

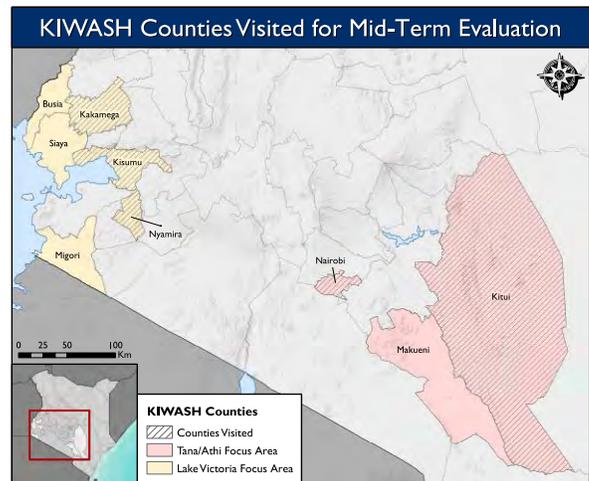
Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (KIWASH) Project Mid-Term Evaluation: Overview and Key Findings

KIWASH Context and Evaluation Background

Despite Kenya recently reaching middle-income country status with strong economic growth and rising living standards, expansion of access to basic and safely managed water and sanitation services has not kept pace with population growth. The ongoing transition of accountability as proscribed in the Water Act of 2016 puts county government in charge of ensuring water and sanitation service delivery. While clear in the overarching roles and responsibilities, several practical aspects are still being determined at both the county and national levels with regard to finance and county capacity to manage its oversight function.

USAID/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) launched the Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (KIWASH) project in October 2015, a \$51 million five-year activity implemented by a consortium led by DAI. KIWASH was designed to institutionalize catalytic models of sustainable service delivery for accelerated expansion of water and sanitation services and to improve complementary hygiene behaviors. Beyond capacity building for county governments, the integrated nature of KIWASH's outputs are reflected in the diverse range of its activities, from technical assistance to water utilities and WASH enterprises, to Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and sanitation marketing, to nutrition counseling.

USAID/KEA commissioned the USAID Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) project to undertake a mid-term evaluation of KIWASH. From October – December 2018, a five-person evaluation team reviewed contractual deliverables and other related documents and conducted 95 key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions at the community level, and a number of site observations. The evaluation team visited five of the nine counties in which KIWASH operates. 75 percent of KIIs were with stakeholders in the five counties visited and 25 percent of KIIs were with women.



Summary of Findings

KIWASH Design. The project's overarching focus on market-based approaches was clearly endorsed in a review of relevant documents and by stakeholder interviewees at all levels; the approach is sound and necessary to ensure more functional, responsive, and sustainable service delivery. This includes efforts to improve the technical and commercial operational efficiencies of the Water Service Providers (WSPs) (i.e., utilities), which will help lead them to creditworthiness. Private and community managed WASH enterprise schemes play an important role in providing water services to communities that are off the utility grid or connected through a bulk connection. The KIWASH emphasis to improve their professionalism and enhance their commercial orientation is important to ensuring viability.

Recent policy documents and the government's commitment to achieving open defecation free (ODF) status by 2020 suggest that KIWASH's design of focusing on CLTS and market-based sanitation is appropriate for rural areas. Scaling up demand for sanitation and sanitation marketing, including introducing and promoting low-cost technologies, is an expressed need of the sector. Including Nairobi among the target counties, however, should have prompted USAID to state expectations more explicitly for KIWASH to work on higher

levels of sanitation services beyond containment, as CLTS and Social Behavior Change Communication, even with effective sanitation marketing, would not adequately meet the needs of more urban settings.

The evaluation team concludes that, given the major shift with counties responsible for service delivery, a more open-ended design may have allowed the implementing partner more creativity in allocating KIWASH resources, sharpening the approach, and embedding sustainability.

KIWASH Implementation. KIWASH has made significant strides in building the capacity of **water** service providers to enhance effectiveness and operational viability. KIWASH support helps WSPs manage their relationships with multiple stakeholder groups whereby they can negotiate and coordinate with county governments as well as Development Partners with greater confidence with regard to data-based decision-making and communicate their needs and expectations more effectively with suppliers and customers alike. With time, these improvements will start to be reflected in the regulator's annual rankings and influence utility creditworthiness. KIWASH-led strategic planning exercises are aimed at mobilizing funds to further strengthen and expand coverage. Commercial banks have appreciated KIWASH efforts to educate them on how commercial finance can best support the WASH sector and should lead to their longer-term engagement in the sector. KIWASH efforts to build the capacity of water enterprises have been noted by the evaluation team as outstanding, having a real impact, and delivering as intended in the original design. Collectively, KIWASH efforts have resulted in over 430,000 people gaining access to water services, with plans clearly in place to meet the 786,000 target.

Concerning **sanitation**, aside from the systematic and well-coordinated rollout of CLTS, the evaluation team questions the appropriateness of initially focusing exclusively on CLTS in the four counties where baseline open defecation numbers were two percent or less. County governments have generally not yet followed through with commitments of public financing to maintain momentum of CLTS activities. KIWASH missed opportunities to methodically focus on and prioritize sanitation marketing earlier in the project, seeing this more as a post-ODF activity. Although accelerating quickly after a slow start, efforts to date have resulted in just over 57,000 people gaining access to basic sanitation services against a target of 237,000 by project end.

Due to having embedded staff, the relationships created and the understanding of local conditions, KIWASH is well positioned through **county-level capacity building** to connect different elements of strategic planning, oversight and regulation, and budget allocation and finance. Combined with the project's market-driven service delivery approach, this should help to ensure success in sustaining and expanding services. Despite an appreciated set of activities and the recognition of KIWASH as a respected and trusted advisor at the county level, interviewees and the document review, however, did not reveal a comprehensive and deliberative countywide WASH sector capacity building strategy. Nor was it clear to the evaluation team why KIWASH applied some governance strategies and activities in some counties, but not in others; what an activity sequence might look like; or what criteria would be used to determine when to implement certain activities.

After a slow start in some counties, KIWASH's efforts to deliver **coordinated WASH and nutrition activities** were recognized as the first attempt to bring three sectors (WASH, agriculture, and nutrition) together at the county level to implement an integrated approach. The program was well received and building momentum when funding was abruptly withdrawn at the end of Year 2. An assessment across the five counties suggests the approach was consistently reaching high levels of collaboration and some cross-training across all counties, though co-location was less apparent. KIWASH and USAID missed an opportunity to learn and document evidence on WASH and nutrition integration as initially intended.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations noted above, the evaluation team found that the KIWASH project is providing meaningful support to county governments and WASH service providers to navigate through a challenging transition period of devolution. Future programming should continue to be mindful of this wider context. Much as KIWASH is currently doing with regard to water services, USAID should focus on strengthening emerging sanitation service delivery models for both rural and urban households.