Welcome to the inaugural RWSSI newsletter, designed to update you on programmes, progress and activities in the Bank’s rural water supply and sanitation sector. In this launch edition, we share some of the Initiative’s notable developments and highlight various strategic events that have taken place, as well as some of the lessons and experiences we have had in pursuit of our continental RWSS development goals. As we know, more than half of Africa’s population lives in rural areas where access to water supply and sanitation remains a huge issue and, with only a year to go to the MDGs and a decade to the African Water Vision goals, there is still much to be done. For RWSSI, we are grateful to all our partners, donors, supporters and communities for working with us to secure an Africa ‘where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment’ [The Africa Water Vision for 2025].

Jochen Rudolph, Focal Point
Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative
Water and Sanitation Department (OWAS)
Tel.: +225 2026 1227 / Email: j.rudolph@afdb.org

Children in Ndiombe Matar in Senegal’s Louga region enjoying their new water supply facility (Photo by AfDB)
The current RWSSI Strategic Plan has been designed to address some of the specific challenges faced by the rural water and sanitation sector in Africa. It articulates the emerging challenges and provides several solutions, in the context of the Bank’s response to this critical developmental issue.

The Strategy Document provides a 3-year vision for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative. The document is available online and can be downloaded from the RWSSI website in English and French:

Strategic Plan (English / French)

The RWSSI Trust Fund is a Multi-Donor Trust Fund managed by the AfDB, created to earmark resources for financing rural water supply and sanitation programmes in Africa. In partnership with the African Development Bank, bilateral and multilateral agencies, African governments and communities, the Trust Fund aims to accelerate access to drinking water supply and sanitation in rural Africa in order to attain the MDG targets in 2015 and the African Water Vision targets of 2025. Through the Fund, 138 million Euros have been contributed to date by the RWSSI Trust Fund Donors (Burkina Faso, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland). These funds have helped leverage a total of 4.85 billion Euros for rural water supply and sanitation and have contributed to the provision of access to clean water for 82 million people and improved sanitation for 57 million.

RWSSI : Targeting full and equitable access to safe, adequate and affordable rural water supply and sanitation by 2025

Mainstreaming: climate change, gender & social equity, prioritizing fragile states and off-track countries

RWSSI Objective: “Achieving 70% access to water supply and 62% to sanitation services for rural areas by 2015”.

**RWSSI TF**

Leverage effect
Every Euro invested by the RWSSI TF has attracted 16 more.

Catalytic effect
RWSSI-TF resources are increasingly used to address the enabling environment and sustainability requirements in prioritizing fragile, post-conflict and off-track states.

**RWSSI TF**

Financial

- **ADB**: € 1.1 Billion
- Other Donors : € 1.9 Billion
- Governments : € 1.5 Billion
- Beneficiaries : € 0.24 Billion

**RWSSI TF**

Financed

- **RWSSI TF**: € 0.14 Billion

**RWSSI**

Investments

- **RWSSI/TF governance**
- Sustainability of RWSSI systems
- Increased knowledge management and communication, including M&E

**RWSSI**

Components

- **RWSSI subsector governance and enabling environment**

**RWSSI**

Outputs

- **129 000 Public Latrines**
- **2.1 Million Household Latrines**
- **50 000 Boreholes & Hand Dug Wells**
- **40 000 Springs**
- **56 000 Rainwater Harvesting & Others**
- **8.1 Million Persons trained in Hygiene/Health Sensitization**
- **91 000 WASH Committees Established**
- **31 000 Artisans trained**

**RWSSI**

Results

- **32 countries**
- **44 projects/programs**
- **82 Mil. access to water**
- **22,000 Pers/day**
- **57 Mil. access to Sanitation**
- **15,000 Pers/day**
The RWSSI Trust-Fund will host the resources mobilised through the Kigali Action Plan (KAP), which was launched on the fringes of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Malabo. The KAP is an African Union initiative that seeks to mobilise at least Euro 50 million that will contribute to providing water supply, improved sanitation and hygiene for five million rural people in 10 African Union Member States that are considered to be off-track in achieving the MDGs. Burundi, CAR, Chad, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Lesotho and Mauritania have been selected as beneficiaries. With the exception of Lesotho and Mauritania these countries are regarded as fragile states.

The KAP will focus on the implementation of direct action at community level, aimed at redressing rural household water supply and sanitation deficiencies in Africa, recognising that Africa will miss the MDG targets for water supply and sanitation by gaps of 16% and 22%, respectively. In rural Africa today, it is estimated that out of a total rural population of 651 million, 282 million people do not have adequate access to water supply and 455 million people do not have adequate access to sanitation. The inaugural African Water and Sanitation Report to the AU Assembly showed that expenditure was well below the requirements and highlighted the need to address the issues that are hindering the implementation of the 2008 Sharm el-Sheikh commitments.

The KAP intends to mobilise part of these funds by hosting a fundraising event in 2014, championing the forgoing of water and sanitation events in Africa in 2015, and soliciting direct donations by individuals through a crowd funding platform.

Read the Press Release here. (English / French)

CONTACT
Anselme Vodounhessi at: Anselmev@african-union.org
Eng. Emmanuel Kamanzi at: emmanuel.kamanzi@mininfra.gov.rw
Jochen Rudolph at: j.rudolph@afdb.org
Each year, since its establishment in 2006 the Steering Committee of the RWSSI Trust Fund has met to review the Fund’s progress and examine the work programme and objectives for the coming year. This year, the 8th Steering Committee Meeting, chaired by the AfDB’s Sector Operations Vice-President, Mr Aly Abou-Sabaa, was held in Tunis on Monday, 16th June.

In his opening remarks, the VP stated that the RWSSI Strategic Plan provided the Bank and its partners with a clear orientation that allowed the Initiative and the RWSSI-Trust Fund to play a key role in increasing investments in water supply and sanitation; supporting national programme preparation; scaling-up service delivery; and capacity building in fragile states and post conflict countries. He highlighted the total funding committed to the RWSSI Trust Fund to date which amounts to Euro 173.7 million. Of this Euro 138.04 has been received from donors. The Vice-President added that the total funding leveraged (from AfDB, other donor governments and communities) for every Euro of RWSSI TF resources committed in 2013, is 16 Euros. “RWSSI has continued to benefit from the Least Developed Countries Fund of the Global Environmental Facility and also managed to mobilise additional resources in 2013 that will support climate change adaptation activities in Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Uganda through rural water and sanitation operations” said Mr. Abou-Sabaa. “This is a positive example of how RWSSI has managed to tap into new and innovative sources of funding. I call on the Bank’s development partners to provide more funding to the rural water supply and sanitation sub-sector through bi-lateral and multilateral channels, as well as through the RWSSI-TF, in order to enable the achievement of the common goal of improving the livelihoods of the Africa’s rural populations” he concluded.

During the June meeting, TF-SC Members reviewed the implementation of the current plan and examined the 2013 RWSSI Annual Progress Report, including the new M&E Framework. Participants also discussed the 2014 RWSSI Work Plan, resource mobilisation efforts and communication.

The SC meeting also provided members with an overview of programme developments in the field. Three countries (Malawi, Morocco and Sierra Leone) were invited to present their rural water supply and sanitation programmes. Representatives of the Bank’s partner agencies in the respective countries presented their results and lessons learned. The Bank’s Evaluation Department IDEV also shared findings of its recent evaluation of eighteen water and sanitation projects, implemented by the Bank.

Read the RWSSI Annual Progress Report here.
MANAGING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS  

New RWSSI Projects Become Drivers for Strengthened Country M&E in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector

In line with the Bank’s Monitoring and Evaluation strategy for the Water and Sanitation Department, five new RWSSI projects will contribute to strengthening the sector M&E in the respective countries (Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Senegal and Zambia). This new direction marks a distinctive shift from previous RWSSI operations by ensuring the improved availability and quality of data about the sector at national and sub-national level. Interventions will also focus on enhancing capacity and coordination within sector institutions (e.g. in Zambia - see box below).

In the longer term, more robust M&E is expected to contribute to better planning, management and improved accountability – both in the countries and for the Bank, and to the achievement of the national objectives and MDGs. In Sierra Leone the Bank is conducting an M&E Needs and Gaps Assessment, which will form the basis of the sector’s M&E framework, streamlining stakeholders and donors’ efforts. Impact evaluations will also be conducted in five countries (Senegal, Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia and Tanzania) in 2014/15. The Bank is also engaged in improving its internal capacity for measuring the development results of RWSSI and other operations through training, and in actively contributing to regional and global M&E initiatives including the ‘Sanitation and Water for All’ task team on harmonising and standardising indicators.

CONTACT Fabio Losa at: f.losa@afdb.org

A new M&E strategy with 3 major objectives

Contribute to global M&E framework and development of standards (Global M&E)

Strengthen countries M&E capacities (Country M&E)

Improve OWAS M&E capacities and framework (Project M&E)

Zambia RWSSI Programme on country M&E Support

The new Zambian RWSSI Programme includes a substantial component to strengthen the sector M&E framework in response to specific country needs.

The planned actions coordinated with line Ministries and development partners range from supporting national water and sanitation inventories and MISs, funding an additional WASH module into the national Living Condition Monitoring Survey 2015, through to training and a specific support to the national sector review.

The actions are expected to provide: i) More comprehensive and robust data, in particular on sanitation and hygiene behaviour, ii) Improved MIS supporting planning and management in rural WASH, iii) Empowered and capacitated stakeholders at all levels, iv) More robust national sector review process, dissemination of information and knowledge, and v) Enhanced sector coordination and resource mobilisation.
The African Development Bank joined other delegates at the ‘Sanitation and Water for All’ (http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/) 2014 High Level Meeting held on the fringes of the World Bank Spring Meeting in Washington DC. This year, the convention, which was preceded by a meeting of Ministers responsible for water and sanitation, included a panel on ‘Reaching everyone and making services last: Eliminating inequalities and achieving institutional and technical sustainability’.

The AfDB is a founding member of SWA - a global partnership of governments, donors, civil society organisations and other development partners, which seeks to coordinate and improve the accountability and use of scarce resources more effectively, in order to achieve universal access to clean water, adequate sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The Bank is also a member of the SWA Steering Committee.

AfDB’s strategic role in the water and sanitation sector is threefold: 1) developing sustainable infrastructure and inclusive services for water security; 2) promoting sector governance and knowledge management; and 3) enhancing water sector collaboration and coordination to achieve Integrated Water Resources Development and Management in Africa.

**CONTACT**
Maimuna Nalubega at: m.nalubega@afdb.org
The African Development Bank has been active in the water sector in Nigeria for over 28 years. The Bank’s Rural Water and Sanitation programme has been in operation since 2009. In this issue, we take a look at how the Bank is responding to the rural water and sanitation situation in one of the poorest regions in this vast country.

The Bank’s rural water and sanitation projects cover two States: Osun State in Western Nigeria and Yobe State in North Eastern Nigeria. Along with Borno and Adamawa States, Yobe is one of three states in the north eastern part of the country currently under a state of emergency that was declared by the Federal Government of Nigeria in May 2013, amid growing concerns about the escalating violence.

Yobe State is now considered to be experiencing extreme fragility. As a result of the insurgency in the region, many women and children in the area have become widows and orphans, which has made the State more vulnerable to poverty. The current security situation has also reduced the movement of people for economic pursuits. Furthermore, Yobe is located in the Sahelian region, where rainfall is inadequate for farming even during wet season in some parts of the state, resulting in the need for irrigation to support farming activities and water for cattle.

The overall aim of the RWSSP project is to increase access to safe water supply and sustainable sanitation for the rural communities. In Yobe State, which has a population of 2.9 million and is the 6th largest of Nigeria’s 36 States, the project is focussed on infrastructure provision and delivering sanitation facilities, water for human consumption, as well as for watering of cattle. The State is endowed with large stocks of animals and is one of the largest producers of beef in the country. A large percentage of the population depends on livestock for livelihood. Adequate water supply is therefore needed for animal watering, especially during the dry season, where the movement from north to south in search of pasture and water occurs. In this migration process, conflicts are bound to occur between the pastoralists and the local farmers in their way.

AfDB’s intervention in this area is therefore vital not only for poverty reduction, but also for conflict avoidance. The overall objective of the rural water supply and sanitation project in Yobe is to provide access to safe water for 2.56 million people by 2015, by providing sustainable water facilities, including hand-dug wells, boreholes and motorised boreholes. By this target date the Bank also aims to provide 2.30 million beneficiaries with hygienic sanitation facilities including SANPLAT and VIP latrines.

Community Development is a big part of the Bank’s intervention, where Water and Sanitation Committees (WASHCOMs) are being formed and trained to sustainably operate and manage the water and sanitation facilities installed. Since the inception of the programme in 2009, a total of 850 Water and Sanitation
Committees (WASHCOM) have been established and it is expected that around one-third of WASHCOM positions will soon be filled by women. By 2015, it is envisaged that the functionality of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation facilities will have increased from less than 50% in 2006 to over 95%.

To date, 831 water facilities have been constructed and/or rehabilitated and these are now operational and have resulted in increased coverage. Significant progress has also been made regarding capacity building at State staff level and on training of Local Government Areas WASH staff in Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), Monitoring & Evaluation and community management.

In order to sustain the projects delivery and to continue to achieve development results in spite of the deteriorating security situation, the Bank is adopting several new measures. Operating in Yobe now requires greater flexibility by the Bank in its implementation approach. Given that some development partners have scaled down their operations significantly in North Eastern Nigeria, the Bank has had to adjust its operational processes, in order to respond more timeously and effectively and to deliver on the projects objectives. In addition, certain rules and guidelines have been adapted to ensure continuity at a local level. Many of the service providers are no longer actively involved in the programme’s delivery and some foreign contractors have pulled out of already awarded contracts. In response, the Bank has been more adaptable in agreeing procurement packages that ensure continuity of work. Such processes are now using national instead of international competitive bidding, while ensuring quality by boosting construction supervision using locally based individual consultants. This use of more locally based contractors from within Yobe State and from the neighbouring states is addressing unemployment and inclusivity of the local population, thus mitigating some of the fragility.

The Africa Development Bank places special emphasis on supporting Fragile and Post Conflict States, as articulated in its Ten Year Strategy (2013-22). Between 2014 and 2016, under its ‘Universal Access’ commitment, the Bank will increase its focus on MDG off-track and Fragile States and up to 25 out of 47 planned new operations in rural water and sanitation initiatives will prioritise fragility.

CONTACT Tom Mugoya at: t.mugoya@afdb.org
AfDB’s Goodwill Message at the 5th African Water Week on the theme ‘Placing Water at the Heart of the Post 2015 Development Agenda’

The 2014 Dakar Declaration commits to ‘mobilising domestic resources and addressing the issue of sustainable financing, including the replenishment and increase of AMCOW’s African Water Facility and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative, in line with past declarations:

Read the full Declaration here. (English / French)

Excerpt from the Goodwill Message Delivered by Mr Keba Ba, Division Manager: Water and Sanitation Department – West and Central Africa

Le continent africain s’est engagé dans un processus de profonde transformation économique pour bâtir l’Afrique que nous voulons pour les Africains. Dans ce contexte, l’importance de l’Eau est centrale et fondamentale pour le développement humain, englobant à la fois les dimensions économique, sociale et environnementale. Pour autant, la gestion de ce bien si précieux se veut holistique et durable. En cela, le thème de cette année est en parfaite harmonie avec la nouvelle stratégie 2013-2022 de la Banque qui est bâtie autour de i) deux objectifs majeurs, notamment la croissance inclusive et la transition vers une croissance verte ; ii) Cinq piliers, à savoir le développement des infrastructures, la gouvernance, l’intégration régionale, le développement du secteur privé et la promotion du savoir et de la technologie ; et iii) trois domaines prioritaires, notamment la promotion du genre, la sécurité alimentaire et les états fragiles.

Dans cette stratégie, la Banque accorde donc une importance particulière au développement d’infrastructures d’eau et d’assainissement qui soient inclusives et durables, particulièrement dans le contexte actuel marqué par les changements climatiques,
la croissance démographique, la forte urbanisation et une impérieuse nécessité d’utiliser les ressources financières de façon plus parcimonieuse face à des besoins croissants. La Banque a toujours appuyé et continuera d’appuyer les pays africains pour l’atteinte de leurs objectifs en matière d’eau et d’assainissement. Pour preuve, le portefeuille actuel de la Banque dans le secteur représente 3,25 milliards de Dollars EU pour 72 projets dans 35 pays. Dans le milieu rural, les interventions de la Banque, pour la période de 2004 à 2013, ont contribué à fournir de l’eau potable à 66 millions de personnes et un accès à un assainissement décent à 49 millions de personnes. La récente création du fonds « Africa 50 » constitue une preuve de l’engagement constant de la Banque à appuyer le développement des infrastructures.

Le débat sur la définition d’un objectif spécifique pour l’eau, nous ajouterons pour l’eau et l’assainissement, dans les SDG a particulièrement retenu notre attention. Nous voudrions féliciter l’AMCOW pour avoir offert une tribune de choix pour une telle discussion. Les deux options sont en réalité plus complémentaires qu’antinomiques, l’objectif spécifique ne pouvant se réaliser que dans la mesure où les conditions liées à la gouvernance, à la durabilité et aux aspects environnementaux et sociaux auront été remplies. En outre, cet objectif bénéficiera à tous les autres secteurs, santé, éducation, énergie, agriculture. Il devra toutefois être le plus simple possible avec des indicateurs pertinents et adaptables selon le contexte spécifique des pays. Nous resterons partie prenante à cette réflexion.

Nous ne saurions conclure nos propos sans parler de la qualité de la collaboration entre l’AMCOW et la Banque. Assister à l’engouement que suscite aujourd’hui la semaine africaine de l’Eau nous apporte une fierté particulière : Celle d’avoir fait naître un bébé en 2006 à Tunis qui a grandi, s’est fortifié pour devenir un événement incontournable dans l’agenda de l’eau et de l’assainissement. C’est tout à l’honneur de l’AMCOW de démontrer que très souvent, il suffit juste de montrer la voie. En outre, pour ne citer qu’un seul autre exemple, les excellents résultats obtenus par la FAE, organe de l’AMCOW administré par la Banque, qui s’est positionnée comme un acteur majeur dans le secteur en Afrique constitue un motif de fierté pour tous. Nous voudrions, à travers ma modeste voix, renouveler aux Autorités de l’AMCOW l’engagement de la Banque à toujours contribuer au renforcement de cette collaboration pour l’accès des populations africaines - rural et urbain - à leur droit inaliénable à l’eau et à l’assainissement ainsi qu’au développement économique ».

CONTACT Keba Ba at: k.ba@afdb.org
Malawi faces serious challenges in providing access to potable water supply and improved sanitation services to its population, and safe hygiene practices remain low, leading to a high prevalence of water and sanitation related diseases. This results in poor health, loss of productivity and more poverty.

Since 1976, the Bank has been supporting a range of water and sanitation sector activities in Malawi, amounting to US$143 million. This partnership with the Government and people of Malawi makes the African Development Bank one of the key players in the country’s water sector. The Bank has also leveraged co-financing of US$ 14.0 million for the programme from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (then Australian Agency for International Development, AusAID).

The Bank’s support has been directed both to urban and rural areas. Among these are several projects with the Blantyre Water Board, the Central and Northern Region Water Boards, the Mpira-Balaka Water Supply and other district centres. As a result of the Blantyre Water Board project, 18,000 m³/day capacity was added to the Walker’s Ferry Water Treatment Plant, through infrastructure investments that included the construction of 25 km of Φ700 mm pumping main and a 16 km distribution pipeline.

In the area of sanitation, the Bank has supported the development of three Studies: the Sanitation Master Plan Study, the District Sanitation Study, and a Study which looked at the construction of sanitation facilities in the districts served by the Central and Northern Region Water Boards.

From the Bank supported WSS feasibility study for district centres in the country, several centres have been developed by the Bank, including Mzimba and Mulanje. Other development partners have provided support in Chitipa and Nkhata Bay.

The Bank has also supported the implementation of the Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (IRWSSP) for Ntchisi and Mzimba districts, which was completed in 2008. Through this initiative, water supply coverage has increased from 28% and 47% to 88% and 89% in Ntchisi and Mzimba districts, respectively.

Through the Bank’s support for the implementation of the National Water Development Programme (NWDP) under the Ministry of Water Development and Irrigation (MoWDI), more than one million people in the four districts of Lilongwe, Machinga, Zomba and Mulanje have benefited from access to clean water. More than 300,000 people have also gained access to improved sanitation, in line with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).
The Bank’s adoption of an innovative, progressive and comprehensive approach to addressing both institutional and infrastructure challenges in water and sanitation in several districts in Malawi has been welcomed by the Government, which is promoting the framework. The projects have provided customised support to the Government in decentralising water and sanitation services to community and district levels. To date, the Bank has supported the Government of Malawi in addressing the needs of 6 out of 28 districts. The “Sustainable Rural Water and Sanitation Infrastructure for Improved Health and Livelihoods” project that was approved by the Bank’s Board of Directors in April 2014 will add 5 more districts. This new RWSSI project is being implemented by the Government of Malawi with support from several development partners including the World Bank, UNICEF, European Investment Bank, the European Union and the Australian Government.

These successful projects in Malawi have contributed to reducing the distance to accessible potable water to within 500 meters, by constructing and rehabilitating water points, in addition to reducing the school drop-out rate of girls’ and improving sanitation in many schools and health centres across the country.

List of Water and Sanitation Projects in Malawi, to date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Amount (UA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blantyre Water Supply</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>19 Sept 1977</td>
<td>31 Dec 1982</td>
<td>4,602,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mpira/Balaka Rural Water Supply</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>19 Nov 1984</td>
<td>31 Dec 1999</td>
<td>11,587,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>District Water Supply II</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>12 Jun 1990</td>
<td>30 Jun 1999</td>
<td>14,149,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sanitation Master Plan Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>21 Apr 1992</td>
<td>31 Dec 1996</td>
<td>677,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Blantyre Water Supply and Sanitation Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>21 Apr 1992</td>
<td>31 Dec 2001</td>
<td>7,199,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>District Water Supply III</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>3 Dec 1997</td>
<td>30 Jun 2004</td>
<td>11,216,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>District Centres Sanitation Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>18 Nov 1998</td>
<td>30 Jun 2003</td>
<td>944,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>National Water Development Program</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>2 Jul 2008</td>
<td>31 Dec 2013</td>
<td>28,984,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Access to Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor in Blantyre City</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>28 Dec 2009</td>
<td>30 Sept 2014</td>
<td>530,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Strengthening Water Sector Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>28 Jan 2010</td>
<td>31 Dec 2013</td>
<td>1,644,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95,121,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTACT Benson Nkhoma at b.nkhoma@afdb.org
CASE STUDY
Providing a Solution to the Sustainability Challenge: Water User Associations (WUAs) in Malawi

Until recently, rural piped water supply schemes in Malawi were managed by voluntary organizations, called Scheme Management Committees. However, many of these schemes were not functioning properly, and as a result over 45% of the taps were not operational. In an effort to strengthen the sustainability of piped rural water supply schemes, the Government of Malawi recently introduced Water User Associations (WUAs) in rural areas and market centres. The WUAs are legal entities, which operate as “small water boards” at community level. They are, responsible for overseeing operation and maintenance of the rural piped schemes. As legal entities, WUAs aim to provide improved levels of service to their members through a Board of Trustees (BOT). In order to ensure efficiency in service delivery, WUAs will employee utility operators to manage the schemes, including collecting funds from consumer charges. Funds collected are used for the operation, maintenance and expansion of the water supply schemes, thereby improving levels of service and sustaining the water supply infrastructure. This also promotes Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in rural areas.

In order to facilitate the establishment of the WUAs, Malawi’s government developed guidelines to assist Implementing Entities and other service providers in establishing the Associations. WUA Training Manuals were also produced to assist different users to develop the competencies required to manage the water and sanitation systems efficiently and effectively. This is aimed at cost recovery and is done on a ‘willingness and ability to pay’ basis. Tariff Guidelines have also been developed to assist WUAs and other stakeholders to set and implement realistic tariffs for rural water supply schemes. This will improve their financial resource bases and ensure the sustainability of the systems.

Since the WUA management model is transitioning from a voluntary organization to a commercial entity, there are several challenges that need to be tackled with time. However, with the first WUAs established and registered to date, the experience has been encouraging. An initial assessment has shown that some of the WUAs have achieved financial break-even between expenses and income from fees. Some have also started expanding their systems and installing more household connections. The success of this management model would alleviate the burden of supporting the piped schemes from the government and render the schemes more sustainable and productive. Nevertheless during the initial stages, as the WUAs are being established and the concept rolled out, the Associations need to be provided with limited operating expenses.
FILMS

This quarter, a series of short documentary films have been produced, showcasing rural water supply and sanitation interventions in three countries including Malawi, Rwanda and Senegal. These films present RWSSI impacts from the perspective of the beneficiaries and cover both water supply and sanitation.

WEBSITE

You can also find out more about various other rural water and sanitation projects and studies by visiting the RWSSI website. (English / French)

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter highlights some of the RWSSI-related activities that the Bank and its partners are involved in. We hope that you have found it interesting and informative. We plan to bring this publication to you every quarter.

FEEDBACK

As our very first issue, we would appreciate your feedback. Please share your comments and observations via: rwssi@afdb.org

We will be happy for you to share this newsletter within your networks and to encourage colleagues and friends to sign up here

RWSSI ONLINE COMMUNITY

RWSSI is part of the DGroups Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) community. By signing up you will be able to receive future newsletters and to join the debate on various RWSSI-related topics and themes. If you change your mind, you can unsubscribe at any time by emailing leave.rwssi@dgroups.org.

Finally, we would also like to encourage you, our readers, to contribute to this newsletter, telling us what you are doing in the area of rural water supply and sanitation in Africa. Please send your contributions to rwssi@afdb.org. The RWSSI editorial team welcomes contributions in both English and French. Wherever possible links to texts in both languages will be provided.

“Every drop counts... count every drop!”

Pupils at a school in Burkina Faso outside their new sanitation facility (Photo by AfDB)
Countries with Bank-Funded RWSSI Programmes/Projects and Studies as at 31/12/13

EDITORIAL TEAM (RWSSI Secretariat)
Jochen Rudolph – Audrey Mpunzwana – Maimuna Nalubega

DESIGN TEAM (AFDB Communication and External Relations Department)
Yattien-Amiguet L. – Justin T. Kabasele