Book review

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND THE POOR.
MAKING PARTNERING WORK FOR ALL—A GUIDELINE**
M. Sohail. Margraf-Verlag, 2003. ISBN 3 8236 1410 X, €22, 172 pp

This book provides a very good guide for the development of effective public-private partnerships (PPPs) in developing countries. The book is divided into four parts, covering basic issues, design of PPPs for the interests of the poor, contractual processes/operational issues of PPPs and lessons for the future.

The author stresses the need to develop strategy at the beginning and the need for the parties involved to get to know each other. He emphasises how each of the partners' objectives and desires requires clarification and openness. The private sector partner will want to see profit and their business needs met, whereas the public sector, which may be an elected government institution, wants the needs of its poor people met. The needs of the poor should be carefully considered and determined thoroughly in the preparation and agreement of the partnership arrangement.

The book details the various factors that must be considered with establishment of PPPs. These include consideration of the risks and liability and apportionment in the contract. The importance of monitoring outcomes is discussed. The service needs of the poor must be delivered effectively and shown to have been.

I did find this guide very easy to read with thumbs up (do) and thumbs down (don't do) providing a quick summary! The 'Implications of the section' parts provide good summaries for ease of reference. One point I did find a little difficult was the reading of the small print on two flow diagrams, which might have benefited from a larger scale.

The subject of tariffs and their working in different PPP situations is well discussed. The importance of communication between operators and the customers is emphasised. The need to be innovative to overcome barriers is important and should not be overlooked.

The book shows how the needs of the poor can be met. Solutions often need to be worked at with different options being employed as part of the PPP process. The willingness and ability to pay for the services by the poor should not be overlooked and can help to provide the best solution.

Fig. 1. Example of a PPP water project

The importance of measuring the performance of PPPs is mentioned. These measures should then be used to reflect and provide improvements. The Appendices provides the details of PPP case studies from different areas of the world and are referenced in the guide.

The author understands and appreciates that the poor have needs for improved services, such as sanitation and good water supply, which can and should be met (Fig. 1). I consider this book a very good, practical guide to the understanding, development and operation of PPPs to serve the poor and it would provide a useful reference tool to each of the parties involved with PPPs.

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