

# CATALYSING ACTION THROUGH INCREASED KNOWLEDGE – CASE STUDY ON WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY IN KAPOETA SOUTH COUNTY, EASTERN EQUATORIA.

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## CHALLENGE

The Government of Southern Sudan’s Ministry of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation aims to improve access to water supply and sanitation services for approximately eight million people living in rural areas. To achieve this, development and implementation of a comprehensive operations and maintenance system for water sources is essential. In order to set up a sound operations and maintenance system, reliable data on the functionality of water points is critical. Unfortunately baseline data for water, sanitation and hygiene activities in Eastern Equatoria State is very limited. Presently there is barely institutional capacity to undertake data collection and analysis within the Ministry.

### Why was the Water Resource Inventory necessary?

As part of SNV’s strategy to support the development of a sound operations and maintenance system, a study was necessary so as to validate the status of existing water sources within the state in terms of

- (i) their functionality
- (ii) management of the water systems and
- (iii) Institutional capacity to operate and maintain existing and or new water services.

It was on the basis of this that SNV commissioned the Water Resource Inventory Study in Kapoeta County. The study aimed to generate data that would assist the county and state in making informed sector decisions in planning and investments for sustainable service delivery. The data would at the same time feed into sector policy & strategy improvements at the macro and meso levels.

## CLIENTS

At the Eastern Equatoria Sate level, SNV has been working with the State Ministry of Infrastructure and sector partners in rolling out the operations and maintenance system by providing capacity building support. This aims to ensure that water facilities in the state are functional and managed in a sustainable manner.

## METHOD / SNV INTERVENTION

1. **Facilitation of Multi Stakeholder Platform** - SNV in collaboration with the State Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Directorate of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation organised and facilitated a multi- stakeholder platform meeting to deliberate on action to improve the quality of data available to the state for planning and decision making. A number of government departments and development agencies participated in this forum. It was unanimously agreed that SNV would identify and work with a local capacity builder, Index Consulting, to carry out the study with support of the two community based organisations. Following, the study, SNV facilitated another multi-stakeholder platform meeting in which the findings and results of the study were discussed and actions agreed by different stakeholders.
2. **Developing and implementing a strategy** that would ensure that capacity for undertaking future Water Resource Inventory is built within local

organisations and the Ministry. SNV developed a strategy that would ensure that Index Consulting worked closely with and mentored staff from the local community based organisations and the Department of Rural Water of the Ministry, and transferred technical skills for undertaking Water Resource Inventory.

3. **Support for the establishment of a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Task Force** that would be responsible for not only overseeing the conducting of the Water Resource Inventory assessments, but also reviewing and endorsing the findings of the study. Most importantly, this task force was to be responsible for implementation of the recommendations. This was a move to ensure that ownership and responsibility for actions arising from the study were with the actors rather than with SNV.
4. **Training of Trainers** – SNV and the local capacity builder conducted training of trainers for both the two community based organisations, Losolia Rehabilitation and Development Association and Kapoeta Development Initiative as well as the staff from the Department of Rural water of the Ministry. Training included skills for taking grid references using a Geographical Positioning System for mapping, collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, focus group discussions and other participatory methodologies. At a later stage, this team was responsible for training enumerators for the actual field data collection, with support from the community based organisations.

#### **SNV's added value:**

- **Ability to work with an array of stakeholders towards joint action** – SNV has so far gained valuable experience in Sudan through working with a number of stakeholders. It was therefore easy to identify an issue that would be of great interest and benefit to many stakeholders and facilitate dialogue around the issue. The fact that many stakeholders identified with the problem of limited data made it easy to get buy-in and to initiate joint action.
- **By facilitating the establishment of a task force**, SNV quickly and at an early stage transferred ownership of the activity to a neutral team. This made it easy for all agencies involved to identify with the study and its findings. Furthermore, it became relatively easy to get the task force to advocate for joint action.
- **SNV's understanding of capacity development** came to play and has ensured that there is now sufficient local capacity to undertake Water Resource Inventory in other areas as need may arise.

#### **OUTCOME**

- The study **created better understanding on the status of the water, sanitation and hygiene services** in the county and highlighted issues that needed to be addressed so that sustainable service delivery and increased access to water services can be realised. For instance, whereas the available information was that 70% of all water sources were non-functional, the study revealed that only 45% of water sources were actually non-functional. This information alone was enough for development agencies and government to re-allocate resources towards other pressing needs.
- **Catalysing Joint action** – Following the dissemination of the study results, a number of development agencies started developing joint strategies for improving sustainable access to water services. For example four organisations (Association for Aid and Relief Japan, Caritas Swiss, SNV and Medair) started working together to develop a joint strategy for ensuring that existing and new water systems have an operations and maintenance system in place. The Guinea Worm Eradication programme of the Ministry of Health and Carter Center has requested SNV to develop and implement an operations and maintenance system that would ensure that water systems in guinea worm endemic areas are functional.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Local capacity for Water Resource Inventory has been created** and this will serve other areas into the future. UNICEF has utilised the capacity built by SNV to undertake Water Resource Inventory in two other counties in Eastern Equatoria. SNV has been requested by the Government Ministry of Rural Water and Irrigation to undertake Water Resource Inventory in other states of Southern Sudan, and to help review a national strategy for operations and maintenance.
- Quality and experience of local capacity builders - skilled and committed local capacity builders like Index Consulting firm have a significant role to play in building the capacity of community based organisations and sector partners to carry out Water Resource Inventory. The local capacity builder can build necessary capacity within a county to ensure that a sound management information systems that continuously inform decision making and planning is available
- Government has the willingness to learn and acquire skills in overseeing adequate data is systematically collected, analysed in order to facilitate informed decision making for effective service delivery. However they presently lack sufficient capacity at the county to spearhead this. This underlines the importance of continuity for any effective implementation of development project.
- Communities play a significant role by participating in the process as they in turn are responsible for data collection, analysis and future planning and management of their water points. Where communities know what information they need to collect, or what signs they need to monitor, involvement in operations and maintenance becomes easier.
- For SNV, supporting this baseline data collection was in itself very useful to obtain a true picture of operations and maintenance issues as well as how communities manage existing water points. The survey confirmed, and in some cases disproved certain information that was available through anecdotal evidence. Furthermore when information is validated, users become empowered and are able to set better targets.