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# **From Beneficiaries to Customers: How to Market Water and Sanitation in Vietnam?**

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# Context

- Urban setting, small towns wanting to appear more city-like; emerging consumer culture
- At the same time traditional channels of communication valued; marketing approach + new messages used
- Weakness of traditional information, education, communication (IEC) campaigns
- Convenience, modernity, emphasis on quality of life. "Good service is worth paying for"
- Challenges:
  - Especially Northern provinces rely heavily on subsidies/aid programmes
  - Ethnic diversity; language, customs, values,

# What is new/different?

- Working with both supply and demand side; customers/rights holders redefine their identity as consumers, operators build professional pride and increased awareness of what customers want
- Sustainability: Customers must not see service as charity (problem with subsidies)
- Operators must have genuine interest and incentive in sound financial base and sales, ie. keeping customers happy

# How?

- Getting to know customers: not only needs-mapping, studies on socioeconomic background etc.
- BUT: desires, hopes, preferred channels of information
- Targeting different audiences with different messages
- Support to operator's capacity building in providing quality service with professional attitude
- Using marketing methodology
- Channels: according to message and audience

# Results and challenges

- Results:

- 50% of Programme schemes have effective mechanisms for customer services in place
- 88% of water supply customers know how to contact the operator to give feedback
- 93% of water supply customers and 79% of sewerage customers satisfied with the service

- Challenges:

- Drainage and sewerage connection rates remain low
- Only 55% of sewerage customers know who the operator is and how to contact them. Sewerage is not as enthusiastically marketed by operators and is considered less valuable by customers than water supply