

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Water Quality Management  
Series**

**Managing the Water Quality  
Effects of Settlements: -**

**A GUIDE TO  
FACILITATING WORKSHOPS  
TO IDENTIFY THE WATER  
QUALITY PROBLEMS IN A  
SPECIFIC SETTLEMENT AS  
WELL AS THE UNDERLYING  
CAUSES OF SUCH PROBLEMS**



Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

**NOVEMBER 2001**

## **Water Quality Management Series**

### **MANAGING THE WATER QUALITY EFFECTS OF SETTLEMENTS:-**

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TO IDENTIFY THE WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS  
IN A SPECIFIC SETTLEMENT AS WELL AS THE  
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**Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**

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## DOCUMENT INDEX

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## PREFACE

Pollution from densely populated and poorly serviced settlements is perhaps one of South Africa's most *important*, but most *complex* water quality problems.

*Important*, because pollution in and from these settlements not only affects downstream users, but has its most significant impacts on the communities living in these settlements. Failing sanitation and waste removal systems create appalling living conditions in many settlements, and contribute to serious health problems in these communities. Pollution in and from these settlements is, therefore, not only a water quality issue, but has much wider implications for government's aims to provide a better life for all

*Complex*, because pollution in settlements is rooted in the socio-economic, political and institutional conditions in the settlement. The use, or misuse, of services together with the way in which the services are maintained by Local Authorities lies at the heart of the pollution problem in many settlements. This is further complicated by the legacy of South Africa's apartheid history. Solutions, therefore, lie in changing the way in which the services are supplied and used.

However, *sustainable* solutions to the problem lie not only in our ability to supply and use waste and sanitation services to best effect, but also in the longer-term capacity of local government to maintain these services. This is likely to be the biggest stumbling block to sustainable management of pollution from settlements. Local government in South Africa clearly has significant capacity problems, and misuse of services, for a variety of reasons, is endemic in many settlements across the country. More importantly, failing waste services contribute to poor living conditions, and hence to the misuse of the services. Non-payment for services also limits the capacity of the Local Authority to effectively maintain the services, which then leads to further failure of the services.

Strategies to manage pollution in settlements must take a broader view of both Local Authority capacity, and the socio-economic and political dynamics of the community in order to arrest this downward spiral. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, therefore, initiated a study of the links between pollution, community perceptions and local government capacity, to run in parallel with the Test Cases. A number of reports have been produced to support this study.

It is hoped that these reports provide compelling arguments to address this problem both by ensuring better planned and run services, but also by active intervention and assistance where there are clear and immediate threats to community health and the environment. This report forms part of this process.

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## SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO THIS GUIDE

The Guide to Problem Analysis provides comprehensive information about the process of identifying problems and their root causes through the development of Problem Trees as well as the method for developing Intervention and Monitoring Plans. It has been written in a manner aimed at providing information on how to structure the problem analysis process. Workshops form a critical but also cost-effective way of structuring broad-based participation in this process.

This Workshop Guide is not meant to serve as a comprehensive guide on facilitation processes and techniques. Neither does it serve as exhaustive guidelines on holding workshops. It has been prepared in order to sensitise persons who have not been extensively involved in arranging and/or facilitating workshops to a number of key issues related to the structured-facilitated approach, the role of the facilitator, the approach to be used during workshops as well as a number of practical “standard operating procedures” that are required in arranging a workshop.

## SECTION B: BACKGROUND TO THE FACILITATIVE APPROACH

### 1 Identifying problems via a Structured-Facilitated process

#### i) Introduction

While pollution problems in settlements are generically associated with the different waste streams, and with physical, institutional and socio-economic factors, each settlement is characterised by a unique set of problems. Interventions must be aimed at these settlement specific “root” causes of pollution in order for them to be successful. The approach to identifying interventions must, therefore, focus on the development of a settlement specific problem analysis in consultation with the affected community and the local authority (and/or service providers). This is done using a “structured-facilitated” process to develop site-specific problem analyses.

#### ii) The Structured-Facilitated process

Many previous attempts to manage pollution from densely populated settlements have failed in the longer term because they do not address all the factors contributing to the problem, or have missed the root causes of the problem. The “structured-facilitated” process aims to overcome this by formulating settlement specific problem trees within the “structure” provided by the four waste streams, and the physical, socio-economic and institutional issues. This process also aims to “facilitate” dialogue between DWAF, the community Local Authority, and service providers to jointly identify the problems and solutions.

The structured-facilitative approach is used as a tool for identifying problems in each of the waste streams and the underlying physical, social and institutional issues. This is done by investigating the pollution problem in increasing depth until consensus and agreement can be reached on the root cause(s) of the problem. Doing the investigation in this manner forms the crux of the “facilitated” part of the process, and involves encouraging stakeholders in a joint forum to identify problems that may not be immediately obvious. It is an iterative process whereby the service users and service providers have to identify problems in each waste stream.

### iii) The advantages of the process

The structured-facilitated process offers several advantages, which should be exploited to maximise the benefits of the process. These are that the process:

- Helps to ensure that all the stakeholders are involved in, and contribute to the identification of problems and solutions.
- Helps to ensure that all the problems contributing to pollution (including the underlying issues) are identified by encouraging stakeholders to address all the waste streams, and the physical, socio-economic and institutional causes of problems.
- Helps to build a common understanding of the constraints facing each of the stakeholders, and how co-operation could benefit all involved.
- Forms a clearly defined structure or pathway for identifying problems and causes. Newcomers to the process can be rapidly brought up to speed with past progress.
- Allows, through the more defined path, discussions to be focused on the important issues and is less easy to sidetrack. This can speed up the process.
- Helps to build an understanding of the processes that cause pollution, and hence contributes to capacity building.
- Is relatively easy to understand, and therefore allows the community to contribute meaningfully to the process.
- Promotes increased community – service provider relationships through joint identification of the problems and the development of greater understanding of the problems each stakeholder group may be facing.

## SECTION C: THE WORKSHOP APPROACH

### 1 Core Principles of a Workshop

Any realistic workshop process implies high levels of community interaction. The one purpose is to identify water quality related problems and the underlying causes in a settlement. At the same time, we need to involve those affected communities to become active in the process of finding and implementing solutions to those problems.

Any well run workshop, in particular a community based workshop, should adhere to the following base principles:

- ◆ It should focus on its objective
- ◆ It should not raise unnecessary expectations
- ◆ It should be open
- ◆ It should be as brief as possible
- ◆ It should be as simple as possible
- ◆ It should be accessible to local participants
- ◆ It should be unbiased
- ◆ It should provide information that is contextualised
- ◆ It should be plausible / truthful
- ◆ It should activate people.

## 2 Interactive Workshops

As indicated above, the workshop should ideally be of the interactive capacity building type. It is however no use to tell the participants that and hope that from that moment on all the ingredients of this participative and interactive workshop will just be present.

As facilitators we will soon realise that participants will still wait for us to set the ball rolling and to supply nearly all the issues and answers to the issues. If we are not careful we are going to produce while the participants play a very minor and token role. We must remember low levels of interaction are the easy option. It requires very little else than for participants to listen and to remember as much as they can. An interactive workshop, on the other hand requires participants to be extremely active, to be wide-awake and, worse of all, it places a lot of responsibility on the participants. They must all of a sudden change from spectators to participants and this is perhaps not that easy and even pleasant. It is therefore necessary to use methods or techniques that will ensure the attendees' full and active participation. An interactive process has the following benefits:

- ◆ Ensure that the participants are active
- ◆ Are more effective because it stimulates interactive learning – (Remember – both the facilitator and the participants learn from one another).
- ◆ Moves away from one-way communication
- ◆ Ensures that issues and proposed solution are relevant to the unique situation in that settlement.
- ◆ Mobilise local participants to become active in the problem identification, solving and solution implementation process.

## 3 Good Communication

### i) **Communication in the Workshop**

Communication in the workshop takes place between the facilitator and the participant group, but also between the facilitator and the individuals and also between individuals. The facilitator is not necessarily the origin or sender of a message. Communication messages are also sent from the participants to the facilitator. Facilitator and participants are therefore in turn sender and receiver of communication messages. Added to this is the fact that none of these communication parties will code their messages exactly the same. They will use different words for the same meanings and the same words for different meanings.

In addition, communication does not only take place in one direction, i.e. from the facilitator to the participant. This means that the receiver after receiving the message becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver and these roles change all the time and at the same time different messages may be transferred between the participants. Our final conclusion therefore is that communication is not a simple process, but is mixed up and often quite complex. This also goes for a workshop where the situation can be even more cluttered.

### ii) **Barriers to communication**

This complexity also means that within this situation there are barriers in the way of receiving the message, understanding it and accepting it. If any of these barriers proves to be insurmountable it will mean a break down of communication in the workshop. So, the barriers must be dealt with and they must be regarded as challenges that must be overcome or removed.

There are various reasons why barriers exist. Various situations put up barriers that make communication ineffective. Some of these are as follows:

- Different perceptions exist between communicating parties. Because each person is unique our perception of things is also unique. This is even more true of the workshop situation where perceptions of the facilitator and of the participants can differ vastly.
- Communication has to compete with a lot of "noise". This is not only physical noise so that one cannot hear communication properly. It is also other problems, for example psychological problems such as fear. A facilitator may fear the situation in the workshop where he/she may be very vulnerable and open. The facilitator may fear the situation if he/she is not very experienced and well prepared. There is also social noise such as prejudice that may be present in the workshop, not to mention political opportunism and superstition.
- Much of our communication has emotional content. We tend to react to the emotion and not to the contents of a message. We do not want communication to be void of emotion, that will be impossible and mechanical instead of human, but we should be careful of how much emotion we allow in our communication and how we react to emotion in someone else's communication.
- We find it hard to trust another person unconditionally. Distrust is really the poison for communication because in communication we do not only give a message, we also give something of ourselves. But if we do not trust we are not going to give of ourselves. In the workshop situation the participants may be distrustful of the facilitator, but mostly one would find distrust among participants especially if they represent a group working together.
- Apathy is not very helpful to communication. One can be apathetic towards the message and of course towards the sender of the message. This can so easily be the case in the workshop where participants are sometimes forced to attend courses or where they are so used to attending courses that they are not really committed.
- One is usually apprehensive about change. If a message such as the contents of a course contains a hint of pending change or emphasises the need for change, some participants may find it disturbing and would want to resist or challenge such a message.
- Culture determines the meaning of the world we live in. Our world view is part of our culture. If more than one culture is present in the same workshop situation, it is inevitable that there will be more than one world view. This will mean that there will be a difference in how participants define specific issues and the weight of these issues. This by itself will erect barriers in communication. Cultural differences exist quite often in the workshop, more so if we accept that culture is not only ethnic of nature, but can be influenced and informed by professional training and the like.

The facilitator's main task is to identify the barriers that do exist in the workshop and deal with them, hopefully by eradicating or removing them.

### **iii) Practical communication tips**

- On a psychological level, if the facilitator does not have a healthy self-image, he/she will not communicate well with the participants. The same goes for every individual participant. However, the self-image of a single participant will not have the effect on communication than that of the facilitator will have.
- Needless to say, facilitators should not feel threatened by the workshop situation. This also goes for each participant and it is to an extent the task of the facilitator to ensure that no participant will in fact feel threatened or marginalised. The less the facilitator or the participants will feel threatened, the easier it would be for them to trust others and to communicate. Without this trust very little productive communication can take place. Trust must and will create reciprocal trust and it is only when that mutual trust begins to exist that real communication can take place between people.
- The process of communication is boosted tremendously by feedback. If silence is the only feedback you get in reply to or as a result of your communication, the communication stops right there. Feedback takes place internally and externally. Internally you conform or correct your understanding of a message or your feeling about a message by external feedback such as asking questions and responding with feeling. Such feedback will come in the form of a message

to the other person who will again react internally through reacting externally. This process of reaction through feedback is typical of the workshop situation. If it is not present, something serious is wrong. Where you do not receive feedback, it does not mean you have agreement. It often means you are out of context with your participant.

- Be aware of the context of communication. The circumstances in the workshop are of immense importance: those present. Will it lead to solutions? Will people benefit? Will some benefit more than others? , Within this context most of the causes of the barriers will be found and the context will also provide the means with which to combat the barriers.
- Be honest. There is no better way to break down barriers between people than honesty. That applies also to the workshop.
- Be sincere. Sincerity always invites a positive reaction from the receiver of the message and such positive reaction makes it easier to overcome barriers that may exist.
- The facilitator can also look at a number of other important practical things that should be done to improve communication in the workshop. They are as follows:
- Be aware of the importance of perceptions and take special care in ensuring that perceptions are clear.
- Consider the participants' point of view and frame of reference. Actually, there can be a number of points of view and frames of reference and they are all important.
- Be sensitive to the trainee's background. It is one of the tricks of the trade" that a facilitator adapts to the background, culture and circumstances of the participants.
- Use direct, clear and simple language. The clearer and less abstract the message, the better it will be received and considered. Symbolic meanings of words must be carefully explained so that there is no confusion as a result of cultural or background differences.
- In education it is good to make use of frequent repetitions to make sure that the educational content sinks in.
- Be supportive in order to counteract defensiveness among the participants. Let the participants feel comfortable and make sure that your communication is objective and descriptive rather than subjective and prescriptive.
- Never use racist or sexist terminology. It can only have negative effects and can even start conflict. It shows your disdain for other people rather than your respect.
- Create a climate and atmosphere conducive to communication in the workshop. The best way to do this is to be friendly, honest and sincere. Also try to be as relaxed as possible.
- Make sure that your body language is corresponding with what you are saying. Inconsistency between verbal and non-verbal communication is picked up quite easily and of necessity invites a negative reaction from participants.
- Be wide-aware to the others' body language. Use the body language of the participants as a frame of reference for your participation in the communication process. In short, observe the participants' body language, interpret it and adapt accordingly.
- Avoid politics and religion because one can easily get trapped. But if these topics do crop up, don't give the impression that you are wary about discussing them.
- Be prepared to admit your own mistakes and to take responsibility for it. The sooner the participants realise that the facilitator is not infallible, the better. It will also set an example for the participants to be prepared to admit their mistakes and to also take responsibility for it. The old notion was that there must be some distance between facilitator and participants. Instead of distance there should rather be difference - there is still a facilitator and there are still participants. If you make yourself vulnerable it makes you more human and this solicits a positive reaction.
- Communicate with confidence. That of course is only possible if you are well prepared and sure of your facts. Then it is also necessary to accept responsibility for what message you are conveying.
- Keep your communication lean. In other words, give optimal information, not maximum. An information famine is as bad as an information overload. So, the appropriate information and the correct amount of information are very important.
- A facilitator should never feel threatened, therefore the facilitator must do his/her bit to make sure of this. Never put a facilitator on the spot, don't be overbearing, don't talk down to the participants, and don't make a joke at the expense of a trainee.

- Never gossip in class because gossip breaks down trust. If you can gossip once, you can do it again and next time it might be about one of the participants. And, talking of trust, be trustworthy and show your good intentions.
- Be a good listener. You must use everything that is said by the participants as the raw material for the production process. Also listen actively which means to listen so as to fully understand what someone is saying and to provide support for the speaker.
- Last but not least – Enjoy yourself. A workshop can just as well be fun. If you are enthusiastic and enjoy yourself, odds are so will the participants. Always make sure there is some humour in the facilitation process – do not however, try to force humour.

## SECTION D: UNDERSTANDING GROUP DYNAMICS

### 1 How to motivate participants

A number of factors will normally motivate the participants: Amongst these are the following:

#### i) **A sense of achievement.**

People participating in an activity would want to feel that they are achieving something. They must feel that there is movement forward. If they feel that their action results in movement, they will be satisfied and motivated to continue with their efforts.

#### ii) **A job worth doing well.**

People want to think that their efforts will lead to something better for them. The sacrifices that they make and the hard work they put in must be worthwhile to them. This is why it is important that the facilitator should not only be a tourist – go there once and never be seen again. The facilitator should keep the participants informed on progress as well as the way forward.

#### iii) **Being entrusted with responsibility.**

People with responsibility want to carry that responsibility to a successful conclusion. Having responsibility for something make them more than mere participants. They become owners of that for which they carry responsibility. This is one of the other core purposes of such an interactive workshop. Not only does it identify the core issues, it also develops a sense of joint responsibility towards solving those.

#### iv) **Being recognised for achievements.**

People naturally want to be recognised for what they achieve. It gives them a sense of worth and of dignity. There is no greater motivator than to feel that one's dignity has been enhanced.

v) **Being afforded the opportunity to advance.**

People are naturally progressive. They want to move forward from a situation with which they are dissatisfied or which they feel could be better to one that they are convinced will be better. When people get this scope or opportunity to advance they become motivated and thence make use of their opportunities.

## 2 Dissatisfiers

Unfortunately every situation also has its dissatisfiers. The goal is to remove all the dissatisfiers in order to ensure maximum motivation. These dissatisfiers that we must get rid of are as follows:

i) **Adverse policies.**

We include the policies of government on all levels; national, provincial and local as well as policies of an organisation or even a committee. These policies need not be very formal statements, but can be the way a certain organisation or committee sees its task and its goals. When people feel that any kind of policy of whatever organisation prevents them from achieving something, from taking up the responsibility for their own future, for making their efforts not worth the trouble, they will become demotivated.

ii) **Poor operational conditions.**

People are usually prepared to make sacrifices if they think or hope that it will help them in achieving certain goals. But there is a limit to their willingness to sacrifice. When the work necessary to achieve something is hard and the returns are few and far between, people become disheartened. Because people are naturally progressive they do not want to toil for no apparent progress. That demotivates them.

iii) **Poor guidance.**

When people are prepared to take the responsibility for certain things and want to work towards certain goals, but they do not receive the information that will enable them to fulfil their obligation, they become demotivated. Participation, empowerment, ownership, self-help are hollow notions if they are not accompanied by information, advice, guidance and support. In fact, the one without the other leads to immense frustration that demotivates people.

iv) **Lack of status.**

People do not want to be mere pawns in someone else's plans and efforts. At least they want to be co-responsible for decisions made and actions taken. This again has a lot to do with human dignity. Without acknowledgement of the people's important place and role there can be little motivation for them to put significant energy into the process.

v) **Deficient interpersonal relations.**

Good communication fosters good relations and they are responsible for motivating people. The cement for any concerted effort of a group of people to reach certain goals is good interpersonal relationships. Without it efforts become haphazard and individualised. It is even worse if you have in the place of the absent good relations deficient relationships. They act as powerful demotivators and result in activities grinding to a halt or becoming counter productive.

## SECTION E: FACILITATING THE PROCESS

### 1 Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator has various roles to fulfil. These roles must be played with extreme care, ensuring that the process allows participants to provide their own inputs. It cannot be used by the facilitator to impose his or her own thoughts and opinions on others.

i) **Guide**

The facilitator is a guide because his/her views and perspectives are often broader and longer term than those of a particular workshop at settlement level. The participants at a village workshop are often concerned with issues that are specific to that village, whilst the facilitator might be involved in similar issues for the whole region. Facilitators will often have good idea of what the consequences of any action might be (specifically in their skills area) and may be able to spot pitfalls and obstacles based upon previous experienced.

They can therefore guide the people through these possible pitfalls towards the group's objectives. But group facilitators can play their guide role wrongly. They do not know everything. They are therefore also part of the learning process. They do not guide cripple or blind people. They are at most co-travellers on the road of discovery. Their role as guide also does not make them group leaders. The group has its leaders and part of the facilitator's task is to also facilitate the leaders so that they can become better and more effective leaders. Therefore, the group may never become dependent on the facilitator and the facilitator may never lead from the front. The facilitator's role is much more a backroom one where other people lead and catch the light.

ii) **Advisor**

Facilitators are channels of information and therefore they can serve small groups with advice. This advice should be in the form of information on the possible choices a group can make and the probable consequences of each choice. Advice should never take the form of telling people what to do and what not to do. Advice should never take the responsibility for decision-making away from the group. That will disempower the group. Therefore this role of the facilitator is easily the most important because without the appropriate information empowerment is just hollow rhetoric.

iii) **Enabler**

Facilitators aim to enable the workshop participants to reach their objectives and to enhance their learning process while doing so. They are there to empower the participants so that they can tackle their problems

in a self-reliant way. They can do all this by creating a climate in which the participants will find it possible to operate; and by motivating the participants.

**iv) Protector of rights**

To an extent, a facilitator also functions as the protector of rights. The facilitator must ensure that everybody gets a fair chance to participate, that nobody interrupts somebody else, ensure good order and make sure that nobody is intimidated by anybody else. He has to ensure fair and balanced participation and make sure that one or two individuals do not monopolise a workshop.

## 2 Composition of the Facilitation Team

Normally, the facilitation team consists of a facilitator, an assistant and where necessary a translator. Ideally, the facilitator should be able to facilitate in the local language. Using an interpreter often complicates the workshop, runs the risk of selective or inaccurate translation and lengthens the workshop process significantly.

The facilitator should have some experience working at the local level and a good understanding of local structures and processes. In addition, the facilitator must have a good understanding of the workshop subject matter.

When arranging a workshop, always take care to liaise closely with the relevant existing community structures. This might range from local development structures, traditional authorities up to and including the local government structures.

# SECTION F: THE WORKSHOP PROCESS

## 1 Preparing for a Workshop

**i) Venue**

The venue has to be organised, arranged and confirmed to avoid confusion and last minute uncertainty. Three main factors have to be considered when choosing a venue for a meeting:

- The venue has to be central and easy to reach for everybody invited.
- The venue must be big enough to occupy everyone invited.
- The venue must have all the equipment and facilities needed for that specific workshop. This could mean for example that either a chalkboard and chalk or flip chart and pens should be available, electricity should be available if an overhead projector will be used and there must be enough chairs for everybody to sit.

## ii) Invitations

- **Distributing Invitations**

First, an invite to the workshop should be drawn up. This must be sent out well in advance to give everyone enough time to arrange his or her priorities. The notice can be distributed in various ways. It can be

- ✓ posted to the relevant people;
- ✓ faxed or-mailed to the proposed participants (where relevant)
- ✓ distributed by hand as notice or pamphlets through the community;
- ✓ published in a community newsletter;
- ✓ put up on notice boards in the community;
- ✓ advertised in the local press.

- **Information on the Invitation**

The following information must be on an invitation to a workshop

- ✓ Who is invited to attend?
- ✓ What organization or committee is calling the workshop?
- ✓ The postal or physical address and telephone number of the organisation calling the workshop. This is so that those members who cannot attend can send formal apologies if necessary, or so that people can get more information.
- ✓ The date the invitation is sent out as well as the date of the workshop.
- ✓ The time of the workshop.
- ✓ The venue where the workshop will take place, and a small map if needed.
- ✓ The programme for the workshop.

An invitation must be prepared well in advance of the workshop so that people have the time to make suitable arrangements and prepare himself or herself. In addition, a reminder should be circulated two or three days before the workshop.

## iii) Preparation by the facilitator

The facilitator must prepare him or herself well. In this regard he/she must ensure the following:

- Understand and know the subject matter of the workshop. The facilitator must have a good understanding of pollution issues and related factors. She/he must be able to guide the participants and provide them with accurate and relevant information.
- The facilitator must prepare her/his workshop materials. If he/she is to use audio-visual material, this must be prepared in advance. She/he must prepare copies of the workshop programme. This must indicate the working hours, tea/coffee times, lunch etc. The facilitator must prepare a registration sheet and all information he/she intends handing out. This could be reports from previous workshops, information sheets on policy, specific issues, etc.
- The facilitator must ensure that all equipment is in working order. Ideally, the facilitator would need at least two flipcharts, an overhead projector, enough flipchart paper, enough pens as well as writing paper and pens/pencils for the participants. If electrical equipment is to be used, check whether the local venue has electricity.
- Where possible, the facilitator should prepare nametags for all the participants (this will also help him/her to identify with the participants on a more personal level. People respond better to names than to descriptions (i.e. rather "Peter" than "the gentleman with the green shirt at the back").

## 2 Components of a Workshop

Normally a workshop would have the following components:

1. Opening and welcome
2. Introduction
3. Background information/presentation
4. Issue identification
5. Prioritizing issues
6. Understanding issues
7. Developing possible solutions to issues
8. Summary of key findings
9. Way ahead
10. Closure