

USAID Water and Development Country Plan for South Sudan

I. Executive Summary

In alignment with the Global Water Strategy and the USAID Agency Plan, USAID/South Sudan is a critical partner in providing access to water and sanitation services to the people of South Sudan. South Sudan has been receiving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) funding since it gained its independence in 2011. Due to the outbreak of the conflict in December 2013, the sustainable WASH development projects designed for implementation in rural and urban settings were suspended and the WASH investments shifted focus to delivering critical water, sanitation and hygiene services, while strengthening the systems that facilitate these services. In addition, the Mission's WASH activities aim for flexibility, in the emergency context in the country.

II. Introduction

As the youngest and one of the least developed countries in the world, South Sudan has faced decades of political instability, poverty, and persistent food insecurity. With approximately 50 percent of the population living below the national poverty line, a weak economy, and ongoing internal conflict, South Sudan also ranks among the most fragile states in the world, with some of the lowest water and sanitation access rates.

Fifty percent of the population of South Sudan, has access to basic drinking water sources,¹ however, 30 to 50 percent of water facilities are non-functional at any point in time due to lack of spare part supply chains, weak WASH infrastructure maintenance capacity, poor overall WASH management practices, and/or inappropriate choice of technology. Thus, the actual level of access to an improved water source in rural areas is estimated to be only 34 percent,² and this affects most of the country as over 80 percent live in rural areas, as well as 90 percent of those living in poverty. Only 2.2 percent of households have water on the premises with a twentyfold difference between the urban (9.3 percent) and rural (0.4 percent) population,³ while 34 percent travel more than 30 minutes to collect water. The laborious daily task of obtaining water is overwhelmingly completed by women. Adult women are most commonly the water carriers (85.6 percent), but female children under age 15 are also significant collectors (8.8 percent). Only 13 percent of the population has access to adequate sanitation facilities. Beyond limited access to improved water and sanitation, there is low knowledge and practice of good hygiene behaviors. Additionally, only 45 percent of South Sudan's 3,349 basic primary schools have access to safe water, and a mere 17 percent have adequate sanitary latrines for both girls and boys. In many developing countries, girls opt not to attend schools that do not have latrines out of concern for their privacy and modesty. Improved access to water and sanitation at schools has therefore been shown to increase school attendance amongst girls.⁴

III. Government of South Sudan Water Objectives

¹ Defined as piped water, public tap, borehole/tube well, protected well, protected spring, or rainwater

² The South Sudan WASH strategic framework, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI), July 2011

³ The South Sudan WASH strategic framework, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI), July 2011

⁴ http://www.unwater.org/downloads/bgound_2.pdf

The overall water and sanitation objectives of the Republic of South Sudan, as stipulated by its Water Policy of 2007, include improving access to safe water supply and sanitation facilities and promoting hygiene education for all people living in rural areas. In addition, the government is committed to ensuring that the rapidly growing urban population benefits from access to safe, affordable, and reliable water and sanitation services and promotes efficient development and management of these services. Sectoral efforts toward these objectives are guided by the Sustainable Development Goals 6, which prioritizes the elimination of open defecation by 2030, as well as universal access to safe water and basic sanitation by 2030.

Unfortunately, little progress is being made toward these objectives in South Sudan. Since December 2013, there has been no direct funding from the Government of Republic of South Sudan (GOSS) for water or sanitation service delivery, and the network of development partners present in country are largely engaged in providing lifesaving emergency WASH services to those affected by the humanitarian crisis.

IV. Government of South Sudan’s Current and Planned Strategies and Approaches to Water and Sanitation

In addition to the aforementioned Water Policy and Urban and Rural Water Sector Strategy Plans, South Sudan is also a member of the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. The SWA is a high-level global partnership to achieve universal water and adequate sanitation to all. This platform engages government ministries in charge of water, sanitation, and finance in advocacy to prioritize financing and improving WASH services in their respective countries. Despite its membership in SWA, the GOSS has not made commitments to the partnership since 2014 due to the deteriorating political and economic situation in South Sudan. Other main donors that support WASH sector development include:

- GIZ – This supports urban water development in Juba city, Yei, and Wau towns
- UNICEF – Primarily supports rural water development across South Sudan

USAID and the other WASH donors closely coordinate their efforts through the WASH Donor Group meetings. Leveraging of resources and avoidance of duplication of efforts is emphasized among the WASH Donors.

V. Challenges and Opportunities in the Sector

The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI) and South Sudan Urban Water Corporation are mandated by the GOSS to provide universal coverage of safe water and sanitation to all people in rural and urban settings by 2030. In order to achieve this mandate, several critical bottlenecks will need to be overcome, including:

- Weak water sector governance and integrity, particularly the lack of separation of oversight from service provision
- A heavy reliance on public financing and absorption challenges

- Human resource constraints
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess progress on a regular basis
- Limited multi-year funding agreements from partners that limit predictability of planning

The following measures have been identified to address these bottlenecks:

- Channel additional public and private resources to urban sanitation, rural water, and sanitation and hygiene
- Scale-up strategies to eliminate open defecation in rural areas and improve access to basic sanitation levels
- Identify and better target resources to improve coverage for vulnerable groups
- Improve revenue collection and ring-fence financing for operating and maintenance costs
- Improve countrywide coordination mechanisms and enhance the sector’s capacity to continuously monitor WASH service delivery
- Amend the Water Policy to fully define governance, financing and oversight roles of rural water and sanitation and clearly separate the service provision and oversight functions for urban water and sanitation services

VI. USAID/South Sudan Country Plan for Water

In light of the changing and deteriorating socio-economic and political context in-country that have made it difficult to engage in WASH sustainable development projects, USAID/South Sudan undertook a thorough review of its current Operational Framework in October 2016. As a result, the Mission established two Technical Objectives (TO1 and TO2) to guide programming efforts: TO1—Promote recovery by facilitating community-led response, delivering critical services, and strengthening livelihoods and resilience to shocks; and TO2—Enable lasting peace through support to an inclusive peace process, strengthening inter- and intra-communal relations and reconciliation, and improving mechanisms for conflict management. The TO1 and TO2 include continued provision of critical services in basic and emergency education and health, including WASH. The current Operational Framework remains relevant since the context in South Sudan has not changed since October 2016. The Operational Framework emphasizes that all USAID programs utilize approaches that promote constructive collaboration and social cohesion and emphasize inclusive community-led projects and extensive community involvement in the design, implementation, and monitoring of WASH activities that directly respond to the effects of conflict.

Despite the challenging operating environment, USAID/South Sudan will aim to enhance the sustainability of interventions through the following measures:

Governance: USAID/South Sudan will engage users of WASH services in the management of their own water and sanitation infrastructure by forming and training water and sanitation management committees. These committees are trained on management of the water points, protection of water points using locally available resources, collection of monthly water user fees especially in relative stable communities, pump mechanics trainings, resolution of conflicts resulting from use of water points, among others. Community contribution is key in creating sense of ownership of water and sanitation infrastructure and to promoting sustainability.

Gender-sensitive solutions: USAID/South Sudan’s provision of gender-sensitive WASH interventions for internally displaced people (IDPs) living in United Nations protection of civilian (PoC) sites and within host communities is critical, as women are particularly vulnerable during protracted periods of unrest. This will include (by order of priority): 1) distributing dignity and menstrual hygiene management kits for IDPs and host community populations inside and outside of PoCs; 2) providing victims of gender-based violence (GBV) with services and clinical management of rape; and 3) improving the availability and accessibility of WASH services that obviates the need for women to travel long distances to collect water.

Prioritizing institutional WASH: USAID/South Sudan will prioritize investments in institutional WASH facilities, including hospitals and schools, given that essential services are suffering during the protracted conflict and that these institutions are likely to endure. Investments will include: 1) building or rehabilitating gender-sensitive WASH facilities in schools, temporary learning spaces, and health facilities; 2) increasing the supply of safe water to PoCs and health facilities, and containing cholera outbreaks; and 3) rehabilitating key non-functional boreholes and constructing emergency water treatment facilities where IDPs are concentrated and in locations highly affected by cholera, including schools and health facilities in and around Juba.

Environmental: WASH activities follow USAID’s environmental regulations as presented in 22 CFR 216 to ensure that they adequately mitigate any potential effects on the environment. In addition, particular attention will be paid to past environmental assessments made with respect to biodiversity and forestry for similar activities, as well as recommendations of the “Environmental Threats and Opportunity (ETO) Assessment” for Southern Sudan.⁵ Furthermore, the design will be informed by sector-specific evaluations, studies, and analysis made by other development partners within the context of South Sudan. An Initial Environmental Examination and an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be developed for all new activities to ensure adherence to all regulations.

Financial/Budget: WASH funding is derived from the Economic Support Fund—Overseas Contingency Operations (ESF–OCO) appropriation account, and the funding level is determined by the Water Directive. Given the huge WASH needs in the country, USAID/South Sudan with buy-in of the host government expects to engage in WASH development and leverage other donors’ WASH resources in future once the political environment is conducive for sustainable WASH development.

Technical: Due to the current economic crisis and volatile security situation, finding a sustainable solution to supply WASH services to IDPs living in PoC sites and within host communities is critical. The WASH response will provide lifesaving WASH needs in the conflict--affected communities. This will be accomplished through implementation of the following activities:

- Access to water and sanitation infrastructure and hygiene commodities

⁵ <http://www.encapafrica.org/documents/biofor/SUDANpercent20ETOapercent202012percent20wg.pdf>

- Behavior change related to WASH practices
- Enabling policy and institutional environment development
- Drinking water supply treatment—source or household (e.g., chlorination)
- Direct protection of drinking water point from contamination
- Small-scale wastewater treatment (septic systems, small plants)
- Software associated with all wastewater treatment (large and small)
- Prevention of GBV associated to poor access to WASH services
- Clinical management of rape services for victims of GBV

Main mechanism:

- Emergency WASH Response and GBV Prevention Project (2014–2017). This is a PIO Grant with UNICEF. This project is being implemented with ongoing monitoring. Subsequent activities that build off this mechanism are currently in design and will commence at the conclusion of the current activity.
- Integrated WASH Activities into the Health Pool Fund (HPF II) Project (2016–2018). USAID has put funding into the HPF II project, including Water Directive Funds for provision of WASH services in health facilities in the eight defunct states of South Sudan. Only Unity and Jonglei States are not covered under the HFP II project since these two states are covered by the World Bank.

The South Sudan Country Plan is costed based on prior year resources still available for programming, the FY 2017 estimated allocation of \$6.0 million, and the FY 2018 President’s Budget Request of \$8.0 million.