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KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AFRICAN SANITATION ACADEMY (ASA) FEASIBILITY STUDY AND MARKET ASSESSMENT

Sanitation remains a neglected service in Africa. There is chronic under-investment in sanitation infrastructure and management, and a general lack of strategic approaches for addressing sanitation on a larger scale; lack of prioritization of sanitation by Ministries of Health; and lack of political leadership to address the sanitary revolution that could improve the lives of approximately [695 million people](#) living in Sub-Saharan Africa without access to improved sanitation.

A Catalyst for Learning and Leadership

To advance African-led transformational change in the sanitation sector, in 2017 the [USAID Water for Africa through Leadership and Institutional Support \(WALIS\)](#) project studied the feasibility of a sanitation training center with an African continent focus commonly called the “Africa Sanitation Academy (ASA)”. The feasibility studies were commissioned to: analyze the needs and demands of sanitation management and leadership in African utilities and local governments; consider products appropriate to meet these demands; explore potential partnerships; determine how an ASA could be structured and financed; and study the overall feasibility of the concept.



Three regional market assessments held in Eastern, Southern, and West Africa



128 key informant interviews held across the three regions



290 people working in sanitation in Africa that responded to an ASA online survey

The data collection exercise also included a consolidation workshop, additional interviews, and secondary research into key aspects of course delivery e.g. communities of practice.

KEY FINDINGS

- The potential target audience for an ASA is broad and includes those working in rural and urban sanitation, as well as the private sector, utilities, nongovernmental organizations, and government.
- An ASA does not have to be a “fixed bricks and mortar” location but could be an association or organization that connects students to materials, and provides additional quality assurance.
- An ASA needs to focus on building competencies for sanitation leadership to produce rounded, competent staff who have what it takes to deliver.
- Shorter, more focused methods of competency and skills building were in greater demand than formal academic courses.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main takeaways from analysis of the online survey and regional feasibility reports are summarized in four lessons:

1.

Lack of leadership is contributing to the poor performance in the sanitation sector

2.

Most people working in the sanitation sector view it as an aspirational sector to work

3.

Classroom-based learning should be consolidated in the field with peer and mentor engagement

4.

An ASA will address the ability of the sector to attract and retain skilled professionals, and nurture sanitation leadership

BUILDING SANITATION LEADERSHIP

To focus on its objective to build sanitation leadership throughout Africa, the feasibility report developed a framework of core competencies for sanitation leadership. The framework has been further cross-referenced with training needs to identify a subset of priority competencies for an ASA startup. These competencies include: **advocacy, behavior change communication, project management, strategy, and monitoring.**

DELIVERY METHOD RECOMMENDATIONS

The regional market assessments and feasibility studies examined various models for leadership development, both inside and outside the sanitation sector, and made recommendations on the most suitable delivery methods to meet the needs of the sector, including:



An ASA should play a key role in **matching knowledge-exchange activities** to a participant's individual competency-building needs



Short courses should be of the **shortest duration** possible to minimize time out of the office for current and potential sanitation leaders



A suite of **short, mix-and-match courses** that deal with specific rather than broad topic areas is needed



The focus should be on building a set of **core competencies for managers and leaders** so it can respond to changing needs of the sector

Download the complete ASA Feasibility Study [here](#). The market assessment reports are also available for download at the respective links: [East](#), [West](#) and [Southern Africa](#)