

# ENTERPRISE VIABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY DIAGNOSTIC TOOLKIT – SAMPLE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

## INTRODUCTION

This document is a part of the *Enterprise Viability and Sustainability Diagnostic Toolkit* developed by WASHPaLS. It is designed to help Market-Based Sanitation (MBS) programs conduct exploratory research for Module 1 to prepare targeted questions for in-depth research on viability and sustainability in Modules 2-4. The toolkit also contains a separate *Sample In-Depth Research Interview Guide for Entrepreneurs* for conducting in-depth research for Modules 2-4.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview guide provides MBS programs with suggested questions to ask entrepreneurs for understanding the business model and operating context of their sanitation enterprises.

## HOW TO USE THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

MBS programs should use this interview guide as a starting point and modify or adapt it to their specific situations.

The questions for entrepreneurs seek to gain a basic understanding of the sanitation enterprise and develop targeted questions for in-depth research on viability and sustainability. However, MBS programs should add further questions to enquire about other aspects of the sanitation business that are not covered here, but may be appropriate for their contexts. For example, this interview guide does not cover costs of door-to-door marketing, which may be a cost for entrepreneurs in certain contexts.

## INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

Interviewers can use the following script during the introduction

*Hello <insert respondent name>,*

*I am <insert interviewer name> from <insert MBS program name> and we wanted to speak with you to better understand your business. We are hoping to discover ways to help you improve your profits from selling toilet products/services.*

*Before we begin, we would like to thank you for taking out time from your work to talk to us. We expect this interview to last about 30-40 minutes.*

*Let us know if you have any questions for us.*

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. When did you join the program?
4. How long have you been selling toilet products?
5. Do you run the sanitation business alone or in partnership with someone else? Who?
6. Who are your most important customers for sanitation products?
7. Where do they live?

## PRODUCT SYSTEMS

8. What types of toilets do you sell?
9. Do you sell them as complete packages, or as individual parts and raw materials as demanded by the customer? Why are they sold in this manner?
10. What additional services (such as delivery or installation) do you provide? Why?

## BUSINESS ECONOMICS

### Prices

11. What is the price of the different products you sell? How do you decide the price?
12. How do you calculate the charge for additional services, such as delivery or installation?
13. Do you charge the same to all customers?

### Cost of Goods Sold

14. What are your major costs for running the sanitation business?
15. What materials and items go into constructing toilets? Do you manufacture them or buy them?
16. What is the cost of different raw materials?
17. How do you procure raw materials?
18. Does the cost of raw materials also include transportation?
19. *If no*, how do you transport raw materials? How much do you pay?
20. Please explain the different roles performed by laborers?
21. How do you employ and pay them? [Probe for full-time vs. casual laborers, salaried or fee per job] What is the reason for this practice?
22. Do you have any components that typically get damaged? How do they get damaged?

## **Operating Expenses**

23. How do you deliver toilets to customers?
24. How much does it cost you?
25. Do you own or pay rent for the land/workshop? How much?
26. Do you pay for any utilities for the sanitation business? How much?
27. What are the different ways you market your business or get customers?
28. Does anyone sell toilets for you?
29. How do you pay them? How much?
30. Do you do any other marketing activities? How much do they cost you?
31. What kinds of equipment do you use to construct toilets?
32. How much did you pay for repairs, if any?
33. What type of credit do you offer customers? Can you tell us how this works?
34. Do you have customers who do not pay back? Approximately how many?

## **Other Costs**

35. Have you taken any loans for the sanitation business?
36. Do you know the interest rate or the monthly installment for the loan?
37. Do you have any other costs that we have not mentioned?

## **ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE**

38. What other businesses do you run?
39. What share of revenue do you earn from different business lines?
40. What assets do you own?
41. Do you share assets between the sanitation business and other business lines?
42. How much do each of these businesses contribute to your monthly take-home income?

## **CONCLUDING SCRIPT**

Interviewers can use the following script to end the interview:

*That brings us to the end of this interview. We would like to thank you again for your time and for sharing all this information with us. As mentioned earlier, we are hoping to use this information to understand how we can help you improve your sanitation profits. We hope to see you again soon!*