MUS THEMATIC GROUP MEETING 12-13 FEBRUARY 2007

SESSIONS ON MUS

* Livelihoods and growth
* Sanitation and reuse
* MUS in irrigation
* MUS in South Asia
* Group business

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY

**Introduction session**

The session was opened by facilitator Joep Verhagen who interviewed John Butterworth on the background and evolution of the MUS group. The group started by giving attention, at policy levels, to the common practice on the ground of using water supply services for productive ends. Now the group has matured into a platform where the WASH and IWRM sub-sectors are working together. We also learned that John especially appreciated these smaller ‘expert’ meetings, without denying the importance of larger forums with wider audiences such as the last WWF in Mexico. The MUS theme has reached the stage of mainstreaming and larger programmes have started to introduce the theme in their programme designs.

SESSION ON MUS, LIVELIHOODS AND GROWTH

The economic benefits of multiple use approaches have proved difficult to assess thoroughly to date due in part to the scarcity of information on costs and the nature of the many income-generating, expenditure-saving and food security impacts of MUS. This session aimed bring together the existing information on the costs and benefits of MUS, and to discuss an improved (simple) framework for evaluating the approach.

The relation of growth and MUS was discussed in the first presentation by Tom Slaymaker (ODI), using the context of the RIPPLE programme in Ethiopia. The issue was raised from the perspective of the local governor: invest in water - or e.g. in health or education? What will bring more growth and poverty reduction to the district? Tom also emphasised the importance of linking strategies of growth with strategies for poverty reduction.

He left us with some big questions to chew on:

In the second presentation Marieke Adank (IRC) showed how difficult it is to prove in general the better cost/benefit ratio from a MUS approach than of the single use systems. The complexity of the reality and lack of data raised the question how useful such studies are? However, within a specific context it was relatively easy to look at cost/benefits for MUS related to specific technical delivery systems.

In the discussion that followed it was argued that in some parts of the world such as Latin America (because plenty of water and over-designed systems) large benefits can be reaped without any additional costs. This will, however, probably not be true for arid and semi-arid areas in Africa and Asia.

In conclusion it was said that there is so much noise when one tries to find answers for the big questions that it becomes probably too difficult to come up with hard evidence. In the end it may all come back to good demand based planning with an explicit pro-poor focus. This is in line with Tom’s earlier remark to link the growth and poverty reduction strategies.

After the break Sally Sutton (RWS Network) showed how the poorest people make improvements themselves and mainly need little help in breaking their glass ceilings, which are kept there by governments and the development sector. She argued that the poorest would benefit a lot when the water sector would follow much more a market approach, offering choice, means and voice. Once people are on the water ladder they will continue to improve their own situation. The MUS approach fits very well with this market perspective, because it also starts from the users’ perspective and not from the donor’s or government.

Laurent Stravato (IFAD) ended the morning’s session explaining that IFAD is looking into bringing closer collaboration between the Water for Food and WASH sectors. He stated that IFAD is exploring different opportunities for partnership to bring about an emphasis on Multiple Uses Services in IFAD investments in Rural Water Health and Sanitation...

It nicely closed the circle with the analysis provided by John in his introduction that MUS was ready to be mainstreamed.

This session was organised by Tom Slaymaker from the Overseas Development Institute.

SESSION ON MUS, SANITATION AND REUSE

One of the resources available for small-scale irrigation is wastewater. Often untreated, this is a valuable resource but poses significant health risks for producers and consumers. Eco-sanitation makes available human fertilisers for crop production in potentially safer forms but the technologies face challenges of user acceptability and upscaling. This session considered the links between livelihoods, small-scale productive activities, sanitation and wastewater reuse.

This session was organised by Stef Smits (IRC). He gave an overview on current MUS issues, based on the background note shared earlier with the participants. How can wastewater be included as source in planning for multiple uses was one of the issues he raised. Stef also emphasised that attention needs to be given to waste flows that may be generated by multiple use, and how these will be handled.

Ann Thomas (IDRC) showed that the health risks of using wastewater for agriculture need to be addressed before local governments buy into the benefits. She also stressed that increased research capacity is needed. IDRC has started four pilots in Ghana, Senegal and Jordan, and one of the challenges they already faced in the beginning stage of these projects was balancing health and economic gains. According to Ann there is economic gain even in cases where there is enough water, as crops grow better with wastewater than with groundwater.

Adriaan Mels (LeAF, Wageningen UR) then discussed how eco-sanitation relates to multiple uses of water. He told us about the SWITCH project, and provided a bit of history on the use of human excreta. Some examples and pictures were shown from Jordan, Beijing, Lima, Sweden and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands about 800-900 hectares of maize can be produced using only wastewater. Barriers for adoption are financial constraints, user aspects, and health and environmental risks (if not treated properly).

SESSION ON MUS IN IRRIGATION AREAS

Irrigation systems can have more impact on livelihoods when they also lead to improved access to water for domestic use, and small-scale productive activities in and around the household such as gardening and keeping livestock. This session considers the benefits and challenges of irrigation-plus approaches to MUS, especially water quality issues.

Irrigation-Plus was introduced by Barbara van Koppen (IWMI) in her presentation on health, wealth and gender issues. She touched upon various issues: irrigation for pro-poor growth, domestic uses, gender in participatory planning, national policies and farmer networks, and bottom-up testing and up scaling of multiple water uses from multiple sources.

This session was organised by Barbara van Koppen for the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

TUESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

SESSION ON MUS IN SOUTH ASIA

In 2005, the MUS group commissioned a case study on the productive uses of water in Bhuj, Gujarat, India with an urban focus, and the winner of the Case Study Award was from NEWAH in Nepal considering how promotion of kitchen gardening can be linked to rural water supply. This session discussed these two cases, and considered the potential for MUS in South Asia as well as the role of rainwater harvesting.

* *Kitchen gardening and rural water supply in Nepal* by Labahari Budhathoki (NEWAH). For a Q&A session on this case study.
* *Productive uses of water in Bhuj, Gujarat, India* by Joep Verhagen, IRC. In this presentation differences between urban and rural MUS were addressed. Urban livelihoods depend more on access to labour markets than to natural resources. Urban administration is much more complex. One of the issues that triggered discussion was that water comes at a cost: women in India reckon 1.5 euros a week are lost due to collecting water (6.2 hours a day). Entrepreneurs are spending 6 rupees a day fetching water.    
  From this session it was concluded that:
  + MUS needs to be expanded to urban areas
  + People are caught in a vicious circle: increase income with more access to water, but because they are poor they do not have access to water.
  + To tackle these issues with administrative complexities, you need multi stakeholder platforms
* *Rainwater harvesting, mus and livelihoods* by Kirsten Neke, Rainwater Harvesting Implementation Network (RAIN).   
  Kirsten Neke looked into how rainwater harvesting can contribute to a multiple use approach. Examples were given from Nepal, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. Financing mechanisms were an important aspect of her presentation. She argued that 200 mm of rain is needed to store drinking water which is not affordable at household level. It has to be subsidized.

This session was organised by Joep Verhagen for IRC.

MUS GROUP BUSINESS

The second part of the meeting focused on the business of the MUS group. Agenda items were:

* Evaluation of the Case Study Award 2006
* The possible development of regional groups or networks
* Supporting new initiatives to scale up implementation of MUS and further research
* Evaluation of the new website ([www.musgroup.net](http://www.musgroup.net)) and expanded group focus
* Governance of the group, and identification of a coordinating team
* Any other business