



## SNAPSHOT

# Leveraging Mobiles to Boost Efficiencies in the Rural Sanitation Market



Commune Councillors from Kampong Speu give their feedback on Watershed's Smart Business app.



An app developer from CAMMOB receives feedback from latrine suppliers.

[Photo Credit: Development Innovations]

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Major gains have been made in providing clean water, sanitation infrastructure and improving hygiene behaviors in Cambodia in recent years. Local markets for commodities to support access to clean water and sanitation began to develop in the past decade and local stakeholders and the Royal Government of Cambodia have made it a priority to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for all.

However, work still needs to be done to genuinely improve rural sanitation and hygiene in Cambodia. Suppliers, sales agents, local authorities and other actors in the rural sanitation supply chain faced many operating challenges, especially relying on outdated and time consuming systems like phone calls and personal visits. As described by [WaterSHED](#) Business Intelligence Manager, Ung Rattanak, "The system was inefficient, prone to error and difficult to manage."

WaterSHED is a Cambodia-based non-governmental organization using market-based approaches to improve the connections in the supply chain. Between 2011 and 2015, WaterSHED facilitated the sale of over 140,000 latrines. And over the next 2.5 years, WaterSHED expects to facilitate the sale of an additional 140,000 latrines to rural consumers through local businesses.

Recognizing the need for a useful, real-time reporting and management tool to improve efficiency of coordination and record keeping among key participants in the toilet supply chain, WaterSHED decided to build a mobile app. The *Smart Business* mobile platform ensures timely communication, clear and error free communication, and basic record keeping through SMS. Latrine suppliers and distributors are able to manage their inventory and coordinate outreach planning, orders, deliveries and maintenance from buyers. In turn, government and community members are able to contact suppliers to order latrines for their citizens. *Smart Business* will improve the efficiency of service delivery for the rural sanitation supply chain for WASH products, and ultimately improve public health through increased access to in-demand commodities.

WaterSHED is currently in the initial pilot phase of testing the *Smart Business* app in Takeo and Kampong Speu provinces, testing the tool across eight latrine suppliers and 20 key persons involved in community hygiene and sanitation. Recently, WaterSHED and their tech partners at software development firm [CAMMOB](#) invited commune councillors and latrine suppliers to exchange feedback on the use of its *Smart Business* app in Kampong Speu.

Latrine suppliers and key persons involved in community hygiene recognize the significance of the app. "I think the app is convenient because it helps connect key persons to me to order my products. It is a fast tool and we do not have to call or wait," described Mey Sok Sophea, a latrine supplier from Kampong Speu.

The app is also useful for community organizers to promote WASH commodities. "After receiving the app, smartphone and training from WaterSHED, I found many good points including sending fast information about building [a] toilet to suppliers or telling suppliers we are organizing a meeting about hygiene issue in villages," added Ket Chun, a commune councilor in charge of sanitation and hygiene from Borset district in Kampong Speu province.

WaterSHED was able to develop the *Smart Business* app through funding from Development Innovations, with a commitment of funding one third of the project budget themselves. The *Smart Business* app will be an integral part of WaterSHED's work in the coming years, which seeks to empower the household to actively participate in the rural sanitation supply chain of WASH products and services.