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Strengthening Coordination to Accelerate the Delivery of WASH Services in Counties

Strong, clear multisectoral coordination structures at the county level are critical for enhanced partnership and cooperation between the key government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and organized community groups to reduce duplication of work, strengthen accountability, and sustainable Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Water Resources Management (WRM) interventions.

USAID Western Kenya Water Project (WKWP) has worked in collaboration with the county departments of Water and other WASH actors in eight counties in western Kenya to initiate a multi-sectoral approach to strengthen coordination towards improved WASH priorities. A key achievement has been reactivating WASH networks that were inactive in seven counties (Homabay, Busia, Bungoma, Migori, Kakamega, Siaya, and Kisumu) establishing the Kisii multisectoral WASH forum, and developing WASH/WRM Terms of References (ToRs) that support sectoral thematic working groups to ensure that they are inclusive, coordinated, and sustainable. The WASH forums also provided opportunities for identification of synergies and areas for collaboration among WASH actors which has avoided duplication and re-inventing of the wheel. Jointly with other stakeholders, WKWP will continue to explore avenues and best practices to enhance ownership and sustainability.

To achieve the above, USAID WKWP conducted a stakeholders mapping exercise that established that the WASH and WRM actors operate in isolation resulting in duplication, and tokenism participation of the grassroots networks among others. The mapping exercise findings indicate that there exist WASH coordination platforms in seven out of the eight project counties (Kakamega, Busia, Kisumu, Migori, Homabay, Siaya, and Bungoma) and non-existent in Kisii County. The WASH platforms have varied weaknesses resulting in duplication and un-sustained projects.

To address these challenges, WKWP developed an

informed multisectoral strategy that links collective engagement right from the grassroots networks, informing the county dialogue, and cascading to the regional and national coordination decision-making processes for sustained WASH and WRM service provision. WKWP shared the findings of the stakeholders mapping exercise during the WASH coordination forums in Kisumu, Busia, Kakamega, Siaya, Kisii and Migori counties. The stakeholders in attendance unanimously agreed with the findings and adopted the proposed strategy integrating structures to institutionalize, operationalize and establish sector/technical working groups for targeted and coordinated joint implementation of the sector projects. Under the guiding principle of leaving no one behind, they also agreed to support the domestication of policies that integrate coordination structures and institutionalize and strengthen the grassroots disenfranchised groups that include women, youth, PWDs, water resources users' associations, community forest associations, and community water projects. Further dialogue and learning sessions shall be held with the remaining two counties.

USAID WKWP shall conduct follow-up and mentorship sessions, provide technical assistance to the eight counties to strengthen the coordination structures, and integrate monitoring and feedback strategies for sustainable WASH and WRM interventions. WKWP working closely with other partners will support peer-to-peer learning through regional coordination within the western Kenya counties and beyond to inform the adoption of best practices to enhance ownership and sustainability.

Multi-Sectoral Strategy

- Joint planning and implementation/ monitoring structures
- Institutionalize and operationalize coordination at different levels



Proposed multi-sectoral strategy © USAID WKWP 2023.



Thank you for sharing this informed multisectoral strategy. I like the fact that you conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise and documented the hurdles that we have been facing especially on leaving the grassroots networks behind and siloed sector operations that has affected the sustainability of the WASH and WRM projects. We, therefore, accept the challenge and commit to mainstream WRM TWG and adopt the proposed multisectoral strategy as we strengthen our WASH network.

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