

# Small Private Enterprise Engagement in WASH Gathering the Evidence

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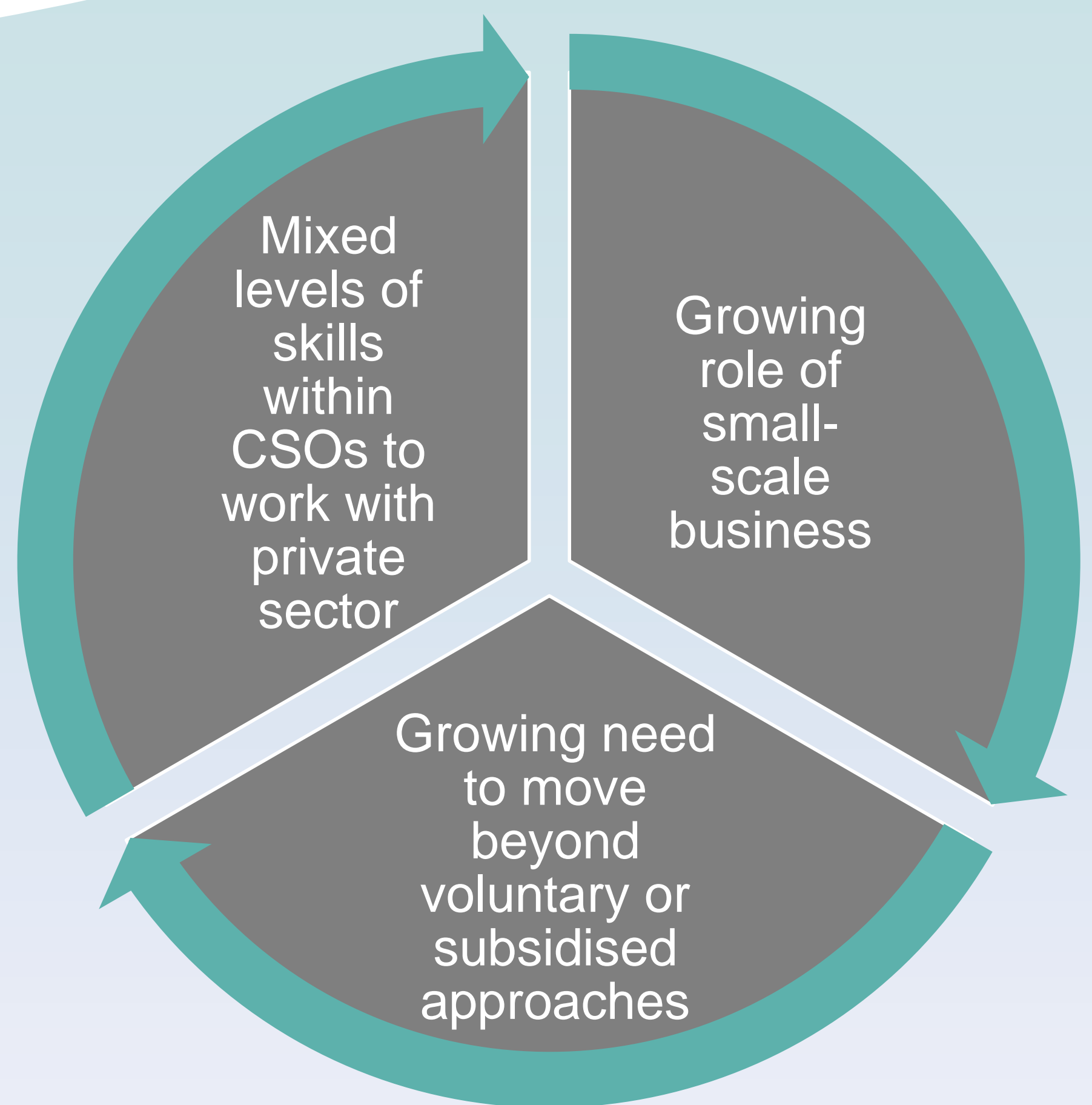
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## Why this research?

Poor functionality of water and sanitation systems over the past decade has called into question the effectiveness and sustainability of current and past approaches. As a response, civil society organisations (CSOs), amongst others, have begun to explore new approaches that move beyond voluntary, solely community focused approaches, including engagement with private and social enterprise, to build 'professionalisation' of service delivery and supporting supply-chain development.

However, **the evidence base to support work in this space requires interrogation.**



## Approach

As the first component of a longer 3-year study, this research adopted a **systematic review approach** to interrogate the evidence base on private enterprise engagement in WASH. This focused on academic and grey literature published in the period 2008-2013.



164

documents mapped and assessed on the rigour of their evidence

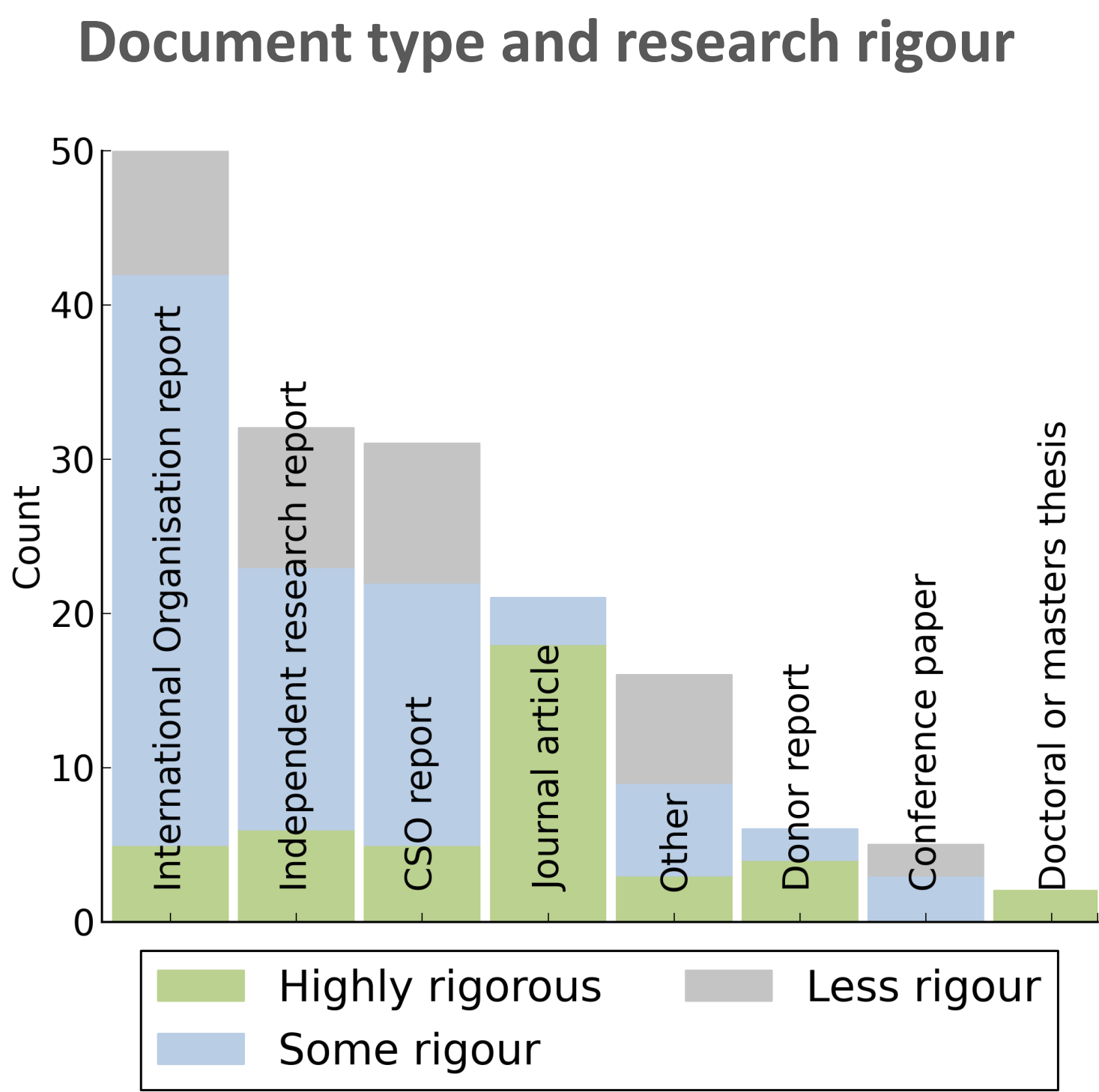
82

documents deemed highly relevant and reviewed in more detail



# Nature of the evidence

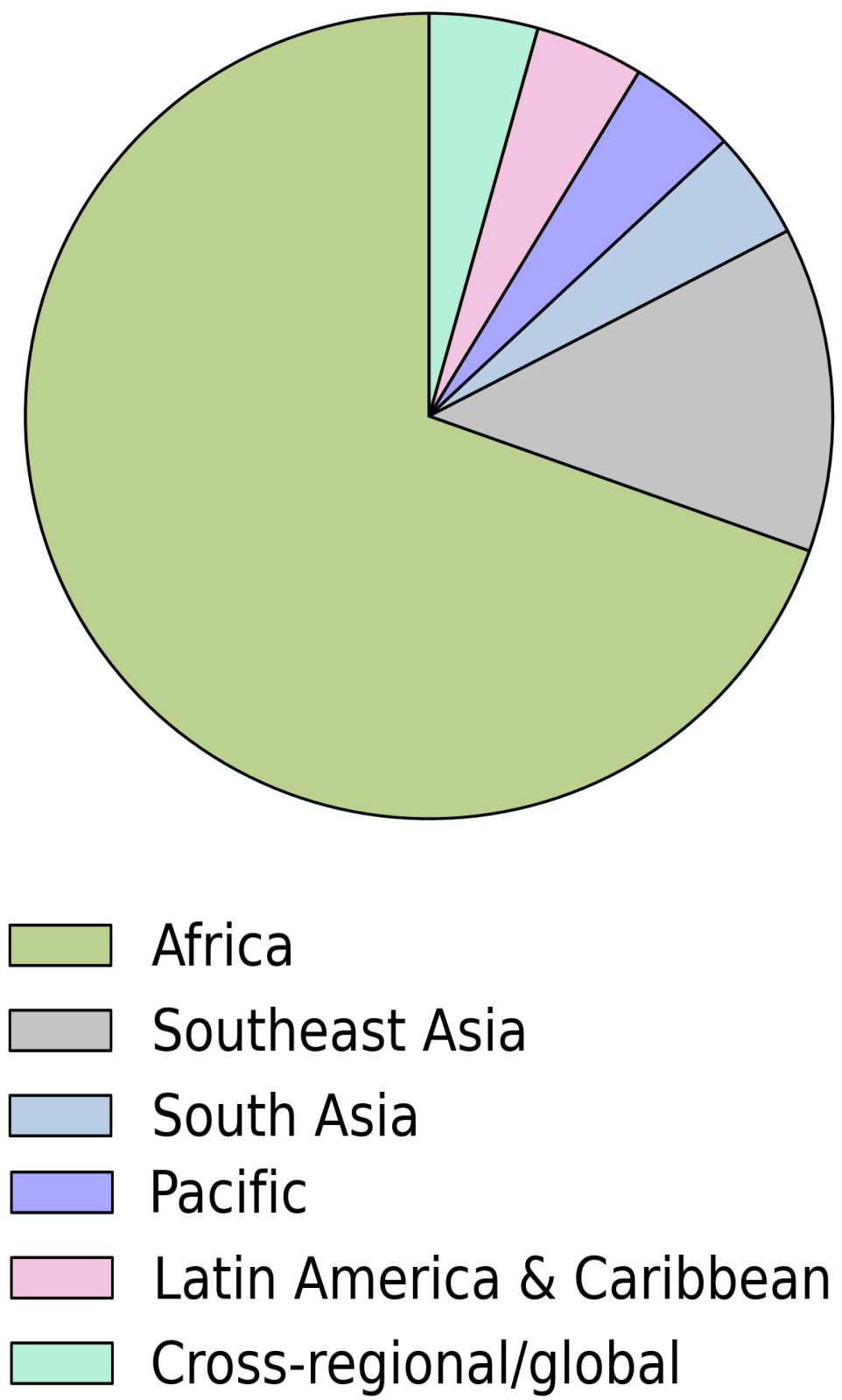
The majority of literature were **international organisation reports**, followed by **independent research reports** and **CSO reports**, with formal academic literature comprising a much smaller proportion. The rigour of the studies was variable.



The growing interest in **sanitation marketing** as an approach to sustainably provide sanitation services was evident in the papers in the sanitation subsector.

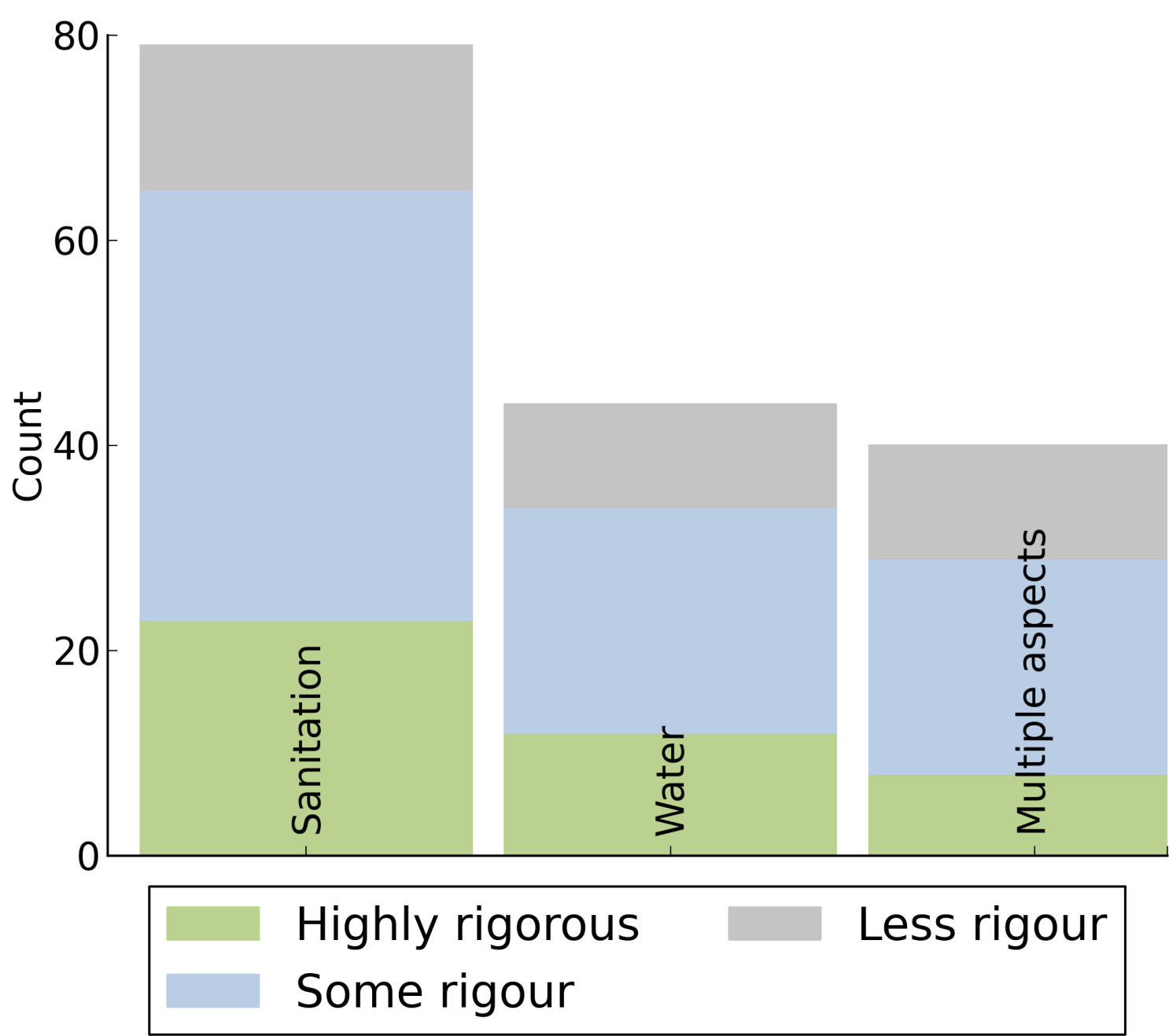
However, literature from the **water subsector offered a longer history** of analysis when compared to sanitation.

Academic papers by region



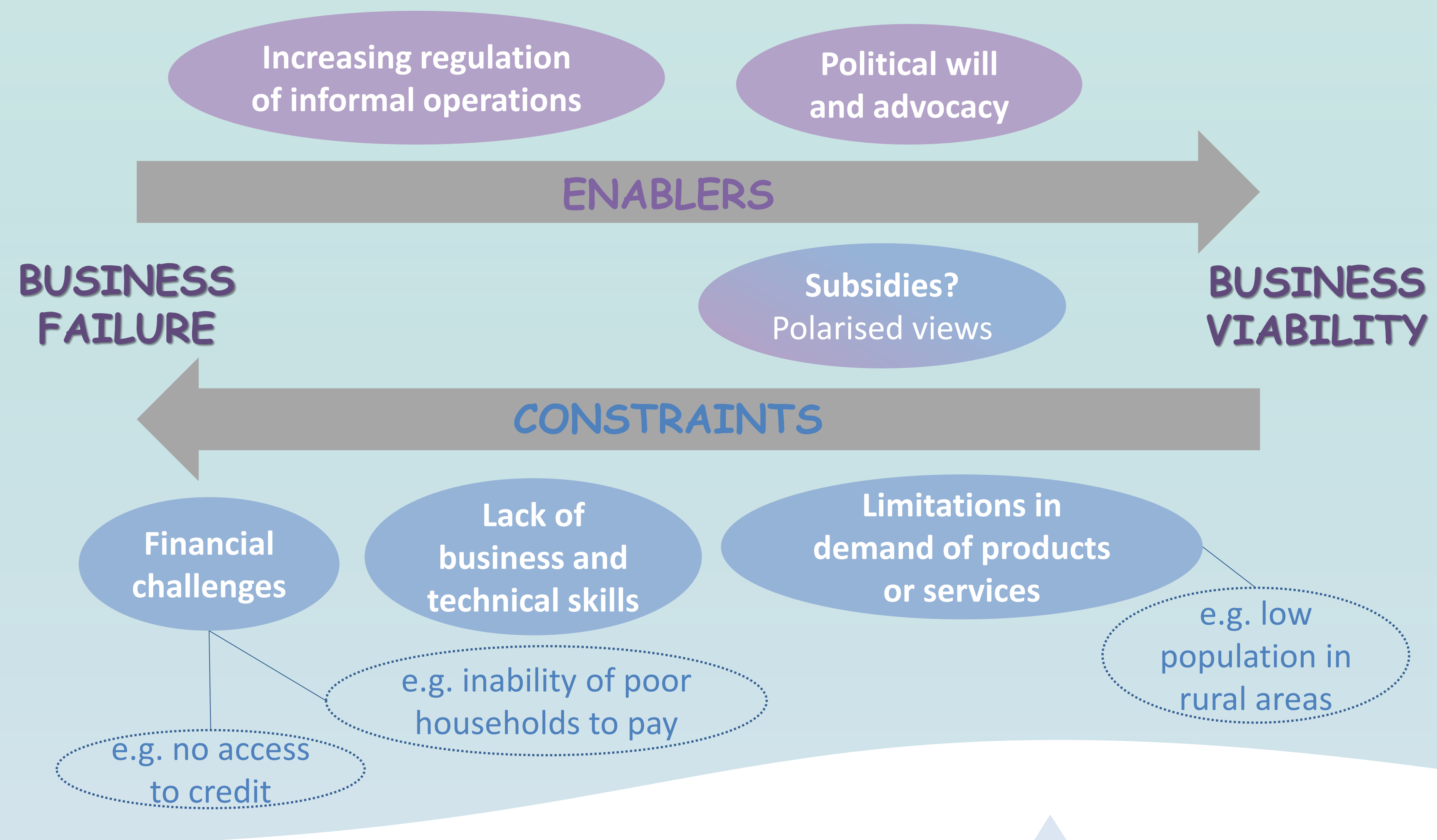
The majority of rigorous studies were conducted in Africa.

WASH focus and research rigour



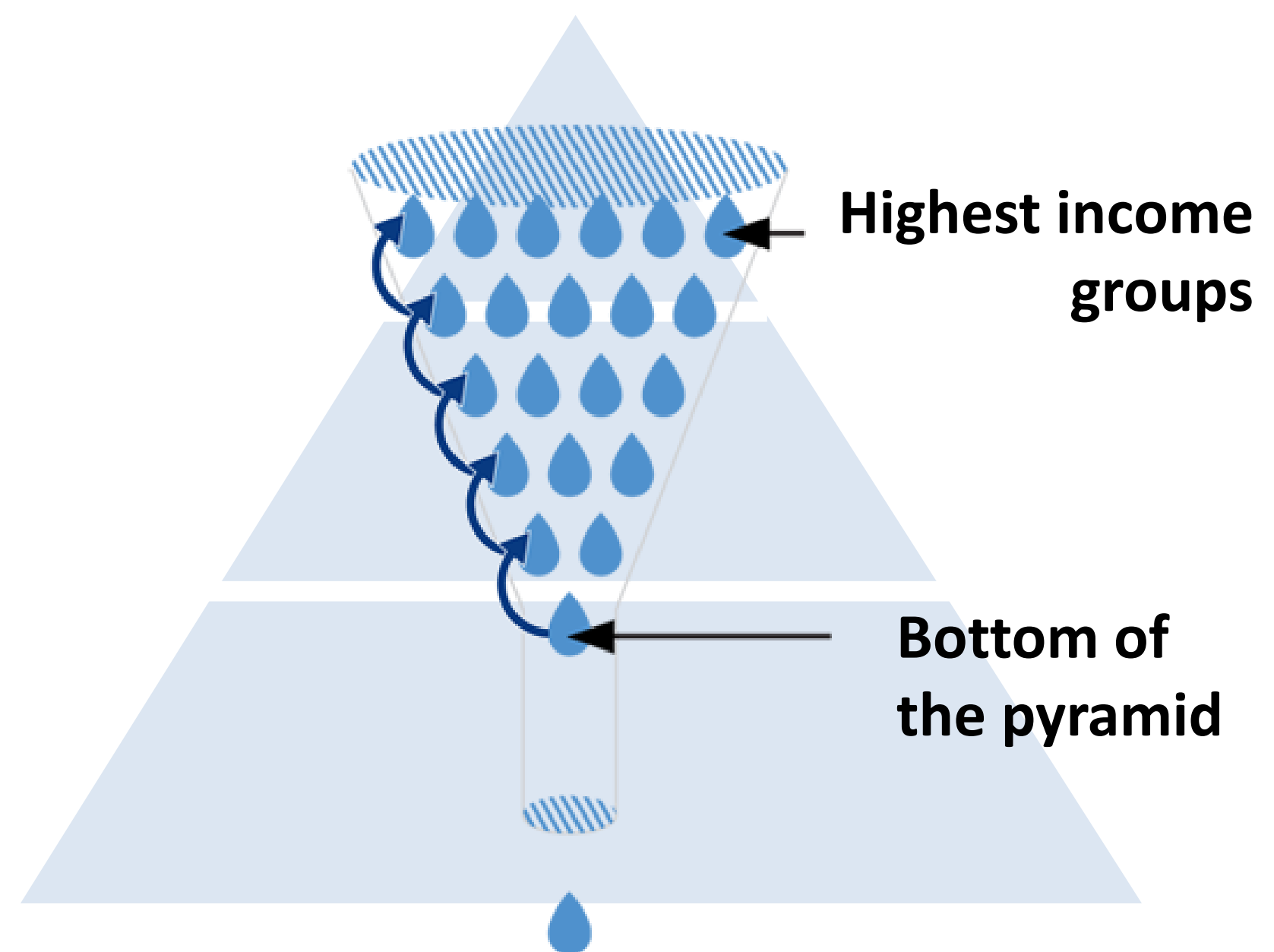


# Factors affecting success of enterprise engagement



## Outcomes for the poor

Serving the poor was **not highlighted** as a **specific priority for businesses**. Businesses tend to prefer servicing non-poor customers to ensure sustainable **collection of payments** and **viable earning of profits**. There was emerging evidence of small-scale providers in the water sector offering **flexible pricing** structures to enable poor households entry into the market, however this **remains a challenge** in most contexts.



## Conclusions

The skill-set required by small-scale WASH operators and CSOs needs further development. Drawing on skills and expertise of other sectors, businesses and academic expertise is important going forward. In addition, securing an enabling environment for businesses to grow may require more proactive support than has been provided to date. In particular, to ensure socially inclusive approaches from which the poor might feasibly benefit.

## Engagement between enterprise and CSOs

Evidence describing engagement between enterprise and CSOs was limited. Most engagement consisted of CSOs offering **bottom-up and capacity building** support to businesses or informal operators. However, there were examples of **institutional support** to government on contract preparation in the water sector.