

TRIPLE-S SURVEY OF POTABLE WATER SERVICES MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL REGION OF BURKINA FASO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary goal of the USAID West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program is to increase sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and improve hygiene in West Africa. The program strengthens the regional environment and builds the capacity of the WASH sector to achieve the WASH Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2008, the Ministry of Water Resources implemented the national reforms for water services delivery in the rural areas. The reforms, implemented at a pilot level in the Sahel region, were aimed to improve sustainable access to potable water. In the context of the implementation of the reforms, the national water management framework was set-up to guide the management of water services by the water users associations (WUAs) and private operators at the village level. Thus, the USAID WA-WASH Program through IRC, conducted a survey to evaluate the national water management framework in the Sahel region using the Triple-S (sustainable services at scale) analytical approach. The survey assessed 210 WUAs in eight municipalities: Aribinda, Dori, Gorgadji, Mansila, Markoye, Seytenga, Tankougounadie, and Titabe in the Sahel region. The eight municipalities were part of the pilot implementation of the reforms regulatory framework. The Triple-S analytical approach evaluates the existing water service delivery management models.

The reforms regulatory framework stipulates that the municipalities ensure planning, coordination, set water tariffs, and support the lower management structures such as the water users associations (WUAs), local private operators, and technicians. In addition, the reform regulatory framework defines the responsibilities of the WUAs as: (1) to supervise and coordinate water point managers and technicians; (2) to collect tariffs and remunerate the technicians; and (3) to represent the municipality at the local level. Although all three functions are well defined in the regulatory framework, their implementation remains a challenge. Therefore, the main objective of the survey was to assess the performance of the municipalities and the WUAs against the reform framework. The findings of the survey aim to strengthen the functional areas of the reform framework and to address the gaps in the framework. The survey allowed the assessment of the adherence to the regulations by the municipalities and other stakeholders in the region. The results of the survey also allowed the institutions (WUAs and municipalities) to evaluate their existing capacity to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

The survey showed both similarities and disparities in terms of performance in the various municipalities. In all the municipalities, the regulatory framework was in place, indicative water tariffs were set, contract mechanisms were in place, and the municipalities were supported by the national government to implement the pilot reform program. However, the major challenges of implementation of the regulatory framework at the municipality level includes the inadequate collection of tariffs from WUAs and inadequate capacities of the technicians who lack training on certain technologies and therefore limit their repair expertise to one or two brands of water pumps. The support function of the municipalities to WUAs is limited by the inadequate tariffs paid by the WUAs. The municipalities experience difficulties in mobilizing the necessary resources to improve their performance in monitoring and support to WUAs. Usually, the support comes from external institutions (mainly NGOs) and aims to develop the planning and monitoring tools for the municipality. At least one WUA in each municipality did not have support of a maintenance technician contracted by the municipality because the WUA did not pay tariffs. Further, the spare parts supply chain is weak in the Sahel region because of a lack of accessibility to and high costs of spare parts. These factors have a short- and medium-term impact on the functionality of the existing water points.

In the Sahel region, the majority of the boreholes were rehabilitated in 2008 through the implementation of the reforms program. However, in 2011, the functionality rates varied between 57% in the municipality of Seytenga and 95% in the

municipality of Tankougounadié, with an average functionality rate of 79%. The performance of the municipalities improved since November 2011 following the hiring of the local maintenance technicians and the establishment of the municipality WASH committees. In addition, 73 boreholes were rehabilitated by the NGO Eau Vive and a significant number of new boreholes were constructed through financing from the World Bank infrastructure program among other initiatives. Therefore, the number of functioning boreholes and the overall functionality rates have increased.

At WUA the level, the water points are managed by water point managers who work closely with the WUA executive committees. For instance, in the municipality of Tankougounadie, WUAs manage all the boreholes and are 80 % compliant with the reform framework. In addition, there are strong relationships between the WUAs and the local stakeholders such as the village development committees and municipality technical staff. Further, the WUAs coordinate the biannual preventive maintenance works and they have basic skills and equipment to fix minor breakdowns. However, the majority of WUAs were not compliant with the regulatory framework. In the eight municipalities, only three out of 210 WUAs were compliant. The major challenges for the WUAs included: (1) low and heterogeneous water tariffs; (2) low rates of collection of user fees (due to the low user satisfaction levels for the existing service and the lack of trust among users in the WUAs) hence WUAs are not able to pay for maintenance costs; (3) low level of education among the members of the WUAs executive boards (163 out of 210 members have no formal education); and (4) WUAs are not established in accordance with the legislation therefore their legitimacy before the water users is questionable. This contributes to low payment of water fees by water users and lack of control of all the boreholes within their jurisdiction.

The results from the urban municipality of Dori show similar trends as in the other seven rural municipalities. Despite stronger follow-up structures with both a technical service department and WASH municipal committee, Dori faces the same challenges of ineffective water tariff collection mechanisms, and the question of the WUAs legitimacy. The legitimacy of WUAs is further weakened by the presence of the national water company (ONEA in French), that is responsible for water service delivery and management in urban areas. Another challenge among the WUAs is the existence of pre-reform community management systems in 50% of the sampled WUAs such as the water point committees.

These Triple-S survey results were shared and validated by the municipality officials and the municipality WASH committees in all eight municipalities. The survey aims to develop resource mechanisms for mutual support that allows authorities to offer an equitable and sustainable service. The Triple-S survey report is an important step in the analysis of water services in rural and peri-urban areas of the eight municipalities in the Sahel region and by extrapolation in the country at-large. Further, the survey underscores the analysis of the levels of services among users and an analysis of the life cycle cost approach (costs of ensuring adequate WASH services to a specific population in a determined geographical area indefinitely) to validate (or invalidate) the possibilities of mutual support. Based on the findings of this survey and the performance disparities among the municipalities, continued detailed analysis at the municipality levels is recommended to identify key areas to improve performance in water service delivery.

The full report is available (in French) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>.

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