

## Solving sanitation from all sides.



Markets  
for WASH

### Bringing the public, private, and development sectors together to address Bangladesh's sanitation challenges.

**BACKGROUND** In Bangladesh's rural areas, nearly 38 percent of households live without access to an improved latrine, and nationwide 63 million people use unhygienic or shared facilities. Given how many households are affected, iDE Bangladesh believes the problem is best addressed by developing connections and creating consensus so that the resources and expertise of all stakeholders—public, private, and development—can be leveraged together to come up with creative solutions.

There is a long history of cooperation between government, development actors, and the private sector in Bangladesh. These partnerships bring together diverse groups to work towards a common goal of improved social welfare, addressing issues ranging from infrastructure projects to household-level water provision.

As part of its research under the SanMark Systems project (SanMarkS), iDE identified additional, different forms of public-private-NGO sector collaboration that had been led by previously engaged development organizations. The project, which began in November 2015, is jointly funded by SDC and UNICEF. SanMarkS is building on these foundations to institutionalize the practice of Sanitation Marketing.

## Public-Private Development Platforms

Through the development of **public-private development platforms (PPDPs)**, SanMarkS aims to establish sanitation industry standards and to facilitate smart subsidy provision and coordinated sanitation promotion activities through collaboration with NGOs and the public sector.

After engaging sector stakeholders separately to understand their specific roles, strengths, and constraints, iDE brings these partners together to raise awareness of each other's work and seek consensus on key issues. The SanMarkS team facilitates quarterly cross-sectoral meetings, district-level working groups, and biannual NGO collaboration meetings.



Photo: Jess MacArthur / iDE / 2016

**I was afraid that the households in my community would not be able to afford high quality latrines without loans, but after learning about the clear advantages, I decided to spur adoption by using Union funds to purchase and distribute 450 improved latrine pans to the ultra-poor in my district through an iDE-trained latrine provider.**

**Azad Rejaul Karim**  
Chairman, Nawpara Union Parishad



Photo: Imran Nizami / iDE / 2016

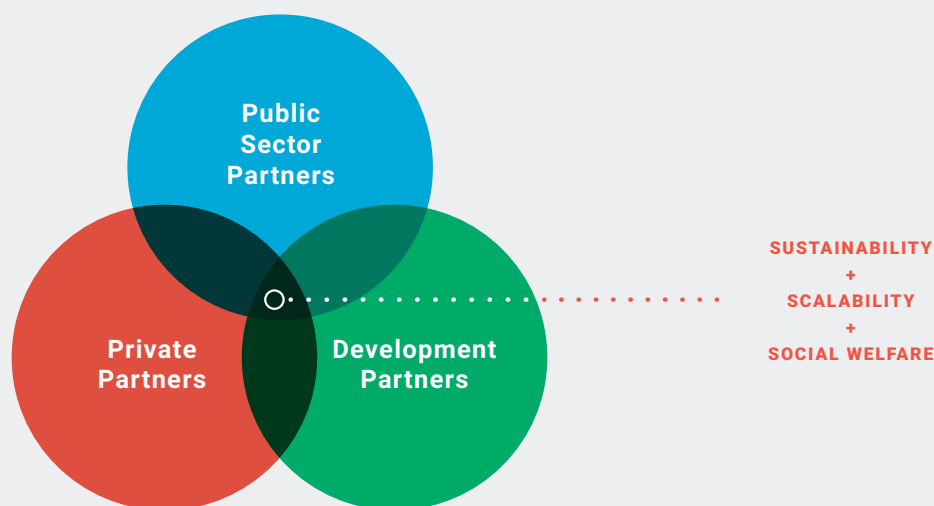
iDE recently hosted a national Sanitation Marketing Conference that brought together representatives from the Bangladesh Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE), UNICEF, and the World Bank; NGOs such as ASA, Sajida Foundation, and BRAC; and private companies like RFL Plastics to discuss how to apply market-based approaches to sanitation in Bangladesh.

<sup>1</sup> SanMarkS, funded by UNICEF and SDC, is being implemented from November 2015 to August 2019 in six districts across Bangladesh.

## Why are PPDPs effective?

PPDPs balance sustainability, social welfare, and scalability. The Government of Bangladesh is invested in finding a sustainable solution to bring improved latrine coverage to all households. At the same time, development organizations view sanitation as a key opportunity to promote social welfare and improve the health of Bangladeshi families. Private sector actors see market opportunities if improved products and sanitation business models can reach wide scale. PPDPs bring all three sectors together to identify solutions that will meet all of these needs.

### Leveraging each other's strengths for a common purpose



iDE Bangladesh engages the public, development, and private sector to increase demand for improved sanitation and enable local entrepreneurs to produce and sell hygienic products.

#### PPDPs draw on the strengths of all participants.

PPDPs leverage the resources of each sector for a common purpose. For example, the private sector can provide knowledge of the local environment and business practices to help development organizations create feasible latrine design recommendations, which can in turn be vetted and enforced through government standards.

**Learning from the past.** *PPDPs must be aware of inherent weaknesses of their members. For example, the public-private collaborations of the 1980s and 90s brought drinking water to 97 percent of the population; however, in the haste to increase access, implementers were slow to recognize an emerging crisis of arsenic in many wells. Under SanMarks, iDE Bangladesh draws on iDE's global experience in sanitation and Human-Centered Design to ensure*

*partners focus on technologies that are environmentally appropriate, meet national and international latrine standards, and aim to move households up the sanitation ladder.*

#### They can increase learning and collaboration among all stakeholders.

By bringing public, private, and development representatives together to discuss sanitation challenges and approaches, iDE hopes to facilitate the exchange of good ideas and best practices. The belief that PPDPs are unsustainable unless someone is willing to bring all the stakeholders together and drive collaboration is contrary to our experience. While it is true that formal collaboration may decrease without an outside organizing force, iDE has seen that the initial efforts to get different actors to work together still leads to increased informal collaboration later on.

**A history of long-term relationships.** *The government, development agencies, and private businesses created formal partnerships to install handpumps throughout the 1990s, and these stakeholders still collaborate informally today even though formal agreements have long since ended. Beginning with the 2012 SanMark Pilot in the district of Rajshahi, iDE has created local-level linkages and networks to facilitate continued collaboration between the local government, civil society, and latrine producers selling improved products. While there is still work to be done to tighten this process, the relationships between latrine producers and Union Parishad officials have remained after the formal project facilitation ended.*

Today, iDE hosts quarterly PPDP meetings in each of the six SanMarkS districts to spur collaboration and build cross-sectoral relationships.

## Projected Outcomes of the PPDP Approach

### Developing national technology standards.

The Government of Bangladesh defines improved latrines using three criteria: 1) confining of feces, 2) separating the pit from insects, and 3) venting gasses. However, there are no national standards on how to design latrines to meet these criteria, nor are there standards of quality for components. While some NGOs have informal guidelines for designing improved sanitation products, many latrine producers are unaware of these recommendations and instead manufacture unhygienic latrines based on a limited understanding of the technical aspects of sanitation. By convening PPDPs with key players

— latrine producers with on-the-ground knowledge of environmental conditions, NGOs and technical experts with design experience, and government agencies with the power to define and enforce standards — iDE will support the development of standards that are rigorous, realistic, and enforceable.

### Strengthening environmental and disaster resilience.

The DPHE is tasked with overseeing sanitation, however, its reach is limited. It lacks clear authority to define where toilets should be installed to prevent environmental and groundwater contamination or how to safely empty a latrine pit. Likewise, there is a lack of information on how existing toilet technologies are impacted by cyclones, floods, and other natural disasters. As a result, latrine producers do not manufacture toilets designed to withstand disasters, leaving households with latrines that are ill-suited to the soil structure and weather patterns in their area. SanMarkS is coordinating with national private sector firms to develop and commercialize disaster-proof latrines and also working with DPHE to expand their guidance to include latrine technology, components, installation, and maintenance.

**Promoting better products and services.** While many households in Bangladesh have a basic latrine, it is unhygienic and poor quality. Customers have little knowledge of improved sanitation and there are few products on the market that are improved, affordable, and desirable. Under SanMarkS, iDE is engaging PPDP members to think about sanitation in a new way, by considering technologies that meet “7As”.

### 7As selection framework for technologies and components

Adequate	Acceptable	Accessible	Available	Awareness	Affordable	Appropriate
Meets international and national latrine standards	Easily scalable through repeatability and quality control, independent from installation	Culturally and socially appropriate	Quality products available at the consumer level	Quality known and understood by all stakeholders	Affordable to the identified consumer groups	Appropriate to the identified geographic contexts

Photo: Nayaran Biswas / iDE / 2016



Apart from earning money through my sanitation business, I want to contribute to increasing hygienic sanitation practices in my society for a safer life.

Md. Shohidul Islam  
Latrine Producer  
Khulna District

## Guidelines for engaging the private sector

**Focus on shared value.** Government and development partners may hesitate to engage the private sector because of a perception that businesses are solely focused on profit. However, many entrepreneurs see sanitation as an opportunity to both grow their business and also help improve life for families in their local community. In iDE's experience, these businesses are able to quickly manufacture high-quality, improved products once they understand latrine designs and specifications.

After receiving training on how to produce and install improved latrines, entrepreneurs are also encouraging their customers to invest in longer-lasting, improved toilets instead of less durable, unhygienic options. By engaging the private sector, it is possible for government and development partners to more quickly reach their goals of social impact. PPDPs help to match the challenge of one group with the strength of another to find shared value for all participants.

**Support the development of sanitation supply and demand.** iDE Bangladesh takes a market-based approach to increase demand for improved sanitation products and services as well as build the capacity of market actors to supply these products. However, PPDPs can increase the impact of this approach by bringing stakeholders together to discuss issues such as when and how to subsidize latrines, how to coordinate sanitation promotion efforts across different organizations, and what support businesses need to succeed as suppliers of improved sanitation. Coordination at the national level (Bangladesh DPHE) and local levels (Upazila DPHE and Union Parishads) ensures relevant stakeholders are engaged at every level of the supply chain.

**Speak the language of business.** Government representatives, development organizations, and the private sector all have different understandings of the factors contributing to low rates of improved sanitation in Bangladesh. Each sector uses their own terminology to talk about the issue, making it harder to reach common ground: for example, the difference between a beneficiary, a household, and

a customer can seem vast. To help PPDP partners understand each other, iDE acts as a translator between the different sectors, using business language to help the private sector feel comfortable and to get development actors and government thinking about the private sector as a method to achieve sustainability.

### A shared vocabulary rooted in business language



A visit to RFL's factory helped PPDP members better understand the business side of sanitation provision.



Photo: Imran Nizami / iDE / 2016

## Thought Starters

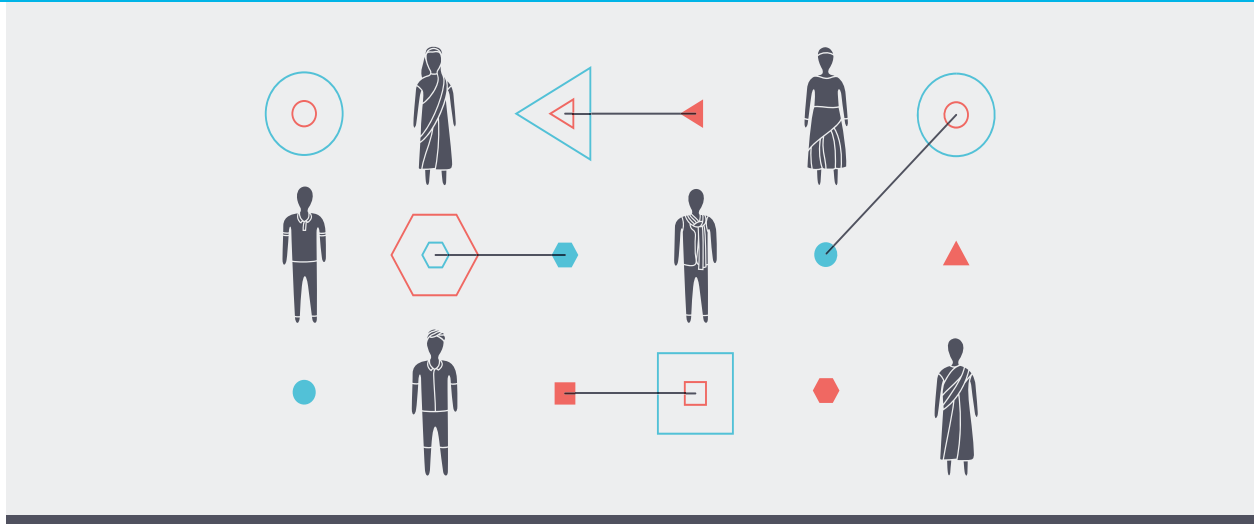
**COORDINATING AMONG IMPLEMENTERS.** Many organizations are implementing a market-based approach to sanitation in Bangladesh. How can we ensure organizations are effectively coordinating and working on complementary activities?

**GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE TABLE.** When it comes to bringing the private, public, and development sector together to agree on sanitation standards and good practices to address Bangladesh's sanitation problems, it can be hard to get decision makers in the room together. How can we better engage those with both expertise and the power to make decisions?

**ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN DECISION-MAKING.** In many cases, projects provide financial incentives to the private sector to engage with NGOs. The WASH programming in Bangladesh does not provide money directly to entrepreneurs and businesses, which can make it more difficult to interest them in participating in networks and decision-making meetings. How can we incentivize private sector partners to come to the table ready to make decisions, without providing them funds for participating?

## Expected Results

The SanMarkS project is on track to reach 450,000 people with affordable improved sanitation solutions by training 500 local latrine producers to manufacture and sell hygienic products and linking these producers with the wider supply chain. The project also seeks to influence public and civil society WASH actors to promote, procure, and subsidise improved sanitation services for the poor and disadvantaged through PPDPs at the national and local levels. Under this project, PPDPs will develop guidance around Sanitation Marketing, including standards related to technical production, smart subsidy selection (targeting poor and ultra-poor households), latrine maintenance and installation, hygienic behaviors, effective messaging, inclusion, and disaster resilience.



**Human-Centered Design** — Through this process, a research team engages with end users to discover their dreams, behaviors, opportunities, and constraints around a specific problem. These insights are used to design a solution that is feasible, viable, and desirable.

**Sanitation Marketing** — Sanitation Marketing is an emerging field that applies social and commercial marketing approaches to scale up the supply and demand for improved sanitation facilities.

**Union Parishad** — Union Parishads are the smallest local government division in rural Bangladesh. They are responsible for local governance and administration, public welfare, and economic and social development.

**Upazila** — Upazilas (sub-districts) are the division of regional government in Bangladesh directly above Unions.


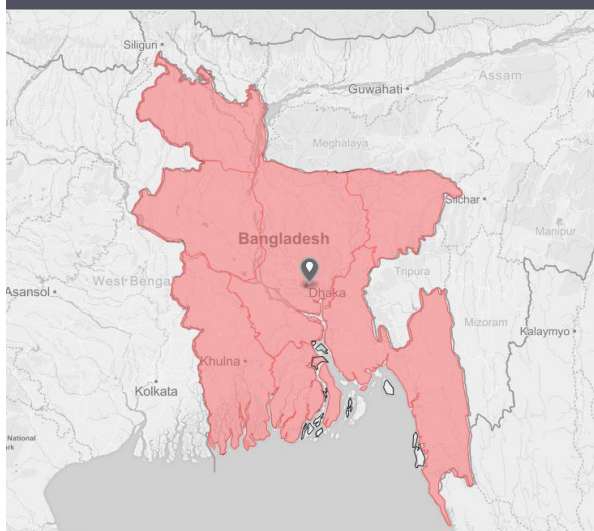
 **Read about iDE Bangladesh's work engaging private sector actors to address the sanitation gap for rural customers:** <https://www.ideglobal.org/bangladesh>



Photo: Jess MacArthur / iDE / 2016



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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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