



The Kenya Sanitation Governance and Exhibition Conference 2024

Concept Note

1. Introduction

Access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is recognized as a fundamental human right by the United Nations General Assembly, reinforced through Sustainable Development Goal 6: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.” Access to safe water and sanitation, and sound management of freshwater resources, are priority challenges that will determine the achievement of other sustainable development goals through close linkages with climate, energy, cities, the environment, food security, poverty, gender equality, and health, amongst others.

SDG 6 progress lagging globally

With only 6 years remaining to 2030, the world is greatly off-track in achieving SDG Goal 6 to provide water and sanitation for all. 1 in 4 people globally lack safely managed drinking water in their homes while nearly half the world’s population lacks safely managed sanitation (JMP, 2022)¹. Kenya’s progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 has also been slow, with only 60% and 29 % water and sanitation coverage, respectively (JMP 2021)¹. Sewerage is currently available to only about 3.9 million people in 26 counties in Kenya with two-thirds of this living within Nairobi City County (WASREB, 2020)². Inadequate and unsafely managed sanitation results in the pollution of the limited water resources worsening water scarcity in the country. The consequence of climate change will further aggravate fresh water availability as it becomes more scarce, more unpredictable, more polluted.

While a lot of gains have been made since the water sector reforms of 2002, sanitation service delivery still receives inadequate attention in terms of investment and development, despite its grave consequences on the health and well-being of the population and the environment. Sanitation service delivery remains inadequate, disjointed and unregulated along the service

¹ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) 2000-2022

² WASREB Impact Report Issue No. 14/2021



chain. As highlighted below, poor sanitation provision in the country can be attributed to inadequate sector leadership, investment, coordination and incoherent arrangements for inclusive sanitation service delivery

Challenges in sanitation governance in Kenya

Institutional arrangements: sector coordination, service delivery arrangements, regulation and accountability

The lack of effective coordination and collaboration among relevant government ministries, agencies, and departments responsible for sanitation governance in Kenya has resulted in fragmented approaches and inefficiencies in addressing sanitation challenges³. Despite the existence of sanitation policies and strategies, there are gaps in the legal framework necessary to enforce safely managed sanitation standards, regulate service providers, and hold stakeholders accountable for sanitation outcomes in Kenya⁴. In addition, there are gaps in policy coherence and coordination with other sectors relevant to sanitation governance, such as water, health, environment, and urban development. Inconsistent policies and priorities across sectors can lead to disjointed approaches and missed opportunities for synergies in addressing sanitation challenges³. Emerging challenges like Climate change impact water scarcity, and extreme weather events, and can exacerbate sanitation challenges, yet climate resilience considerations are rarely considered in sanitation policies and programs. Strengthening capacities among sanitation practitioners, promoting cross-sectoral collaboration, and integrating climate resilience considerations into sanitation planning and programming are essential for enhancing resilience to disasters and climate change impacts⁵. Weak Enforcement mechanisms of Sanitation Regulations and standards in Kenya, lack of compliance monitoring, and inadequate penalties for non-compliance contribute to violations of sanitation standards and substandard service provision³. Further, the regulatory framework for fecal sludge management (FSM) in Kenya remains weak. Inadequate regulations and standards for the Containment, collection, transport, treatment, and disposal of fecal sludge can result in environmental pollution, public health risks, and substandard sanitation services¹. Inadequate enforcement of regulations governing wastewater discharge, solid waste

³ Kenya Ministry of Water and Irrigation (2019), National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy

⁴ Kenya Ministry of Health (2016), Kenya Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Policy

⁵ Kenya National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), 2018)



management, and pollution control contributes to environmental degradation and public health risks⁶. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms is essential for ensuring compliance and mitigating environmental impacts. Informal sanitation providers play a significant role in delivering sanitation services, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, yet they often operate without proper regulation, leading to service quality issues, safety concerns, and sanitation inequities¹. Sanitation workers, including pit emptiers, manual scavengers, and waste collectors, often work in hazardous conditions without adequate safety measures, social protections, or recognition of their contributions to public health and environmental sanitation¹. Legal protection and recognition for sanitation workers in the sector remains inadequate. Meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholders, including local communities, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and academia, in sanitation governance processes is often lacking, leading to missed opportunities for inclusive decision-making and innovative solutions⁷

Sector budgeting and financing

Currently, there are significant gaps in establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for sanitation projects and programs in Kenya. Limited funding sources, inadequate budget allocations, and challenges in accessing financial resources hinder the implementation and scale-up of sanitation initiatives³. In addition, investment in sanitation infrastructure in Kenya, particularly in rural and informal urban settlements is inadequate. Insufficient funding and resource allocation for sanitation projects result in inadequate access to sanitation facilities and services for a significant portion of the population¹. There are opportunities for alternative financing mechanisms leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) to enhance sanitation service delivery in Kenya. PPPs offer opportunities for mobilizing private sector resources, expertise, and innovations to address sanitation challenges, yet their potential remains underutilized due to regulatory barriers, limited private sector engagement, and challenges in contract management. At the same time, small-scale enterprises (SMEs) that play a significant role in providing sanitation products and services, often face challenges in accessing financing for business growth, technology adoption, and market expansion.

⁶ National Environment Management Authority (2020), Kenya State of the Environment Report

⁷ Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (2020), Kenya Water and Sanitation Sector Performance Report



Sector Capacity Development

There is limited investment in sanitation research, capacity building, and knowledge generation initiatives in Kenya. Research and innovation play a crucial role in developing context-specific solutions, improving technology, and advancing knowledge in the sanitation sector⁸. While technological solutions such as mobile applications, remote sensing, and data analytics hold potential for improving monitoring, service delivery, and decision-making in sanitation, their integration into policy and practice in the country remains limited⁹

Where data on sanitation access and outcomes may be available, there is often a lack of skilled personnel, technical tools, and resources to analyze and interpret the data effectively for informing policy development and program planning. Strengthening research capacities, conducting applied research, and fostering knowledge exchange are essential for informing evidence-based policy decisions, promoting innovation, and building local expertise in the sanitation sector. Research and innovation play a crucial role in developing context-specific solutions, improving technology, and advancing knowledge in the sanitation sector.

Sector Planning & monitoring

Inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, assess impact, and ensure accountability in sanitation governance initiatives in Kenya hinders evidence-based decision-making and impedes the identification of gaps and areas for improvement⁵. Monitoring of Sanitation Progress at Sub-National Levels such as counties and sub-counties remains weak. While national-level data provide an overview of sanitation trends, sub-national disparities and variations in sanitation access and outcomes may be overlooked, hindering targeted interventions and resource allocation¹⁰.

Further, progress in addressing equity and inclusion in sanitation governance in Kenya has been slow. Limited disaggregated data collection, monitoring, and evaluation fail to capture disparities in sanitation access and outcomes among different population groups, hindering efforts to prioritize marginalized communities and reduce inequalities. Mainstreaming gender

⁸ Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (2019), National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

⁹ Kenya ICT Authority (2017), Kenya National ICT Masterplan,

¹⁰ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019), Kenya Population and Housing Census



considerations into sanitation policies and programs in Kenya is also limited. Gender disparities in sanitation access and usage, as well as gender-specific sanitation needs and preferences, are often overlooked, resulting in inadequate sanitation solutions for women, girls, and other marginalized gender groups. Inadequate access to safe and private sanitation facilities can increase the vulnerability of women and girls to Gender-based Violence (GBV), yet sanitation is often not adequately addressed in GBV prevention initiatives¹¹

Sector Policy & Strategies

Despite Kenya having made a lot of progress in creating a better enabling environment, there is a lot that needs to be done. For instance, Kenya developed a National Sanitation Management Policy that is pending approval, to make it operational. Without this policy, the Non sewerage space still remains difficult to manage, because the current laws and policies did not envisage the value chain approach, neither do they guide the country, and more so, utilities, on how to manage the sub-sector. Further, this makes development of operating procedures and creating guidelines possible, but not based on approved public policy.

For the sector to work coherently, the draft policy provides for a coordination mechanism, which is all encompassing, and gender inclusive, making it possible for Kenya to be on the path to leading in terms of how service provision should be done. Once the policy is approved, the next steps will include ensuring laws that govern the sector are harmonized and or reviewed, for enforceability.

Need to develop performance indicators for sanitation monitoring by WSPs

Water and Sanitation has co-existed and the importance of water and sanitation service provision has been recognized worldwide and more so in Kenya to the extent that both are under one command domiciled in the Ministry of Water Irrigation and Sanitation. Water service provision has been monitored extensively using various established performance indicators; however, almost none has been developed and accepted in the sanitation sector. There are very few uncoordinated indicators in sanitation which are scattered in different ministries, departments, and Agencies and do not speak to the same values and standards.

¹¹ Kenya Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs(2019), Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development



The lack of clear and comprehensive indicators has made it impossible to establish the current existing levels of human capital and investments. There are no identified indicators to define the service area, its entire coverage, its accessibility, its quality including service levels. There is no identification and adoption of the indicators that can create standards that if compiled will bring about order in the sector. The sector is not regulated to ensure compliance and as a result, there is no healthy competition that would improve management of sanitation services.

Currently, there are no indicators to properly identify and establish the quality and quantity of the utilities including the coverage and accessibility. This makes it impossible to institute measures and interventions for the improvement of the provision of sanitation services in Kenya.

2. Proposal for Convening

It is against this background that the Water and Sanitation Providers Association (WASPA) and the Ministry of Water, Sanitation & Irrigation together with their partners the County Government of Kisumu and Kisumu Water & Sanitation Company (KIWASCO), propose to host a **Convening on Sanitation Governance, June 26-28, 2024**

3. Overarching Goal

To bring together key stakeholders to deliberate on prevailing challenges, share good practices, and formulate strategies to address Sanitation Governance challenges in the sector to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6

4. Specific Objectives

- i. To create a platform to share experiences, and identify barriers and good practices enabling information-sharing, and transparency for improved sanitation governance & service delivery.
- ii. To provide networking opportunities for innovative investments and public-private partnerships to accelerate access to safely managed sanitation.
- iii. To explore technologies, innovations, and market opportunities to improve access to safe sanitation for all.
- iv. To foster partnerships to entrench capacity building & research for improved sanitation governance and service delivery



5. Conference Theme

Promoting Good Governance to accelerate Safely Managed Sanitation

6. Conference Subthemes

1. Promotion of Good Practices in Sanitation Governance (Policy and Sector coordination framework)
2. Innovative and optimized financing opportunities in Sanitation
3. Innovations, Technologies and market opportunities for improved sanitation governance and service delivery
4. Sanitation Planning, monitoring and evaluation: Key Performance Indicators to track progress and promote accountability in sanitation governance
5. Capacity Development & Research for improved sanitation governance and service delivery

7. Convening details

- **Venue & Dates:** 300 pax, Ciala Resort, Kisumu County; June 26-28, 2024

8. Convening Partners

- i. Ministry of Water, Sanitation & Irrigation (MWSI)
- ii. Water and Sanitation Providers Association (WASPA)
- iii. County Government of Kisumu
- iv. Kisumu Water & Sanitation Company (KIWASCO)

9. Convening Format: 2.5 days

- i. Day 1: Excursion 6 am - 1 pm; Opening Ceremony 3:00 pm
 - Cultural tours (Kit Mikayi, Rusinga Island, Ruma National Park)
 - Technical Tour (KIWASCO, Manual emptiers)
 - Opening Ceremony 3 - 6 pm
 - Cocktail 6:00 pm
- ii. Day 2
 - Plenary Presentations
 - Presentations
 - Panel discussions



- Breakout sessions
- Skills Competition: WSPs, Manual emptiers (Community), Universities/Technical institutions
- Gala Dinner Awards

iii. Day 3

- Plenary Presentations
- Panel discussions
- Breakout sessions
- Closing Ceremony 2- 4 pm

10. Target Institutions

The Convening targets at least 300 delegates from all sectors including but not limited to

- Government at National and County levels
- Water Utilities
- Water Associations
- Government Agencies with bias in Sanitation
- Environment, Energy, and Agriculture
- Research Institutions
- Institutions of higher learning
- Private Sector
- Development Partners
- Foreign Missions
- Civil Society
- NGOS
- Consultants
- Service Providers
- Financial Institutions