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## CO-CREATION AND JOINT WORKPLANNING

Experiences from the Western Kenya Water Project (WKWP)

The USAID Western Kenya Water Project (WKWP) is supporting the Government of Kenya and the County Governments of Bungoma, Busia, Homabay, Kakamega, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori, and Siaya to increase sustained access to water services while enabling better management of water resources. The project brings together the different components critical to county-wide sustained service delivery. These components are urban and rural water services, water resources management, and good governance and financing strategies.

The project aims to provide basic drinking water services to over 500,000 Kenyans, improve service quality to over 350,000 Kenyans, and improve water resource management for the benefit of 300,000 Kenyans by the end of five years. It will help mobilize USD \$15 million in new public and private sector funding for the benefit of the sector.



Community members develop actionable plans in line with their priorities during a meeting facilitated by WKWP ©USAID WKWP 2023.

## INTRODUCTION

USAID WKWP's implementation approach is oriented as a partnership model that aims to promote locally sustained results, helping counties and water service providers mobilize public and private revenues, strengthening local capacities, and accelerating enterprise-driven development. This approach

increases confidence, capacity, and skills to lead their own development and become more self-reliant after the project is concluded. WKWP is committed to putting county governments, water service providers, and citizens in the driver's seat of their own journeys to self-reliance.

### Why Invest in the Co-creation and Joint work planning Process

Laying a stronger foundation and securing ownership of all the county governments, Water Service Providers (WSPs) and targeted communities is crucial for effective implementation of the project. The joint work plan provides an opportunity for multisectoral discussions on co-implementation and co-monitoring of activities to eliminate duplication. It enables the pooling of investments and enhances collective action for collective impact leading to strengthened capacities for sustainability.

It endeavors to achieve the following:

Empower key stakeholders to actively participate in the decision-making process.

Deliberately sequence and layer program activities with county priorities.

Jointly examine data evidence and past progress to identify gaps and priority areas and agree on a joint process of measuring progress and performance.

Use the opportunity as an avenue to review progress and agree on priority areas for improvement.

Provide a cross-sectoral platform to identify opportunities for leveraging on what other partners are doing to eliminate duplication.



*We appreciate WKWP for giving us a chance to participate in this co-creation workshop so that our voices can be heard. We would like to recommend the provision of disability user-friendly water points so that we can access the water points with ease.*

**- A representative from  
Persons with  
Disability in Siaya County.**

Consequently, the process is expected to contribute to establishing and building stronger partnerships, ensure coordination and complementarity, cement mutual trust with core stakeholders, inform field activity planning, and provide an opportunity for partners to provide feedback on the proposed interventions. The users of the joint work plan include the county governments, WSPs, Water Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) actors, civil society organizations, development partners,, and communities. Joint Process is a joint effort that improves collaboration, ownership, accountability and hence guaranteeing sustainability.

### What constitutes the Co-Creation and Joint Workplan Process

The startup process included conducting introductory meetings, inception meetings, and co-creation workshops that were done in the eight counties between October to December 2022 . The aim was to establish a shared vision of improving and sustaining water service provision while enabling better management of water resources with key county stakeholders. The co-creation involved stakeholders' critical reflection on previous and current interventions on water, identifying critical gaps, bottlenecks, and

Co-creation is the practice of collaborating with other stakeholders to guide the design process. Participants with different roles align and offer diverse insights, usually in facilitated workshops

opportunities that informed context-specific prioritized activities included in the costed joint work plans. This process culminated in formalizing the partnerships through the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that provide the framework for co-investment and joint implementation. Through the implementation of the work plans, WKWP will strengthen its relationships with local county partners and encourage strategies that enhance sustainable water interventions.

### Key gaps identified

- Instability in the governance of water service providers,
- High level of inefficiency among regulated WSPs
- Alarmingly high levels of water losses - Non-Revenue Water (NRW) and operating (energy) costs,
- A funding gap of US\$ 23M.

### Co-planning on areas of intervention

The co-creation process pieced together the county priorities in water service provision as spelled out in the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), county annual work plans, and WKWP five priorities and strategic plans and business plans for WSPs. The documents informed the criteria for identifying projects and areas for joint intervention. One

key criterion was that any proposed project must have been prioritized in the respective county government's annual development plan 2021 with a budgetary allocation to it. The other criterion was that the selection process would include quick-win projects – that require low-cost investment for maximum output. All these factors taken together led to the development of a county-specific list.

The section below highlights the detailed process:

#### PRE-PLANNING PHASE

- Mapping of key stakeholders
- Identification of co-creation and joint work timeframe
- Identification of mode of delivery including revisions of tools and templates
- Development of technical scope of work



#### PLANNING PHASE

- Collation and desk review of key technical resources including CIDPs and Governors manifestos.
- Identifying Government Strategic Development Priorities
- Development of the joint logistical plan
- Proper communication with stakeholders
- Develop joint workplans results framework
- Technical working group planning meetings



## CO-CREATION PHASE

- Conduct project introductory meetings targeting county leadership in all counties
- Conduct inception meetings to agree priorities led by the Government
- Conduct the co-creation workshop that involves consultative sessions to integrate joint priorities, indicators and budgets
- Develop a zero draft of the joint workplan and process report



## APPROVAL PHASE

- Validation of the draft joint workplan
- Develop and agree on a monitoring and reporting schedule
- Sign off of the validated joint workplan by WKWP, county government and WSP indicating cost share element with clear roles.



## IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Operationalization of the signed joint workplan



## MONITORING AND REPORTING PHASE

- Conduct monthly debrief sessions and quarterly pause and reflect
- Integrate joint field monitoring and learning visits
- Conduct joint documentation to capture success stories, lessons and impact
- Dissemination of information and knowledge products



*It gives me great pleasure to sign the MOU between Siaya County Government and WKWP. We have been involved at all levels of the co-creation process. When you get water right, you eliminate 75% of health issues. I am glad to be part of this process.*

**- H.E. Governor James Orenge,  
Siaya County.**



*We had lost hope, everyone had abandoned us. We are really grateful you came to support us. We are ready to learn and we need you to build our capacity to be better.*

**- Lucy Wahito,  
Acting Managing Director,  
Gusii Water and Sanitation  
Company (GWASCO).**

## Guiding Principles/Enablers

The project works with county governments and sector stakeholders to strengthen sector governance and improve coordination—both between the national and county levels and between county governments and water service providers. This is crucial for effective devolved sector governance and for the establishment of incentives for private sector engagement and leadership at decentralized levels.

- **Inclusivity /Leave no one behind** - Including everyone regardless of their differences and vulnerabilities promotes learning, ownership, and good will.
- **Mutual trust, accountability, and transparency** practice encourages an open dialogue, and feedback, fosters continuous growth, and promotes a culture of learning e.g. being open and transparent on budget allocation and expenditure to avoid misconceptions and allegations.
- **Continuous coordination** through WASH forums and other county-led processes: Coordination brings harmonious and united action to achieve the common goal. It promotes **Sequencing layering and integration**. It avoids duplication of work or efforts, interpersonal conflicts, controversies, misunderstandings, delays, wastages, and confusion.
- **Open and two-way communication:** problem-solving, sharing insights, and generating new innovative ideas of addressing bottlenecks in implementation and opportunities for further collaboration.
- **Meaningful engagements:** Embrace active and meaningful engagement of all relevant actors leaving no one behind. The county government needs to demonstrate goodwill and commitment through active participation by county leadership.
- **Agility:** some level of flexibility should be embraced which also calls for continuous engagement during implementation.
- **Results and targeted impact:** Realizing sustainable development outcomes through mutual benefits -the effectiveness of joint workplan in achieving sustained and sustainable development impact requires a focus on maximizing clearly identified well defined and measurable outcomes,

## MILESTONES



Coherent and objective joint work planning and clarity on sectoral resource allocation agreeable between the county governments, the project and other actors.



Actors gained cross-sectoral awareness of the linkages and synergies of what is going on in the county in addressing the development agenda for improved service delivery to the people.



Joint workplan platform provided clear evidence of meaningful engagement between county government, WSPs, and the project as such enhanced trust and partnership in addressing the development needs and priorities.



Co-created and validated plans that were signed off with key priorities that meet the citizenry's demands



Joint participation in the development of CIDP III 2023-2027, Annual Development Plans among other county plans that establish the development agenda and priorities for the counties



Joint field visits paved the way for sharing learning and innovation among county government, WSPs, and the project.



Adaptations and change of strategies for effective delivery based on lessons learned and emerging issues.

## CHALLENGES

- **Conflicting timelines** in the county planning and budgeting cycle/calendars between the county government and the project. Harmonization during reviews was difficult due to the financial year cycles.e.g WKWP financial year ends in October while the county government ends in June.
- **Lack of reliable up-to-date data to inform quick decision making.** There is need for reliable and verifiable data on the status of water in the counties. The counties lack updated information on the current population accessing improved water which has resulted in delayed implementation as the stakeholders work on getting baseline information that will support setting targets.
- **Inadequate budgetary allocation to the Water sector.** Budgetary allocation towards water is still low in all eight counties. The situation is further compounded by delayed disbursement of county revenue from the national government. As such, most of the water activities prioritized do not have any budgetary allocation from the county governments. WKWP will explore a working relationship with private sector players, banks, philanthropists, and microfinance institutions to leverage private financing for community water infrastructure projects and working capital loan facilities for water enterprises.
- **Lack of enforcement of regulation on utilization of water resources:** In most counties, there is lack of enforcement to regulate water resources, which has resulted in the exploitation and degradation of water sources.
- **High costs of infrastructure interventions.** Several proposed water projects were either dysfunctional or nonfunctional. Assessments jointly conducted by WKWP and respective county governments indicated extremely high tentative budgets that surpassed the provided project costs per project.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Laying a stronger foundation and securing ownership of all the county governments particularly the line departments is crucial for the effective implementation of the project. Ultimately, this is expected to contribute to achieving the set project targets, attaining the project objectives, and achieving the overall goal.

1. Effective communications and proper planning improved the participation of stakeholders. Timely communication from WKWP to all stakeholders about the meeting dates, venue, and timelines supported individual participation and planning.
2. Leveraging diverse funding sources-co-budgeting allows different stakeholders, including government agencies, development partners, and private sector entities to pool resources. This collaborative funding approach enables access to diverse funding sources, increasing the available provides an opportunity to address larger scale projects and implement comprehensive solutions that go beyond the capacity of individual actors.
3. Sequencing, layering, and integration of activities and joint learning and field visits should be prioritized to inform improvement of service delivery, leverage on synergies, minimize conflicts among the implementing partners, and eventually inform future investments
4. The joint work plans are valued as reference material for water sector planning and budgeting and have been used during the drafting of the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP 2023-2027) and advocating for increased investments in the water sector through supplementary budgets.
5. The workshops contributed to establishing and building stronger partnerships with the respective counties, ensuring coordination and complementarity, cementing mutual trust with core stakeholders, and providing an opportunity for partners to collaborate e.g. through SANA International presentation in Kisumu and Homabay counties on their delivery model, WKWP organized a field visit to learn about their service delivery models to pick best practices.
6. Co-creation with governments is critical in designing government-led, government-owned, and government-managed interventions. Co-creation has revealed high levels of commitment by county governments and shows the need for governments to actively support and participate in the implementation projects to enhance sustainability.

7. Based on the county consultations and meetings with Water Service Providers (WSP), it was noted that critical self-reflection and peer learning are critical to inform decision-making for enhancing water services delivery and water resources management.

The joint workplans are being used as reference materials for water sector planning and budgeting. The workplans were presented to the county leadership and members of the County Assembly committees for Water and Environment for concurrence and to understand the core funding areas needed to inform resource mobilization.

## TIPS

- Ensure your workshops are interactive and build on design thinking methods.
- Invite stakeholders from across the board, provided they can contribute.
- Work to discover what's viable, what's a direct need and what will benefit the target beneficiary.
- Stay curious and keep listening – it takes time to become collaborative partners.
- Use techniques such as the 5 Whys to stimulate collaborative efforts.

## RECOMMENDATION

Laying a stronger foundation and securing ownership of all the county governments particularly the line departments is crucial for the effective implementation of the project. Ultimately, this is expected to contribute to achieving the set project targets, attaining the project objectives, and achieving the overall goal.

- Aligning and integrating the project timelines with the county government budget cycle for effective implementation
- Continued joint monitoring through monthly and quarterly pause and reflect sessions to improve implementation.
- Institutionalization of knowledge management tool kits that document co-creation and joint implementation to form point of reference for sharing among actors.
- Integrate co-creation and joint workplan into county M and E and have the process included in the budget circular that outlines the county schedule of planning and budget activities.

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