

Premature failure or abandonment of water and sanitation development interventions is a common phenomenon that has severely limited progress in developing regions. In searching for the causes, researchers have implicated decision-making and planning processes that neglect one or more key areas of sustainability (represented here by social, environmental, human health, economic, and technical criteria). This case study in the rural Philippines analyzes the relationship between the project planning processes of aid organizations and long-term project sustainability, and develops a locally appropriate framework by which to incorporate holistic consideration of sustainability into decision processes. Applying the "sustainability framework," the sustainability of project impacts was found to be most significantly affected by the extent to which the implementing agency allowed project identification and planning to be performed by the community, the attributes (such as experience, integrity, and commitment) of human players involved in the project, and the nature of the relationships between these individuals.

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