The Eswatini Country Brief

The Country Briefs were prepared by governments ahead of the SWA 2019 Sector Ministers’ Meeting. They are a snapshot of the country’s current state in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene, and future targets.

1. Country context

The Kingdom of Eswatini is a small land-locked country covering 17,364 km² bordering South Africa and Mozambique with a population of 1.1 million of which 53 per cent are women. It is estimated that up to 70% of all children in Swaziland live in poverty. Comparatively, the national poverty rate stands at 63%.

Eswatini is classified as a lower middle-income country with economic growth estimated to have declined to 1.9% in 2017 from 3.2% in 2016, reflecting slow recovery in agriculture and mounting fiscal challenges. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to contract by -0.6% in 2018 mainly due to worsening fiscal challenges and government’s fiscal consolidation efforts.

The King is the head of State and appoints the Prime Minister as Chairperson of the Cabinet and the head of the Government with of 18 Line ministries, with Water and Sanitation falling under two different ministries. The Kingdom of Eswatini developed a National Development Strategy that encompasses the SDG on water and sanitation. The WASH sector has several policies and strategies aligned to the SDG 6.

2. SDGs and the water, sanitation and hygiene sector

In 2016 on the adoption of the SDGs, 72 percent of the population used an improved source of drinking water: 96 percent in urban areas and 63 percent in rural areas. 17% of household members were using unimproved drinking water sources, however they were using an appropriate water treatment method. In the case of sanitation coverage, it has generally lacked behind with 11% of the population practicing Open Defecation (OD) as of 2016. The overall, percent of the population who were living in households using improved sanitation facilities was at 82% with only 18% using unimproved sanitation facilities.

The Kingdom of Eswatini in 2017 developed consolidated results framework with localized indicators in line with the global SDGs. The National Development Strategy (Vision 2022) set a target of 100% access to water and sanitation in line with SDG indicators 6.1 and 6.2. The sector has not undertaken an analysis to give a clear picture of progress made on achieving SDG 6, however Sector Government reports indicate an
annual increase of water coverage by 2% government implementation and 1% by civil society. This project annual increase places Eswatini at an estimated 78% access to improved water access which is a 6% increment in coverage. If the country were to sustain an annual growth of 3% water access the SDG target would be met by 2026. With the introduction of SDGs and reclassification of indicators with shared facilities regarded as unimproved the countries improved sanitation has dropped from 82% to around 46%, which is attributed to the high-density communities on the periphery of urban centers where families reside in communal one room rented flats sharing toilet facilities. This reclassification also has an impact on rural sanitation coverage as one homestead may have two or more households sharing one toilet within the extended family compound. Changing the arrangement of sharing facilities will require great investment in advocacy and mind shift among sector players, landlords and communities.

Climate change has also contributed to the retarded growth specially to access to water supply within the context of local standards of supply. The sector is currently in the recovery phase from the effects of the El Nino induced drought experienced in 2015 and 2016. The drought resulted in a lowered water table affecting water access mainly to rural communities rendering their water systems none functional. Available national development funding had to reprogrammed for humanitarian assistance providing short term interventions such as water trucking, household water treatment and increasing water abstraction depth for groundwater systems.

In efforts to change the sanitation and water access outlook the sector line ministries with support from stakeholders have led the development of the National Water Policy 2018 and The Draft National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (awaiting cabinet Approval). In addition to these documents government conducts Water and Sanitation Joint Sector Reviews that assist in tracking progress and further identify challenges to achieving national commitments. These documents form the backbone of the Enabling Environment which is giving a clear direction to all stakeholders what are the national priorities for the sector.

To fast track sanitation coverage, the sector has developed a Sanitation and Hygiene strategy and action Plan accompanied by the Open Defecation Free Protocol to fast track ending OD in the Kingdom. These sector documents are aligned to vision 2022. It is the sector aim to build coordination around the implementation of the policy actions by all stakeholders which will reduce duplication of activities on the ground and streamlining and tracking of resources to national sector priorities. Both Sector Policy documents note a need for institutional reforms to enable better planning, regulatory and monitoring of the sector, which is affecting implementation of sector initiatives. With adoption of these documents the sector hope to align itself with the Policy suggested institutional and sector arrangements.

Achieving SDG 6 is at the heart of the two-line ministries which have noted various existing gaps in the legislative framework. In view of these gaps the sector in 2019 has begun the process of legislative review with the aim of modifying and developing new legal instruments to guide the sector toward achieving local and international sector targets.
3. Collaborative Behaviours, Building Blocks and Guiding Principles

The WASH sector in Eswatini has an established a Sector Coordinating Forum where the stakeholders two-line ministers meet quarterly to table plans and progress made in the sector. The aim of the forum is to hold the sector players accountable to sector goals and targets and for collaboration on common interest around achieving SDG 6. The Forum has strengthened sector leadership at all government levels including regional sector coordination. The aim is to have an Eswatini High-Level Ministers Meeting Bi-Anually Lead by the two line ministers along with the Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Planning and Development. The aim is to Enhance government leadership of sector planning processes as the ministers will hold the sector accountable for set targets. The forum influences how local and foreign resources are directed and coordinated. Presently the sector is developing a Sector Master plan which will be completed by end of 2020. The Master plan will include a monitoring and evaluation framework which will form the backbone for measuring sector performance on agreed benchmarks and milestones.

The Joint Sector Review and WASH bottleneck Analysis have played a pivotal role to indicate sector gaps in the multi-stakeholder cycle of planning, monitoring, and learning. However, the Sector does understand the multi-stakeholder nature of WASH service provision with the participation of the Education, Agricultural and Health Sectors within the WASH Stakeholder coordination forum. Under the guidance of Ministry of Tikhundla/Local Administration and Development the WASH sector is work working directly with traditional leaders to strengthen WASH sector implementation at community level.

The government of Eswatini has existing systems for public financial management, HR management, statistics, procurement and contract management. The ongoing WASH financing study is showing that not all financial flows are being recorded with the government Aid Coordination Unit which exists to guide foreign aid and track its utilization.

4. Eliminating Inequalities

In Eswatini the major disparity exists between urban and rural communities. According to MICS 2014 Almost half (49.5%) of urban household make use of a flush sanitation system where as in rural areas only 5% have access to such a system. Open Defecation is mainly practiced in rural areas with 14.4% of rural homes practicing open defecation as opposed to the 0.5% in urban areas. For water supply access a similar picture can be observed with 91% of urban households having access to water in their premises with only 30% within rural areas. The Eswatini Rural Water Supply design standards indicates that households should walk a minimum of 30 mins or less to their water point within a radius of 200m. Available data shows that 10.8% of households in rural areas walk more than 30mins to their water source, with a further 15% walking more than 30mins to an unimproved water point in rural areas, where for urban areas 0.9% of the households walk more than 30mins.
Inequalities are also evident by wealth quintile with 97.6% of the richest households accessing water from improved sources within their premises in relation to 4.8% among the poorest households. Only 9.6% of middle wealth quintile household walk more the 30mins with 18.1% among the poorest homestead. Available information does not capture data on disability access, however observations within the sector indicate that disability appropriate water and sanitation access points are not visible in rural areas and small urban centers.

Globally the burden of water supply and sanitation is heavy on women and children. In Eswatini 21% of the households have adult males supporting collection of water with the remaining 79% relaying on women and children below 15 years. Currently the country has data gaps on hygiene with handwashing a proxy indicator, this does not account for menstrual hygiene management which is key for female users.

The Enabling environment in terms of policies and strategies notes the need to address inequalities within the WASH sector and foster Gender responsiveness and social inclusion as strategic cross cutting issues. However, there is limited data at national level to support planning for these key groups across sector especially disability. To address access inequalities related to poverty, will require updating of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and updating of the National Poverty index to guide pro poor sector programing. The lack of clear guidance has affected the efficient utilization of the Sanitation Subsidy which is aimed at the poorest, but due to lack of clear guidelines is applied across communities.

Eswatini has four Administrative regions with Lubombo and Shiselweni lagging behind in both Sanitation and Water supply access. Efforts have been made in the past five years to invest in these regions with large scale WASH projects. The impact of these projects will be evident through national assessment such as the planned MICS 6.

5. Water, sanitation and hygiene Financing

The SDG 6 2018 Synthesis Report indicated that to achieve the goal targets each country will have to increase WASH sector funding. In 2017 the country developed a loan bill which estimated the required finance to reach 100% access at US$ 1.1 Billion. GDP Growth by economic activity at constant 2011 prices (E Million) shows a fluctuation in Water supply and sewerage activities with between 2012 (6.2 Million) and 2017 (5.4 Million) with lowest activity observed in 2015 and highest activity in 2016 (7.7 Million). The kingdom of Eswatini is currently conducting a WASH financing Assessment to completed in May 2019. The assessment will inform what are the current sector financing sources, point out areas of improving efficiency and reducing losses as well as mapping out future financing sources such as private sector and documenting the value of household self-financing. Along with Sector Financing the county is developing a WASH Sector Master Plan of how it will achieve SDG 6. Initial steps to cost 100% water supply infrastructure water coverage through a feasibility study to be completed by end of 2019. The study will be

1 Ministry of Economic Planning and Development Macroeconomic Analysis and Research Division E-Bulletin No.27, Q3 2018
used to develop the master plan which will indicate more realistic the funding gaps and the required annual financial investment required for the WASH Sector.

The kingdom of Eswatini upon finalization of the Master plan will be able to clearly define the deficit towards achieving SDG 6 based on available and recurrent sector financing. The Sector notes the need to subsidize the most vulnerable of its country within the urban and rural areas. Clear guidelines will need to be developed to ensure that such subsidy initiatives reach the target population. There is a need to improve financial flows with the rural water supply subsector to ensure that communities see the value of the contribution towards operation and maintenance of their water systems. Improving rural water supply system maintenance will reduce the burden on government and civil society expenditure on rehabilitation of water supply schemes and focus on development new and expansion of existing water systems.

The WASH sector also aims to improve the efficient use of domestic resources and international resources by improving financial efficiency, sector aid coordination and tracking through the SWA accountability framework. The national Water Policy 2018 states that Financial mechanisms for water resources management will be put in place to ensure availability of adequate funds on a sustained basis. Sustained finance will be realized through streamlining resources from Government and development partners, including nongovernmental organizations and the private sector for water resources management based on the sector wide approach (SWAP). To leverage funding Government will provide guarantee for loans raised by water development agencies and utility companies to finance water supply and sanitation networks.

6. Country priorities and commitments

Apart from the SDG 6 targets, the National Development Strategy NDS places a sector target of 100% access to water and sanitation for the Eswatini population by 2022. Following the Enabling Environment workshop held in Eswatini in 2018 the Government and its Development Partners made the following commitments;

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<td>By 2019 - Review water related legislation (Water services Act (1992) and Water Act of 2003) to ensure WASH activities are properly integrated</td>
<td>TORs for legislative review being developed for Advertising in March 2019 funding secured from Water Policy, 2018 approved National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy developed and awaits Cabinet approval.</td>
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<td>By Mid 2020 - Conduct national WASH feasibility study to inform investment plan development</td>
<td>Conduct Feasibility Study - Total amount required to achieve 100% coverage by 2030 TORs Finalized for recruitment, consultant to start the feasibility study by June and complete in December 2019</td>
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By June 2019 - Develop strategy for WASH resource mobilisation - Sector performance analysis - WASH financial data

WASH Financing Study completed which will inform available resources and existing gaps for mobilization for domestic resources, this will provide a financing landscape. 2019 budget brief to be developed as an advocacy tool for in-depth analysis of the current budget April 2019/March 2020.

By 2019 - Establish WASH SWAP coordination, monitoring and evaluation Unit within DWA

Pending - government committed to start, ongoing discussions with funding being the main challenge

By 2018 - Advocacy at Chiefdom on open free defecation and capacity building for community led total sanitation

Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy and action plan, ODF Protocol has been completed. ODF Certification training conducted. 51 communities have been triggered and monitoring for ODF Certification by end of 2019.

Following these achievements, the country is tabling the following commitments for the next three years:

**Government**

- Ending Open Defecation by 2022
- To increase access to potable water by 2% annually
- Develop a WASH Sector Master plan
- Develop a WASH Sector Financing Mobilization Strategy
- Establish a SWAp Coordination Unit.

**CSO commitment**

- To support the role out of the CLTS Program and ODF Protocol toward ending Open Defecation
- To increase access to potable water by 1% annually

**Research and Learning Constituency Commitment**

- Explore Private Public Partnership Models for rural water supply and sanitation sustainability to increase coverage

**Mechanisms for review and follow-up on the priorities and commitments**

- The review of the commitments and priorities will be done during the ministry quarterly review meetings and during the Joint Sector Review

**Processes and materials used in the preparation of the Brief**

- National Water Policy 2018
- National Sanitation and Hygiene policy
- 2016 National Development Strategy (Vision 2022)
7. Contacts

   Email address: nompie25@gmail.com
   Mobile Number: +268 7605 3719
   Skype: zwidekalanga

2. Edmund Dlamini – SWA – Alternate Focal Point
   Email Address: edmunddlamini60@gmail.com
   Mobile Number: +268 7606 3217