

Internal Assessment of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative

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An intervention in the water sector provides wide benefits across other sectors given its important linkages to health, child mortality, education, gender empowerment, and food security. The Bank recognizes the strategic role and unique multi-sectoral nature of water and sanitation in advancing the Bank's poverty reduction and economic growth agenda for the continent.

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Prior to 2003, more than 80 percent of Bank Group financing for water supply and sanitation focused on urban areas. The Bank took a strategic decision to increase its water sector investments in rural areas and launched the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI). The Initiative was conceived in response to the African Water Vision and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was then adopted by African governments and international development partners as the common framework for resource mobilization and investment at the First International Conference on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa, held in Paris in April 2005.

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The overall objective of the RWSSI is to provide access to sustainable water supply and sanitation services to 271 and 295 million people in rural Africa, respectively, to reach the target of 80 percent coverage by 2015. This target has been designed to be reached in stages: 50 percent access in Phase 1 (2004-2007), 66 percent in Phase 2 (2008-2010) and 80 percent in Phase 3 (2011-2015).

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The water supply and sanitation situation in Africa is dismal and the future looks bleak if no action is taken. According to the 2010 Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) report, access to improved water supply and sanitation services was 47 percent and 24 percent respectively in Sub-Saharan Africa. Situation in the Fragile States is much worse.

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The RWSSI is aimed at accelerating access to sustainable RWSS through: awareness raising; ensuring beneficiary participation; adoption of fast track mechanisms, using demand driven programmatic approaches; raising the profile of sanitation; emphasis on capacity building; and mobilization of more funds from governments, communities, NGOs and donors.

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The financial resources required to achieve the 2015 RWSSI targets were estimated at USD14.8 billion. About USD 3 billion was estimated to have been mobilised in Phase I out of the estimated USD 4.5 billion required. An additional USD 1.5 to 2.5 billion was mobilised for RWSSI between 2007 and 2009 bringing the total funds mobilised to between USD 4.5 and 5.5 billion. Of this, USD 0.95 billion and USD 0.82 billion are contribution by the AfDB, and governments and communities respectively.

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Some of the results achieved through the RWSSI interventions are:

- i) 28 RWSS programs in 22 African countries have been approved, of which 16 have started to deliver water and provide sanitation services. The additional people served with access to water supply through the RWSS program rose from 1.15 million people repor-

ted at the end of 2007, to 32.63 million people at the end of 2010, while for sanitation it increased from 0.58 million to 20.09 million people, over the same period.

- ii) Through and in parallel with RWSS programs, several countries have made good progress on institutional reforms in the rural water supply sub-sector. Financing instruments employed in these operations have ranged from project loans and grants to sector-earmarked budget support.
- iii) The RWSSI is making major contributions to capacity building. In 13 RWSSI countries about 34,000 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education Committees have been established, and by the end of 2009, over 26,000 of them had received training in hygiene and health education, management of water points, among others.
- iv) The private sector is actively involved in the implementation of the interventions providing services that include consultancies, construction, drilling, as well as the provision of services by artisans, community facilitators, water supply operators and spare parts suppliers.

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Some of the challenges which need to be addressed during the coming years are:

- i) **Inclusion of more countries in need:** To date only 22 countries have RWSS interventions, with over 30 countries still waiting. This poses a challenge as 18 of these countries are Fragile States or post conflict countries requiring support in front-end activities, including policy and institutional reform and massive capacity building efforts.
- ii) **Entrenching decentralisation:** Though many African countries have embarked on the process of devolving responsibilities for water and sanitation services to local authorities, in most cases, decentralization has only been on paper with little practical manifestation. More importantly, there is a need to increase financial flows and transfer authority to local level structures.
- iii) **Improving supply chains:** Existing supply chains managed by governments are weak and most RWSS programs have not incorporated the establishment of privately-driven supply chains. Communities are exposed to very weak supply chains and post-construction support.
- iv) **Low sanitation coverage:** According to the JMP 2010 report, only 6 countries in Africa are likely to meet the sanitation MDG target. Without further political and financial commitment from Governments and development partners, the sanitation situation might actually regress on the continent. In most countries the management of sanitation is fragmented and there is no designated budget and institutional home for sanitation provision.
- v) **Conflicting financing mechanisms for sanitation:** The majority of the RWSS programs finance only community mobilization and training in hygiene edu-

cation and construction of public sanitation facilities. There is a need for policy guidance on the financing of household sanitation facilities.

- vi) **Improving Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks:** Despite financial support through a number of RWSS programs for the establishment of M&E systems, most countries are unable to provide reliable data for sector planning and information management.
- vii) **Weak knowledge dissemination:** Practices in the use of the private sector and experience from use of innovative technologies are not efficiently shared across the region due to lack of knowledge and information dissemination mechanisms, and thus the benefits of innovative approaches and experiences are often lost.

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In order for the RWSSI to continue its support to socio-economic development in the rural areas of Africa, it needs to be buttressed with a number of actions. The key intervention areas identified for immediate action are:

- i) **Enhance the Bank's implementation capacity through use of Field Offices:** The Bank should strengthen its capacity for implementing RWSSI by effective use of Field Offices (FOs). Appropriate operational procedures, guidelines and tools for management, monitoring and evaluation by FOs need to be developed.
- ii) **Countries should be in the driving seat:** The political buy-in by national governments for the RWSSI should be reflected with the development of clear sector policy, increasing budgetary resources, strong support to decentralisation, moving to greater cost recovery, providing attention to functionality of the schemes, developing the RWSS national program in countries, and strengthening RWSS M&E systems.
- iii) **Strengthen programmatic approach:** A programmatic approach will lead to more a coherent and integrated national framework for greater harmonization and donor support. In line with this, it is necessary to work towards adopting common procedures and instruments for donor interventions at country level.
- iv) **Strengthen local capacity to deliver goods and services:** Capacity of local service providers, contractors, consultants and artisans in the countries should be strengthened through concerted action to develop small and medium sized enterprises in the rural areas in collaboration with other sector programmes.
- v) **Collaborate to strengthen country M&E frameworks:** The AfDB should collaborate with other development partners in institutionalizing WSS M&E systems in all RMCs.
- vi) **Take action on all fronts for sanitation and implement eThekwini commitments:** The serious sanitation deficit in Africa requires continuous advocacy to undertake concrete actions in order to attain the sanitation MDG target, as stated in the eThekwini declaration.



This country profile was prepared by the Water and Sanitation Department (OWAS) of the African Development Bank. Every effort has been made to present reliable and up to date information as of October 2010.