



Open innovation in rural water and sanitation

The Antioquia experience, Colombia

ADB e-Marketplace • Session 30

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In collaboration with:



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Who are we?

Cewas is an international non-profit organization that strengthens water and sanitation innovation ecosystems by connecting entrepreneurs, utilities, governments and investors.



**Innovation
ecosystems**



Entrepreneurship



**Impact
Investing**



**Knowledge and
training**



**Governance and
integrity**

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

2010

16 years of
experience

First accelerator in WASH

Headquartered in Willisau, Switzerland and Amman,
Jordan

With programs in Latin America, Africa
and the Middle East

+420

Ventures in incubation, acceleration
and scaling stages.

+6.5 million people who have obtained drinking
water or improve its supply.



How do we activate the innovation ecosystems in WASH?

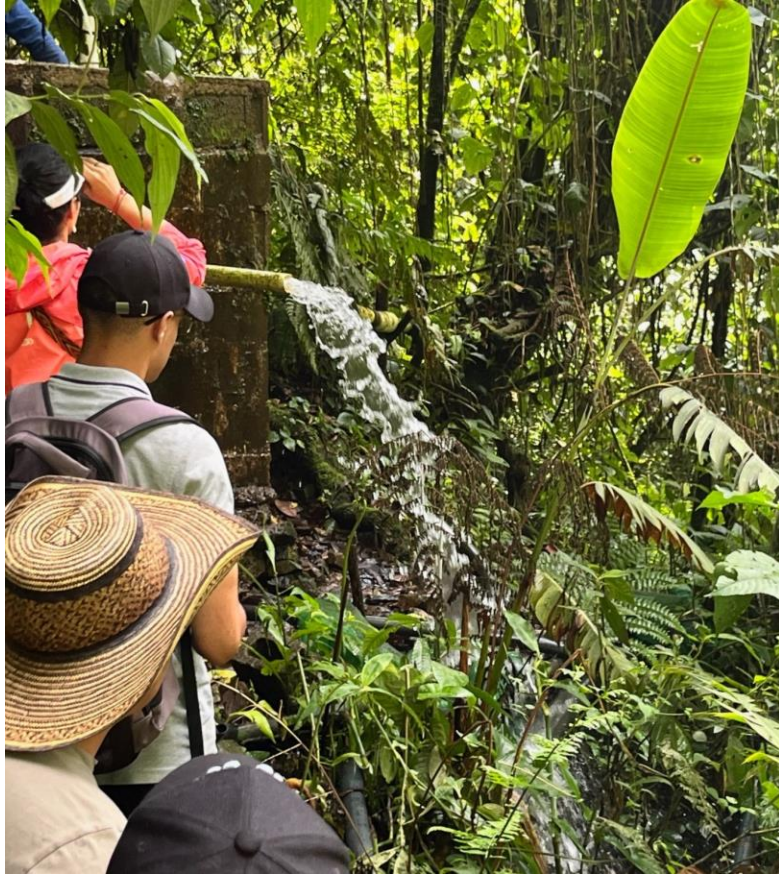
We work simultaneously on the three conditions required for innovation to reach implementation and scale.



Why rural water supply needs a different innovation approach



Community-based providers face complex challenges but often cannot manage innovation internally.



The challenge

- **Persistent gaps**
Aging infrastructure, climate risks and limited access to technical support.
- **Limited capacity**
Many rural providers lack specialized staff, staff, time and financial resources.
- **Innovation is needed**
But it must be accessible, practical and anchored in real operating conditions.

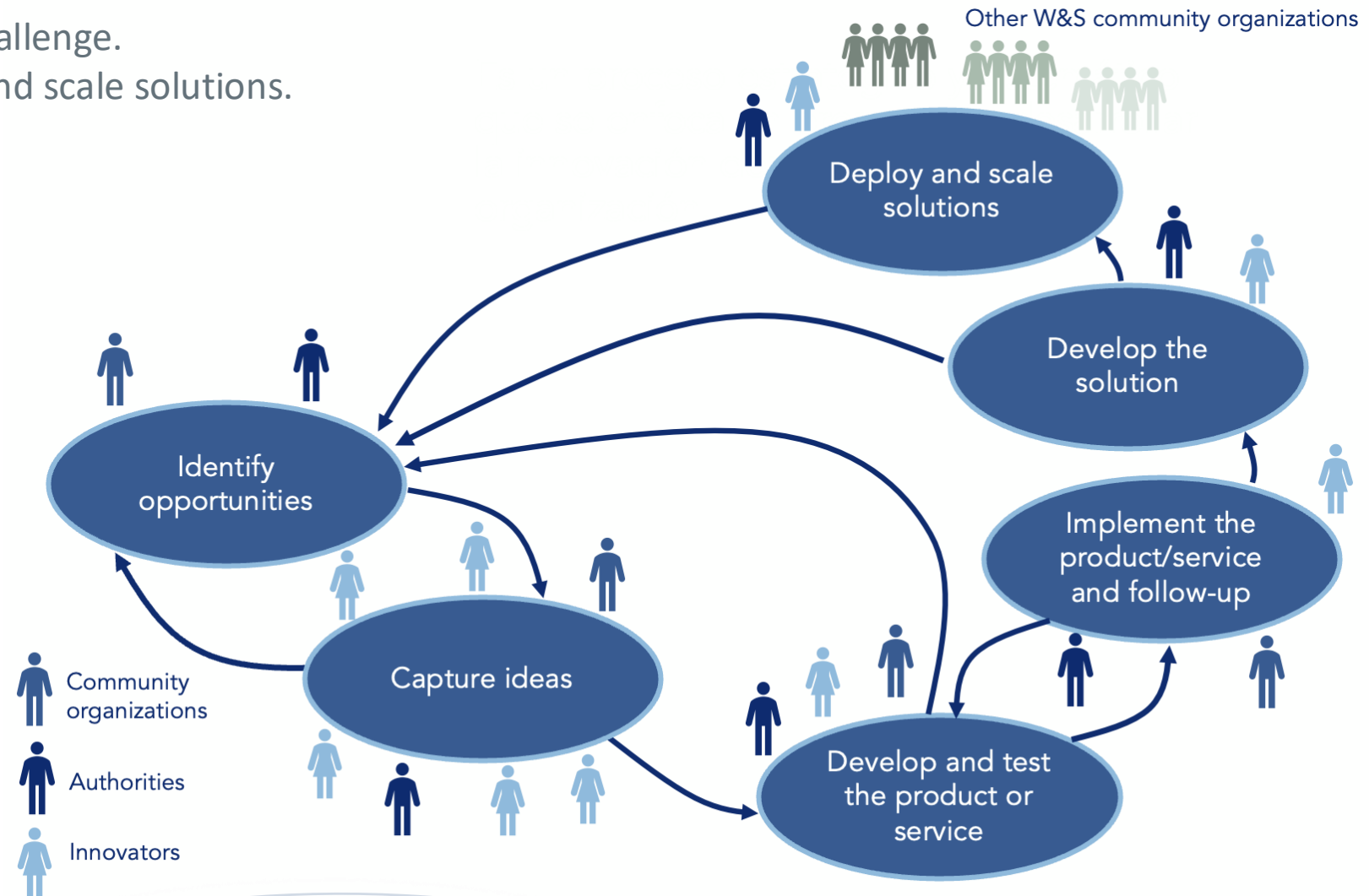
Key point: innovation should not depend on each provider having all capacities in-house.

A collaborative model for locally relevant innovation

- The service provider identifies the challenge.
- The ecosystem helps generate, test and scale solutions.



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Open innovation in Water and Sanitation in Antioquia



Ciudad Bolívar

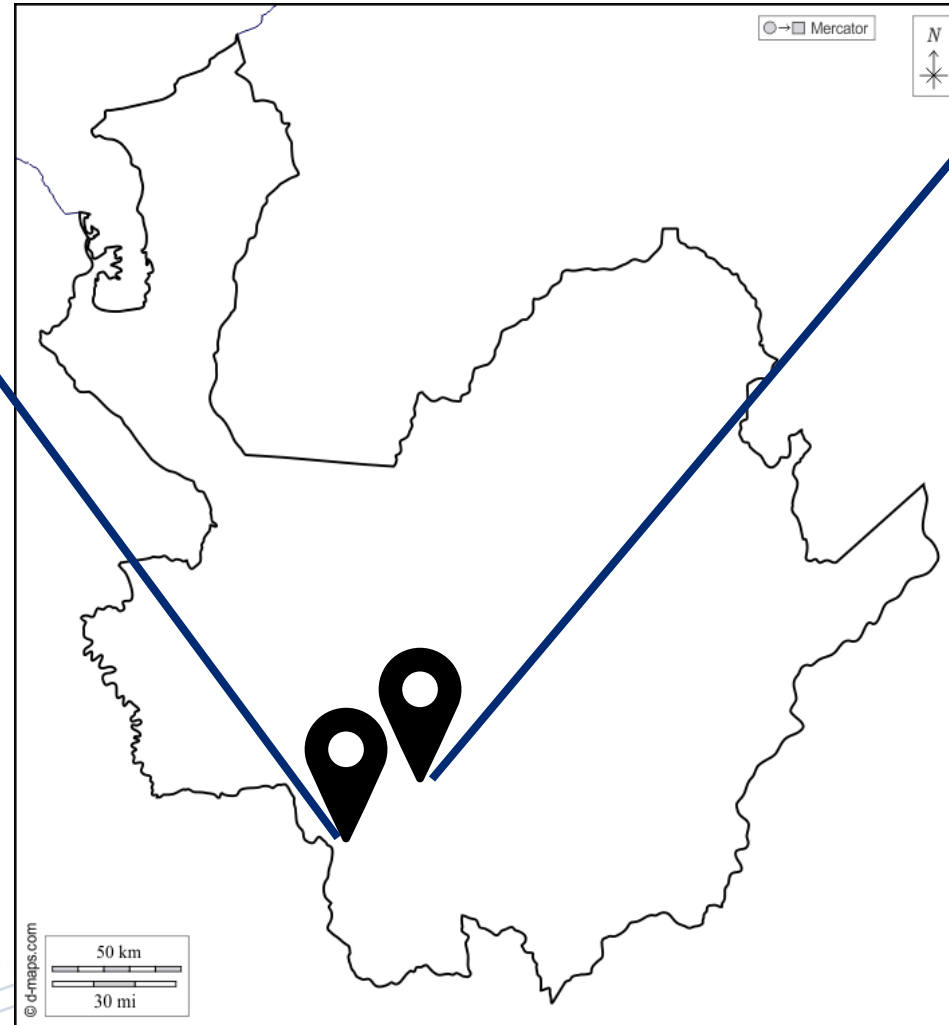
AMBA - Bolívar Arriba Multi-Village Aqueduct Users Association

- 1/29 community operators
- 435 connections
- Does not provide sanitation services

Amagá

AsoCamilo - Aqueduct Subscribers Association Camilo C

- 1/31 community operators
- 720 connections
- Does not provide sanitation services



≈ 4500
Beneficiaries



Four lessons from Antioquia

What the experience revealed about making open innovation work in work in rural water and sanitation.

1

Communities must drive innovation

They define the challenge, test the solution and build ownership ownership for operation and maintenance.

2

A hackathons is only the beginning

Intensive events generate ideas, but only structured follow-up follow-up turns ideas into viable solutions.

3

Partnerships need active facilitation

Bringing communities, authorities and innovators together requires trust, requires trust, clear roles and continuous facilitation throughout the throughout the process.

4

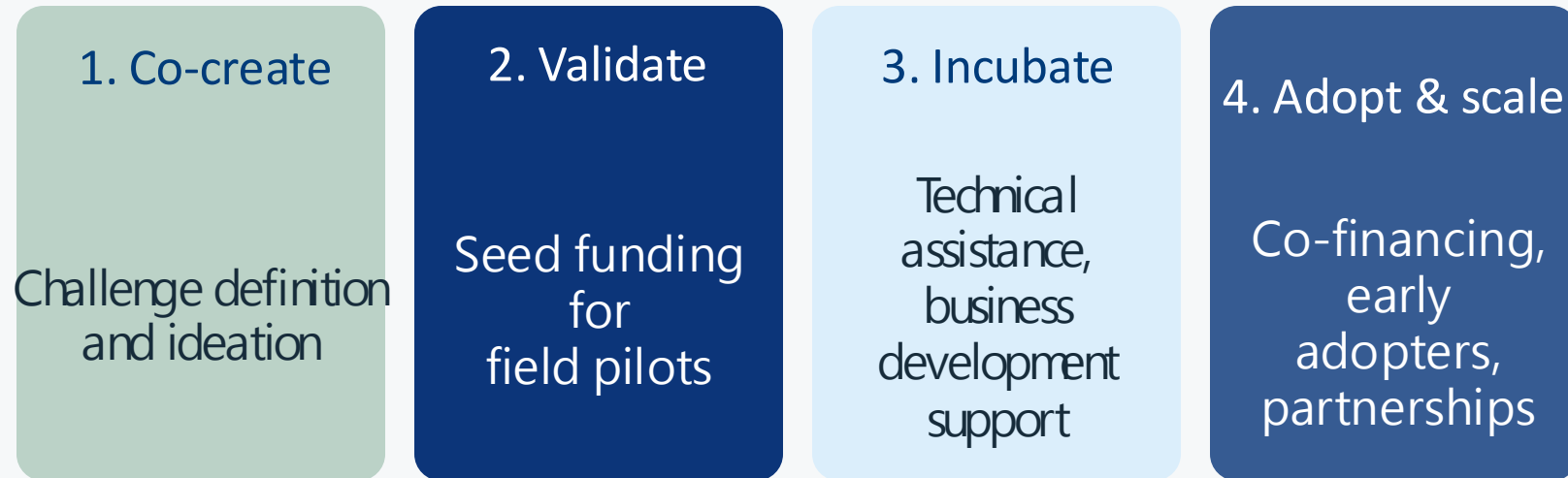
Technical validation must lead to market adoption

A solution that works technically still needs a viable business business model, customers and a pathway to adoption and adoption and scale.



Finance the innovation journey, not only only the technology

Different stages require different instruments and partners.



Financing innovation means supporting the whole path from problem to problem to adoption.

Two pathways to scale

1

Solutions reach new communities

AqualIngeniería, Elemento and DBO Solutions continue strengthening their companies through Gacelas.



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2

The model can be replicated

The manual systematizes the six-phase methodology, methodology, activities and tools for other rural territories.

Open innovation does not replace the State or community management. It acts as management. It acts as a bridge between public, community and entrepreneurial capacities.



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Thank you!

