

TRIPLE-S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TO EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE OF POTABLE WATER SERVICES IN BURKINA FASO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000, Burkina Faso committed to reduce by half the population without access to potable water by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A national plan for the provision of drinking water and sanitation services was developed to increase the access rates to these services. Through this plan, a set of WASH infrastructures were constructed within the country. As the MDG deadline approaches, it is important to gauge the performance of the infrastructures that have been installed as compared to what was specified in the national plan. Accordingly, the USAID West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program through its implementing partner, IRC, evaluated the performance of water services in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso using the Triple-S (sustainable services at scale) analytical framework. This framework, developed in 2013, provides the guidelines and tools in the context of sectoral public policy evaluation in relation to the achievement of the MDGs in water provision.

The Triple-S framework aims to identify the challenges to achieving sustainable water services at the community level, test solutions to overcome the identified challenges and scale-up the successful solutions. It also aims to improve the management of water services at the municipality level and is, thus, useful for local authorities, water service providers, technical agencies, and NGOs working in the water services sector. The framework evaluates the performance of potable water services in terms of quality of water services delivered and the projected costs of provision and operation of water points. Further, it analyzes the long-term cost components (funded and non-funded) of water structures for sustainable drinking water services. The framework also serves as a basis for communication and dialogue among stakeholders in the WASH sector in Burkina Faso. It proposes the performance measurement tools that are developed and tested in the rural context of Burkina Faso. The ownership of the framework by the relevant stakeholders contributes to better and sustainable management of water services.

The Triple-S analytical framework identifies five globally recognized levels of water provision service. The levels are: (1) no service; (2) substandard service; (3) basic service; (4) intermediate service; and (5) high level service. The Triple-S analytical framework compares the actual services delivered to the expected services in terms of the quantity of water, quality of water, accessibility/distance to water points, reliability of the water point and time spent collecting water/crowding at the water points. At the level of no service, the beneficiaries access water from insecure or unimproved sources, or sources that are too distant, too time-consuming (crowded) or are of poor quality. At substandard service, beneficiaries access a service that is an improvement on having no service at all, but that fails to meet the basic standard on one or more criteria. The basic service allows access to a minimum of 20 liters per capita of acceptable water quality from an improved source, spending no more than 30 minutes per day collecting water. The intermediate service allows people to access a minimum of 40 liters per-capita- per-day of acceptable water quality from an improved source, spending no more than 30 minutes per day collecting water. High service level provides access to a minimum of 60 liters per capita of high water quality on demand.

In addition, the Triple-S framework calculates and evaluates the long-term funded costs of water services (investment and operation costs). Similarly, the framework evaluates the non-funded cost components such as maintenance and support costs to municipalities and other potable water service providers.

The framework was used to evaluate water service provision in the village of Komsilga in the Sahel region. The following were some of the key findings from the evaluation: (1) half of the population in the village had access to intermediate and high level service while the other half received a substandard service or no water services at all. This result sharply contrasts the potential of service that could be provided by seven hand pumps and three community taps available in the village; (2) the unit costs of investment and recurrent costs from the study concurred with the provisional costs (8.1 million FCFA) estimated by the regional directorate of water and sanitation services for hand pumps; (3) the unit cost of a water point varied inversely to the number of users. However, increase in the level of service delivered by a pump increased the investment cost; (4) recurring costs varied proportionally to the number of users. A highly frequented pump required higher service costs than a less frequented pump, leading to increased maintenance cost per person; (5) the recurring unit cost of a piped water system decreased with quantity of water distributed. There was marked under-utilization of piped water systems in Komsilga (between 49 to 90 users for each piped water system) indicating that the level of service observed could be improved by promoting the use of the piped water services.

The study in Komsilga village illustrated the use of the Triple-S framework. The findings may not reflect the reality on the ground as the study used data that was collected in 2009. Nevertheless, the findings served to stimulate dialogue, both at the national and local levels, on issues of planning and monitoring the quality of drinking water services. This analytical framework informed consequent evaluations of the performance of 24 water structures in the Sahel region.

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