-to-day management, decision-making is likely to be poorly linked to accountability or to a coherent business plan. These associations can ensure such separation by focusing on oversight themselves while fully delegating operations to a private operator. A contract with performance indicators is also highly desirable if the operator is chosen from amongst the members. Associations can set up a board with representatives of local authorities and utilities (as in the ACF programme in

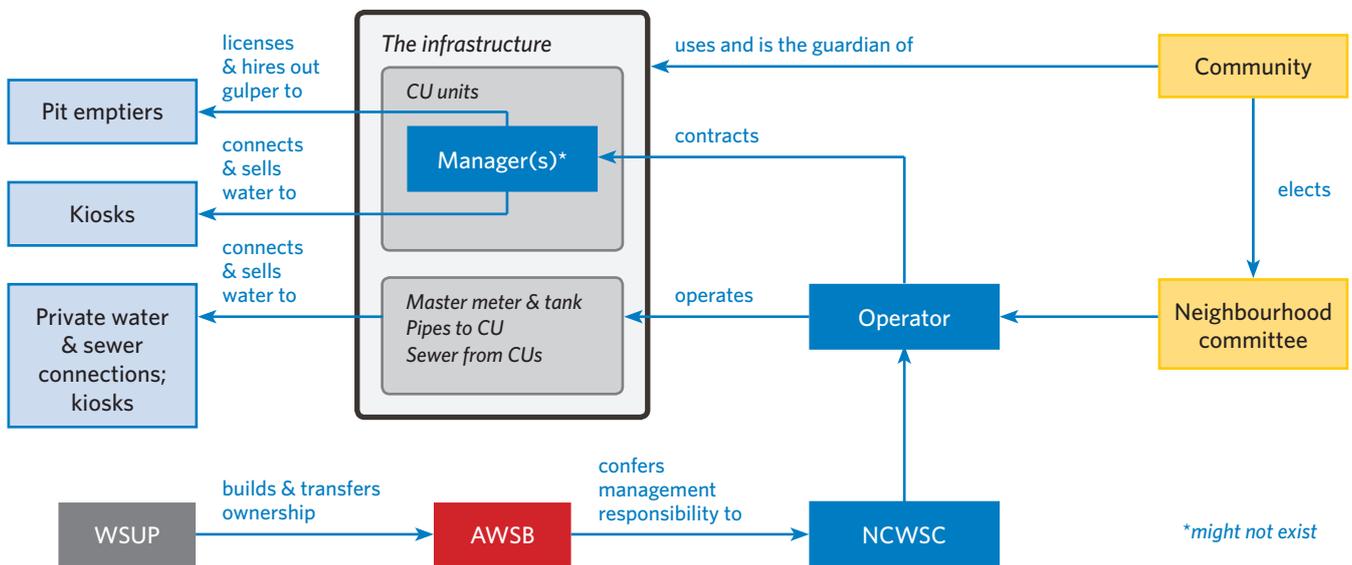
Kumasi), which will reinforce the skills needed for management oversight. Opting for an external financial audit, as planned in Kumasi, also boosts an association's accountability. Such a separation of functions is particularly necessary in WSUP's multi-sectoral partnership models. Delegating management of the WASH scheme to a private operator or community-based entrepreneur is also envisioned by WSUP in their work in Kibera.

Both formalisation/professionalisation and specialisation/delegation are typical processes of hybridisation and are often linked. Formalisation and professionalisation do not necessarily require significant specialisation, but proper delegation implies some formalisation.

**Box 5: Separation of functions in the ACF programme in Kambi Muru (Kibera, Nairobi).**

In Kibera, WSUP pioneered the idea of delegated management of communal sanitation facilities to a private operator. WSUP put special emphasis, during meetings with the Neighbourhood Committee, on the

need to consider ownership, management and oversight of the facilities as separate roles to be undertaken by distinct actors. Various scenarios for the delegation of functions were envisioned early on in the project.



**Table 3**  
Gradual separation of roles in official community-based management models in Ghana

Pop. size	System	Management models
<2,000	Point source	WatSan committee
2,000-5,000	Non-mechanised systems (e.g. gravity-fed water schemes)	Water and Sanitation Development Board (WSDB) supported by skilled artisans from within the community, whose services may be procured when necessary on a retainer basis ('option 1' in the CWSA Small Towns O&M Guidelines)
5,000-10,000	Simple boreholes, gravity fed or slow sand filtration based piped systems	WSDB with certified/reputable firm to carry out specialised functions as and when needed (indicated as 'option 2' in the CWSA Small Towns O&M Guidelines) or, preferably, WSDB with contract with a firm or firms to perform specialised functions on a periodic basis ('option 3')
>10,000	Communities served with complex water supply systems	WSDB and a contracted firm (private operator) to completely operate and maintain the water supply system ('option 4')

HYBRIDISATION THROUGH INCREASING DELEGATION

Adapted from Lockwood (2012)<sup>3</sup>

### 2.3. Social entrepreneurship

Another perspective worth highlighting relates to the sensitisation or “softening” of private management to achieve social goals.

Key processes include: improving poverty responsiveness (e.g. through lower prices, service expansion), increasing awareness and demand for improved services, and meeting minimum quality and technical standards requirements. This can be accompanied by other objectives, such as formalisation, contractualisation, or fostering competition.

### 3. Context and hybridisation

An analysis of the context will often determine which are the favourable hybridisation options, the more risky paths and the ‘dead-end’ options. It is important to have a good understanding of the natural, technical, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural environments, as the following examples suggest:

**Natural environment:** Difficult access to water resources and unfavourable topographical and soil characteristics have technical and economic consequences, which often favour partnerships with the utility as a bulk water provider. Water scarcity and seasonality have major consequences too.

#### Box 6: Water availability issues and their influences on management models

- Water scarcity in Tana fosters community participation and willingness to pay for water services.
- Declining water demand during the rainy season affects the profitability of business for the private operator in Naivasha.
- Large storage tanks make water supplies more reliable in Kambi Muru, Nairobi, and as a result the water supply system becomes more attractive for kiosk owners.
- In Kumasi, borehole water improves water quality, which stimulates demand.

**Technology:** As shown in Figure 3, population density influences the choice of technology, which has significant bearing on the type of management model and scope for hybridisation. These conclusions derive from analyses of rural contexts, but are equally applicable to urban contexts. Sophisticated engineering solutions increase the requirement for O&M skills and the need for support from external organisations. Improved technologies can however increase competitiveness and make services easier to market.

**Figure 3**  
Professionalisation  
of service delivery  
models as affected by  
settlements type in  
rural contexts

Population density & service levels		Voluntary based	Semi-professionalised	Fully professionalised
	Rural growth centres & small towns	Community-based management		
Rural (village)				Delegated contracts to private operators
Rural (highly dispersed)	Self-supply			

Adapted from Lockwood (2012)<sup>3</sup>

**Institutional environment:** Legal frameworks may be more or less supportive of private sector participation and 'water has to pay for water' principles. Commercial or public law restrictions, facilities for microcredit and commercial loans will favour some legal statuses over others. The sector policy framework may be progressive (as in Ghana, Kenya and Madagascar), allowing for a wide range of hybrid model options, including delegated management of water and sanitation services by private, CBO, CBE or cooperative operators.

**Economic environment:** Levels of demand and willingness to pay –as well as the need for solidarity mechanisms –will have a critical influence on cost recovery, service expansion and surplus/profits, thus affecting the level of incentives for commercially oriented operators.

**Box 7: Unfair competition and lack of social cohesion weaken commercially oriented blends in Tana and Kibera.**

WSUP has tended to structure management models in the form of partnerships involving official service providers, generally a public utility, and meso-level operators (CBOs, CBE, private operators, etc.). In Kumasi, Tana and Nairobi, the management models set up under the ACF programme put the public utilities in charge of production, supplying bulk water to these meso-level operators. In Naivasha (Kenya) the private owner-operator of the borehole likewise works under an agreement with the utility too.

This approach demonstrates the viability and scalability of partnership models building on the complementarities of public service provision and community management (and sometimes private management) along commercial principles. A blend of actors, skills, practices and styles that have not succeeded independently may well prove effective when carefully integrated.

**The socio-cultural environment:** The degree to which traditional institutions remain active despite modern influences (e.g. individualism, movement away from traditional social structures, innovation) will also influence the range of viable options for hybrid models (for example, despite strong adherence to traditional ways in Kotei, Kumasi, reliance on voluntary work may jeopardise the model's sustainability; in Kibera, Nairobi, the acceptance of a private operator in place of the usual CBO is an issue). Likewise, the level of social cohesion is an important factor.

**Box 8: Building models from scratch in greenfield sites – Naivasha and Kumasi**

The ACF interventions in Naivasha, and to a certain extent in Kotei (Kumasi), benefit from contexts favourable to more complex and ambitious hybrid models, where the lack of competition and entrenched perverse incentives or traditional expectations (e.g. free services) are likely to result in less resistance to separation of functions/delegation, to the legal ownership of assets, or to tariffs allowing cost recovery.

**The existing state of service provision:** Depending on the type of model dominating service provision in an intervention area, certain blending strategies will be favoured. Where communitarian management models prevail, hybridisation will involve corporatising community management organisations, as described on page 5. This scenario is at play in Antananarivo: public authorities have gradually disengaged from the management of public toilets and various types of community management coexist, with Water User Associations increasingly autonomous and professional, in part thanks to the input of WSUP and CARE.

While these three scenarios remain too simplistic to represent real-life situations, it provides a useful insight into the possible processes at play and related objectives in hybridisation according to the context.

Where the small private sector dominates, hybridisation of the system will require “softening”, as described on page 8. If the context is characterised by the absence of significant investment in water and sanitation services, the challenge is to build a hybrid model from scratch that is technically effective, economically sustainable, socially responsible, transparent, participatory and scalable.

With model scalability being one of WSUP’s top goals, these three scenarios (corporatisation of community management models; softening of private management model, and building hybrid models from scratch)<sup>c</sup> must be embedded in the formal sector framework and involve the utility, which adds another layer of complexity (see Box 9).

While this Topic Brief attempts to lay out some of WSUP’s experience and analysis around hybrid management models under the ACF programme, an understanding of how to more effectively design such models is expected to emerge in the coming years. WSUP and BPD welcome the reader’s comments and guidance on the analysis herein, based on his/her own experience and observation.

#### 4. Recommendations for programme managers

##### **Box 9: What sustainability for hybrid management models in the light of sector strategies?**

Sector strategies that shape the evolution of the relationships between actors at macro, meso and micro levels strongly influence the sustainability of the ACF programme. Two main options are generally considered, each of them with fierce defenders and opponents:

- Utilities absorb the diversity of actors under a banner of universal standards of service and economies of scale.
- Utilities build partnerships with small, neighbourhood-level operators.

This wider discussion sets out the overall context in which WSUP’s hybridisation attempts take place. WSUP and BPD take a rather pragmatic stance on this issue: since the first option is very unlikely to happen in the near future, it seems more meaningful at this time to explore Option 2, which will build on existing assets to better meet the current needs of the poor.

WSUP’s development of hybrid management models is an on-going process; the schemes in Nairobi and Kumasi have not been operational for long enough to deliver definitive conclusions and provide comprehensive guidance regarding these experiences. The following recommendations thus mainly reflect lessons learned by WSUP teams early on, and essentially revolve around the aim of maximising stakeholders buy-in and financial viability through appropriate tariff-setting.

**Foster significant stakeholder involvement:** Involving the key actors early in the discussion around the most appropriate model is critical. The model needs to fit with the local context while meeting stakeholders’ expectations, some of which may be based on positions that constrain creative solutions (e.g. poor relations or mistrust between the community and the utility, or between the utility and informal water cartels). Sufficient facilitated meetings must be factored into the project timeframe and budget to allow actors to reflect on their positions and engage in a constructive discussion and negotiation. Establishing a project steering committee in Kumasi proved instrumental in this process. Proposing a range of alternative management models— with varying degrees of community, utility and private sector involvement— will help structure the discussion around the analysis of key factors in concrete scenarios.

“ All actors need to have proper incentives to fulfil their roles effectively ”

**Address financial viability as a core priority:** Hybrid models seek to incorporate business common sense and thus need to rely on a robust financial analysis, including an assessment of demand and willingness-to-pay for services, and the true life-cycle costs of service provision. Effective capacity building support ensuring the take-up of business practices by key actors is essential. The solidarity mechanisms set up to serve the poorest groups must not threaten the financial viability of the model.

**Set appropriate incentives for all:** All actors fundamentally need to have proper incentives to fulfil their roles effectively. So there is a need to ensure that the operator has sufficient revenue, while providing affordable access to all members of the community. The entity in charge of service oversight also needs to be duly compensated and therefore motivated. It is important to reflect on the means of protecting the operator's involvement against rises in the cost of production. It may also be important to ensure that the system of compensation for the operator incentivises service expansion (e.g. by increasing network coverage). Finally, flexibility is critical: there should be agreement to review the incentive structure after a pilot phase.

**Select your words carefully:** Words and expressions may be politically and emotionally loaded, and careful attention needs to be paid to communication that generates proper buy-in by all stakeholders. In the context of separating functions, for instance -and while accepting that communal facilities will often be legally owned by public authorities- it is important to make sure that the notion of public ownership is balanced with the notion of local 'guardianship'. When dealing with operational management roles, reflect on the most appropriate term to use: "manager" or "private entrepreneur", "social entrepreneur" or "socially responsible entrepreneur"?

**Influence the sector to support innovative approaches:** WSUP's work with hybrid models will hopefully challenge the usual approaches of local and international NGOs in partnership with the utility and public authorities in the country. A process leading to open exchange of ideas between these different actors is needed. The aim is to influence local sector thinking to help transcend arguments about community-based vs. private management approaches, explore the best of both worlds and find ways to blend them. Repeated informal meetings with local organisations already inclined to engage in a constructive debate can be a good way to initiate this dynamic. This exchange will be greatly enhanced if participants are willing to engage in a collective learning experience, by sharing information including poor results and obstacles to success. Attention should be paid to emphasising the value of all the learning previously amassed by local organisations.

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**Credits:** This Topic Brief was researched and written by Jacques-Edouard Tiberghien (BPD) with input from WSUP staff in Nairobi, Antananarivo and Kumasi. It forms part of a learning review commissioned by WSUP and led by BPD Water and Sanitation with funding provided by USAID under the ACF Programme. The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government. Series Editor: Guy Norman. Coordination: Gemma Bastin. Design: AlexMusson.com. [Version 1, January 2013]