

ideas to impact.



**SANITATION
CHALLENGE
FOR GHANA**

Rewarding Excellence in Urban Liquid Waste Management



THE SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA: MAKING URBAN SANITATION A POLITICAL PRIORITY

FINAL EVALUATION SUMMARY

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ABOUT IDEAS TO IMPACT

Ideas to Impact is an action-research programme funded by UK Aid delivered by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Ideas to Impact designs and runs innovation prizes to incentivise contestants to find solutions to challenges faced by the poor in low-income countries. These include access to clean energy, water and sanitation, transport and climate change adaptation, in Africa and South Asia.

The programme tests the value of prizes as a non-traditional mechanism to spur behaviour change and socioeconomic development. It has been delivered by an IMC Worldwide-led consortium and evaluated by Itad.

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Cover photo: Dr Bastian Schnabel

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The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not necessarily represent those of IMC or of any of the individuals and organisations referred to in the report.

THE SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA: MAKING URBAN SANITATION A POLITICAL PRIORITY

The Sanitation Challenge for Ghana (SC4G) aimed to stimulate local government to develop and implement innovative approaches to urban sanitation, thus delivering tangible improvements across the urban areas served. SC4G was a partnership between the Government of Ghana and Ideas to Impact (I2I), a Department for International Development (DFID)-funded programme that is testing the value of using innovation inducement prizes to achieve international development outcomes.

An innovation inducement prize offers a reward to one or more solvers who first or most effectively solves or meets a predefined challenge and is awarded based on predefined criteria, unlike recognition prizes, which reward past achievement.

As the programme's evaluators, Itad is supporting I2I to understand if such prizes work as intended in development, and when and where they could be useful as a funding mechanism for international development, compared to other forms of funding, such as grants.

This summary describes what I2I learned about the value of using prizes to influence the policy environment for liquid waste management (LWM) in urban settings. If you want to know more about the Prize and specific details of the evaluation, please see the full evaluation report, which is available on the I2I website.

THE SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA

The Prize was launched as a two-stage innovation inducement prize. In Stage 1 (known as the Duapa Award), Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were encouraged to submit LWM strategies for the whole urban area served, including the poorest segments. Of the 139 MMDAs targeted, 48 submitted eligible LWM strategies and 21 MMDAs were recognised, either through monetary prizes totalling £75,000 or by being awarded honorary prizes.

The 21 MMDAs that won a prize under Stage 1 were invited to participate in Stage 2 – the implementation stage, known as the Dignified City Award. But only 17 MMDAs were eligible to continue in the competition after proving their political and financial commitment to participating and to providing improved sanitation service for the urban poor.

During Stage 2, a complementary separate 'sister' prize was launched, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The Private Sector and Non-State Actor (PS-NSA) sister prize aimed to stimulate private sector and non-state actors to partner with the MMDAs participating in Stage 2 and support the implementation of their LWM strategies by bringing innovations, expertise and investment.

This evaluation focuses on Stage 2 of SC4G, the Dignified City Award, up to the point of prize award and investigates the extent to which the Prize drove MMDAs to make progress in implementing LWM strategies through innovative approaches, and improve LWM in urban settings, particularly for the poor.

THE CHALLENGE: GETTING GHANAIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO FOCUS ON URBAN SANITATION

Although Ghana was selected as the location for the Prize, the problem that SC4G sought to address is common to many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Local government authorities in rapidly expanding urban areas in the developing world are finding it more and more difficult to expand sanitation services to keep up with urban growth.

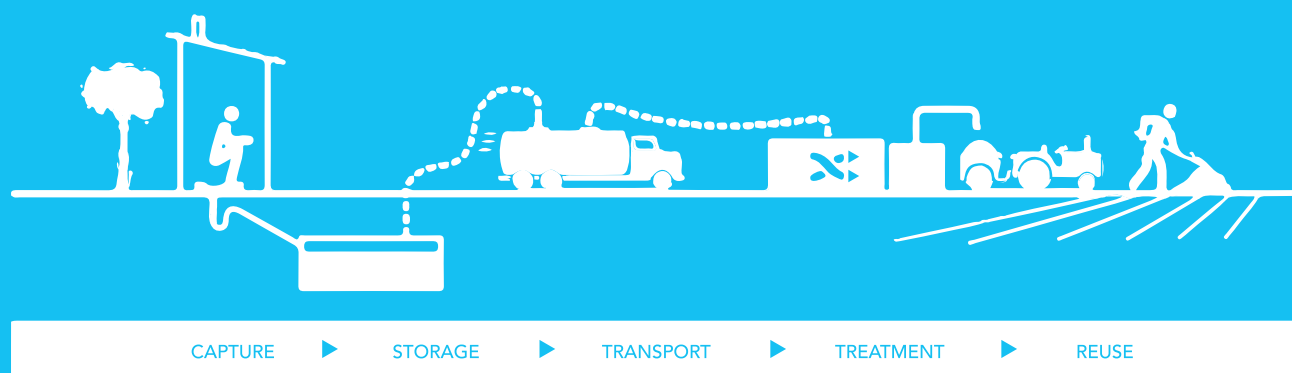
I2I's research prior to designing SC4G uncovered several other issues that hold back progress in LWM:

- Sanitation services are developed in a piecemeal manner, with little foresight and coordination.
- Facilities are often built by households themselves, meaning the power of local government authorities to intervene is low.
- The majority of sanitation services in sub-Saharan Africa are not sewer-based and so sustainable on site sanitation service management is more important. Authorities tend to see this as a low priority in terms of both funding and technical assistance.
- Peri-urban areas in both large and smaller municipalities are served with unimproved on-site sanitation facilities, which are not emptied as frequently as needed. Where waste water and faecal sludge is collected from on-site solutions, treatment is almost non-existent. Open defecation is not uncommon and public toilets are in disrepair.
- This results in limited access to sustainable sanitation, with a large proportion of 'shit flows' being discharged indiscriminately into the surrounding environment, which in turn results in disease and environmental degradation.

When I2I was researching how a prize could be used to solve challenges in water, sanitation and hygiene, the Prize Team found that urban sanitation coverage in Ghana was low, with 80 per cent of the urban population using unimproved facilities and 6.6 per cent practicing open defecation¹.

I2I designed SC4G to incentivise local governments (MMDAs) to prioritise the delivery of improved urban sanitation programmes. Specifically, SC4G encouraged the MMDAs to take an integrated approach to sanitation services, covering the entire sanitation value chain, defined by the Prize as: capture, storage, transport, treatment and reuse (see below).

Sanitation Value Chain



¹Trémolet, S., 2015. Can innovation prizes help address water and sanitation challenges? Ideas to Impact, UK

DID SC4G MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN GHANA?

SC4G set out to incentivise local government to prioritise the improvement of sanitation service delivery in urban areas for the benefit of the poor, and so alter the policy environment for urban sanitation. The theory underpinning the design of SC4G was that for MMDAs to successfully deliver on their LWM strategies, they would need to be committed to implementing their strategies, i.e. suitably motivated, and have the capacity to do so (where capacity includes institutional, financial and staff capacity).

We found evidence of the Prize stimulating leadership commitment in local government authorities to participate in Stage 2 and implement the LWM strategies they had developed under Stage 1 of the Prize. This increase in will, however, was hampered to some extent by a general lack of technical capacity within MMDAs to implement and report on their LWM strategies and, depending on the size/status of the MMDA, differing levels of staff capacity for LWM.

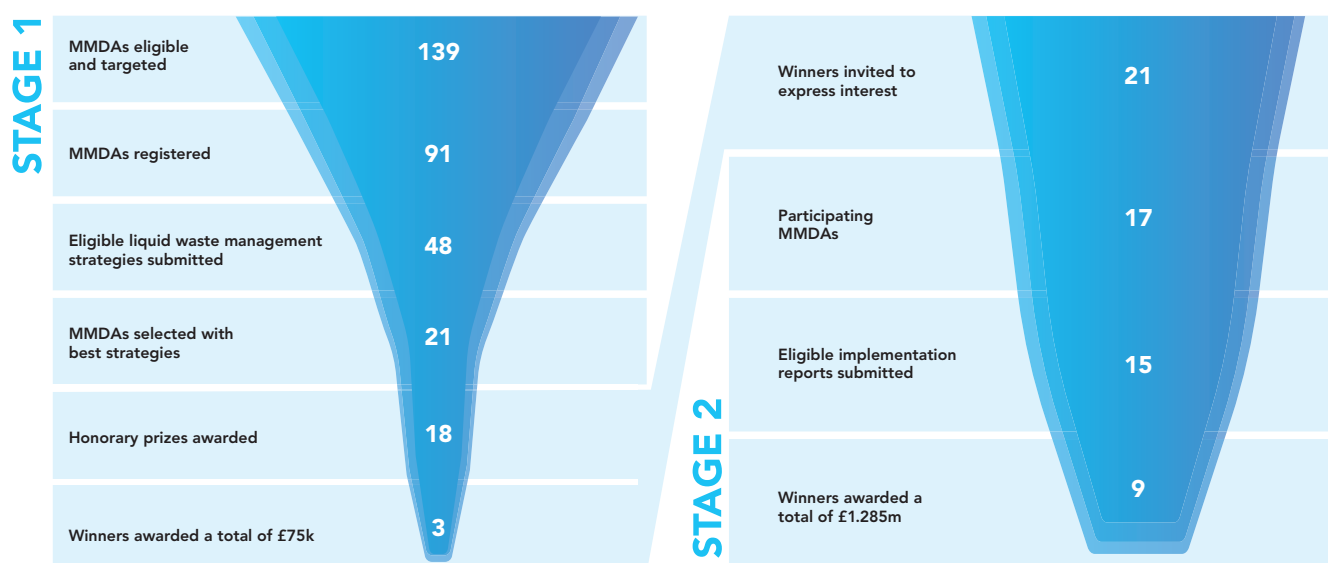
Those MMDAs that were able to, supplemented their capacity (staff, institutional and financial) with support from external private sector and non-state actor partners. The combination of SC4G and its sister prize stimulated MMDAs to partner with private sector and non-state actors to implement their LWM strategies.

Key results of SC4G include:

- 17 local government authorities in Ghana implemented their LWM strategies during Stage 2 of the Prize, without any funding from the Prize Team to support their participation.
- The 15 finalists demonstrated a positive change in their sanitation planning, policy, resource allocation and/or attitudes towards LWM, and made good progress in their LWM strategy implementation.
- SC4G had an effect on local funding and legislation for LWM. There is some evidence, for example, that SC4G stimulated and enabled MMDAs to allocate (and in some cases, release) more budget to sanitation/LWM and to revise and enforce by-laws relating to sanitation.

There are indications that the Prize resulted in a small number of unintended consequences, both positive and negative. The Prize stimulated MMDAs to engage in improved ways of working, with a range of other MMDA-specific benefits seen. However, in the context of competing demands for resources, MMDAs also reallocated funds from other areas of work in order to fund their LWM efforts under the Prize. There also exists the potential for environmental harm from the activities of a small subset of MMDAs; however, there is insufficient evidence to fully ascertain the scale or impact of this issue.

SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA: WHAT HAPPENED



THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME?

The changing sanitation landscape in Ghana, and the alignment between these changes and the Prize's aims, also served to support and further the results seen under the Prize. For example, towards the beginning of Stage 2 a dedicated ministry for sanitation was established under the new government. Another enabling factor for MMDAs was the inclusion of LWM in central government guidance for medium-term development plans and budgets. This latter change was influenced in part by Stage 1 of the Prize, when the government commitment was originally made, demonstrating the potential for multi-stage prizes to encourage an enabling environment.

Other facilitating factors include changes happening in the broader sanitation landscape during the lifetime of the Prize, including an increased focus on urban sanitation, increased involvement of the private sector in sanitation service delivery and the emergence of innovative ways to manage liquid waste. These changes are largely thought to be due to the influence of both funders and implementers of sanitation projects in Ghana.

THE WINNERS

Award (GBP)	Winners	Reason for award
Metropolitan and Municipal Assembly category		
First prize 400,000	Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly	Leadership from the Mayor down to the environmental health officer, innovative partnership with private sector partner Aquaculture, and commitment to the whole sanitation value chain.
Second prize 225,000	Effutu Municipal Assembly	Innovative partnership with the private sector and governmental institutions, including the local prison service, which is using biogas for cooking.
Third prize 125,000	Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly	Innovative partnership with non-state actors supporting public engagement and a highly committed Assembly.
District Assembly category		
First prize 285,000	Nanumba North District Assembly	Leadership from local tribes and innovative partnerships with local youth group to support community engagement.
Second prize 150,000	Kwahu East District Assembly	Innovative commitment to the complete sanitation value chain and strong leadership from the Chief Executive as the presiding member in the implementation of the liquid waste management strategies.
Special prizes		
25,000	Prestea Huni Valley Municipal Assembly	Community engagement
25,000	Offinso North District Assembly	Financial commitment
25,000	Savelugu Municipal Assembly	Disability inclusion
25,000	Kassena Nankana Municipal Assembly	Leadership commitment

THE ADDED VALUE OF USING AN INNOVATION PRIZE

One of the benefits that innovation prizes can offer is that of incentivising many minds or organisations to work towards the prize sponsor's aims. This 'prize effect' is known within I2I as "maximising participation towards the sponsor's aims". We saw this come through strongly in SC4G where the contribution to development did not come just from the efforts of the winners. The majority of the 15 finalist MMDAs made good progress in their strategy implementation, had a particular focus on improving sanitation service delivery for the poor and engaged with local communities.

We also found evidence that the Prize raised awareness of LWM among prize participants, with both MMDA and central government ministry representatives indicating that the Prize was a 'wake-up call' to liquid waste.

Also, together with the sister prize, SC4G facilitated and strengthened partnerships and networks; a total of 31 private partnerships and agreements are known to have been entered into by 16 of the 17 participating MMDAs.

I2I defines innovations as new processes, technologies and services, or a blend of all three, and includes those that are new to the world (novel), new to the location or firm (imitative) or new to the field of endeavour or repurposed (adaptive). The evaluation finds that most of the 15 finalist MMDAs showed imitative innovation when implementing their strategies, i.e. what they were doing was new to them.

SUMMARY OF IDEAS TO IMPACT PRIZE EFFECTS ACHIEVED

RAISE AWARENESS Bring awareness and knowledge of an issue to people's attention. 	PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE Identify best practice in a certain field and encourage adoption. 	FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS Raise visibility and bring together people working towards a common goal. 
OPEN INNOVATION Enable new solvers to enter the field of endeavour. 	COMMUNITY ACTION Incentivise communities to take action towards a problem and solution. 	POINT SOLUTION Find a solution to a highly specified problem. 
MAXIMISE PARTICIPATION TOWARDS SPONSOR'S AIMS Benefits are provided by all effective participants, not only winners. 	MARKET STIMULATION Increase or start new economic activity for a particular good or service. 	ALTER THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT Influence policy change in reaction to the other prize effects. 

Intended effect, evidence found

Intended effect, limited evidence found

Unintended effect, no evidence found

WAS SC4G BETTER THAN USING A GRANT-BASED PROGRAMME?

Demonstrating where prizes can help solve development problems is only half of the story for I2I. When a funder is choosing from the funding modalities available to them, they will need to know if and how prizes offer advantages over a grant or payment-by-results contract, for example.

To investigate value for money (VFM), we first did an 'internal' assessment, measuring the VFM of SC4G against the original expectations for the Prize. We then did an 'external' assessment, comparing Stage 2 with the Ghana component of the USAID-funded Sanitation Service Delivery (SSD) programme, implemented by Population Services International (PSI), PATH and Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP).

SC4G achieved good VFM overall compared to the Prize Team's expectations

The Prize met almost all its expectations in relation to economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. For example, the Prize was implemented significantly below budget, the majority of the prize process ran to time, and the LWM activities that MMDAs implemented met expectations in their focus on the poor and vulnerable and in their engagement with community members from poor neighbourhoods. However, the Prize achieved significantly less than the expected level of new investment in LWM, and prize participants' engagement with vulnerable groups was moderately below expectations.

The Prize's comparative value over the grant-based project came from its broader reach

The assessment supported us to identify the relative merits of each funding modality and implementation model rather than providing a specific calculation of their absolute VFM. SC4G's comparative value over the grant-based technical assistance project was in the number of self-selected and self-funded participants it attracted and retained. The Prize's broader reach made it moderately more efficient than SSD in increasing government commitment to improve sanitation service delivery. This strength in numbers of participants, and the combined activity they undertook, also contributed to SC4G being moderately more cost-effective than SSD.

The grant-based project's strengths came from its tailored approach and focus on monitoring

While SC4G did not seek to directly build MMDA capacity, the prize process overall sought to facilitate this. By contrast, capacity building was central to the more traditional comparator project, which provided ongoing and tailored technical assistance to a broad range of stakeholders across the sanitation supply chain, thereby achieving greater efficiency than the Prize in this respect. In addition, the comparator project monitored interventions on the ground more closely to help prevent negative environmental impacts and was moderately better able to demonstrate results in relation to equity, largely due to being able to say how many and who they reached.

DID THE PRIZE TEAM PROVIDE ENOUGH SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS?

A distinguishing factor between different innovation inducement prizes is the level and type of support provided to prize participants. This could take the form of seed funding, capacity building or covering expenses for attendance at workshops and other events.

A relatively limited level of solver support was provided to participating MMDAs under SC4G, and yet extremely positive results were seen in both the number of MMDAs remaining within the prize process, and the level of progress made against their LWM strategies. The support that was provided served to leverage central government's involvement in the Prize as a mechanism to maintain MMDA participation and commitment. It also facilitated peer learning across MMDAs in place of direct technical capacity support.

The main form of solver support provided was the convening of all 17 participating MMDAs and some of their partners along with ministry representatives at two Learning and Practice (L&P) workshops, which took place one year and two years respectively into the prize process. Senior figures from the Office of Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS) and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) featured prominently in the programmes of both workshops, thereby contributing to keeping MMDAs committed

to continue participating in the Prize. In addition, support was made available to prize participants via a telephone- and email-based helpdesk, web-based information and mobile phone-based information communications. It is unknown to what extent these forms of support were utilised by MMDAs.

MMDAs implemented their strategies in the context of limited financial capacity, organisational-level change and high staff turnover. The evaluation found that despite the barriers experienced, participants were often resourceful in overcoming these. For example, five MMDAs cited issues in working with communities, including resistance to behaviour change/sensitisation, lack of household capacity and commitment, and lack of community buy-in. MMDAs overcame this issue by showing proof of concept, undertaking further sensitisation and making costs more affordable for households.

WHAT NEXT FOR URBAN SANITATION IN GHANA?

This evaluation took place immediately after the prizes were awarded under Stage 2 of SC4G. While we can report on changes in the policy environment up to that point, we can only look at the likelihood of the progress being sustained. Our conclusion is that the majority of MMDAs that participated in the Prize are likely to continue implementing LWM activities in the short-to-medium term, though at a reduced scale to what was done under the Prize, depending on each MMDAs' level of leadership commitment and resource availability (both internally and through external partnerships) in the absence of a prize process. Sustained activity is more likely by those MMDAs that won the main prizes under SC4G, in the context of the financial constraints faced by most MMDAs during the Prize.

Longer-term sustainability of LWM activity (beyond 2021) by MMDAs is less certain. This depends on LWM being included in the next set of medium-term development plans and budgets, which in turn depends on a continued focus on sanitation and LWM at both national government and MMDA leadership levels. There is limited evidence that the majority of participating MMDAs will continue their LWM efforts in the longer term, without further interventions to push them and keep them on course.

Initial indications are that national government commitment to LWM will continue, as this reflects the broader new direction in sanitation service delivery in Ghana; however, the speed of implementation is uncertain, given the limited funding for sanitation. Though this features within the 'Ghana beyond aid' charter and strategy, which transcends any changes in government, the effect of the upcoming leadership election in December 2020 on government priorities and MMDA leadership presents a threat to the commitment established under the Prize.

For the positive changes seen in the policy environment for sanitation and LWM at MMDA level to continue, and to ensure participating MMDAs' LWM plans continue to be implemented, there needs to be sufficient oversight by, and accountability to, the national government level. This should not be limited to the winners of SC4G, nor just its participants.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA?

At the end of the full evaluation report, we draw a broader set of lessons from the Prize's experience, aimed at prize managers and funders, who may be interested in running prizes for development in similar contexts. Here, we share some of the key lessons from the SC4G Prize experience and encourage readers to reflect on how they could be brought into the design of their own future prizes.

Prizes can be an effective use of development money to achieve results at scale with limited inputs

If the right incentivisation structure is in place, results can be achieved by a multitude of actors, with no upfront funding and minimal support. This can lead to better VFM and a greater level of ownership by participants, in comparison to more traditional grant-based technical assistance programmes. Prizes also have the potential for stimulating political engagement at both national and local levels, provided there is an enabling environment for this.

Prize managers have a responsibility to monitor and understand the effects of a prize on the ground

Given that prizes can stimulate a portfolio of projects that are run independently without direct prize manager or funder oversight, it can be challenging to understand what activity and change is happening on the ground. And yet, having this insight and taking the appropriate action in real time is particularly important, given that prizes can result in unintended consequences that can be both positive and negative and affect different actors in differing ways. This insight should be achieved through a combination of prize monitoring and participant reporting.

It is important that prize participants are held to account for the quality and impact of interventions

Though prizes may attract participants that are not traditionally or routinely development actors, prizes that seek to achieve development outcomes should incentivise participants to ensure a minimum level of quality in their interventions (e.g. through the effective use of judging criteria). Given the voluntary nature of participation in prizes, mandatory reporting requirements should be kept light. However, reporting should include the collection of certain data points to help establish the ultimate development impact of prize participant interventions. Additional support is likely to be needed to help non-traditional development actors to meet these expectations.

Prizes alone are not enough to ensure development impact; they are best used as part of a toolkit to help ensure longer-term sustainability of results

Prizes can be a useful and successful funding modality and implementation model to induce behaviour change and action in a set of prize participants. However, there needs to be continued commitment to realise the full development impact of actions stimulated under a prize. Therefore, prizes should be used as part of a toolkit of development interventions. For example, by running prizes as part of a broader programme, relevant activity can take place beyond prize award to sustain and further build on the results of a prize once the prize mechanism is removed. This should help ensure longevity, equity and depth of results at outcome and impact levels.



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