



Office of
Independent
Evaluation

How to deliver
water projects which
change lives >>

Pipes don't equal progress

- 💧 Building modern treatment plants creates supply, but if families don't trust the water, public investment won't deliver health or financial gains.
- 💧 First impressions stick: Managing community expectations on day one is far more effective than trying to repair broken trust later.



Trust is an operational variable

- 💧 Trust isn't just a marketing job; utilities must track customer complaints and service outages alongside water purity levels.
- 💧 Minor disruptions during startup can ruin long-term trust, driving families straight back to buying bottled water out of habit.



Fix problems while the project is active

- 💧 Traditional evaluations check boxes after construction ends; real-time monitoring helps teams spot issues and adjust before habits harden.
- 💧 Measure how people actually use the service, not just how many kilometres of pipe were laid.



End the double payment burden

- 💧 For years, discoloured water forced families to pay twice; once for piped utility water and again for bottled drinking water.
- 💧 Ditch complex lab reports; build confidence with clear guarantees like 'safe for children' and live water-testing demonstrations in local neighbourhoods.



Social risks will always outweigh engineering risks

- 💧 Engineering risks are usually well managed; the biggest threats to project outcomes emerge when real people start using the service.
- 💧 Catching early warning signs only works if project contracts, schedules, and leadership are flexible enough to adapt.



The bottom line

A water project is only complete when families feel safe enough to drink from the tap, confident in their health, and relieved of the cost of bottled water.



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