



# Ownership and alignment enhancing crosscutting issues in the water sector: The case of Uganda

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# Ownership and Alignment

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- Attained through grounding policy and programmes into national legal and policy frameworks; as well as institutions at all levels
- Legal framework
  - The Constitution
  - Acts and Regulations
- Policy Framework
  - The National PRSP
  - The National Gender Policy
  - The National Water Policy, developed in the ambit of the above two



# Institutional Arrangements

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At National level, ownership and alignment of water and sanitation sector programme activities is established through two fora:

- Political level: Minister is assisted by a **Water Policy Committee** answerable to Parliament
- Implementation: **Water and Sanitation Sector Working Group (WSSWG)** providing policy and technical guidance; group constitutes of government, development partners and CSOs
- Government and development partners support a single policy and expenditure programme (SWAP) which is under **government leadership** and follows a **common approach in financing, planning, M&E**



# Alignment Between Sectors and Donors

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- Key institutional roles and responsibilities are clearly spelt out
- Alignment enhanced in some areas that suffered coordination challenges through **Memorandum of Understanding**: Sanitation (Ministries of Water & Environment, Health, Education & Sports); Water for Production
- Development partners aligned and dialogue enhanced thru the SWAP, WSSWG, and annual Joint Sector Reviews
- A Joint Partnership Fund has been established



## Ownership and Alignment at the Local Government Level

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- Through **District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committees** comprised of administrative and political leaders, technocrats and NGO/CBOs
- **Communities** are responsible for demanding for, operating and maintaining rural WSS facilities. A **Water User Committee (WUC)** is established at each water point (however, often WUCs only become active when breakdowns occur)
- The situation is still very challenging in post-conflict areas of Northern Uganda



# Enhancing Crosscutting issues

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- Crosscutting issues reflected in the budget thru gender and equity budgeting initiative
- For gender equity, a Water Sector Gender Strategy was developed and it is advocating for enhancing women's participation
- The sector's pro-poor strategy in place includes gender aspects as women are often among the most vulnerable groups of society.



## Gender Equity - a reality or rhetoric?

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- The Directorate for Water Development has beefed up staffing for mainstreaming crosscutting issues. However, the water sector as a whole still suffers from inadequate representation of women in decision making positions in its staffing at all levels.
- The sector has developed an indicator to measure and promote the participation of women as one of the 10 Golden Indicators of the sector performance measurement framework: *"% of water user committees/water boards in which at least one woman holds a key position"*
- Gender has been institutionalised in manuals, guides & tools used in community mobilisation, planning, implementation, operation & maintenance and monitoring of water and sanitation programme activities.



## Gender Equity (contd.)

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- Women who had served on key positions of the water and sanitation user committees felt empowered
- The government considers gender in the urban water supply and sanitation sub-sector in design, construction and operation & maintenance; however, urban and piped water supplies are often still implemented following an engineering dominated approach, with little room for participatory, gender sensitive planning processes.



# Environmental mainstreaming

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- The National Environment Policy is in place
- Environment Impact Assessments are done for all major projects but are still often perceived rather as a bureaucratic burden, to meet legal requirements, than a chance to investigate possible risks and prevent damage or conflicts.
- An Implementation Manual has been prepared for the districts to guide them in the implementation of water activities.
- Environmental Monitoring Templates for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation are used to assist stakeholders monitor environmental and operation and maintenance issues of water points.
- Wastewater permit holders are required to carry out self-monitoring of their effluents.
- For water abstraction a permit is also required but many applicants, including government authorities, do not apply for permits.



# Mainstreaming Human Rights

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- Effected through efforts to address equity issues as noted under gender and equity budgeting initiative
- Decentralisation has encouraged participation in the provision of water and sanitation services.
- The water sector is actively engaged in assuring access to safe water for all (as a defacto human right).
- According to national water policies, water users are required to pay for the services provided and private sector involvement is encouraged. In this context the affordability of water remains a challenging issue: The right to access water needs to be reconciled, through an appropriate regulatory framework, with the requirement to ensure the economic viability and sustainable operation and maintenance of water supply facilities.



# Challenges and lessons Learnt

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- Mainstreaming crosscutting issues is usually a complex exercise and calls for capacity enhancement
- In the past the various projects had been developing their own, sometimes very well elaborated, approaches regarding crosscutting issues. It is challenging to identify and preserve best practices when the mode of implementation is changing, in particular in the case of decentralised implementation through Local Governments
- Effective gender mainstreaming requires adequate financial resources for capacity building, as well as political will and support
- Stronger involvement of groups specifically addressing gender issues, such as Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) or the Donor Gender Group, is desirable



# Challenges and Lessons Learnt

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- Involvement of women in the water and sanitation sector also has to address the socio-cultural factors that may be impediments.
- Women represented in Water User Committees are often left with labour intensive tasks while decision making tasks are left with men
- Mainstreaming crosscutting issues requires adequate disaggregated data that can clearly show the inequalities
- In addition to generating GDD, a more comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation system that generates data and information on gender and environmental sustainability



## Challenges and Lessons Learnt (contd.)

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- Effective community participation focusing on demand for services is difficult to ensure if the community contributions to either the capital and/or the operation and maintenance costs are meagre
- Involvement of profit seeking private sector is tricky. There is need to have mechanisms of fostering and regulating increased private sector participation, in particular a pro-poor regulatory framework.
- The alignment of operations in the sector that promotes the budget support mechanism for development partners raises concerns for the Civil Society who have to be funded through government : How effectively will CSOs advocate for the marginalized and monitor / evaluate government activities in the sector?
- It is essential to tailor EIA requirements according to the scope and type of projects in order to prevent a too bureaucratic character of EIA procedures and ensure mainstreaming of environmental issues.



# Conclusions for the way forward

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- The harmonized approaches agreed upon between donors and government of Uganda in the framework of the SWAP led to a well established national sector framework. Therefore adequate policies and strategies to consider CCIs are in place.
- Implementation and enforcement of policies related to CCIs remain a challenge.
- The increased shift of donors towards harmonized approaches and alignment with government procedures implies a considerable potential for joint monitoring and implementation and enforcement of CCIs at all sector levels (community level to national level).