



WATER FOR AFRICA THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR SANITATION REVOLUTION IN AFRICA

Technical Brief



PHOTO: WaterAid/Alex Macro

INTRODUCTION

Over the last twenty years, Africa's water sector has made steady improvements towards providing access to improved water sources for its rising population. The continent's sanitation and hygiene sector, however, remains underdeveloped. While the region increased access to improved water sources by 20 percentage points [during the Millennium Development Goals \(MDG\) period](#) (1990 – 2015), access to improved sanitation increased by only six percentage points in the same period. Although hygiene was not included in any MDG targets or indicators, available data at the time showed that in 2015 [only 15 percent of Africa's population had access](#) to a basic handwashing facility with soap and water. Chronic under-investment in the sector, lack of prioritization of sanitation and hygiene by policy makers, and a lack of strategic approaches to address sanitation on a larger scale mean that [less than 50 percent of the continent's population](#) has access to even basic sanitation and hygiene facilities.

One lesson that emerged from the post-MDG period was that [success in achieving water and sanitation-related targets](#) is dependent on clear commitment and effective leadership by governments, strong stakeholder coordination, and the creation of an enabling environment through the development of coherent policies. After the slow

progress made by African countries in meeting the sanitation-related MDG targets, African governments and sector stakeholders renewed efforts to realize an African sanitation revolution via the "AfricaSan" movement. This was reinforced in 2015 by the adoption of the [Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene](#), which positions the continent to meet the ambitious [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 6.2](#) on universal access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene services for all, and the elimination of open defecation by 2030. Consistent with the four core elements [identified by USAID](#) as necessary to achieve universal access to sustainable sanitation – governance, financing, behaviors, and markets – the Ngor Commitments focus on the enabling environment for sanitation and hygiene.

To advance this African-led transformational change in the sanitation sector, USAID's [Water for Africa through Leadership and Institutional Support \(WALIS\)](#) program partners with the [African Ministers' Council on Water \(AMCOW\)](#), a specialized committee of the African Union mandated to lead Africa's sanitation agenda and give policy direction for African countries to meet the Ngor Commitments.

USAID WALIS supports African leadership to improve the collection and use of sector knowledge, and to implement evidence-based policies, strategies, and plans that will deliver sustainable services consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals.

"AMCOW is a global leader in the WASH sector and an important knowledge hub for water and sanitation ministers on the continent," says Alayne Potter, WALIS Deputy Chief of Party. "Our partnership with AMCOW supports the implementation of practical priority actions in meeting Africa's water and sanitation goals, effective governance and policy decision-making, and improvement of monitoring and data collection."

BUILDING A MONITORING FRAMEWORK

In its Strategic Plan (2018 – 2030), AMCOW prioritized the sanitation sector and made it a strategic, standalone pillar, with the objective of helping African countries create a suitable enabling environment for accelerated progress towards achieving the overall Ngor vision: sanitation and hygiene for all. The Ngor monitoring and reporting process is a cycle that involves extensive in-country consultations, a biennial data collection exercise, and subsequent data validation by country representatives. Once the data has been validated, AMCOW conducts a data analysis and quality assurance exercise before it is presented to African heads of state through the African Union Commission.

“The Ngor monitoring and reporting process is rightly called the cornerstone of the AfricaSan movement because it is only through this process that we are able to get the real picture of each country’s enabling environment for its sanitation sector,” says Emmanuel Uguru, the AfricaSan Monitoring Support Officer at AMCOW. “At the same time, it is the results of the monitoring process that will inform high-level decision-making for the sector at country-level.”

“From the results of the monitoring process we are then able to measure progress against country-specific targets, identify any gaps or bottlenecks in national sanitation action plans, and make policy recommendations for bridging these gaps,” says Uguru. Beyond informing decision-making, the results of the monitoring process are also used to catalyze the required interventions by governments, and inform the [learning themes](#) for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing during AfricaSan conferences.

To strengthen AMCOW’s Ngor Commitments monitoring process, WALIS, in coordination with UNICEF, supported AMCOW’s leadership of the AfricaSan International Task Force (AITF). Specifically, WALIS helped the AITF’s Subcommittee on Monitoring and Learning develop a standard framework for countries to monitor and report on sanitation and hygiene progress, and to better coordinate with other countries on the continent in order to meet the Ngor Commitments.

“WALIS’s support to AMCOW resulted in a comprehensive system to monitor the continent’s progress against the Ngor Commitments as well as the first-ever AfricaSan Ngor Commitments baseline study for forty countries across Africa. This monitoring effort has positioned USAID as a leader on regional efforts to enable countries to effectively address their own sanitation challenges,” says Richard Rapier, WALIS Chief of Party.

This comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework was then piloted by governments and sanitation sector stakeholders in three countries in Africa: Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal, to facilitate country-level buy-in. The three countries were chosen based on their different approaches to organized services, policymaking, national and local budget allocations, and location. The pilot exercises tested the draft framework’s indicators and monitoring tools to ensure that they were usable and useful, and to ensure that country context and feedback on the indicators was incorporated into the final framework.

Through the AfricaSan Leadership and Monitoring Support Activity, USAID WALIS:

- *Provided coordination support to the AfricaSan International Task Force*
- *Supported the operationalization of the pan-African Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting System*
- *Supported effective collaboration for knowledge sharing, sector monitoring, and leadership*

The final Ngor Commitments Monitoring Framework, which comprises 39 indicators, incorporates existing country-led monitoring and reporting processes, and measures progress in the creation of an enabling environment against national sanitation targets. The framework was first used in 2018-19 to conduct [the baseline Ngor monitoring study](#), which gave a snapshot of the state of sanitation and hygiene across the continent. The framework is the foundation against which future sector progress and coordination will be measured as AMCOW completes its next data collection exercise in 2020.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SUCCESS

Results of the [baseline study](#) are housed on AMCOW'S [pan-African Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting System](#) (WASSMO), an online portal that captures harmonized monitoring and reporting indicators for the continent's WASH sector.

The revamped monitoring process has been instrumental in strengthening AMCOW's capacity to give policy direction to governments. To this end, AMCOW is using the 2018-2019 baseline data to develop the African Sanitation Policy Guidelines, which will help countries create a suitable enabling environment for accelerated progress in sanitation and hygiene. Through the monitoring process, AMCOW also provided guidance to 40 countries to help them develop resource mobilization action plans for improved access to sanitation and hygiene services, a matter of urgency in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“From the monitoring process we realized that some countries did not have clear sanitation policies. This is because there is usually no clear disaggregation between the water and sanitation and hygiene sectors, meaning that sanitation receives less attention when it comes to development of policies and budget allocations,” says Emmanuel Uguru. “However, the monitoring and reporting process has given sanitation more prominence and countries are realizing the need for dedicated sanitation policies and budgets,” he adds. In Ghana, for example, the government has made changes to financial planning guidelines for local government to make it easier to disaggregate spending on sanitation.

The creation of an enabling environment – a building block for the sanitation and hygiene sector – is only possible where policymakers have access to accurate, reliable, timely data for data-driven decision-making. With the help of WALIS, AMCOW has established sanitation data management and analysis systems and strengthened its monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge generation systems. This has positioned AMCOW as a knowledge hub for timely, reliable data and information for decision-making in Africa's sanitation and hygiene sector, and has empowered the organization to effectively lead the continent to achieve the Ngor vision.



PHOTO: WALIS

As a result of the development of the Ngor Commitments Monitoring Framework and the collection of continental sanitation baseline data, countries were able to identify critical bottlenecks and priority focus areas for the achievement of their sanitation targets and the Ngor Commitments. For example:

- ❖ Malawi subsequently undertook a national-level Community Led Total Sanitation Last Mile Study to develop strategies to reach unserved households;
- ❖ Benin realized it lacked data on its marginalized population and, therefore, conducted a mapping exercise to identify the most marginalized households for improved targeting of sanitation interventions;
- ❖ Ivory Coast revised both its National Development Plan and Rural Sanitation Strategy to align with the SDG 6 targets;
- ❖ Eritrea held its first ever National Sanitation Conference to trigger cross-governmental action on sanitation; and
- ❖ Nigeria developed a sanitation roadmap based on the results of the baseline monitoring process.