



MID-TERM INDEPENDENT EVALUATION FOR THE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING & SUPPORT (ISS) PROJECT

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PREPARED FOR
THE AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER
(AMCOW)

PREPARED BY
FRANCESCA DE MARIA
DENIZIA PINTO
IA KAKIGHASHVILI
DR POULOMY CHAKRABORTY

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This document reports on the results from the mid-term evaluation of the Institutional Strengthening (ISS) project of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW). The four-year project supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) aims to enable AMCOW to provide a high-level platform to push the water agenda forward at the continental, regional, and country levels, ultimately enabling Member States to ensure sustainable management of water resources to address both poverty reduction and social development goals by 2030. In this sense, the ISS project seeks to improve the secretariat representation and engagement, leverage financing resources to ensure a more sustainable Secretariat and influence Policy and Practice to increase the use of research and best practice by partners and stakeholders on different fronts.

The midterm evaluation of the ISS Project aimed to provide AMCOW with insights into the performance from its start in 2019 through the second quarter of ISS's third program year (July 2022).

The main objectives of this mid-term evaluation were to:

1. Assess the relevance and coherence of the ISS project design regarding AMCOW needs.
2. Assess how the project is perceived and valued by project beneficiaries and partners.
3. Ensure accountability for the achievement of the ISS objective.
4. Identify the contributions of the ISS project to the AMCOW Strategic Priorities for 2018-2030, SOP 2020-2022, and its synergy with other projects and programmes within the AMCOW Secretariat.

II. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

With the support of an independent international evaluation team (ET), the midterm evaluation was conducted between the period of April – September 2022. The evaluation's approach followed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation principles of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and impact. Through an inclusive and consultative methodology, the evaluation involved a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods used to collect and analyze both primary and secondary data. A total of 55 countries comprised the sampling population within the sampling scheme. The sampling stratified the countries by regions – to ensure fairness in coverage, while still maintaining the diversity of geographical aspects.

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Data collection methods and tools were selected to ensure sufficient variation to reach the geographical regions covered by the secretariat. To collect the data used to inform this report, the ET utilized a triangulation of data from a desk review of project documents, an online survey with Member States and country-level organizations, a focus group with Secretariat personnel involved in the ISS project and interviews with key informants from Stakeholders at the continental or regional level. Key informants were identified through the stakeholder list provided by AMCOW (invitee of the third Meeting of Partners Coordination Platform (PCP) on Water and Sanitation in Africa). They were selected in agreement with AMCOW based on their role and involvement in the project activities to date.

The evaluation findings are thereby presented with the expectation that they will assist AMCOW in making evidence-based decisions and improving results-based management for the remaining part of the ISS project.

III. KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS

EFFECTIVENESS

The midterm evaluation noted remarkable progress in different components that constitute the objective of the ISS project. For instance, AMCOW has organized several events at the regional and continental levels engaging different stakeholders, such as regional consultation meetings and organizational executive committee meetings, to fulfil the needs of making decisions related to AMCOW's action plans and budgets. The survey respondents highly rated the ISS project's effectiveness in strengthening AMCOW's governance. Compared to 2018, data demonstrated that AMCOW could engage with a broader range of stakeholders and improve the relationship with Member States. Moreover, the ISS project has contributed to the development of AMCOW M&E Strategy and the development of the first-ever Annual Report of the institution; The ET found the existence of two annual reports: 2020 and 2021.

However, a significant number of outputs were hindered due to several factors, particularly due to the extended period of recruitment at the beginning of the project and afterwards due to the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. This evaluation found two levels in which the ISS project is addressing obstacles: at the management level and the activity level. The ISS grant was signed towards the end of 2018, and the first disbursement arrived in AMCOW's account in December 2018; hence the project started in January 2019.

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The first two quarters of the project (January- July 2019) were focused mainly on hiring and onboarding the selected candidates. Afterwards, the COVID-19 pandemic obliged AMCOW Secretariat to conduct remote meetings, which on the one hand, made it possible to move forward with a work plan and, on the other, affected the implementation of the funds between 2020 and 2021 and the effective engagement among partners and stakeholders for fundraising.

Nevertheless, AMCOW has made progress regarding collecting contributions from Member States; however, the performance indicators still need to be met. The Financial Sustainability Strategy was elaborated, but the Organizational system still needs improvement, and the Resource Mobilization desk still needs to be fully functional.

RELEVANCE

At an overall project level, the ISS project is aligned with the AMCOW mandate and the objectives proposed by the organization, as per the SOPs. Although the ISS project was largely implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat delivered in line with project objectives and planned activities without significant programmatic change.

With the funding from the ISS project in place, the management team has been strategically focused on improving the overall project management and technical efficiency to strengthen compliance with the set policies and procedures. Evidence is reflected in the increased number of strategic partnerships since the project's inception. The results also reflect on strengthening the cross-cutting agendas such as Youth and Gender, equity, and inclusion, which have been integrated into the regional and continental agendas. However, significant efforts need to be mobilized to address the need to strengthen groundwater programs at all levels.

The mid-term evaluation identified the need to enhance internal knowledge sharing and communication about the ISS project, to strengthen knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, and visibility of the project relevance.

COHERENCE

The ISS project demonstrated a good measure of synergy with the AMCOW's mandate in the Secretariat, as well as with the Member States. In a broader sense, the ISS project also supports AMCOW's role in policies and governance, which AMCOW can deliver for its members.

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AMCOW's governance improved through the ISS project's support, and thereby AMCOW could conduct statutory meetings and some sub-regional meetings.

There is also an expectation that AMCOW should increase regional representation in the organization and reinforce the technical capacity of the Member States.

With stronger leadership and the ISS project's activities, AMCOW's Secretariat staff considers that the Member States' needs are increasingly met and, as a result, there is a boost in membership contribution (see Effectiveness).

EFFICACY

Overall, the project has been developing a good record, despite the reported challenges, particularly during the first years of implementation during the period of covid-19. Regarding resource allocation, the project has been strategically designed to increase AMCOW's capacity to strengthen governance, finance management transparency and visibility as an entity of reference for specialized knowledge and expertise in the water sector in Africa. Through the ISS project, some prominent measures have been implemented to improve project management, including investments in core positions considered for AMCOW to optimize its potential for leading the African water sector.

However, it was noted that the project's activities/operations schedule had been affected by the initial delay experienced in the beginning due to the delayed recruitment process and afterwards by the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

IMPACT

Even with the challenges faced at the early stage of the project, coupled with the imposed restrictions of Covid-19, AMCOW Secretariat has been able to adapt strategically. Significant changes have occurred with the ISS project, with relevant impacts not only on strengthening the organization's capabilities to deliver but also on positioning AMCOW leadership at regional and continental levels while influencing policies and decisions making in the water agenda in the AU. Overall, with AMCOW's renewed leadership and improved position across the AU and internationally, AMCOW can be considered to be on the path of the positive progress of its ISS project's objective 1, representation and engagement, wherein AMCOW more effectively serves as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

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It was noted that the ISS project's focus on the capacity building had yielded significant results in knowledge management and learning, extending to member states through the knowledge hub, an online platform created under the ISS project in 2020. This initiative has resulted in activities that have significantly impacted partner engagement, collaborative action between member states, information sharing on SDG 6 and increased support for groundwater projects.

With the ISS project, AMCOW strengthened data validation and reporting through the WASSMO system, which was considered a contributing factor that improved transparency and accountability of the institution as well as members' confidence in AMCOW; therefore, more members are willing to contribute towards the fee. In fact, the increase in the financial contribution from the Member States was reported as one of the most significant impacts of the project. Yet, the impact of the WASSMO system could be capitalized on by increasing awareness of the member states regarding the reporting mechanisms.

Meanwhile, partnerships and resource mobilization remain critical challenges for AMCOW concerning the sustainability of the organization and the need to support other organizations through fundraising. This should include improvements with regard to gender and youth participation in the events and activities conducted by AMCOW through the ISS project.

SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, the sustainability and exit of the ISS project need to be a well-discussed topic within the Secretariat. Several factors currently impact the sustainability of AMCOW results which need to be addressed. This includes, first and foremost, the retention of the most relevant human resources to support the Secretariat beyond the scope of projects. Currently, AMCOW's core staff's salary is paid through the ISS project, which, when it ends, will not be able to meet and retain human resources, though AMCOW focuses on maintaining key staff positions on its own.

However, some factors can promote the endurance of results. While the ISS project does not have a 'documented exit strategy' as of now, reports indicated that AMCOW is preparing itself for possible self-sustenance in the near future, and AMCOW can count on the Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030.

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One positive factor that is likely to contribute to the sustainability of the results is AMCOW's focus on increasing the number of annual contributions from countries and providing funding in return (for example, 3% of this amount for water and sanitation activities in contributing countries). Additionally, AMCOW has prepared a detailed 'Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030' that is expected to support AMCOW in securing predictable and sustainable funding to deliver its mandates till 2030.

Furthermore, AMCOW has been actively exploring other funding sources from various partners, which is also heavily reliant on AMCOW's current reputation and perceived value by the AU and depends on the willingness and ability of the countries to pay their country contributions, considering protocols and sanctions.

There is also a plan to document the activities conducted within the unit and propose SIDA for future funding, and to include other organizations that can work in synergy. AMCOW's role at the continental level is unique, and through AMCOW, indigenous African knowledge can be shared and strengthened. If a second phase of the ISS project occurs, then AMCOW can contribute largely to the continental water and sanitation needs.

IV. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation generated some significant findings, and thereby, the following sections describe some of the key recommendations based on the findings. The key recommendations to strengthen the project-assessed objectives include:

AMCOW's larger role and representation in the African Union

- Consider diversifying strategies to motivate the MS to pay their fees to address the current gap.
- Consider strategies to accommodate MS's need to receive technical support to increase MS's commitment towards AMCOW, ultimately leading to financial contribution.
- Strategically relate to MS according to their level of engagement in the WASSMO system, including reporting, training and meetings to continue improving the WASSMO system.
- Operationalize Youth, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy with an operational plan.

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- Re-think gathering both qualitative and quantitative data regularly to measure the changes in effective participation.

Strengthening of AMCOW Secretariat's internal processes

- Improve the communication flow to strengthen institutional governance and the decision-making process.
- Improve monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- Improve the Knowledge Management system and webpage
- Assess and reduce the current workload and increase the gender and national diversity of the Secretariat's staff.

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ACRONYMS

AMCOW.....African Ministers' Council on Water
ARDWE.....Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment
AU.....African Union
AWF.....Africa Water Facility
AWW.....Africa Water Week
BMGF.....Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
ET.....Evaluation Team (consultants)
EU.....European Union
ISS.....Institutional Strengthening and Support
KPI.....Key Performance Indicators
OECD DAC.....The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

SIDA.....Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMC.....Sub-Regional Ministerial Committees
SOP.....Strategic Operational Plan
TAC.....Technical Advisory Committee
TEC.....Technical Experts Committee
UNEP.....United Nations Environment Programme
USAID.....United States Agency for International Development
WALIS.....Water for Africa Through Leadership and Institutional Support
WASH.....Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WASSMO.....African Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring
WSSCC.....Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) is an intergovernmental institution formed in 2002 in Abuja, Nigeria. The organs and structures of AMCOW serve as the working group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC on ARDWE). The mission of AMCOW is to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and sustainable management of water resources in Africa, for poverty alleviation, social and economic development, regional cooperation, as well as maintenance of ecosystems. In this context, AMCOW is at the forefront of initiatives to realize “a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”, which is Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063; as well as actualizing the Africa Water Vision 2025.

1.1 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING SUPPORT (ISS) PROJECT

Since 2019, SIDA has been supporting AMCOW through its ‘Institutional Strengthening and Support (ISS)’ project. The ISS project was proposed to support AMCOW in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities as the sub-Committee on Water and Sanitation of the STC on ARDWE. The support seeks to leverage financial resources for an effective and sustainable Secretariat, catalyze implementation of the AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030, and influence policy and practice using research and best practices by various stakeholders. The overall objective of the ISS project is to enable AMCOW to provide a high-level platform to push the water agenda forward at the continental, regional, and country levels, ultimately enabling MS to ensure sustainable management of water resources to address both poverty reduction and social development goals.

Within the broader scope of AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030, the ISS project focuses on three specific objectives, as follows:

- ***Specific Objective 1: Representation and Engagement - AMCOW more effectively serves as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment.***

Under this specific objective, it is key to clarify the roles of the TAC Focal Point[1] and support the hosting of a regional workshop each year. The events are intended for capacity building (such as monitoring and reporting WASSMO indicators training) and strategic discussions on critical regional water and sanitation issues that will inform subsequent TAC and GA meetings.

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Moreover, the regional workshops will help reactivate the five regional ministerial committees (SMC) and enable them to offer policy guidance on the implementation of AMCOW's work plan at the regional level, ensure alignment of continental strategies and plans with regional and national priorities, and ensure that MS honor their obligations to AMCOW while implementing decisions of the Governing Council. The project aimed to empower and facilitate the Vice-Presidents to effectively coordinate the SMCs. In the same vein, the project aimed to reactivate the Technical Experts Committees (TEC) at the regional level and enable the TAC Vice-Chair to effectively lead the TEC in its efforts to provide technical support to the SMC, contribute well-thought-through regional priorities to AMCOW work planning process and ensure that action plans at regional and national level reflect policy undertakings at the continental level.

- *Specific Objective 2: Financing - AMCOW is successful in attracting and leveraging more financial resources to ensure a more sustainable Secretariat and to support the implementation of the 2018-2030 Strategy.*

The project's objective is to enable AMCOW to be successful in attracting and leveraging more financial resources to ensure its sustainability to meet its desired mandate and vision in Africa concerning the period before the implementation of the ISS. The project foresees establishing a financial management system that could ensure more effective and efficient delivery in technical areas and more accountability and transparency in the financial areas. In addition, the project aims at enabling AMCOW to set up a fully functioning resource mobilization desk to coordinate resources from in-kind, solicited, and unsolicited proposals, donations from funders, and MS' contributions, as well as a financial sustainability plan, including organizational sustainability benchmarks for the project period.

According to the ISS project, AMCOW Secretariat should also put in place an engagement communication plan focused on increasing MS' contribution through direct payment of their membership dues and covering the cost of TAC members' participation in statutory meetings as well as ensuring that the MS pay their fee contribution when due. Strategies include developing and distributing AMCOW publication materials during meetings where MS representatives are present, conducting advocacy (one-to-one) meetings directly targeted at MS representatives and designates, and consciously and deliberately involving MS representatives during AMCOW's activities to boost the visibility of AMCOW and stress the need for contributions.

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- *Specific Objective 3: Influencing Policy and Practice / Knowledge Broker - To increase the use of research and best practice by policymakers, private companies, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and public institutions, etc.*

i) Knowledge Management: The knowledge management component encompasses improving AMCOW's internal document management processes, establishing a state-of-the-art web-based learning and communications hub, as well as a community of practice of knowledge management focal persons at the country levels to champion in-person peer-to-peer engagements.

ii) WASSMO Report: The WASSMO Report is AMCOW's flagship document as it is presented at the highest levels of the African Union Summit for Heads of States and Government (HoSG) and it raises awareness of water and sanitation issues in Africa. The WASSMO reporting process promotes evidence-based decision-making at all levels and strengthens national coordination mechanisms to adequately report quality data which is used to effectively plan for development and increase sector investments. AMCOW, with the financial support of the Africa Water Facility (AWF) and the technical support of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)/DHI, designed the WASSMO system which includes indicators for the Africa Water Vision 2025, the Africa Agenda 2063, and the SDG 6. Cognizant of how important the WASSMO reporting system is to the AU and MS, AMCOW will make a business case for the monitoring and reporting function to be funded through MS contributions in time. However, SIDA funds may be needed to ensure continuity beyond AWF funds as MS gets ready to mainstream the positions as core staff positions.

iii) Youth and Gender Strategies (now called priorities). AMCOW, in its Strategy 2018-2030, committed to developing youth and gender policies and strategies to mainstream the respective agendas in Africa's water and sanitation sector. This is to intentionally recognize the invaluable role of Africa's women and youth in the sector and improve their capacity as leaders, dedicated professionals in the sector, agents of change, and rights' holders. AMCOW decided to use the ISS project to review and update its policies and strategies for gender and youth mainstreaming in the WASH sector taking into consideration key and updated information from new research, studies, and findings to align them with current challenges and opportunities. Additionally, the Secretariat decided to maintain the collaboration with the AUC and other key stakeholders at Pan-African levels, regional, and national bodies, and to promote more partner engagement, dialogue, as well as to engage with specialized agencies and other Youth Networks in the sector.

AMCOW is committed to ensuring constant dialogue with all MS representatives and agencies (not just those who focus on youth and gender equality) and promoting programmes and initiatives that prioritize the concerns of gender and youth during conferences, technical meetings, review sessions and forums.

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iv) Convening: Coordination is a fundamental aspect of AMCOW's work as an intergovernmental organization, because of its legitimacy to convene stakeholders throughout the water and sanitation sector: Ministers, researchers, implementers, INGOs, civil society, and youth networks. AMCOW is unique in bringing sector influencers and actors to the table. AMCOW's main events are the Africa Water Week (AWW) and Africa Sanitation (AfricaSan) Conferences. Since the mentioned events are hosted by incoming Presidents from Member States (Ministers for Water), the Secretariat faces new conditions each time these events are held - which might be related to the environment, logistical and human factors. In addition, some countries do not have adequate facilities or event management companies, and the locations are not always optimal for drawing large numbers of participants. A further constraint is that AWW / AfricaSan Conferences are held in conjunction with the TAC and General Assembly meetings which take an enormous amount of staff time. It also deprives the Ministers, TAC members, and Secretariat's staff of the ability to participate in the AWW and constrains the Secretariat leadership's ability to supervise service providers hired to support the AWW organization and to provide required guidance during the week. AfricaSan is the other AMCOW's large-scale event that will need the same effort. Therefore, AMCOW requested SIDA to support with funds for meetings, ensuring there is sufficient AMCOW staff to undertake to convene and follow up, and building staff competencies in organizing and hosting events.

v) Building competencies: With the approval of the AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030, the EXCO, in its 11th ordinary session, directed the Secretariat to develop a new organogram to fill required capacities and competencies and the ISS supported some key positions. Among other supports, the budget for the Project includes Staff Retreats for annual reflection, review, and planning.

vi) Building capacity for Water Resource Management: In 2018, AMCOW assessed that to implement the AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030 in a balanced way, it is important to implement more projects in (transboundary) water, water resources management, water governance, groundwater, climate change, capacity building, etc. Hence AMCOW decided to hire an overall Program Director, with expertise in water sciences or engineering. As the Africa Groundwater Commission failed to get off the ground, AMCOW decided to step in and adopt a more pragmatic and affordable approach by initially establishing a Groundwater Desk at the Secretariat to coordinate and implement Africa's groundwater activities.

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1.1.1. Mid-Term Evaluation of the ISS Project

Against this background, AMCOW Secretariat contracted a team of independent evaluators to conduct the ISS project's mid-term evaluation. The aim of this mid-term evaluation is to understand whether the expected project outcomes will be appropriately realized based on current circumstances, and, if not, what changes are required for better project implementation, and what can be learned from the good practices that may be identified from this evaluation. Therefore, the main objectives of this mid-term evaluation are to:

1. Assess the relevance and coherence of the ISS project design regarding AMCOW needs.
2. Assess how the project is perceived and valued by project beneficiaries and partners.
3. Ensure accountability for the achievement of the ISS objective.
4. Identify the contributions of the ISS project to the AMCOW Strategic Priorities for 2018-2030, SOP 2020-2022, and its synergy with other projects and programmes within the AMCOW Secretariat.
5. Review the overall project Result Framework and enhance organizational, and developmental learning.

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2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Institutional Strengthening Support (ISS) Project

This evaluation was conducted between April and September 2022, using international evaluation standards and a virtual method of data collection and reporting supported by online tools.

The evaluation approach follows the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation principles of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and impact. An adaptive and client-based approach was used to unfold relevant and useful information for AMCOW. Consultative and inclusive processes were adopted, wherein, the client was consulted for the various stages involved in the evaluation, and the evaluation was supported by a thorough triangulation of data, which aimed to listen to the voice of the different stakeholders involved.

Furthermore, triangulation was also achieved by using a mixed method approach with qualitative and quantitative data collection and by having a team of four experts with different yet complementing competencies for discussing and analyzing the results.

The evaluation findings are thus presented in the following sections with the expectation that they will assist AMCOW in making evidence-based decisions and improving results-based management for the remaining part of the ISS project.

2.2 Methodology

The mid-term evaluation was conducted in three phases:

- Inception phase
- Data collection phase
- Data analysis and reporting phase
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2.2.1 Inception Phase

The key activities undertaken in the inception phase were:

Kickoff meeting

The online kickoff meeting for initiating this evaluation was organized on April 25th, 2022, where members of the AMCOW Secretariat representing this evaluation, along with the team leader of the Evaluation Team (ET) participated.

Desk review

Then, the ET conducted a thorough desk review of all the documents shared by AMCOW, along with some independent internet searches for additional information. This review benefitted the ET with a deeper understanding of the project, its implementation, and overall management systems. It also helped the ET strengthen the evaluation questions (Annex 1) and make them more relevant for this evaluation. Additionally, the review formed the basis for developing the primary data collection tools (Annex 3). The Evaluation Team also requested additional documents as needed at different stages of this evaluation. This being a mid-term evaluation, only documents up to April 2022 were considered for the inception phase desk review.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions (Annex 1) were revised after the desk review at the inception stage. This revision was done to strengthen the evaluation further and reflect on the mid-term evaluation's objectives and priorities. The ET considered all the key aspects of this evaluation while revising the questions based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Further, a criterion of 'exit' was also added with sustainability to understand AMCOW's preparedness for sustainability after the completion of the ISS project.

Inception report

The inception phase was completed with the submission of this inception report. This report contained the ET's updated methodology with sampling strategies, a list of respondents, primary data collection tools, the desk review findings, and a list of annexes, all of which initiated the next stage of online data collection. The ET embarked on the next evaluation stage after AMCOW's approval.

2.2.2 Data collection phase

Primary data was collected virtually between June-July 2022 using mixed methods and an inclusive approach to ensure all relevant stakeholders' views were considered. The methods were planned to enrich the analysis and increase the data variability, as well as reduce respondent and information biases, along with increasing participation and considering data collection ethics, leading to a robust evaluation outcome.

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Keeping in mind AMCOW's Secretariat cardinal approach adopted for the SIDA grant - to collaborate with national, regional, and international partners of the Water and Sanitation sector, wherein, 'the implementation of the grant is relying on broad and combined expertise of a wide range of stakeholders to achieve results earmarked under the project', this evaluation also adopted the same approach, wherein, a wide range of respondents were selected to collect primary data from.

Respondents were categorized into three 'units of analysis'. 'Unit 1' comprised on the respondents from the AMCOW Secretariat who from whom qualitative data was collected using Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). 'Units 2 and 3' comprised of respondents from Member States and country-level organizations and, stakeholders at continental or regional level, from whom both qualitative and survey data were collected. Participants for qualitative data analysis for Units 2 and 3 were selected purposely from the list of proposed attendees of the Third Meeting of Partners Coordination Platform (PCP) on Water and Sanitation in Africa 2022, Ethiopia. In this vein, the ET directed the online surveys to the email listed by AMCOW in the inception phase. Online surveys were sent to a list of emails shared by AMCOW. The qualitative data collection methods and allowed for in-depth and open discussion of the issues and indicators for this evaluation. Primary qualitative data was collected virtually through online software (Zoom and Skype). All virtual data collection activities were recorded with the participant's consent.

Quantitative data was collected through an online survey administered by the ET through emails from five continental regions: 1) Eastern Africa, 2) Southern Africa, 3) Central Africa, 4) North Africa and 5) West Africa. A total of 55 countries comprised the sampling population within the sampling scheme, with the common regional division of the continent on strata level and 12, 13, and 16 countries at each regional level, respectively. Primary quantitative data was collected virtually through an online survey, using Google Forms (in English and French) emailed to a list of respondents (Annex 2), initiated in mid-June to the regional and continental stakeholders forming Units 2 and 3 of the analysis. All respondents' personal information was anonymous, and the collected data were de-identified before analysis. Please refer to Annex 2 for more details on the data collection strategy employed in the evaluation and summary of respondents.

2.2.3 Data Analysis and Report Collection Phase

Based on the evaluation questions, a 'qualitative data outcomes framework' was created, where the data was transcribed and organized according to relevant themes and evaluation questions. The framework helped analyze the qualitative data to further triangulate the findings with the desk review and quantitative data outputs. The quantitative analysis relied on descriptive statistics such as counts and tabulated proportions to analyze and understand the evaluation objectives, responding to the evaluation questions and adhering to the OECD-DAC principles of evaluation. The evaluation findings are thereby presented through this report.

3. FINDINGS

The following section provides detailed findings from this mid-term evaluation. The findings are based on a thorough desk review, triangulated with qualitative and quantitative primary data collected for the evaluation by speaking directly with key respondents and from data received through Online surveys from respondents. It is noteworthy to mention that the findings recorded in this evaluation focused essentially on the performance of AMCOW in the scope of the ISS project, at its mid-term phase. Thus, the findings do not consider the overall performance of AMCOW as an institution itself, nor does it reflect the Secretariat's relationship with individual Member States and regions.

3.1. Core Evaluation Theme

Effectiveness

Summary of Outputs and Outcomes of the ISS Project

The extent to which the ISS project has achieved its intended outputs and immediate outcomes in its mid-term are summarized in the table below. Further, the subsequent sections elaborate on the project's effectiveness covering the various aspects of this evaluation.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Specific Objective 1: Representation and Engagement - AMCOW more effectively serves as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.						
Stakeholder engagement at regional and continental levels, including but not limited to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AfDB- African Development Bank 2. World Bank 3. JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan 4. IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development 5. DFID- Department for International Development, United Kingdom 6. DGIS- Directorate-General for International Cooperation, The Netherlands 	1.1 More formal linkages/ relationships established with the AU and regional bodies.	Number of new MOUs and increased scope of existing MOUs Target(s) 2019: 3 new MOU 2020: 3 new MOU 2021: 3 new MOU 2022: 3 new MOU	16 MOUs signed as of November 2018	MOUs	Document review (to be tracked in the records management system)	<p>The output was met as AMCOW has organized events at regional and continental levels engaging different stakeholders.</p> <p>The outcome is achieved with the signing of 9 MOUs during the period of the ISS project.</p> <p>Though the Performance indicator did not meet its yearly target of 3 MOUs (1 MoU was signed in 2019, 2 in 2020 and none in 2021), however, overall, 9 MOUs were signed till July 2022.</p> <p>During the Water Forum in Dakar in 2022, AMCOW</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
7. KOICA- Korea International Cooperation Agency, South Korea 8. BMZ – The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany						signed 6 MoUs. The MoUs signed are listed below: AMCOW/UNESCO-May 2019 AMCOW/DAI-WALIS-Sept 2020 AMCOW/WIN-Sept 2020 AMCOW/ANEW-March 2022 AMCOW/APHRC-March 2022 AMCOW-BGR-March 2022 AMCOW-IWMI-March 2022 AMCOW-Speak up for Africa- March 2022 AMCOW-World Vision International -March 2022
Staff with key competencies in place <i>(all new positions hired by 2019 Q2)</i>	1.2 Secretariat is viewed as being more effective in its role in positioning AMCOW as the primary continental actor for water and sanitation.	Increased satisfaction of TAC members and other stakeholders. Target(s)	No tracking system in place	High program performance TAC, partners, stakeholders satisfied	Feedback from stakeholders	The output was achieved. New positions were hired. The position of Resource Mobilization Officer was filled but the officer was later released from the position.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
<p>Communications strategies enacted (<i>starting 2019 Q2</i>)</p> <p>Improved convening and advocacy resources and capacities (<i>ongoing</i>)</p>		2021: evident at mid-term evaluation stakeholder consultations				<p>Since then, AMCOW reviewed its approach to mobilizing resources – through ongoing efforts to establish the Development Partners Coordination Framework (DPCF).</p> <p>The Outcome was met as according to the evaluation survey the majority of MS and stakeholders perceive AMCOW's role since 2018, as positive, owing to AMCOW's activities at the continental and regional levels.</p> <p>AMCOW's role at the country level is moderate.</p> <p>In 2020 AMCOW ran a Stakeholders' Perception survey that also gave positive feedback.</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
<p>Engagement and advocacy with the range of key investment actors and mechanisms including Ministries of Finance, donors, AfDB, private sector, – i.e., convening consultations on strategic issues such as SDG6 progress, convening annual Strategic Dialogue with Development partners, triennial donor conferences, participating in high-level international forums such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) 2. World Water Week 3. SWA-led Sector Ministers Meetings with Ministers of Finance, etc. 	<p>1.3 AMCOW is successful in engaging stakeholders including national governments, financial institutions, and development partners to prioritize and support investments that align with 2010-2023 Strategic Operational Plan.</p>	<p>Increased investment in the water and sanitation sector across the continent including through more innovative platforms.</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2020-22: Investments increase 10 % annually</p> <p>2020-22: AMCOW annual reports cite progress and case examples</p> <p>2021: evident at mid-term evaluation stakeholder consultations</p>	<p>No tracking system in place</p>	<p>Engagement platforms established</p> <p>Reports</p> <p>GC Minutes</p>	<p>Document review and feedback from stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Output was met as AMCOW has successfully engaged with Ministers of Finance and donors in conferences.</p> <p>There is a gap in evidence to measure whether the outcome has been met.</p> <p>ET requested more evidence to make outcome-related assessments, but data was not provided (i.e., Reports GC Minutes).</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Documents and orientation processes that clearly specify ToR and action plans for offices of AMCOW President and Vice Presidents, and for TAC, TAC subcommittees, regional focal points. <i>(Developed by 2019 Q4)</i>	1.4 Key functions of each entity are agreed upon and used for more effective internal governance.	<p>TAC and EXCO approve TOR for each entity.</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2019: by Q4</p> <p>Evidence of improved functioning at each level.</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2021: evident at mid-term and end term evaluations</p>	Mandates and functions defined in the AMCOW Governance Framework need updating.	EXCO minutes Updated governance framework.	Governance Council Reports review.	<p>The outcome and output are partially met.</p> <p>AMCOW provided the ET with the Governance Framework of 2013 which specified the ToR for President and Vice President. However, there is missing documentation describing whether and how it was revised.</p> <p>The ET also reviewed a 2020 document (The induction Package) in which there are ToR for TAC, EXCO, and regional focal points. In this document, it is not specified when, if and how these ToRs were written/revised.</p> <p>Adequate data and evidence are missing to make further assessments. Despite sharing additional data through SharePoint, the ET could not find further evidence</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Documents and orientation processes for Water Ministers. <i>(communications material and orientation finalized and launched by 2020 Q2)</i>	1.5 Water Ministers are more aware of key issues within the water and sanitation sector	Evidence of improved awareness. Target(s) 2021: evident at mid-term evaluation stakeholder consultations	No formal orientation process or documents	Induction Package produced and effectively handed to new GA members	AMCOW Secretariat and EXCO Reports	It was possible to confirm the existence of an Induction Package that contains clear and complete information. However, it was not possible to see AMCOW and EXCO reports on orientation processes. Hence, the ET assesses that the output and outcome are partially met.
Specific Objective 2: Financing - AMCOW is successful in attracting and leveraging more financial resources to ensure a more sustainable Secretariat and to the implementation of the 2018-2030 Strategy.						
All required systems and processes are in place, including robust financial management system & operationalization.	2.1 Financial and management systems meet international criteria	AMCOW passes EU pillar assessment. Target(s) 2021: passes assessment	Systems and procedures under development	Donors and EXCO satisfied EU certificate	Strategic Dialogue and Monitoring report, Audit opinion and Management Letters	The outcome was achieved. AMCOW established an ERP to improve financial management and administration management. There is inadequate data to assess this.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Improved organizational systems and competencies (ongoing)	2.2 Increased MS annual contributions and payment of arrears.	<p>% of member having cleared arrears and % paying current fees</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2019: 10% of MS with outstanding arrears clear them & 15% pay current fees</p> <p>2020: 10% clearing arrears & 20% paying current fees</p> <p>2021: 10% clearing arrears & 25% paying current fees</p> <p>2022: 10% clearing arrears & 30% paying current fees</p>	5% Cleared Arrears and 13% paying Current Fees	Financial records	Document review	<p>AMCOW Secretariat made great improvements in both Output and Outcome.</p> <p>The Output is not yet achieved.</p> <p>The outcome was partially achieved. The target of having 25% MS paying fees (including regular and arrears) was partially met as in 2021 the percentage of MS paying was 21% (considering 55).¹ It's also important to note that MS' contributions in June 2022 were \$500,000, which was up from \$134,000 reported in the same period in June 2021 (317% growth).</p>

¹ The year 2022 is not considered for this review as the fee payment period for the year 2022 is still open.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
<p>Improved organizational systems and competencies <i>(by 2019 Q4)</i></p> <p>Fully functioning Resource Mobilization desk <i>(by 2019 Q1)</i></p>	2.3 Increased support from development partners.	<p>increased # of donors and increased amount of funding</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2019: 1 new donor and 10% increased budget</p> <p>2020: 1 new donor & 10% increased budget</p> <p>2021: 1 new donor & 10% increased budget</p> <p>2022: 1 new donor & 10% increased budget</p>	<p>3 Donors</p> <p>Actual Annual Budget of \$1.2m in 2018</p>	Financial records	AMCOW Secretariat and EXCO reports review.	<p>The Output was achieved as AMCOW decided to change its Resource Mobilization desk by organizing task shifting of the Resource mobilization officer tasks towards other positions.</p> <p>The Outcome was partially achieved. AMCOW Secretariat was not able to attract 1 new donor per year but attracted three (3) new donors in 2022 (BGR, NVF, and UNICEF). However, there was no increase in the budget raised from donors when comparing donors' funds before the ISS project and donors' funds after the ISS project (with ISS funds not considered in the comparison)².</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Development and implementation of Financial Sustainability Strategy, which includes organizational sustainability benchmarks <i>(by 2019 Q4)</i>	<p>2.4 AMCOW makes and sustains progress in achieving financial sustainability of core operations, in particular:</p> <p>(a) covers increased percent of SIDA - supported core staff positions and (b) events: Africa Water Week (AWW) and AfricaSan becoming self-sustaining.</p>	<p>Organizational sustainability benchmarks are met.</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2020-21: Annual targets pursued in annual work plans as a way of implementing sustainability strategy</p> <p>By end of 2022: 30% of Sida supported positions are mainstreamed into core staff. 50% of convening costs of TAC meetings and 70 % of AWW budget is internally covered.</p>	FY 2019 SIDA supports 5 positions to some extent, 15% of total staff costs, 100% of convening costs of TAC meetings, 40 % of AWW budget.	Financial records and audited statements	Reports Review	<p>The Output was achieved. The Outcome has not yet been met as the staff under the ISS project is 100% financed by SIDA. Specifically:</p> <p>Director of Programmes-100%</p> <p>Director of Finance & Admin-100%</p> <p>Ground Water Desk Officer-100%</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation Officer-100%</p> <p>IT/Database Officer-100%</p> <p>Knowledge Management and Information Sharing Officer-100%.</p>

² see 15-02-2022_SIDA ISS Performance Indicator Tracking Table-PITT and list of projects provided by the secretariat to the ET via email.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Specific Objective 3: Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker) - To increase the exchange and use of research and best practice by policymakers, private companies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations, public institutions and other water sector actors.						
Operationalization of knowledge management function, including initiatives to increase KM profile amongst stakeholders <i>(by 2020 Q2)</i>	3.1 AMCOW's web-based knowledge and Information Hub attracts relevant content on the water and sanitation sectors from knowledge partners including Centres of Excellence and MS experts.	Knowledge partners contribute content to Knowledge Hub Target(s): 2020: 10 contributors 2021: 15 contributors 2022: 20 contributors	Knowledge Hub is not established	Portal Knowledge partners	Review of Knowledge Hub content Feedback from partners	The Output was achieved, in fact, the KM profile of AMCOW improved and was able to attract new stakeholders contributing to the KM Hub such as UN agencies, universities, and new ministries of water. The Outcome was partially achieved as the number of contributors. On one hand, it is possible to see an increase in the number of annual contributors, on the other, targets were not achieved. In 2020 was 7, and in 2021 was 12 against the planned 15. The ET cannot consider 2022 as the year has yet to end and new contributors may arise. Up to 30th July 2022, the number of contributors was 14.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
<p>Operationalization of knowledge management function.</p> <p>Initiatives to boost participation in, and highlight critical issues for, women and youth</p>	<p>3.2 Knowledge and Information Hub is widely used resource, including by MS to inform evidence-based decision-making and project development.</p>	<p>Increasing # of visits to site over time</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2020: 100 visits</p> <p>2021: 10% increase in visits from 2020</p> <p>2022: 10% increase in visits from 2021</p> <p>Evidence of contribution of KH content to policy and practice</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2021: evident at mid-term evaluation stakeholder consultations</p>	N/A	<p>Web analytics</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Meeting minutes</p>	<p>Review of monitoring reports (analytics and statements by users attributing changes to KH to be tracked in M&E system)</p> <p>Feedback from stakeholders and website built-in comments space.</p>	<p>Output was achieved, as out of 25 respondents of Survey, 5 mentioned WASSMO and 2 knowledge sharing between countries as the most important positive outcome. The outcome was also achieved as the number of visits in 2021 was 2329 and the number of new users 1507, meaning that the number of sessions per user was 1.55. The reports provided show data from April 2021.</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
<p>High quality WASSMO report produced.</p> <p>Country and regional reporting process supported in conjunction with AfDB-AWF.</p> <p>Advocacy that promotes report and subsequent actions/ responses.</p>	<p>3.3 WASSMO report is a flagship document that is used at country and regional levels to inform policy development and planning processes.</p>	<p>Evidence of report's contribution to improved policy and practice</p> <p>Target(s)</p> <p>2019: 10 cases of evidence of improved policy or practice identified</p> <p>2020: 10 cases identified</p> <p>2021: 15 cases identified</p> <p>2022: 15 cases identified</p>	<p>No tracking system in place</p>	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Review of monitoring reports (analytics and statements by users to be tracked in M&E system).</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>The data was requested from AMCOW but was not provided to the ET (Sept 2022).</p> <p>WASSMO indicators mentioned lack of data from the years 2020-2021 (Governance and Institutions). In addition, it is difficult to trace whether the evidence improved policy such for instance 2021 initiative of AMCOW to launch African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG) Source: WASSMO report 2021, pg. 19. was under the ISS project's direct relation or not.</p> <p>From the same source, the data reported under the Chapter Governance and Institutions is not enough to</p>

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
						<p>make conclusions on the targets indicated for the ISS project.</p> <p>As part of strengthening the monitoring and reporting, the Secretariat developed an M&E strategy that will assist in the tracking and reporting of the SOP 2022-2024. In addition, to showcase AMCOW results within partners, the Secretariat developed the first-ever Annual Report of AMCOW in 2020 and 2021.</p> <p>The SIDA-ISS grant has contributed to the review and validation of the WASSMO framework in January 2020.</p>
AMCOW's Youth Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy is developed and widely	3.4 Increased mainstreaming of gender and youth issues through policy	Evidence of gender and youth issues is being recognized	No tracking system in place	Policy documents	Monitoring reports of policy reviews.	Output and outcome are yet to be achieved. Data from the online survey in forms of assessments indicated that

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
disseminated; related advocacy and training carried out at TAC and regional meetings, Africa Water Week, AfricaSan Conference Series, other forums.		and considered in policy and practice. Target(s) 2019: policies disseminated Starting end of 2020: annually 10 cases of evidence of implementation of gender and youth policies.				Youth and gender topic integration is Moderate. A revised youth gender and social inclusion strategy has been developed and will be presented to the 13 th EXCO in October 2022 for approval. The dissemination and implementation of this strategy will commence in 2023.
More robust events management function established (planning, implementation and follow-up). Internal capacity to successfully manage events built through mentorship, establishment of active sub-committees.	3.5 Increased participation in, and effectiveness of, AMCOW's peer-to-peer knowledge and learning platforms – Africa Water Week, AfricaSan Conference Series, other forums. Increased profiling of gender and youth issues at events and	Increased event attendance, including by women and youth from MS. Target(s): 10 % annual increase in participation % of women and youth attendees 2019: AfricaSan (25% / 13% / 12%),	512 registrants for Gabon AWW (2018), substantial issues with local hosting providers Will serve as baseline for	Event records (disaggregated for gender and youth) Participants	Review of documents. Participant feedback forms.	The Output was partially achieved. If it is true that AMCOW was able to carry out events even during COVID, MS reported still observing delays in the organization of events. The outcome was partially achieved. The data available, however, is insufficient and more data is needed for a stronger evaluation. There is

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Initiatives to boost participation of, and highlight critical issues for, women and youth	increased participation of women and youth from MS.	<p>2020 Africa Water Week (45% / 25% / 20%)</p> <p>2021 AfricaSan (50%/30%/20%)</p> <p>2022 Africa Water Week (50%/30%/20%)</p> <p>Increasingly positive feedback about event organization and usefulness from participants.</p> <p>Target(s) for event survey forms:</p> <p>2019: 70% satisfied or highly satisfied</p> <p>2020: 80% satisfied or highly satisfied</p> <p>2022: 90% satisfied or highly satisfied</p>	<p>2015 AfricaSan.</p> <p>AfricaSan: 23%/13% women/10% Youth attendees</p>			no disaggregated data about the number of women and youth attending AfricaSan and Africa Water Week, therefore, it is not possible to evaluate if the outcome was achieved. In AfricaSan 2019, 83.56% of participants reported being satisfied and highly satisfied.

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Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes	Performance Indicator of Outcomes and Targets	Baseline	Data Source	Data Collection Strategy	Evaluation findings
Secretariat attracts and retains experts in water and sanitation through its staff and network of advisors that provide to MS and other actors.	3.6 AMCOW is seen as a credible knowledge broker and is widely recognized for its technical expertise in both the water resource management and sanitation sectors. This includes emerging high need areas such as groundwater management and climate financing.	# and type of requests for advice Target(s): 2019: 2 requests for technical experts responded to 2020: 10% increase 2021: 10% increase 2022: 20% increase Target(s): 2021: evident at mid-term evaluation stakeholder consultations.	No tracking system in place	Experts Advising Logbooks Beneficiaries	Monitoring reports that track advising activities. Feedback from TAC, EXCO and other stakeholders	The data was requested from AMCOW but was not provided.

Table 1 Summary of outputs and outcomes

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Unintended Outcomes of the ISS Project

AMCOW's mission is to "Provide political leadership, policy direction, and advocacy in the provision, use, and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development and maintenance of African ecosystems". Although ISS-specific objectives do not cover political leadership aspects, the ISS project facilitated the organization of high-level meetings between the Executive Secretary and Ministers of Water of the MS. For instance. The ISS project made it possible for the Executive Secretary to engage - in the last 9 months - with the Ministers responsible for water and sanitation affairs of Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Malawi, Cameroon, Senegal, Zambia, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Namibia; Uganda, Ghana, and South Sudan. In turn, these interventions contributed to strengthening the relations and cooperation regarding transboundary water management in the region.

Enablers and barriers of the ISS project in attaining its targets

Members' States' motivation to pay the fee can be a determinant to help collect fees from the MS.

Various respondents (AMCOW's staff, MS representatives, and stakeholders) expressed that the MS' perception of AMCOW's practical usefulness is key when the MS makes decisions about fee payment. As understood, when recognizing the value of AMCOW's role for themselves, the MS are more willing to contribute with their fee and vice versa. For instance, this is consistent with Specific Objective 2, which states that AMCOW is "successful in attracting and leveraging more financial resources to ensure a more sustainable Secretariat and to support the implementation of the 2018-2030 Strategy", and Outcome 2.2, which foresees the achievement of "Increased MS annual contributions and payment of arrears".

Conversely, when looking at the strategies that the AMCOW Secretariat proposed to SIDA concerning the increase of fee payments[1], the ET found that the proposal focused, essentially, on increasing communication and visibility towards the MS. It would also be important to address the importance of strengthening the support to the MS at the national level to attract and leverage more financial resources. Nevertheless, this midterm evaluation found that there was a considerable increase in the MS's fee payments, with 21% of MS paying the current fees in 2021, although the performance indicator of 25% of MS paying the current fee was not achieved.

Still concerning strategies to mobilize the payment of the fees, this midterm evaluation observed a discrepancy between the ISS proposal and the Secretariat activities and between the MS, stakeholders, and the Secretariat's staff opinion. While the latter considered the recognition of AMCOW's value and receiving support at the national level as a potential stimulus for MS to pay fees, the first focused mainly on communicating AMCOW's improvements.

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Although communicating about AMCOW's activities is important in raising awareness among MS, data suggests the need for further review the strategy to maximize the opportunities and capitalize on actions that streamline direct support of AMCOW Secretariat to the MS, as the primary drive changes to achieve a significant perception threshold about AMCOW's value and usefulness.

This perception is observable in the survey results. As per survey respondents, the MS and stakeholders perceived AMCOW's role at the MS level as moderate, and high at the regional and continental levels. The WASSMO system especially regarding SDGs, knowledge sharing among countries, the support in organizing national activities such as National Consultation on African Sanitation Policy Guidelines, setting up the National Coordination platform (NCP), organizing of national workshop for WASSMO data validation and reporting and capacity building in general, support in organizing a tool on groundwater piloting and, analysis of the national sanitation sector were mentioned as a valuable contribution by AMCOW.

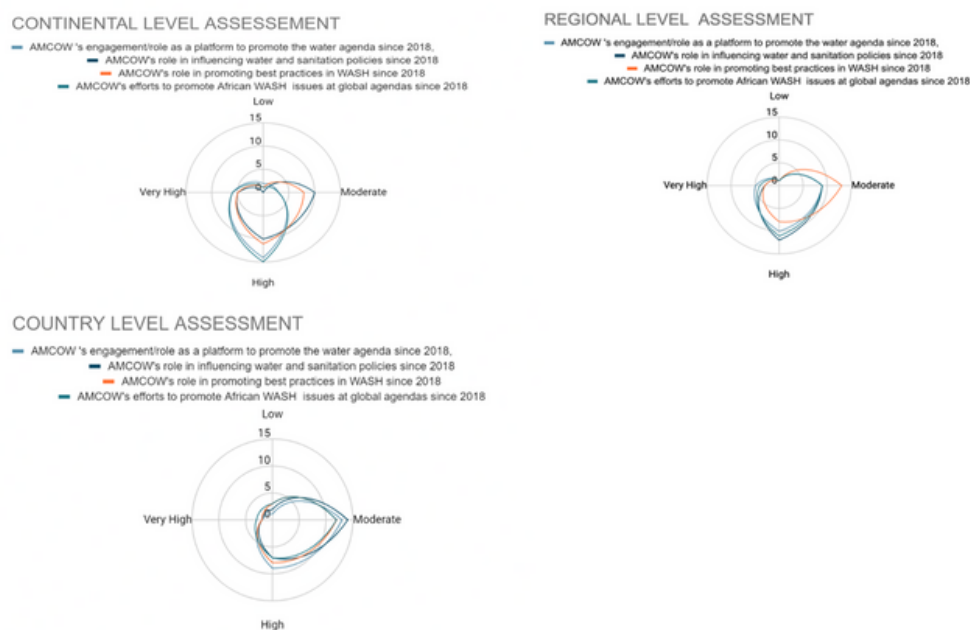


Figure 1 Members States and Stakeholders assessment of AMCOW's role at Continental, Regional and National levels

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AMCOW also organised several governance-related meetings supported by the ISS project, such as regional consultation meetings and organizational executive committee meetings, to fulfil the needs of making decisions related to AMCOW's action plans and budgets.

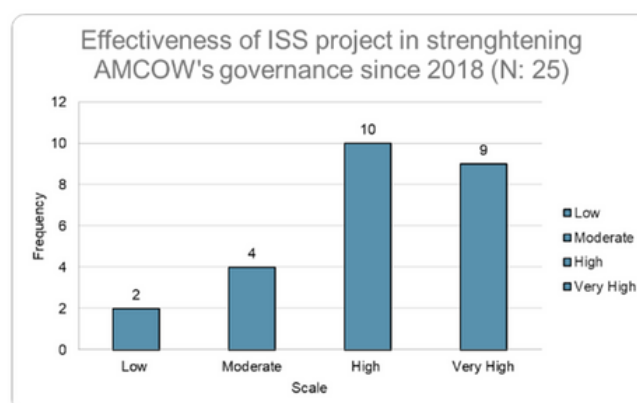


Figure 2 MS' and Stakeholders' view on effectiveness of the ISS Project

The survey respondents highly rated the ISS project's effectiveness in strengthening AMCOW's governance.

The ET considers that not having identified the importance of the Secretariat support to MS at the national level in the project design phase and, later on, during the implementation of the ISS project up to the midterm evaluation, may have had a negative influence towards the full achievement of Outcome 2.2.

Recruitment issues and structural overwork within AMCOW Human Resources

The initial proposal of the ISS project identified a series of positions to be supported by the project. The majority have been filled but two positions: the Resource Mobilization Officer and the Manager of Communications and Visibility. The first was initially identified and filled. However, the officer was later discharged, and AMCOW Secretariat adopted a different approach involving other officers in the Resource Mobilization activities.

When discussing recruitment issues with the key informants and AMCOW staff, two main themes emerged:

- Key informants reported they would like to see more diversity among AMCOW Secretariat staff in terms of representation of nationality and gender.
- The respondents mentioned several barriers. The most common was COVID-19 which has increased the difficulty of recruiting internationally, travelling, and relocating. One respondent mentioned that Abuja was a problematic duty station, which may deter candidates from relocating elsewhere. Another added that the vacancy announcement timing needs to be longer to ensure a more expansive selection pool. I would like to let you know that AMCOW has an internal policy to disseminate vacancies through different channels and to have vacancies posted publicly for 30 days.

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During the interviews with AMCOW staff, the interim measure of combined functions emerged as one of the major challenges related to implementing activities. A concern with the workload generated by the combination of tasks was underlined during the interviews. This evaluation found a difference in vision between staff covering more than one position and senior management within AMCOW, with the first needing additional help and the second considering the actual solution to be adequate.

However, ET learned that a new organogram was under discussion during this evaluation and would be approved by the EXCO during the 13th Session in Windhoek in October 2022. As the way forward, it may be pertinent to consider the decentralization of functions to ensure effective performance and responses to upcoming needs, particularly for the ISS project. This will positively impact HR motivation and the organization's time management for the due purpose.

COVID-19 and remote operations

The COVID-19 pandemic obliged AMCOW Secretariat to conduct remote meetings. Some respondents think that this has lowered the quality of meetings and the expected outcomes. There are reports that participants were not 100% focused on the meetings because of family/personal issues or due to the fatigue from having to attend multiple online meetings in a day. A key respondent also identified that the impossibility of having in-person meetings was the main barrier to fundraising. Additionally, it emerged that online meetings did not provide an ideal set-up for informal interaction among participants, which is important for building trust and connections, which are especially key for fundraising.

This evaluation found that there are two levels in which the ISS project addresses these obstacles: the management and activity levels.

- Management level: the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have generated savings as meetings were held online in 2020 and 2021. AMCOW has requested to revise the activities and their budget that SIDA approved.
- Activity level: activities are selected by AMCOW staff based on the available resources. For instance, in Knowledge Management, it was chosen to maximize activities that were already planned. When webinars were organized, they were transcribed, and their transcript was processed into knowledge products/learning papers and circulated among the MS.

Overall effectiveness and quality of outputs

- According to one of the respondents, before the ISS project, the stakeholders perceived AMCOW as an “entity with a black hole”. They were a deterrent for most development partners and MS to make monetary investments in.

Respondents reported that the situation has now improved thanks to the ISS project.

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The SIDA representative stated that AMCOW's financial system is now more accurate, and according to various AMCOW staff, the institution is now more trusted by donors.

Keeping this in mind and considering several other factors, this evaluation considers the ISS project to be moderately effective overall (see Summary of Outputs and Outcomes of the ISS project for details).

Specific Objective 1 - Representation and Engagement

AMCOW Secretariat was able to engage with a wider range of stakeholders and improve the relationship with MS compared to 2018. In the first year of the project, AMCOW did not formalize the engagement in MoUs, but during the Dakar conference in 2022, 6 new MoUs were signed. It is important to consider that according to AMCOW senior management, the Secretariat signs MoU just when it is convenient for the two counterparts and that the Secretariat does not seek to sign MoUs merely to check the performance indicators.

Although the AMCOW secretariat was able to sign new MoUs and secure projects with new donors, the amount of funds raised through donors did not increase when compared with the period before ISS. Finally, the structural overwork of task shifting between the Resource Mobilization Officer and the Manager of Communications and Visibility has not contributed to improving representation and engagement. This midterm evaluation found that the quality of the effectiveness of the outputs of the specific objective 1 is moderate. For further discussion, please refer to the recommendations.

Specific Objective 2: Financing

AMCOW has made strong progress regarding collecting the contribution of MS. However, the performance indicators have not been met yet. This evaluation has identified a barrier that was not addressed yet by AMCOW Secretariat, possibly contributing to slowing down the fee collection (please refer to the barrier section in effectiveness).

This evaluation also found that the stakeholders' perception of AMCOW has improved and that AMCOW Secretariat is trustworthy. This perception emerged in all groups considered (MS, AMCOW staff, Donors, and Stakeholders). The positive perception is also confirmed by the fact that AMCOW was able to sign 6 MoUs in 2022, showing that different institutions value AMCOW and want to collaborate. However, when looking at the hard evidence of the number of donors' funds collected, this evaluation found that AMCOW Secretariat's ability in the fundraising sector has remained the same as before the ISS project.

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This evaluation considers that there are possible concurrent explanations for the discrepancy between stakeholders' perceptions and AMCOW Secretariat's ability to raise funds:

i). COVID-19 Pandemic made difficult in-person interactions resulting in low effectiveness in mobilizing funds; ii) during the COVID-19 pandemic, donors addressed the pandemic as a priority, and other programs suffered a reduction in financing; iii) considering the aforementioned, the current approach adopted by AMCOW of spreading the resource mobilization officer's tasks' across several positions is not the most adequate.

In terms of quality, the output is moderate - the Financial Sustainability Strategy was elaborated but the Organizational system is still under improvement, and the Resource Mobilization desk is not fully functioning.

This evaluation is unable to make estimates for financial processes because it was not possible to review the documents.

Specific Objective 3 Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker):

The number of contributors to the knowledge hub has increased from 7 contributors in 2019 to 14 contributors in 2022, and the contributors are now more diversified, including universities, different multinational organizations, ministers of countries, and non-governmental sector

The data on events' participation, disaggregated by gender, age, and satisfaction, is partial, as it was not gathered regularly in all events. The available data suggest the moderate engagement of youth and women and high and very high satisfaction of participants. However, complete data is needed to provide a definitive answer.

This evaluation found that, even if the output was not fully achieved, overall, the quality of the activities implemented was good. For instance, there is an increasing diversification in stakeholders involved with AMCOW and the WASSMO system. The stakeholders mentioned knowledge exchange as the most positive outcome of the ISS project.

Effectiveness of monitoring process of the project

This evaluation found that, though performance indicators are SMART and mostly adequate to measure outputs and outcomes, the data on several performance indicators are missing (see Summary of outputs and outcomes of the ISS project for details), which poses a barrier to assessing the current situation and compare the current situation with the previous. There is a dearth of regular micro-data gathering on the ISS project indicators, which hinders the decision-making and monitoring capability of the project management. It is observed and strongly recommended that AMCOW takes active steps to improve its monitoring mechanism. Furthermore, the ISS project has contributed to the development of AMCOW M&E Strategy and the development of the first-ever Annual Report of the institution; The ET found two annual reports: 2020 and 2021. AMCOW's well-established WASSMO system is a success in itself. This evaluation found it to be well organized and provides meaningful Water and Sanitation data on continental and country levels.

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Its structure is somewhat easy and user-friendly, though there is a concern it is slightly more favourable to countries that have better statistical capabilities (refer to sections below).

A key informant from SIDA raised concern about quality control by AMCOW and the possible lack of best-quality data provided by the MS. On the other hand, AMCOW reported to the ET to have a quality control process that allows it to review the data submitted by MS. Before the commencement of analysis, quality checks are carried out on the data to detect and eliminate obvious errors in the submission from MS. In addition, the Secretariat reported having organized a validation workshop with stakeholders at the regional level before the development of the first draft of the report. This evaluation found there is a discrepancy between the view of the project donor and the AMCOW Secretariat. This evaluation has not found any data regarding the cause of this discrepancy; however, in the recommendation section, further advice will be given on how to improve the situation.

The extent to which the project management and governance structure worked strategically with AMCOW Secretariat and SIDA

As perceived, the biggest challenge and need for strategic reallocation that the ISS project faced was its adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to the restrictions for in-person events and activities, AMCOW adjusted the operational plan to conduct remote meetings and events, thereby generating a saving from the initial budget. Thus, a proposal of an amended work plan and respective budget was submitted to SIDA which approval followed on 21st January 2022.

As indicated in the review of various documents from the ISS project[5], the decision on project modification involved: i) ISS project management, ii) AMCOW management, and iii) SIDA. Nevertheless, some of the key respondents from the MS, who are also TAC members, expressed concerns about not being aware of how the savings would be implemented. While they acknowledged the information provided about the savings, they expressed a willingness to have a clearer picture of the situation. Where appropriate, it could be pertinent to issue a communication on this topic and offer further discussion to ensure a common understanding.

Moreover, during the evaluation, a member of the AMCOW Secretariat reported that they have difficulties in their area, claiming to have little or no budget to implement activities, feeling that they are “barely left with nothing to do” since 2021. This indicates the possibility of an issue in the communication between the project management and the staff regarding the use of ISS resources.

[5] Email thread of the amendment approval between SIDA and AMCOW, minutes of the meetings held between AMCOW and SIDA on 30-31st March, ISS workplan and budget modification document

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This midterm evaluation also found that the flow of communication and decision-making, and providing feedback within the staff of AMCOW, as well as between external actors are partially effective. While AMCOW Secretariat was able to find solutions to problems created by external threats (such as COVID-19), the approach was not effective enough to include and/or inform all relevant actors – mirroring a sense of exclusion.

COVID-19 pandemic – Influence, Adaptations, and Learning

The ET found that, even before the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, AMCOW had been investing in a functional space to accommodate virtual events, by establishing an equipped conference room to facilitate interaction with diverse participants in a hybrid model. That was an important added value for AMCOW to rapidly adapt to the remote-working mode. This demonstrates AMCOW's foresight toward the use of technology.

The ISS grant was signed towards the end of 2018 and the first disbursement arrived in AMCOW's account in December 2018, hence the project started in January 2019 leaving a very small part of the project in the pre-COVID-19 time. The period between January and June 2019 was used mainly to recruit staff and get them on board with staff reporting on duty in July 2019. Hence, it is not possible to compare what the project achieved pre-COVID-19 and after COVID-19.

Nevertheless, it was possible to identify areas where the project's effectiveness was affected by COVID-19. As mentioned earlier, recruitment and reporting to duty stations during the pandemic was a barrier because of travel restrictions and social distancing. Further, in-person meetings and events were not possible during COVID-19's initial period (2020-2021) with international travel and in-person meetings resuming only in 2022. For example, the 8th Africa Water Week (AWW) was initially planned for 2020 and the 6th AfricaSan was initially planned for February 2021. They could not be held due to the pandemic that restricted international travel and large gatherings. The impossibility of having in-person meetings also affected AMCOW's ability in fundraising, where in-person interaction is key, as mentioned in earlier sections.

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It is commendable that AMCOW showed its capacity to adapt itself:

- The 8th Africa Water Week and the 6th AfricaSan were held jointly from 22-26 November 2021[6][7] and were organized as one remote event[8].
- AMCOW was able to find a solution for the use of the savings generated by remote events by requesting SIDA for project amendment.
- AMCOW conducted an online survey to understand MS' priorities in terms of collaborative tools and resources. From the results of the survey the knowledge hub/library was seen as a possibility for MS to share knowledge and "instead of affecting negatively, COVID-19 rather provided a reason for people to consult the knowledge hub more often". By the time the library was set up, the staff had started going to AMCOW's office in person. "Covid indirectly provided an advantage". AMCOW demonstrated foresight in utilizing it. Data also confirmed a high interaction and number of visitors.



Figure 3 Access to all AMCOW's websites 2021 and January - August 2022

As a learning, AMCOW is in a strong position to adapt itself based on the needs of the ongoing pandemic and also its preparedness for future crises. In 2022, in-person meetings and international travel have resumed due to reductions in restrictions. However, this evaluation suggests a need for to improve strengthen the flow of communication and decision-making process between the Secretariat management and its staff as well as between AMCOW Secretariat and MS and stakeholders in order to increase the sense of inclusion and full engagement in AMCOW's activities. More learning is presented in the recommendations section.

3.1.1 Relevance

Meeting the needs of AMCOW's SOP and SP

From the perspectives of MS and project staff, AMCOW is positioned as highly relevant at continental and regional levels. A representative from the MS stated, "AMCOW'S work is key, an organization that brings together the ministries of water and share ideas and gets the head of states giving instruction and direction to leverage water and sanitation agenda in Africa".

[6] <https://AMCOW-online.org/news/AMCOW-au-and-the-government-of-namibia-to-host-continental-water-and-sanitation-conference>

[7] <https://sdg.iisd.org/events/8th-africa-water-week/>

[8] <https://economist.com.na/66213/environment/namibia-hosts-african-union-water-week-on-behalf-of-southern-african-region/>

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As demonstrated by the evaluation survey, the majority of the respondents assessed the ISS project's activities as of high relevance for the African Union Commission.

With the project, AMCOW Secretariat has been investing in institutional capacity aligned with the identified priority areas in the project document[9]. AMCOW Secretariat proposed a set of interventions under the SIDA-ISS project that aimed to strengthen the AMCOW Secretariat, improve its functioning, and demonstrate its added value as a representative of the African water and sanitation sector.

Various respondents shared the view that the ISS project contributed to a significant increase in AMCOW's visibility and recognition of its relevance in promoting the water agenda, thus reflecting on improved governance, as set out in Objective 4 of the SOP[10] and which was highlighted as the most remarkable one for stakeholder Engagement and Coordination.

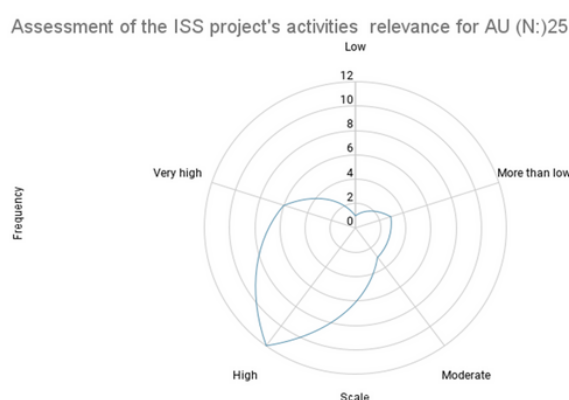


Figure 4 ISS project's relevance for MSs and Stakeholders

As reported, the main emphasis of the project implementation during the last two years was on establishing procedures and instruments to raise the position of AMCOW at the continental level while supporting MS initiatives toward water security and safely managed sanitation for all. Moreover, the proposed and achieved objectives and outcomes stated in SOPs and annual reporting[11] have contributed to enhancing coordination and representation of the water agenda at all levels while providing a high-level platform to push forward Africa's water agenda at the continental and regional and national levels, and ultimately helping MS to ensure sustainable management of their water resources.

[9] Project Proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa, Regional Section for Cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa for Institutional Strengthening Support of the AMCOW Secretariat 2019-2022

[10] Strategic Operational Plan 2020 - 2024

[11] Annual Progress Reports: 2019, 2020, 2021.

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Although the ISS project has been largely implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat was able to deliver in line with project objectives and planned activities without significant programmatic change. Overall, it was noted that AMCOW has been working on building the building blocks to enhance capacity building through the improvement of representation and governance at all levels. However, respondents also recognized that there is a need to increase the work at the country level, engaging the country's technical members and improving national monitoring. This can contribute to improving the capacity and accountability as well as access to information in the sector.

Project's objectives and the technical solutions to fulfil AMCOW's mandates

The ISS project was based on the premise that SIDA's support will enable AMCOW to strengthen the institutional capacity to become a strong institution that operates effectively and professionally towards its continental mandate, accelerates political interests and commitments for water and sanitation, including the delivery of relevant services to its MS.

The respondents of this evaluation mentioned that the key pillars for elevating AMCOW's mandate and recognition among the stakeholders and MS were strengthening technical capabilities with core functions such as monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and communication, and investing in financial systems reporting mechanisms.

However, this evaluation found that although the ISS' first disbursement was in December 2018, the new positions started to be placed in the second quarter of 2019 because of reasons explained in the effectiveness section (recruitment).

With the funding from the ISS project in place, the management team has been strategically focused on improving the overall project management and technical efficiency to strengthen compliance with the set policies and procedures. According to some respondents, this is particularly important for AMCOW, considering the limitations faced before the ISS project in terms of accountability and transparency.

Currently, the ISS project directly supports the Secretariat. It sustains the positioning of the required staff and technical capacities to streamline the implementation of the key mandated activities, which includes the engagement of different stakeholders at the international level and capacity building[12]. This evaluation found that AMCOW is recognized as a mechanism that stands for the African water agenda at continental and regional levels, contributing to supporting governments, civil society groups, development cooperation partners, financial institutions, and the United Nations (UN) to address Africa's water policy challenges towards the achievement of the proposed SDGs in the water sector.

[12] Annual Progress Report (Jan-December 2021)

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While policies and agreements are taken at the continental level among the MS, there is no evidence of their impact at the country level, which could help to assess the relevance of the actions and policies implemented, as also mentioned in the earlier sections.

Current partners in the project to meet the intended outcomes

This evaluation found that AMCOW is working towards promoting cooperation among the MS. In this regard, AMCOW Secretariat has built several partnerships with several partners in the sector and has been investing in its visibility and public recognition to attract new donors and build loyalty among current supporters towards the implementation of AMCOW's projects and programs[13]. For example, recent concept notes were developed for program funding and submitted to the BMGF, SDC, and the US Department of State (refer to previous sections). The majority of the survey respondents from the MS and Stakeholders reported that they think AMCOW is working with the right partners.

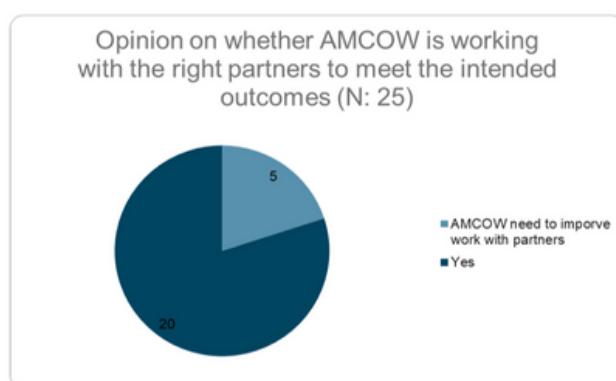


Figure 5 MS and Stakeholders opinion on whether AMCOW is working with the right partners to meet the intended outcomes

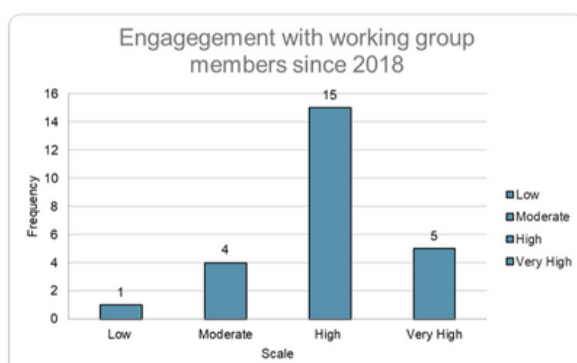


Figure 6 MS' and Stakeholders' assessment on AMCOW's engagement with stakeholders at country level

AMCOW's organs and structures serve as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) of the African Union that facilitate the interaction and collaboration with different key partners in the sector.

Furthermore, the members of AMCOW comprise the 55 MS of the African Union, while the institutional structure of AMCOW comprises a Governing Council, Executive Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and a Secretariat based in Abuja, Nigeria[14].

[13] AMCOW Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability Strategy, 2020-2030

[14] AMCOW's Website: <https://amcow-online.org/governing-structure>, <https://amcow-online.org/member-states>

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As indicated in the resource mobilization plan, AMCOW maintains partnerships with specialized Organizations and relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Consulting firms in providing the required technical support to MS to deepen its relationships with key entities such as the European Union, World Bank, AfDB and UN Agencies like UNICEF and UNDP which broadens the scope of partnerships. AMCOW forms part of the knowledge management working group[15], which increases the opportunities to strengthen and build new partners, contributing to enhancing AMCOW 's efforts to promote water issues on the global agenda at the continental, regional and country levels. This evaluation found that Stakeholders and MS think that AMCOW is particularly effective in this exercise at the continental and regional levels.

Respondents pointed out that the current Executive Secretary has been implementing a new and successful approach with partners promoting “head-to-head relations while promoting regular meetings with the leadership of various organizations”. These meetings were recognized as an important momentum for information sharing among partners about the progress and necessary support in the sector. The AMCOW Resource Mobilization Plan states that donors are eager to invest in integrated programs. These types of meetings can create opportunities to build consortiums for future collaboration and funding.

From data emerged that MS and Stakeholders, as well as AMCOW's staff, think that, with the support of the ISS project, AMCOW is getting into a position where “everyone wants to work with AMCOW”. This suggests that AMCOW's image has improved since the implementation of the ISS project. In this regard, the majority of the survey respondents think that AMCOW has been working with the right partners, which has a high level of engagement with Stakeholders at the country level, and that the engagement with working group members was high. On the other hand, while existing partners are considered relevant, respondents have been unanimous in the view that there is still room for AMCOW to enhance partnerships, particularly for groundwater programs.

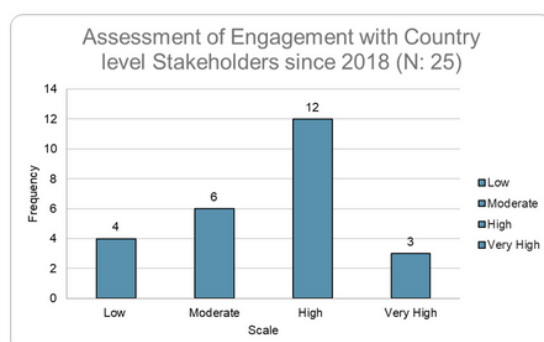


Figure 7 MS and Stakeholders opinion on AMCOW's Engagement with working group members

[15] AMCOW's Website: <https://knowledgehub.amcow-online.org/community/groups>

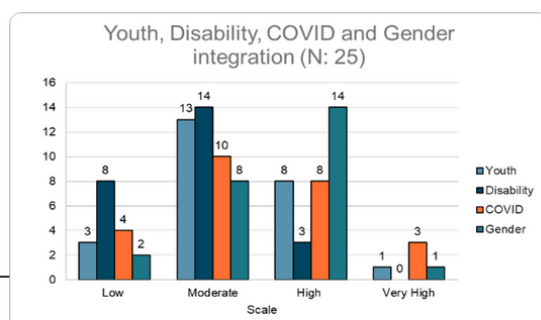


Figure 8 MS' and Stakeholders' opinion on the ability of the ISS project to integrate youth, gender, and disability in its mandate

Considerations for cross-cutting themes - gender, youth, social inclusion, COVID-19 resilience

Various respondents acknowledged that the inclusion of young people and gender (women development) had been widely debated and emphasized in the discussion at the Secretariat level. Youth and Gender focal points are now established at the AMCOW Secretariat, and the themes of youth, gender, equity, and inclusion are now considered in the regional and continental agendas. The survey showed that most of the MS and Stakeholders are willing to contribute to the strategic objectives of the youth and gender strategy. They think that the ISS project's ability to integrate Gender, Disability and COVID-19 issues in its mandate will be increased when the Strategy is approved and implemented. Hence, there is a need to strengthen the promotion of these cross-cutting themes in discussions with MS and conduct impact evaluation after some time from the inception of its implementation to ensure the achievement of its objectives at the level of the region and countries while also understanding the extent the strategy is contributing to respond to the AU 2063 Agenda[16].

A respondent mentioned that youth representation is an important element in enhancing AMCOW's sustainability - particularly in the field of knowledge management. The respondent reinforced that knowledge management is associated with technology, and youth are considered the main users of new technology, along with social media, online platforms, etc.

Respondents recognized weak representativeness at the Secretariat about women's development and engagement. One of the respondents stressed that the limited participation of women reflects the constitutions of the MS ministry – whereby leadership positions in the sector are held mainly by men, hampers the opportunities for women's participation in the TAC. There is a need to strengthen the advocacy for women's inclusion at the Ministries of Water and Sanitation and, consequently, at the Secretariat levels.

[16] <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20160317>

[17] AMCOW Annual Progress Report 2019

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Participation of the AMCOW Secretariat personnel and stakeholders in project design, planning, and implementation

While representing the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and the Environment (STC on ARDWE), AMCOW has been able to undertake several initiatives to encourage MS to adopt policies, processes and build consensus on decisions, towards the commitments in the water sector agenda in Africa. Some highlighted examples of these initiatives include AMCOW's TAC meeting, Partners Coordination Platform (PCP) under the STC on ARDWE, Coordination and Planning workshop with RLBOs, and 3rd Extra-Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee of the AMCOW Governing Council where strategic documents and terms of references were developed and approved. For instance, as reported, in 2019, AMCOW organized and facilitated a consultative workshop, funded by the grant, in which 55 MS and AMCOW Secretariat staff discussed the key ideas to support the development of AMCOW's 5-year Strategic Operational Plan, which was then finalized by AMCOW[17].

Meanwhile, as mentioned above, the current Executive Secretary organized institutional visits to MS Water and other ministers representing the water sector, which might have contributed to mobilizing new partnerships and opportunities for information sharing on how AMCOW works and how the commitments are implemented. As understood from the responses I provided, this initiative has developed a close collaboration with the minister in Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Cameroon, and Nigeria, as well as new partnerships, for instance, with AfWASA, among others. According to the reported information, most of the AMCOW staff were not engaged in the project's conceptualization and planning because either they were hired through the ISS project or after the ISS project was approved. Although they are actively involved in implementing the proposed activities, they are still unfamiliar with the 'ISS project' per se, demonstrating a gap in internal communication and coordination that represents a risk to staff commitment and accountability.

The MS and stakeholders are moderately familiar with the ISS project. Although understandably, stakeholders only need to have some details about the project, it is important to consider that many State Members are also TAC members and as such, shall have a high level of knowledge of the project. Additionally, conveying the right information to MS and Stakeholders and promoting discussions about the project, the objective, available resources, forms of implementation, and impact may also strengthen knowledge management, monitoring, evaluation, and visibility.

[17] AMCOW Annual Progress Report 2019

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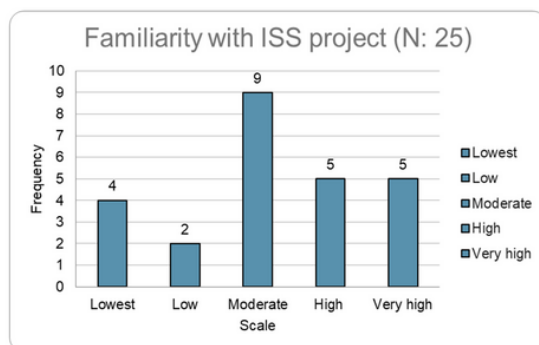


Figure 9 Survey respondents from MS and Stakeholders' familiarity of the ISS Project.

3.1.2 Coherence

The ISS project demonstrated a good measure of synergy with the AMCOW's mandate in the Secretariat and the MS. Firstly, with the ISS project, AMCOW is becoming more robust; many new positions were added that increased AMCOW's response and timely information sharing. The project presented AMCOW with the opportunity to build and strengthen its capacity, which was rightly identified and needed. Since 2018, overall, there has been an increase in staff at the Secretariat and their capacities to deliver to fulfil AMCOW's role in the continental perspective.

In a broader sense, the ISS project also supports AMCOW's role in policies and governance, which AMCOW can deliver for its members. For example, the ISS project did not fund sanitation activities, but AMCOW's role through the ISS project has created synergies that lead to an increased capacity to work in sanitation.

When asked what their thoughts were about the extent to which the ISS project creates synergies with other interventions in the Secretariat, most respondents from the MS and Stakeholders rated high (15) and very high (6) (N: 25).

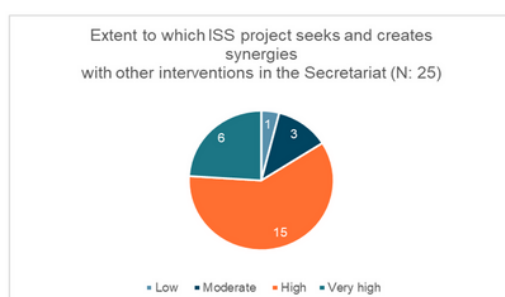


Figure 10 Member States and Stakeholders opinion on ISS's ability to create synergies with other interventions

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However, there are some gaps and discrepancies in AMCOW's expected and current functioning. One respondent from the Secretariat expressed that there may be assumptions from the MS that AMCOW is more focused on Secretariat-level programming. Yet, AMCOW is working to serve the continent. AMCOW's governance improved through the ISS project's support, and thereby AMCOW could conduct secretary meetings and some sub-regional meetings. On the other hand, respondents from the Members States and Stakeholders reported that part of their expectations was not met, in the manner that they feel AMCOW was meeting more of continental needs while not much of national needs, apart from online capacity building activities - that came with the request from the countries (please refer to earlier sections for more information). There is also an expectation that AMCOW should increase regional representation in the organization and reinforce the technical capacity of the MS. However, overall, MS has started to value AMCOW's role and significance, and a large contribution to this outcome is through the ISS project's support in organizing the sub-regional meetings and other stakeholder meetings.

Supporting this viewpoint, the respondents from the Secretariat also mentioned that the ISS project has not only strengthened AMCOW's ability to perform various tasks as per its mandate but has also improved its capability "like never before". With stronger leadership and the ISS project's activities, AMCOW's Secretariat staff considers that the members' needs are increasingly met and, as a result, there is a boost in membership contribution (see Effectiveness).

This evaluation also found that AMCOW's work is in synergy and for the support of the AU. For example, AMCOW was approached by Tanzania and Kenya for consultations on Ground Water Management and the development of a management plan for a transboundary water issue. AMCOW also organized a two-day Experts and Stakeholders' Workshop on continental intervention in groundwater development in October 2019 - AMCOW Pan-African Groundwater Program (APAGroP) to advance the APAGroP agenda.

This was attended by 52 participants (a fourth of which were women) from various stakeholder interest groups, including Universities, civil societies, RECs, development and financial partners, representatives of regional Groundwater related institutions, and the Secretariat of AMCOW. The workshop decided to support food security, learning, and adopting best practices from regional to continental levels and push the agenda on groundwater in larger international forums[18]. This was followed by a successful Water Resources Management on Groundwater webinar in May 2021.

[18] ISS Project Annual Report, 2019

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One of the respondents also mentioned that, with AMCOW's work on KM, there are expectations for indirect effects for additional funding and returns from the donors. For example, BMGF increased its investment after considering AMCOW's work using the ISS-supported KM, and there is an expectation of seeing returns on investments for such successful work.

3.1.3 Efficiency

Allocation of resources

The ISS's strategic documents showed that the resources allocated in the project were based on a priority assessment undertaken before the ISS project, following the objectives advocated by AMCOW in the WALIS project, which established the stepping-stone for the institutional vision of becoming a professional and internationally recognized organization in the water sector. All respondents recognized that before the ISS project AMCOW experienced limited resources, particularly human resources to achieve envisioned performance and quality. As discussed with Key Informants and reported by the documents the secretariat invested in the core positions considered fundamental for AMCOW to optimize its potential for leading the water sector in Africa[19].

In the respondents' view, the Resource Mobilization Officer and Manager of Communications and Visibility were key to uplifting AMCOW's position among the MS in the last years. According to the 2021 annual report, AMCOW counts six departments in the ISS project payroll, which includes the Director of Programmes, the Director of Finance and Administration, the Knowledge and Information Sharing Officer, the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Officer, the Groundwater Desk Officer, and the IT/Database Officer. As reported in the efficiency section about human resources recruitment, AMCOW experienced some challenges in the project's first years. However, swift actions were undertaken to respond to the dynamic of project implementation and secretariat needs.

For instance, AMCOW saw the need to combine the functions of communication and visibility with knowledge management to communicate knowledge and promote AMCOW's impact effectively. In general, respondents agreed that the current structure of AMCOW provides the necessary support to deliver on the outputs and outcomes proposed under the ISS project and that AMCOW allocated the resources strategically to strengthen governance, finance management transparency, and the visibility of AMCOW as an entity of reference for specialized knowledge and expertise in the water sector in Africa.

[19] SIDA project proposal

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The former officials and representatives of members that accompanied AMCOW development reported that the ISS project funding contributed to a significant improvement in AMCOW's capacity to deliver, which increased Members State's participation in more events. For example, in the 3rd quarter of 2021[20], AMCOW procured an Event Manager and Conference Coordinator to support the organization of the numerous events during the post-Covid-19 emergency.

While congratulating the core capacity improvements, the respondents called attention to the need to prioritize crosscutting programmes such as youth and gender for the effective achievement of the SOPs objectives as well as in the SDG (2030) and African Union (2063) agendas. In this field, AMCOW should promote the dissemination of the Strategy and organize advocacy and training at TAC and regional meetings, such as Africa Water Week, AfricaSan Conference Series, and other forums as planned. According to the AMCOW plan, the YGSI Strategy is expected to be launched and operationalized in 2023 after going through the validation, further review, and approval processes by the various policy organs of AMCOW.

Measures to ensure good management of programme resource

Program resource management

The evaluation noted that AMCOW has been committed to developing and systematising processes to strengthen program management and governance in response to the AMCOW Strategic Operational Plan (SOP 2018 - 2030). According to the information collected during the interviews and from the project documents' review, some prominent measures appointed by the respondents and included in the annual reports are:

- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to improve program management
- Development of the Finance and Procurement Procedures Manual and Management Policies, (ii) Staff Handbook, (iii) Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Performance Management Policies
- Monitoring and evaluation system to facilitate measurement of progress and performance reporting

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to improve program management While at an early stage, considering the effective time of the project, the respondents agreed that the above-mentioned measures added a new dimension to AMCOW's capacity to deliver and plan, considering previous experience. The approval of these policies and procedures are important steps toward the compromise to improve the internal control environment and enhance transparency and accountability. In this regard, the staff applauded that the ISS project has provided AMCOW with a more robust accounting system, which can support budget decisions and bring momentum to demonstrate effective compliance.

[20] ISS Project's Annual Report, 2021

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With this new system, AMCOW has been able to enhance the cash flow and generate financial reports that are presented to MS, contributing to increasing its accountability and the willingness of the country members to provide their contribution. The fact that AMCOW passed the USAID international assessment may have harvested fruit from the improvement of the management system. Moreover, the fact that AMCOW started sharing the financial report at TAC member groups was considered an important step. However, no evidence was found on the regularity of the financial report to MS, while some countries raised the concern about the reprogramming of the remaining funds for the Covid-19 period, when most of the meetings were held virtually, reflecting the reduction in expenditure.

Development of the Finance and Procurement Procedures Manual and Management Policies, (ii) Staff Handbook, (iii) Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Performance Management Policies

The systematization of procurement procedures was pointed out as an asset to enhance the quality-of-service delivery. Not only staff but also respondents from MS reported improvements in the operations and logistics of the meetings, despite challenges in time management for organizing the logistics, short-noticed travel arrangements, etc. It is worth addressing these issues as they may affect the quality and effective participation of the countries, especially concerning international travel arrangements and planning. In recent years, the recruitments filled by AMCOW emerged as an advantage regarding delivering activities and outputs in different thematic areas - groundwater, knowledge management, etc. However, some areas still need to be addressed, which adds to the workload for people on duty, such as program management monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management communication and visibility (see effectiveness). Nevertheless, the evaluation noted that AMCOW had hired consultants to support some activities, such as developing procedures, organising conferences, etc. All of these fall within the measures to ensure better productivity and responsiveness.

Monitoring and evaluation system to facilitate measurement of progress and performance reporting

It was noted that AMCOW developed a range of performance indicators that will help measure its SOP objectives' achievement. The respondents considered the establishment of the M&E System as a relevant asset for the due purpose, as it benefited AMCOW with a mechanism to track and record the implemented activities. Conversely, while the system considers progress and product indicators such as the number of meetings, participants, and approved documents, there is a noted vacuum in terms of evaluation. Based on project management evidence, investing in evaluation is key to counterbalancing the results with the impact assessment of the proposed actions and having a deeper understanding of the outcomes and impact of the outputs while building the foundation to enhance quality and maximize the current progress results. For instance, a respondent from a country suggested AMCOW should report and share the results of the meetings conducted to understand the effectiveness and ways for improvements of future events.

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Schedule of project's activities/operations

As mentioned earlier in the report, the ISS project was awarded in December 2018, and most of the planned activities occurred in 2020 and 2021 while Covid-19 was in force, restricting travel and meetings, which further delayed activities across the board. Moreover, the desk review and KIIs detail the major delays that the project experienced even before the pandemic as a result of the previously mentioned challenges regarding the lack of human resources in key areas. Indeed, as referred to in different sections of this report, the initial recruitment of project staff was lengthy. Meanwhile, AMCOW seeks to improve the recruitment process with the recruitment policy and by advertising the open position on the organization's website, which is also syndicated to other vacancy websites. In this line, respondents of the interview suggested for AMCOW share the open vacancies directly with MS contacts, which could streamline the information sharing and contribute to enhancing diversity and inclusiveness in the organization.

Referring to COVID-19, AMCOW was quick in adapting the working model to the innovative virtual meetings, thus advancing the work plan. Respondents considered that results could be better in countries that were not severely impacted by the pandemic, yet there were canceled or postponed events. In this line, AMCOW has implemented fewer resources than was planned for the mentioned period. As indicated in the interviews with staff and shared earlier in this report AMCOW had conducted a reprogramming of the remaining funds that are accommodated in 2022 planning.

Adapted to the restrictions imposed by the global COVID-19 pandemic

Referring to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a shared view that the unprecedented period of the pandemic has affected project operations and AMCOW prioritized a virtual environment to conduct meetings. Respondents at all levels recognized how AMCOW rapidly adapted its planned activities and responded in new ways. Thus, AMCOW moved from the planned face-to-face meetings to a virtual modality and most of its technical and statutory meetings were accommodated virtually.

Somehow, as understood, this experience facilitated the integration of a larger number of participants from MS concerning in-person meetings. However, no evidence was found concerning the effectiveness of results, considering that no evaluation of the scenarios of online meetings was put in place.

As reported, while the COVID-19 pandemic period required change management at the operational level, no major change was identified at the programmatic level, while AMCOW maintains the core activities and outcomes previously foreseen under the ISS project. At this stage, AMCOW has agreed with SIDA to a plan to reprogram and reallocate some project funding accordingly to make the best use of its remaining time and budget during the last year of the project.

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3.1.4 Impact

Position, leadership, and staff strength

The Secretariat staff unanimously agreed that AMCOW has enhanced its visibility across the African continent in the past few years. They also reported that the greater visibility led to an increase in MS' fee contribution as well as key partners' willingness to collaborate with AMCOW. Moreover, MS and Stakeholders have changed their perception of AMCOW - shifting from considering AMCOW a financial "black hole" with no clear accountability to now considering it to be a committed institution that offers its services to the members and is also recognized by USAID as International Public Organization. With its increased recognition for being relevant and effective, which came through the implementation of the ISS program components, there has also been a positive spiral: on one hand, the Project helped AMCOW increase its position and capacity at the institutional level, which now formed an image of AMCOW among the members. On the other hand, this new image is in turn, helping to leverage an increased collaborative environment for AMCOW with its partners.

One of the changes that happened within the AMCOW Secretariat during the ISS project is the restoration of the lost leadership of AMCOW. The current Executive Secretary was recruited after the former Executive Secretary terminated his position before the end of the term. A few key informants reported during this evaluation that this termination was perceived as a negative image for AMCOW because its mandate calls for effective leadership and strong secretarial staff to be able to support the needs of the MS. The new Executive Secretary and the recruitment of staff within the ISS have bolstered AMCOW's image and perceptions among the Members States and the stakeholders, which now perceive AMCOW as an institution that can contribute to WASH in Africa and their countries and recognize AMCOW as a strong institution to deliver its mandate at the continental level.

Through his exemplary leadership abilities, the current Executive Secretary is very effective in creating collective consensus among the leaders of various organizations. AMCOW provides a platform for politicians and practitioners to work together. The Executive Secretary's meeting with MS' Ministers responsible for water and sanitation affairs has led to added linkages and countries' interest in AMCOW. Additionally, the systematic monthly meetings with key stakeholders enhance mutual support and provide space to discuss needs. For example, as a part of AMCOW's leadership in transboundary water issues, AMCOW is able to successfully hold negotiations to solve water issues in the continent. AMCOW's overarching role and mandate to spread peace, transboundary cooperation, security, and sustainable development in terms of water, along with efficient KM to bring people together have been strengthened through AMCOW's current effective leadership.

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In the large continent of Africa, to fulfill its role to represent all countries and not just a few of the more powerful African nations, AMCOW has been implementing in small tasks groups - meeting at regional levels to elevate and understand regional-level homogenous needs and provide space for the generation of ideas and dialogues. Additionally, the partners, especially the TAC of AMCOW (during regional consultations) have expressed satisfaction with the changes made at the Secretariat through the ISS.

Overall, with AMCOW's renewed leadership and improved position across the AU and internationally, AMCOW can be considered to be on the path of the positive progress of its ISS project's objective 1, representation and engagement, wherein, AMCOW more effectively serves as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union's STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

Support to enhance water and sanitation-related knowledge

AMCOW has been playing a significant role in building and supporting water and sanitation-related knowledge in the continent of Africa, which is not only an outcome of AMCOW's support from the ISS project to improve AMCOW's staff capabilities but is also an extended outcome from AMCOW's improved leadership. A respondent reported – “AMCOW can go to issues about knowledge brokerage, that is, serve who needs what knowledge”. Others reported that AMCOW's role of support to policies and advocacy has enhanced, which makes AMCOW more empowered to make stronger decisions with broader knowledge service provision across the AU. Considering AMCOW's larger role, AMCOW facilitates learning sessions and events such as Africa Water Week, and AfricaSan, where AMCOW mobilizes various actors of WASH in Africa (governments, INGOs, etc.) to come together to share knowledge.



Figure 11 MS and Stakeholders opinion on ISS Contribution in the expansion of WASH related knowledge and research, since 2018

When the survey respondents were asked about the ISS project's contribution to the expansion of WASH-related knowledge and research, 19 of the 25 respondents reported that they think that the ISS project's contribution to the expansion of WASH-related knowledge has been high and very high respectively, also supporting AMCOW's emerging role as a knowledge broker in the continent.

When asked, 'between 2018 till date, what are some of the most important positive outcomes from the ISS project that benefitted your institution/country directly', the survey respondents mentioned the exchange of information between countries, knowledge sharing and coordination, capacity building on water resources management, enabling MS to ensure sustainable management of water resources to address both poverty reduction and social development goals.

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Additionally, to support AMCOW's large role in knowledge building, AMCOW Secretariat established an online knowledge management hub as a part of the ISS project. The mention of this hub repeatedly emerged among the respondents, who cited the hub as an achievement and positive outcome of the ISS project. The hub was launched in November 2020. It is an online repository of resources accessible to the MS. This hub can help "knowledge sharing and coordination" among the members of AMCOW. As reported by AMCOW staff, with the establishment of the online hub, AMCOW is now adequately equipped with the necessary systems and structure to provide knowledge services to its MS and partners to accelerate learning, use research results and best practices, and build their capacity to deliver better results, all of which serves to fulfil AMCOW's mandate to support policies and advocacy in the AU. Additionally, serving the MS, the hub is a platform for them to learn, make informed and evidence-based decisions and access the right knowledge whenever needed.

An unexpected positive outcome of the hub was its collaborative process of setting up - which generated a lot of collaborative and participatory actions between the members. The hub provides resources on WASH that have been collected through generous participation and contribution from members and partners (UNESCO, SUSANA, International Water Management Institute). There is also an anticipated future partnership (British Geological Survey, Africa Water Atlas, etc.) for more resources and systems interconnectivity and exchanges through an access programming interface (API) system.

While respondents referred to the KM system as hugely successful and achievement of pride, the measurable indicators do not show significant evidence in support. The ISS Project's semiannual report 2020 mentioned that, since the launching of the hub, the water and sanitation partners - United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), British Geological Survey, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Water for Africa through Leadership and Institutional Support (WALIS), Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) had expressed interest to contribute their information and knowledge products to AMCOW's resource centre to benefit users, especially the MS[21].

After verifying from the PITT table and with a list shared by AMCOW, it was found that for the sub-indicator 'knowledge partners contribute content to Knowledge Hub', of the targeted, AMCOW received only 10%, 20%, and 0% contributions in 2020, 2021, and 2022 respectively[22], with a total of fewer than 100 articles uploaded till date[23].

[21] ISS Project's Semiannual Report, 2020

[22] AMCOW website. <https://knowledgehub.amcow-online.org/>

[23] AMCOW's PITT table

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On the other hand, the list indicates seven contributing organizations in 2020, 12 in 2021, and 14 in 2022[24]. The data presented in both documents need to be further matched and updated by AMCOW. The ET found the website's interface to be friendly and increased new visitors to the site. Still, an added push to increase the resources in the hub and the visitors' footprint on the website will result in further spread and dissemination of the purpose of the hub[24].

Revival of relationships

As a leader in policies and governance and as a knowledge broker, respondents unanimously agree that AMCOW can restore and revive old relationships using the support from the ISS project. For example, as reported by a respondent, the relationships with River and Lake Basin Organisations were revived through the ISS project, wherein, after a gap of several years, in 2020, AMCOW organized a meeting to reactivate the relationships with River and Lake Basins, which was followed by a subsequent meeting in 2021, and thereby led to further relationships with the 'Centers of Excellence' - a network of universities who provide support in water research and development of innovation as a part of the African Union Commission. The meeting in 2020 explored areas of mutual interests and priority concerns, determined appropriate collaboration mechanisms between the Basin Organizations and AMCOW and linked up with its knowledge hub and shared open-access information and knowledge resources to benefit the MS and the water sector users[25].

Though somewhat different from the findings of this evaluation, the majority of respondents from the small representative survey reported that AMCOW's engagement with country-level stakeholders and engagement in serving working group members was high. However, some also reported these engagements to be low and moderate, which needs AMCOW's attention (please refer to earlier sections).

Capacity to deliver and relevance to partners

It was reported by the respondents that there were overall "notable improvements" in achieving AMCOW's mandate since 2018[1]. As a result of increased collaborations and through ISS projects funding support, various respondents reported that AMCOW's capacity to deliver had improved significantly. This is evident from the various forums and meetings that AMCOW organizes and participates in. For example, it was reported that many new collaboration interests were generated during the World Water Forum held in Senegal in 2021.

[25] AMCOW Knowledge Hub Analytics. Jan 1, 2022 – Aug 23, 2022.

[26] ISS Project Annual Report, 2020

[27] AMCOW's mandate: to work with water resource management (WRM) organizations at the continental level, while supporting MS' initiatives towards water security and safely managed sanitation for all., as per the Strategy 2018-2030. The four strategic priorities (SPs) identified within this mandate are, SP 1: Ensure water security, SP 2: Ensure safe sanitation and hygiene, SP 3: Promote good water governance and transboundary water cooperation, and SP 4: Strengthen AMCOW's governance and operational effectiveness.

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It was also reported that through the past years, AMCOW had facilitated an exchange of information between countries, helped with water and sanitation data and reporting, and evaluated and audited the 'country-level progress as well as the achievements for SDG 6. Moreover, AMCOW supported operationalizing the African Network of Basin Organizations, promoted transboundary water infrastructure projects, and organized and conducted training sessions on priority water-related areas on the continent, such as financing infrastructure projects, joint groundwater management, etc.

This evaluation also found that under the ISS project, AMCOW's relevance has increased significantly in terms of its partners, as reported with examples from the respondents - AMCOW's involvement created a positive impact on partner engagement for groundwater, where AMCOW leveraged the technical knowledge and created an impact on the partners. In Namibia, AMCOW provided country support to groundwater management, which had not been of much focus in Africa earlier. The support was found to be effective and successful, which was therefore replicated in Uganda and Senegal. These studies and interventions have the potential to improve livelihood and food security in Africa. This was done with the support of the ISS project and through public and private investments. Therefore, AMCOW's mandate of improving water service delivery for food and water security in MS was highly relevant to support its MS, which was done through the ISS project's support and member partnership.

The respondents also reported that AMCOW's work had created a chance to bring together the Ministries of Water/heads of state, share ideas, and learn from each other to improve Africa's water and sanitation needs (refer to the section on knowledge brokerage).

Evaluation respondents, who are also stakeholders, expressed their excitement to be a part of the high-level sanitation-working group organized by AMCOW and collaborate to create important documents and decisions as MS on practices and policies, such as the 'African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG)'[28].

The approval of the ASPG by the African Union was an important step forward and was done within the ISS project's timeline. AMCOW's involvement in producing documents/guidelines is expected to serve the rising WASH needs of the increasing population of the African continent. The evaluation survey also generated multiple responses, where the respondents from the MS reported that:

[27] AMCOW's mandate: to work with water resource management (WRM) organizations at the continental level while supporting MS' initiatives towards water security and safely managed sanitation for all., as per the Strategy 2018-2030. The four strategic priorities (SPs) identified within this mandate are SP 1: Ensure water security, SP 2: Ensure safe sanitation and hygiene, SP 3: Promote good water governance and transboundary water cooperation, and SP 4: Strengthen AMCOW's governance and operational effectiveness.

[28] AMCOW (2021). African Sanitation Policy Guidelines. Abuja, Nigeria./.

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the ISS Project supported countries in setting up National Inter-ministerial Committee on Water and helped organize a workshop for WASSMO data validation and reporting. Further, AMCOW helps them ensure sustainable management of water resources to address both poverty reduction and social development goals (similar to groundwater good practice mentioned earlier) and helps with governance and resource issues to bridge gaps, along with providing capacity-building support.

One respondent also mentioned an expectation that SIDA's support through the ISS project should not end at the institutional strengthening level but should also provide future support to ensure the institutional strengthening translates to impact at continental, regional, and national levels. Further, one respondent stakeholder mentioned that while some organizations should report to AMCOW owing to AMCOW's nature of work in the AU, AMCOW should, in return, support these organizations through fundraising. AMCOW can directly raise funds for them or, through advocacy – wherein knowledge and skills could be counted as capital.

AMCOW's expansive role in progressing toward fulfilling its mandates has been commended. There is increasing evidence of AMCOW's importance and value to the partners, as well as its relevance to the needs of its stakeholders. While AMCOW serves a disparate range of partners, there are also disparate expectations from AMCOW, and AMCOW is striving to fulfil the needs through its existing means and capabilities. A representative from an MS from the East Africa sub-region reported an unexpected outcome, "Yes; as a result of this initiative and through the participation of line ministries, we were able to see our needs to coordinate WASH interventions and data aggregation in the country".

When asked how active AMCOW has been in organizing continental and regional meetings since 2018, most respondents appreciated AMCOW's regional and continental efforts. They said AMCOW is very engaged and active. One of them also said, "Very active. Working through the TAC and in collaboration with Regional Economic Blocks, and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society agencies, AMCOW has organised engagements on water and sanitation throughout the continent".

However, eight respondents raised some concerns, such as they said AMCOW is active, yet more needs to be done, and they think AMCOW's engagement is 'moderate'. Some also acknowledge that COVID-19 and the virtual meetings were challenging owing to poor internet connections, and one of them expressed the need for translations as the meetings were in the English language. When asked about AMCOW's national-level engagement, there were expectations of AMCOW to engage more at the country level.

[27] AMCOW's mandate: to work with water resource management (WRM) organizations at the continental level while supporting MS' initiatives towards water security and safely managed sanitation for all., as per the Strategy 2018–2030. The four strategic priorities (SPs) identified within this mandate are SP 1: Ensure water security, SP 2: Ensure safe sanitation and hygiene, SP 3: Promote good water governance and transboundary water cooperation, and SP 4: Strengthen AMCOW's governance and operational effectiveness.

[28] AMCOW (2021). African Sanitation Policy Guidelines. Abuja, Nigeria./.

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Financial contributions to AMCOW

A major impact of the ISS project has been in the increase in the financial contribution from the MS, to AMCOW. Through AMCOW's improved leadership roles, delivery of knowledge and services in policies and governance for the members, there has been an increase in member-acceptability of AMCOW, which has thereby led to an increase in member state contribution, as reported by all respondents from the AMCOW Secretariat. The member contribution has increased from 2018 to 2019, with a significant increase in total contributions in 2020, however, falling significantly in 2021, but rapidly rising again in 2022, with only six countries contributing so far in 2022^[29]. AMCOW's transparent functioning and increased accountability have improved members' confidence in AMCOW and therefore more members are willing to contribute towards the fee. Among respondents, the majority stated that they pay fees but not regularly. Although this is an improvement compared with the previous situation, it is still a situation that requires AMCOW's attention.

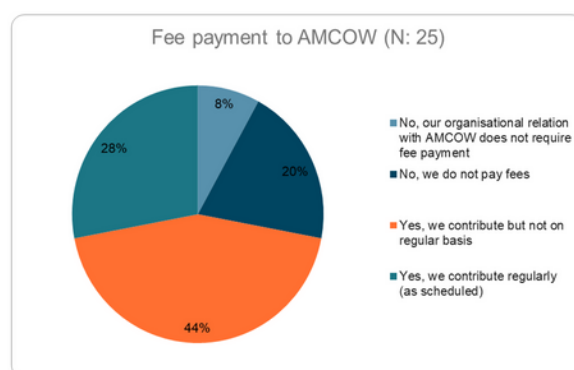


Figure 12 MS and Stakeholders reporting on their payments to AMCOW, source Evaluation survey

Additionally, it was found from the PITT table, that, till 2021, AMCOW has well progressed towards its sub-indicators 2.2 and 2.3, percentage of members having cleared arrears, and members paying current fees respectively even if performance indicators were not achieved. The PITT table also showed that AMCOW exceeded its performance in finding new donors (2.4), which is unclear and does not well triangulate with this review. However, it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to measure the extent and value of the new donors found by AMCOW between 2020-22, however, it is assumed that these donors will help sustain AMCOW's financial requirements after the ISS project is completed. Further, there is a rapid increase in sub-indicator 2.5, percent change amount of funding in 2019, which most respondents attributed to the outcomes of the ISS project and AMCOW's new leadership, yet, from the PITT, there is no further evidence of AMCOW's continued increasing in fundings.

[27] [29] Document review: MS contribution 2014-current.

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Therefore, though there are verbal reports of improvement in AMCOW's financial capabilities through this project, this evaluation has not found reports and evidence strongly supporting AMCOW's financial improvement.

Prioritization for gender and youth participation

Within AMCOW Secretariat: Though at an early stage, AMCOW is making efforts to hire and retain more female staff at its Secretariat, and in the ToRs or job announcements, women and young professionals are strongly encouraged to apply. There has been some success: two female staff have been recruited through the ISS projects funding.

Within AMCOW's functions and role: Since 2011, upon the development of the 'Gender Strategy' and since 2013 when the 'Youth and Gender Strategy' was developed, and until recently, right before the start of the ISS project, there were not much progress and initiatives in the implementation of the strategy. Draft Youth, Gender, and Social Inclusion (YGSI) Strategy was developed in line with the SDGs, which are expected to be launched and operationalized in 2022 after going through the validation and approval processes by the various policy organs of AMCOW[30]. Moreover, AMCOW has been making deliberate efforts to include and empower these groups by taking the lead continentally and pushing the agenda forward to include youth and gender diversities.

In all AMCOW's activities, AMCOW makes efforts to mobilize countries to ensure that they should support the participation of youth and women. As a result, since the ISS project, there has been an increase in the recruitment of youth and women – a lot of whom are below 30 years of age, as reported. When verified from the PITT, there is no documented evidence of improved gender and youth participation in the events and activities conducted by AMCOW through the ISS project. When the survey respondents were asked for their opinion on how much the ISS project integrated gender and youth in their mandates, most respondents said that the integration of youth was moderate. In contrast, the integration of gender was high.

This evaluation acknowledges AMCOW's efforts to integrate and increase the participation of youth groups and gender, mostly indicating improving women's participation in AMCOW's activities supported by the ISS project. However, there is no documented evidence of the actual increase in participation. Additionally, it is unclear what AMCOW means by integration and participation - whether it is to increase the count or, it would also be an increase in effective participation wherein the participants make effective and valuable decisions and take leadership roles supporting AMCOW's mandates.

[30] ISS annual report 2021

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It is expected that through the implementation of the Youth and Gender Strategy, a more robust integration of gender and youth will be visible in the ISS project-related activities.

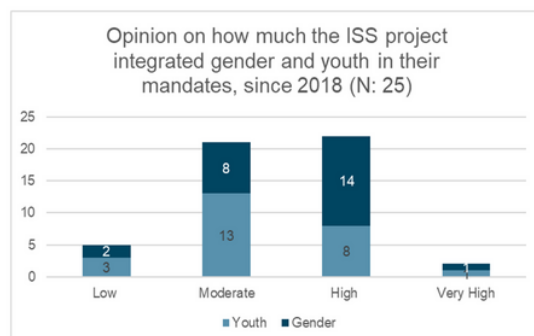


Figure 13 MS and Stakeholders' opinion on how much the ISS integrated Gender and youth in their mandates

Internal processes and systems

The ISS project has been instrumental in upgrading and strengthening AMCOW Secretariat's systems and infrastructure. The IT system is reported to be improved, which includes an updated website portal. The ERP system became functional, and there has been an improvement in the M&E system with the production of the M&E report. This report provided details of AMCOW's work toward its stakeholders.

Further, the ISS project has also enhanced the capacity of AMCOW's human resources, with the recruitment of additional staff members and enhanced service delivery due to added staff members. Strong staff strength has also helped AMCOW to represent in relevant activities in the continent and among the donors and other supporters. AMCOW was able to deliver key roles for the continent's WASH goals because of the recruitment and, therefore, participation of the key staff recruited through the ISS support. The ISS project has contributed to the enhancement of Secretarial capacity by recruiting new staff, thereby filling the gaps in human resources within the Secretariat. However, 100% of the recruitment needs were not met (refer to earlier sections).

Though not initially expected and planned for, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an unexpected turn in the processes by which AMCOW functioned and planned to implement the ISS project objectives. Much of the activities and meetings planned to be conducted in person were re-programmed to be conducted online. AMCOW organized most of its technical and statutory meetings virtually because of the COVID-19 restrictions. These meetings include one General Assembly, two Executive Committee (EXCO) meetings, and the African Water & Sanitation Week (AWSW)^[31].

[31] ISS Annual Report 2021

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Setting up an online meeting system and connecting with all members online was an unexpected outcome of the project.

Water and Sanitation Monitoring

As one of its primary indicators, AMCOW also strengthened the WASSMO system through the ISS project. The survey respondents expressed moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the monitoring mechanisms of AMCOW, implying the WASSMO system. While a respondent said that there are numerous parameters to inform, which is somewhat challenging, on the whole, it serves its purpose with continuous reports from countries (Please refer to other sections on WASSMO).

Gaps and challenges

Financial challenges

While on the one hand, there are surplus/unspent funds to date, there were some areas in the ISS project where an adequate budget needed to be allocated. For example, the KM did not receive adequate funding except for the establishment of the KM system, and the KM system was established early on in the project. Additionally, there was a low disbursement rate, as the planned activities (meetings and consultations) to be conducted within the ISS project were expected to be in-person, which included planned expenses for travel, logistics, etc. However, instead of a high expense on those, the funds were diverted to purchase of Zoom license, which resulted in a very disbursement rate (refer to earlier sections for more on the financial aspects of this evaluation).

Challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

During the data collection phase, the respondents consistently mentioned the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic as a major challenge for AMCOW, as this unprecedented period imposed significant limitations on the implementation of most of the activities and restricted physical meetings. Consequently, there was a reduction in the level of project implementation, followed by financial implications. However, AMCOW was able to re-strategize some of its activities to conduct them online. As explained in a previous section, the shifting of activities from face-to-face to online mode had budgetary implications on the ISS budget. Furthermore, virtual engagements with some of the key partners were challenged by limitations to internet access, which also suggested challenges in the organization of such enormous virtual events. Responding to the challenges, AMCOW quickly progressed with the development of a simplified virtual conferences/meetings platform[31] (refer to earlier sections for more details).

[31] ISS Project Annual Report 2021

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Challenges related to AMCOW's overall role

While there existed a consensus about the considerable evolution of AMCOW's role and visibility in the past few years and an appreciation of AMCOW's involvement in continental-level activities, the interviewed stakeholders expressed concerns regarding AMCOW's role in the AU. For instance, the respondents suggested the need for improvements in the organizational capacity by straightening the focus and the system of coordination, particularly of the events.

Moreover, the respondents expressed expectations for improvements regarding AMCOW's role in regional coordination and country-level activities as well as capacity building (refer to earlier sections), to raise the expected decision-making from the TAC. Another important suggestion from the respondents was the need to increase the Secretariat advocacy with local governments to promote the integration of WASH activities into the national plans and enhance the importance of having strong WASH institutions or mechanisms at country, sub-regional and continental levels. Finally, there were also concerns about the need for AMCOW's to devote valiant efforts to mobilize the African implementing partners, such as the AfWASA, WSA, ESAWAS, and GWP.

Besides the above-mentioned, the respondents seized the opportunity to express other requests and needs outside the Secretariat's mandate. For instance, there was the suggestion to have the Secretariat involved in providing some seed funds to support initiatives at country levels or in mobilising funds to finance WASH activities and the private sector partnership. Yet, there was also the request to the Secretariat to put in place a system to manage the retirement and resignations of people in the water and sanitation sectors. However, since the latter concerns and requests are not within the MS remit or the current Secretariat's mandate, it shall be the Secretariat to assess the relevance of the proposals and consider the appropriate approach to address the issue through its decision-making mechanism.

Challenges with the WASSMO system and monitoring

Overall, the respondents reported to be between moderately to highly satisfied with the WASSMO reporting system. A regional assessment of 25 respondents in total shows broadly that the West African Region may require additional focus in terms of their usage and familiarity with the WASSMO system. It is also encouraging to find that more than 3/4th of the respondents (76%) reported submitting data to the WASSMO system.

[31] ISS Project Annual Report 2021

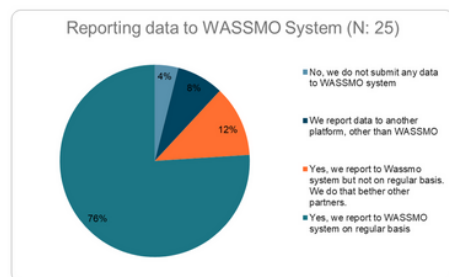


Figure 14 Percentage of MS and Stakeholders reporting to the WASSMO system and frequency

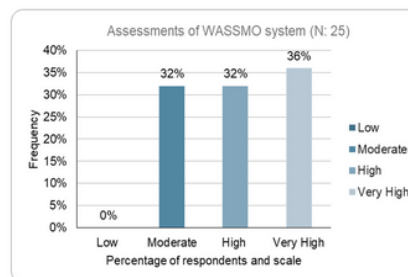


Figure 15 Percentage of MS and Stakeholders assessments of WASSMO system

However, a handful of respondents have had a few concerns regarding the WASSMO system. Respondents from countries in Eastern Africa mentioned a need to improve the WASSMO software because there is a lack of clarity in some questions within the system, some data need to be treated with confidentiality, and at times, the member countries are requested to submit data into the WASSMO system at short notice. Another Eastern African country representative also mentioned that the training provided was inadequate and up to the mark. Data collection is challenging because it requires collaboration with statistical experts and the participation of relevant departments, which may often be challenging.

Though the WASSMO reporting cycle is every six months, and AMCOW provides and continuously supports the WASSMO reporting mechanisms, a concern raised by a member needs to be addressed, probably because of their need for awareness regarding WASSMO reporting mechanisms.

3.1.5 Sustainability and Exit

Overall, the sustainability and exit of the ISS project is not a well-discussed topic within the Secretariat. The ISS project does not have a 'documented exit strategy' as of now, but interviews with key staff demonstrated that AMCOW is preparing itself for possible self-sustenance soon and AMCOW can count on the Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030.

During the data collection process, there was a reference to a questionnaire that was responded to by the MS, to let AMCOW know about the activities that are of interest to the MS and that AMCOW could address them (refer to sections above). These responses formed the basis of the activities that were carried out in the ISS project. As a part of the exit strategy, it is anticipated that AMCOW will further tailor the activities from the recommendations to fit into a plan. There is also a plan to document the activities conducted within the unit and propose SIDA for future funding and to include other organizations that can work in synergy.

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There were discussions to understand AMCOW's preparedness for sustainability after the ISS project. A respondent mentioned that, though there were initial challenges to implementing the ISS project, AMCOW, an "agile and dynamic organization", was able to adapt speedily to the new normal, indicating the shift from in-person activities to remote functioning. Along those lines, it is perceived that the project's sustainability is "still quite intact" because "AMCOW as an institution is becoming more financially and technically capacitated to operationalize its mandate." The ISS project stepped in when AMCOW was undergoing financial stress and staff uncertainties. Through the support of the ISS project, AMCOW has achieved a series of positive outcomes, which led to AMCOW's internal revival and re-established AMCOW's position in the African Union and globally.

Financial sustainability

Because of the ISS project's efforts, there is mobilization and, therefore, an increase in the total member fee collections from 2018 till current (please refer to the section earlier). While the current fee for MS is still USD 10 thousand, AMCOW expressed its intention to increase the membership fee in the future. It was anticipated that if all the MS agreed to contribute, "AMCOW would sustain itself for the next five years. However, AMCOW has not yet reached that stage of financial independence". A respondent recommended planning a second phase for the ISS project, after which AMCOW is expected to be more financially stable and function independently. AMCOW has requested SIDA for a budget modification of the current ISS proposal owing to the additional funding availability.

Additionally, documents from this evaluation found that AMCOW organized its first Donor Conference on the sidelines of the World Water Week (WWW) 2019 in Stockholm, Sweden where over 48 participants from across various stakeholder groups, including funding agencies, private sector, International Organizations, CSOs, and MS participated. This conference helped AMCOW to share and spread AMCOW's strategy and programs with current and potential donors and disseminate information on AMCOW's impact story, share experiences with partners on AMCOW's work, and explore new partnerships and collaborations on a more structured basis, along with exploring donor priorities and needs.

AMCOW has been actively exploring other funding sources from various partners, which is also heavily reliant on AMCOW's current reputation and perceived value by the AU and depends on the willingness and ability of the countries to pay their country contributions, considering protocols and sanctions.

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Since the Donor Conference, several donor-engagement meetings with the then Executive Secretary of AMCOW have been conducted. These meetings included the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Swiss Development Cooperation, WSSCC with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), etc. [33].

AMCOW Secretariat also conducted Regional Meetings of the Technical Experts Committee (TEC) with the North, Eastern, Southern, Western and Central Africa, wherein the TEC had recommendations for AMCOW's financial sustainability specifying that AMCOW should develop a strategy to collect monetary contributions from MS. There were recommendations for taking stricter measures, such as suspension of countries who did not pay their contributions, similar to the UN methods, where countries with outstanding payments are denied the right to vote until they complete their payment. Receive direct support from the African Union, identification of private companies by the Member State's Ministry of Water, which will pay the country's contribution, and increase the number of annual contributions from countries and provide funding in return (example 3% of this amount for water and sanitation activities in contributing countries)[34].

Additionally, AMCOW has prepared a detailed 'Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030' expected to support AMCOW in securing predictable and sustainable funding to deliver its mandates till 2030[35].

Sustainable staff plans

Currently, AMCOW's core staff's salary is paid through the ISS project, which, when it ends, will not be able to meet and retain human resources, though AMCOW focuses on maintaining key staff positions on its own. AMCOW has thought of a plan to retain and sustain its staff in the future. As mentioned by a key respondent, AMCOW has been recruiting and managing its team at the Secretariat on a project-to-project basis, resulting in a loss of staff and knowledge when the funding and the project concluded. As a part of institutional strengthening, the goal was to move away from 'project-based staff' to more the 'Secretariat staff' - who can work on any program/project that comes through. This would be possible only when AMCOW's reserves are permanently built on recruiting and retaining staff. AMCOW aims to build a 'program administration fee' in each project. The project will have a fee, and the money will go to a pool to build AMCOW's reserves. AMCOW is in discussion with SIDA and other partners on how to develop this pool.

[35] Document review: Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030

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Sustained role towards the African Union

AMCOW's role at the continental level is unique, and through AMCOW, indigenous African knowledge can be shared and strengthened. Through AMCOW, there can be an opportunity for countries to share knowledge and learn from each other. If a second phase of the ISS project takes place, then AMCOW can contribute largely to the continental water and sanitation needs. There is also a desire for the ISS project to return with a second phase so that the staff can continue and AMCOW can better serve the continent through a longer period using SIDA's grant. AMCOW's KM activity is well acknowledged, and therefore it needs time to realize its benefits to the countries, as well as helping AMCOW to raise funds in the future, especially more European funds.

4. LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation generated some significant findings pertaining to AMCOW's progress at the mid-term of the ISS project. Key recommendations from the evaluation are broadly based on two categories

1. AMCOW's larger role and representation in the AU
2. Strengthening of AMCOW Secretariat's internal processes and institutional development.

4.1 AMCOW's larger role and representation in the African Union

Context: Financial sustainability is one of the main goals of the ISS project. Currently (till 30th July 2022), the Secretariat has progressed towards improving its financial capability and position, it has attracted new donors and ensured the highest number of MS to pay fees and clear their pending payments, compared to the situation at the start of the ISS project. However, the Secretariat cannot be considered financially self-reliant and independent, and SIDA remains its biggest donor.

[33] ISS Project Annual Report, 2019

[34] ISS semi-Annual report Jan-Dec 2020

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This evaluation found three important factors that influence the MS' ability to pay their fees:

- The ability of the Ministries (such as the Ministry of Water in some countries) to directly dispose of funds or to coordinate with the Ministry responsible for making the funds available (such as the Ministry of Finance in some countries)
- The financial and political stability of an MS.
- The MS' perception of AMCOW's relevance for them.

MS' payments are particularly important for AMCOW, as The Governance Framework and Rules procedure, 2013, mentions, "The core functions of the Secretariat shall be financed by the member states themselves as a show of commitment to and ownership of AMCOW's initiatives." In the ISS project and documents reviewed, the Secretariat focuses on showcasing its positive achievements to motivate MS to pay the fee, with what the ET considers as a 'one strategy fits all' approach. Data suggests that while this strategy has allowed the Secretariat to increase the number of MS regularizing their payments, it was not sufficient to reach the desired target per the schedule defined by the Secretariat within the ISS project.

AMCOW's mission is "to provide political leadership; policy direction; and advocacy in the supply and management of water for sustainable social, economic, environmental development and the maintenance of Africa's ecosystems"[36]. AMCOW's work at the continental and regional level is universally acknowledged by the respondents in the primary data collected. However, data also showed that MS would appreciate receiving more direct technical support from AMCOW. The support provided by AMCOW, and its value for the MS, may be considered a factor influencing the MS to pay the fee. This may not be within the current operational scope of the AMCOW Secretariat. However, activities organized with a national focus, such as training provided for the WASSMO System, were highly appreciated by MS.

Respondents from various MS unanimously appreciated AMCOW's WASSMO system. It is understood that they would like to actively take an interest and participate in the system - which is also an opportunity to strengthen it continuously. However, primary data reflects some concerns that can be taken into account for WASSMO systems improvement: lack of clarity in some questions within the system, data confidentiality, short notice for data submission, and lack of statistical ability of MS to fulfil the needs of the WASSMO.

[36] AMCOW Governance Framework. May 2013 version, page 1

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Additionally, AMCOW has developed a ‘Youth, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030’ that “aims to enhance engagement and participation of women and girls, youth, and the physically challenged, by involving them in national and regional programme initiatives, services and decision-making processes in the advancement of Africa’s water and sanitation aspirations”^[37]as, another of its larger role in the AU. The strategy document is very detailed, with extensive documentation of context, definitions, Theory of Change, result areas, implementation framework, M&E strategy, etc. This is a commendable step for AMCOW, considering its influence in the African WASH sector. However, this evaluation did not understand how AMCOW plans to implement and operationalize the strategy. The Strategy was not yet approved for implementation during the time of this evaluation. Therefore, considering AMCOW’s larger role and representation in the AU, in the context of the remaining part of the ISS project, the following are recommended:

- **Consider diversifying strategies to motivate the MS to pay their contributions to address the current gap.**
- **Consider strategies to accommodate MS’s need to receive technical support to increase MS’s commitment towards AMCOW, ultimately leading to financial contribution.**

The above recommendations address and link Specific Objective 1 (Representation and Engagement) and Specific Objective 2 (Financing). The following are a few broad examples of possible strategies that could be undertaken. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing according to its rules and procedures.

- Analyze the factors that influence MS’s ability to pay their fee and start advocating with the MS that are more likely to get on track with their payments (i.e. those with high political instability and security problems are less likely to pay than those with stability but that have issues in coordinating with ministries responsible for emitting payments)
- Open a dialogue to engage MS on contributions, including discussing with Ministries that have the power to release funds, etc.
- Apply an “exchange of experience” approach, learning what made it possible for specific MS to get on track with their payments and analyze if the lessons learned are relevant for other MS.
- Utilize the sub-regional ministerial committee functioning to understand the needs and expectations of the MS and analyze it compared with fee payments to understand if satisfying MS needs can be influential in fee payments.

[37] AMCOW draft Youth, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030.

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AMCOW can utilize its function of “Strengthening Regional cooperation through facilitating the creation and strengthening of an enabling environment for collaborative approaches (...) resulting (in) shared management arrangements form fundamental building blocks for regional cooperation and coordination through the establishment of regional institutional mechanisms and networks at all levels (political, technical and civil society)” [38] to create opportunities to give technical assistance to those MS who are willing to receive it. This could be by creating a “south to south” cooperation or knowledge sharing initiative, or by acting as liaison with international agencies that can give technical assistance to MS, or any other solution identified by AMCOW and the Secretariat.

- **Strategically connect with MS according to their level of engagement in the WASSMO system, including reporting, training, and meetings to continue improving the WASSMO system.**

The above recommendation fall under the Specific Objective 3 Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker), but can also be beneficial for the Specific Objective 1 (Representation and Engagement). The following is an example of possible strategies that could be undertaken for the due purpose. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

- Reinforcing the WASSMO system and some basic re-strategizing may contribute to constantly engaging the countries while also improving the WASSMO system. To further improve MS’ engagement, it will be reasonable to divide the reporting period according to MS’ engagement levels – the more engaged countries may report at a higher frequency (as they may already be doing so) while the less engaged may first meet a simplified schedule, and gradually increase the frequency of their submission. Further, it is important to maintain constant communication about WASSMO reporting needs with the MS, because countries, staff, and data capacity may change over time. Keeping this in mind, updated WASSMO-related training and meetings can be organized, and efforts to regularly update and engage can be made more prominent.
- **Operationalize Youth, Gender, and Social Inclusion Strategy with an operational plan.**
- **Re-think gathering both qualitative as well as quantitative data regularly to measure the changes in effective participation.**

[38] Governance Framework point 4.1

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The above recommendations address Specific Objective 3, Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker). The following is an example of a possible strategy. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

- There is an anticipation that AMCOW will operationalize the Youth, Gender, and Social Inclusion Strategy after its formal launch, giving opportunities for an in-depth discussion on these thematic and presentation of the expected results at the end-line evaluation of the ISS project. By strengthening the strategic efforts, AMCOW is also expected to witness this translating to MS' and stakeholders' WASH governance - at the Ministries of Water and Sanitation and consequently at the Secretariat levels. Thus, it is highly recommended that AMCOW translates the 'Youth, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy' into an operational plan, establish a youth and gender coordination framework, create specific events to highlight and strengthen gender and youth inclusion in WASH and re-think gathering both qualitative indicators as well as quantitative indicators regularly. For instance, to streamline the results in this regard, AMCOW should strongly invest in establishing qualitative indicators which help to evaluate changes in the effective participation of women in the activities, then merely focus on the number of women participating in activities.

4.2 Strengthening of AMCOW Secretariat's internal processes

Context: The ISS project provided significant and much-needed institutional strengthening to the AMCOW Secretariat. However, a few issues emerged during this evaluation, which provides a scope for AMCOW to be considered in the remaining term of the project.

There are existing challenges in the quality of the information flow within the Secretariat and between the Secretariat and the MS. The challenges, though seemingly minor currently, may generate long-term misunderstanding and distrust and low ownership of the project and tasks if allowed to continue. For example, the ET observed that the Secretariat had problems with the mailing list of MS's focal points. Additionally, data showed that the representatives of MS, even when they are members of the TAC, are not always fully informed about important decision-making done by the Secretariat, such as the amendment of the ISS project.

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There were reports of slow and late communication by AMCOW wherein even important high-level documents are supplied late with very little time for review and are often close to actual events and meetings. Additionally, during the data collection, Secretariat staff members who are not in high-level positions reported not being familiar with the ISS project structure and seemed to not fully understand the decisions made about the project, as for the case of the ISS amendment. At the same time, the senior management of the Secretariat reported that explanations were provided to the whole staff. AMCOW governance framework states the Executive Secretary will be “facilitating knowledge management and timely provision of information and professional advice to the various organs of AMCOW to enhance informed decision making and, on the other hand, to partners and stakeholders to ensure effective engagement and participation”[39].

The Secretariat has elaborated an M&E Strategy that assists in tracking the implementation of the SOP 2020-2024. The ISS indicators were set at the project's inception, including a Performance Indicators Tracking Table (PITT) with definitions, data collection method, the indicator's relevance with the result area, and other key characteristics. The Strategy also describes the data collection protocol and plans for data quality assessment to ensure that AMCOW Secretariat integrates quality checks in data and information generated and ensures quality standards in data reported on performance indicators. Furthermore, the Secretariat progressed in best practices in M&E by inducting the Secretariat staff on Results-Based Project Management with a two-day customized short training in March 2020. However, the ET has concluded that the current Secretariat's M&E data is currently insufficient for implementing 'Result Based Management' for the ISS project. A few of the ISS project's indicators are not efficiently and regularly collected, while there are a few indicators for which the data is completely missing. According to the Secretariat senior management, the data was not collected as indicators during the ISS project and appeared inadequate to capture the project results and AMCOW's vision.

For instance, AMCOW Secretariat focuses on the quality of the MoU signed, while the ISS project only on quantity. Nevertheless, the Secretariat did not use the opportunity of the project review to improve the indicators. Additionally, the gaps in data collection represent a problem in implementing the “Financial Sustainability Strategy” with an evidence-based approach.

[39]AMCOW's Governance Framework, 2013.

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Enhancing the Knowledge Management sector is also one of the primary activities of the ISS project, which is an innovative idea, allowing African data to be organized locally, and making it available publicly. Additionally, it is considered to be an important feature by MS. The Knowledge Management system is expected to grow massively as AMCOW engages more with its relations, and, as more users come to know about the system. This requires very active collaboration between the knowledge management and the communications units. The management at AMCOW's Secretariat decided to merge both functions into a Knowledge Management, Communications, and Visibility Unit. The former Knowledge Management and Information Sharing Officer currently cover this position. A support officer is expected to be recruited to assist the KMCV Officer as the function expands.

Further, AMCOW's webpage is new, yet there is scope for further improvement to enhance communication. There may be a need to make the information more systematic and coherent. For example, at its simplest level of information, the website reported that the number of MS is 55 as well as 53 in separate places. There was a report from an AMCOW staff about the heavy workload and the need for additional support. To compensate for the situation, staff reported making their plans based on time management and less on needs and quality assessments. Furthermore, during the evaluation, the ET noted that the responsiveness from AMCOW was slower when officers were involved in multiple tasks, suggesting that staff were overworking. The staff within AMCOW has little gender diversity; women are a minority and do not cover any key management positions. This was also pointed out by SIDA and respondents, one of them requested to have more countries represented within the Secretariat's staff.

- **Improve the communication flow to strengthen institutional governance and the decision-making process.**

The above recommendation address Specific Objective 1 (Representation and Engagement). The following is an example of possible strategy. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

- Communication is a critical component in decision-making and should be strengthened to elevate the coordination of actions. Hence, regardless of the type of decision-making process being applied - horizontal or hierarchical, it is highly recommended that the reasons, needs, systems, and processes supporting the decisions are explained to all the actors involved.

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It is crucial that communication be not only timely, clear, and relevant but also effective to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately informed and understand their responsibilities for the way forward. An important step would be for the Secretariat to consider implementing an ongoing self-assessment of the effectiveness of its communication to understand the current situation and trace it effectively.

- **Improve monitoring, evaluation, and learning.**

The above recommendation will support The Secretariat in achieving Specific Objective 1 (Representation and Engagement) and Specific Objective 3, Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker). The following is an example of a possible strategy. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

- AMCOW must take proactive measures to strengthen its overall M&E system considering the human resources needed and the importance of regularly collecting and interpreting data and translating it to different departments to discuss how to use the findings. Also, the ET recommends that the AMCOW Secretariat assess which ISS indicators are adequate to realistically capture AMCOW Secretariat's vision. Given that the ISS project is close to an end, changing indicators at this time can be counter-beneficial. Hence, the ET recommends i) discussing the situation with the donor and including additional indicators, carefully designing them to capture the last part of the ISS project, ii) for future interventions, carefully designing indicators so that they reflect the Secretariat's vision and activities, iii) where relevant, collect micro-data which gives an in-depth level of information that can be used to improve the decision-making for both finances as well as project performance.

- **Improve the Knowledge Management system and website.**

The above recommendation will support The Secretariat achieving the Specific Objective 3 Influencing Policy and Practice (Knowledge Broker). The following is an example of a possible strategy. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

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- Considering the significant achievements made in the Knowledge Management System, its expected growth, and its appreciation by MS on the one hand, while on the other, the high workload for the Secretariat's staff, it is critical that the Knowledge Management, Communications, and Visibility Unit is provided with adequate human and financial resources to implement its activities while pursuing the desired growth. These two conditions are instrumental to take forward AMCOW's new initiative of the continental Water and Sanitation Knowledge Management Challenge to drive AMCOW KM efforts further into its constituents – the MS, RECs, RLBOs, and other partners. This will also strengthen knowledge brokerage across the sector. Finally, it will help promote the system with dedicated activities. It will allow AMCOW to give more attention to the website and unleash its highly effective potential as a communication tool.
- **Assess and reduce the current workload and increase the gender and national diversity of the Secretariat staff.**

The above recommendation is cross-cutting and will support The Secretariat in achieving all three Specific Objectives. The following is an example of a possible strategy. AMCOW Secretariat may consider discussing detailed strategies according to its rules and procedures.

- Although the AMCOW Secretariat has purposely changed its strategy towards redistributing tasks among officers for fundraising activities as a team effort, AMCOW's officer reports show that the current workload distribution is considered sub-ideal. Considering that not being financially sustainable would mean the loss of recruited staff from the ISS project and institutional memory and knowledge, the ET recommends AMCOW internally reassess its staff needs and take decisions accordingly. The ET suggests considering having a dedicated officer for fundraising to support and follow up the "Team Effort". However, the Secretariat might consider other approaches to decrease the current workload. To ensure diversity, representation, and inclusion for the possibility of recruiting professionals from all African States, AMCOW may also review its current hiring strategy and discuss solutions with MS to increase gender and nationality diversity.

5 ANNEX

5.1 Annex 1

OECD Principles and Key Evaluation Questions

RELEVANCE

- To what extent do the project objectives and intended outcomes continue to meet the needs of AMCOW SOP and SP?
- How realistic are the project's objectives and the technical solutions to fulfil AMCOW's mandates?
- How realistic are the project assumptions?
- How relevant are the current partners who work on the project to meet the intended outcomes?
- How inclusive is the project in terms of integrating cross-cutting themes (gender, youth, disability, COVID-19 resilience) in its design and implementation?
- Did the project consider the participation of the AMCOW Secretariat personnel and stakeholders in project design, planning, and implementation?

COHERENCE

- To what extent does the ISS project seek and effectively create synergies with other interventions within the AMCOW Secretariat?
- To what extent are the objectives of the ISS project coherent with the needs of the other stakeholders and members that AMCOW serves?

EFFECTIVENESS

- To what extent is the ISS project achieving its intended outputs and immediate outcomes?
- Are there unintended results of the project?
- What are the main enablers and barriers to the project's success in attaining its targets?
- How is the project addressing obstacles and challenges (barriers)?
- How effective is the project overall?
- 13.1. Could you tell me what the assessment is about the quality of the project outputs?
- How effective is the monitoring process of the project?
- 14.1. Is the monitoring and evaluation system results-based and facilitates adaptive management and learning?
- To what extent is the COVID-19 pandemic influencing project results and effectiveness?
- 15.1. How has the project addressed this influence?
- 15.2. Has it been ready to adapt to changes for at least some time from now on?

EFFICIENCY

- How have the resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated to achieve the project outputs and outcomes?
- What measures have been put in place to ensure good management of programme resources?
- Are the project's activities/operations in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the project team, work plans, and budgets?
- How has the programme management adapted to the various programming challenges (such as the global COVID-19 pandemic or others) to continue with the smooth implementation of the project?

IMPACT

- What are the key positive impacts of the project at the institutional level on the AMCOW Secretariat, MS, and other stakeholders?
- Were there any negative impacts, challenges, and gaps of the project at the institutional level on the AMCOW Secretariat, MS, and other stakeholders?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes and impacts?
- What do stakeholders perceive to be the major changes linked to the project's contribution to themselves and their institutions?
- Is the project contributing to expanding the knowledge base and building evidence regarding the project outcomes and impacts?

SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT

- How has the sustainability approach of the project been affected, or could be affected, by the Covid-19 situation in the context of the national responses?
- Has the project developed and implemented an exit strategy?
- Are the members aware of SIDA's exit and AMCOW's future sustainability plans?

5.2 Annex 2

5.2.1 Detailed Data Collection Methods

RELEVANCE

The evaluation followed best practices of sampling; used elaborate sampling methods, which respected necessary dimensions for proper and objective extrapolation of the evaluation findings. The sampling strategy that was presented in the inception report was approved by AMCOW; thereby, the ET proceeded with data collection activities. -

Respondents were categorized into three main units of analysis, as described in the table below.

Unit of Analysis	Qualitative Data Collection	Quantitative Data Collection
Unit 1: AMCOW Secretariat (Secretariat personnel involved in the ISS project)	FGD KII	Non applicable
Unit 2: Member States and country-level organizations (Ministries, key partners that operate in the countries - UN, INGOs, LNGOs, etc.)	KII	Online survey
Unit 3: Stakeholders at continental or regional level (SIDA, UN, Intergovernmental organizations in the continent of Africa)	KII	Online survey

Table 2 Units of analysis for primary qualitative and quantitative data collection

Unit 1: AMCOW Secretariat unit of analysis: This unit of analysis includes only the AMCOW Secretariat personnel involved in the ISS project. During the inception phase, it was agreed to collect only qualitative data. For more details, please refer to the section 'Qualitative data collection methods'.

Unit 2: Member States unit of analysis: Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from this unit of analysis. The Member States (MS) were categorized based on their regions and through their estimated fee payment to AMCOW between January 2014 till 30th April 2022 [40].

A total of 55 countries comprised the sampling population within the sampling scheme. The sampling stratified the countries by region to ensure fairness in coverage while maintaining the diversity of geographical aspects.

[40] List of countries and regional disaggregation <https://AMCOW-online.org/member-states>

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Therefore, the sampling scheme included five regions, with the common regional division of the continent on strata level, and 12, 13, 7,7, and 16 countries at each regional level. The table below shows our strategy for the primary and secondary sampling units.

Primary sampling unit – regional	Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	Central Africa	Northern Africa	Western Africa
Secondary sampling unit – country	12	13	7	7	16

Table 3 Sampling Strategy

[41] Based on calculations from AMCOW documents about member country fee payments

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It was found that out of 55 countries, 25 countries have paid their fee to AMCOW[41]. This data was combined with the number of countries per region to arrive at ranks where regions from highest to lowest are ranked.

Score	Region	Countries that contributed	Countries selected for evaluation
Highest engagement	Central Africa Sub Region	3	Gabon: Highest fee submitted in the region in 2019
Medium engagement	Eastern Africa Sub Region	5	Kenya: Most frequent contributor in the region
Medium engagement	Southern Africa Sub Region	9	Namibia: Consistent contributor High report of indicators[42]
Medium engagement	Western Africa Sub Region	6	Senegal: Contributed only once in 2015
Lowest engagement	Northern Africa Sub Region	1	Egypt: Only contributor from the region
	Total	25	

Unit 3: Stakeholders unit of analysis: The participants from this unit of analysis were selected purposely to ensure maximum diversification of the sample. During the inception phase, a list of stakeholders was agreed upon with AMCOW. However, at the end of May 2022, AMCOW proposed to the ET to attend the Third Meeting of Partners Coordination Platform (PCP) on Water and Sanitation in Africa, which was scheduled to be held in June in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Members from the ET had planned to attend this meeting to conduct in-person Key Informant Interviews (KII). The rationale proposed by AMCOW was the possibility to engage personally with stakeholders and ensure a maximum response rate. The ET agreed and selected a list of stakeholders among those invited to the meeting choosing them purposely to ensure maximum variety within the sample.

[42] WASSMO Report.

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The selection was confirmed by AMCOW. This meeting was, however, rescheduled to August. Hence, the ET and AMCOW agreed to use the same selection of stakeholders but to reach them remotely to conduct virtual KIIs. Please refer to the 'qualitative' and 'quantitative data collection' sections for more details.

Proposed list of respondents is presented in the table below:

Qualitative data collection methods	Respondents based on the units of analysis
Key Informant Interviews (Using KII guidelines)	AMCOW unit of analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 members from the AMCOW Secretariat at Abuja MS unit of analysis 2 staff from each of the selected 5 AMCOW MS (total 10 staff) 2 KII with national stakeholders – 1 from the country most engaged with AMCOW, 1 from the country less engaged with AMCOW Regional Stakeholders unit of analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 KIIs at the regional and continental level 2 interviews with a SIDA staff Total: 28 KIIs
Focus Group Discussion (Using FGD guidelines)	1 Group Interview with members of AMCOW Secretariat at Abuja Total: 1 Group Interview
Quantitative data collection method	Respondent
Online survey	We propose a sample of respondents based on the actual list provided by AMCOW to answer an online survey. The final total number of respondents will be identified after AMCOW provides the requested lists of attendees and persons from the member countries.

Table 5 Proposed list of respondents

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The ET emailed all proposed respondents requesting their participation in the evaluation, according to their respective data collection methods – online survey, KII, and FGD. Following the invitation, the ET sent a reminder email to each contact to maximize participation in this evaluation. Additionally, the ET agreed with AMCOW that participants who were unavailable or willing to participate virtually in KII could answer the questions via email instead. Hence all key informants received the two options.

The summary of participants for this evaluation is as follows:

Respondents of qualitative data:

- 4 AMCOW staff participated in KIIs, out of the 6 invitations sent
- 1 FGD was conducted with AMCOW Secretariat staff as planned, in which 13 Staff participated
- 1 KII conducted with SIDA staff, out of 2 as planned
- 1 member state representative participated in online KII out of 12 invitations sent
- 2 stakeholders responded and participated in KII/email form out of the 8 invitations sent

Respondents of quantitative data:

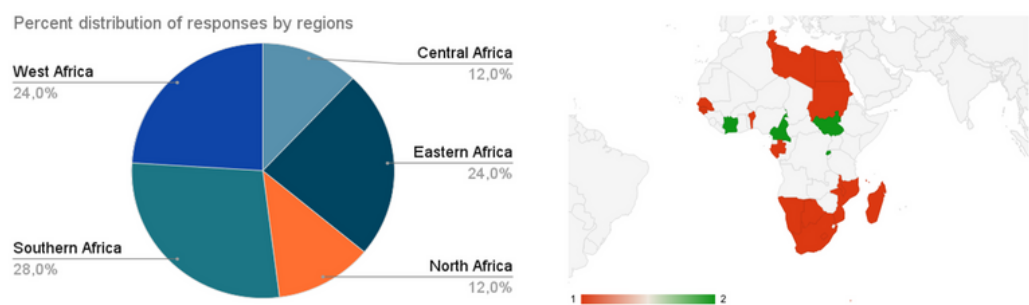


Figure 16 Survey respondent's composition and spread

The ET and AMCOW Secretariat agreed on a list of 96 respondents to be contacted through email. These respondents were representatives of MS and national and regional stakeholders. The ET ensured that in case more than one email id was listed for a respondent, emails were sent to all the listed email ids to ensure maximum coverage and minimum slippage. Overall, 25 participants representing 21 countries and an estimated 25% of the total size of response population responded to and submitted the online survey. Though the survey did not attain a 100% response, the composition of the respondents generated during data collection indicates that the survey reached the number of country representatives required for this evaluation. Of the 25 survey respondents, 88% of the respondents were representatives of MS, while 12% were other stakeholders, and most of the survey respondents were males.

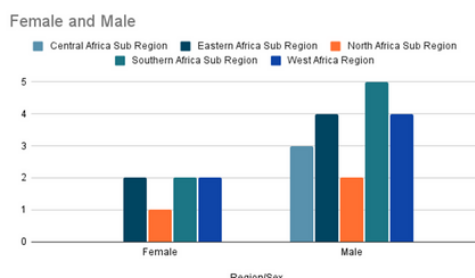


Figure 17 Gender distribution of respondents across Africa regions

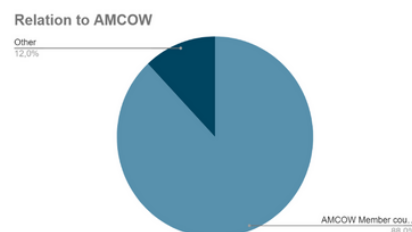


Figure 18 Distribution of respondents to online survey between MS and Stakeholder

The ET and AMCOW Secretariat agreed on a list of 96 respondents to be contacted through email. These respondents were representatives of MS and national and regional stakeholders. The ET ensured that in case more than one email id was listed for a respondent, emails were sent to all the listed email ids to ensure maximum coverage and minimum slippage. Overall, 25 participants representing 21 countries and an estimated 25% of the total size of response population responded to and submitted the online survey. Though the survey did not attain a 100% response, the composition of the respondents generated during data collection indicates that the survey reached the number of country representatives required for this evaluation. Of the 25 survey respondents, 88% of the respondents were representatives of MS, while 12% were other stakeholders, and most of the survey respondents were males.

5.3 Annex 3

Data collection tools submitted separately as a PDF.

5.4 Annex 4

5.4.1 Summary of findings from desk review

AMCOW's History and Role

The 2002 Abuja Ministerial Declaration on Water—a key to sustainable development established AMCOW. AMCOW provides political leadership, policy direction, and advocacy in water management, as well as the provision of sanitation and hygiene services for sustainable social, economic, and environmental development and maintenance of Africa's ecosystems. AMCOW serves as the Working Group on Water and Sanitation of the African Union (AU) STC on ARDWE. AMCOW is thus tasked to report annually to the AU's Assembly of the Heads of State and Government (HoSG). Furthermore, AMCOW also serves as the co-chair of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation, launched in 2002 as the African component of the European Union (EU) Water Initiative.

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The February 2004 Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of HoSG, held in Libya, adopted the Sirte Declaration, by which Africa's leadership expressed support for AMCOW for its role in spearheading efforts to address Africa's water policy challenges. A decision was thus taken to adapt the mandate, structures, and activities of AMCOW to integrate them into the activities of the Commission of the African Union and its Specialized Technical Committees. In 2008, the HoSG – meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt – tasked AMCOW to annually report to the Assembly on progress made by MS to accelerate the achievement of water and sanitation goals in Africa. The African Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System was initiated by AMCOW in 2011. The inaugural report was presented to the Assembly of the AU in January 2013. In 2016, the system was transformed into a web-based platform with the acronym WASSMO. The WASSMO system supports AMCOW in tracking the progress of MS towards achieving the Sharm El Sheikh commitments, the Africa Water Vision 2025, as well as the targets of SDG 6.

At the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in October 2018 held in Libreville, Gabon it was agreed that the priority for donor support to AMCOW should be capacity strengthening of the Secretariat. Within that, the priority was stakeholder engagement and coordination with the remaining area. The purpose was to support the increased engagement of AMCOW's broad array of stakeholders, followed by resource mobilization and building a knowledge hub. Based on these priorities, AMCOW looked for support in institutional strengthening provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the ISS project, initiated in 2019 for a period of 4 years.

AMCOW's Vision is An Africa where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment. Its Mission is to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development and maintenance of African ecosystems". Its guiding Principles are to Maintain a Member State Focus, promote Inclusiveness and Collaboration, enable and encourage Knowledge Driven decision-making, act with Professionalism and ensure Transparency and Accountability[43].

[43] AMCOW resource mobilization and financial sustainability strategy, 2020-2030

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As found from various documents during the review, AMCOW is highly committed to focusing on the targets in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and aims to contribute to the African Water Vision 2025 as well as the African Agenda 2063 while also opening opportunities to reinforce the objectives and other guidance reflected on the SOP 2020-2024. Through several meetings held with MS, AMCOW has also been providing vital opportunities for knowledge sharing, partnerships, and collaborations, as well as technical support to strengthen the joint venture towards national, regional, and continental priorities.

2020 was an atypical year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the modus operandi and structure of work, implying relevant changes in the methods of interaction with the MS and stakeholders. In response to the emergency, AMCOW shifted to virtual and remote management to progress on planned outputs, with most of the technical and statutory meetings conducted online.

Despite the slow-downs caused by COVID-19, AMCOW is reported to have strengthened partnerships and support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) -now named Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, among others. Moreover, 2020 marked the start of AMCOW new SOP 2020-2024.

Structure

AMCOW has a Secretariat hosted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Abuja. An Executive Secretary heads the Secretariat and is responsible for preparing programs and budgets, taking follow-up actions on the decisions of the Council, providing Secretariat services for the sessions and meetings of the organs of the Council, and reporting to the Executive Committee.

In the AMCOW organogram below (Annex 3), staff positions meant to be the Secretariat core staff and supported by MS are in blue, and those meant to remain, project staff, are in green. Staff positions are considered core positions and shall be supported by the MS, the rest of the positions are linked to projects and hence denominated “project staff”. However, countries were inconsistent in paying their fees, and, according to AMCOW’s records, in 2018, only 13% of them were current in their payments, and the amount due in arrears was US\$4.8 million. As a result, most of the Secretariat’s budget was from development partners for project-specific activities.

In 2016 AMCOW Secretariat secured support from BMGF and USAID with the WALIS project that allowed AMCOW to improve the robustness of the operational systems and processes, but only limited funds were available for core staff positions.

According to AMCOW Secretariat's records, in November 2018, the time in which AMCOW Secretariat submitted the ISS proposal to SIDA, the following positions were filled[1]:

i. Office of Executive Secretary: Executive Secretary, Resource Mobilization Officer, Personal Assistant.

1. Directorate of Finance and Administration: Director of Finance and Administration, Management Accountant, Finance Accountant, HR/Procurement, Administrative Assistant, Receptionist, Drivers (2), Office Assistant.
2. Directorate of Programme: Senior Policy Advisor, Sanitation Project Manager, AfricaSan Monitoring Support Officer, and Manager of Communications and Visibility.

In 2018, as agreed in the TAC meeting in October 2018 held in Libreville, Gabon, the Secretariat requested support from SIDA for the following positions[2]:

1. Director of Finance & Admin (from July 2019)- previously called Chief of Finance and Admin
2. Program Director – WRM and Transboundary expert (new position)- previously called Programme Coordinator
3. WASSMO Officer (from 2021)
4. I/Database Management Officer (from 2021)
5. MEL Officer (new position)- previously being an advisor seconded to both the AUC and AMCOW-Sec
6. Groundwater Desk Officer (new position)
7. Knowledge and Information Sharing Officer (new position)
8. Resource Mobilization Officer (from September 2020)
9. Manager of Communications and Visibility (from September 2020)- Previously Communication Officer.

5.4.2 Excerpts from qualitative responses from primary data collected

Excerpts from qualitative responses through the survey are presented below. The responses stating 'none, no comments, or irrelevant are excluded from the lists.

[44] AMCOW Secretariat's proposal to SIDA for ISS

[45] All positions listed below are the one that were requested in the proposal to SIDA

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A. Is there anything you would consider helpful to change or improve in your country's representation at AMCOW?

- Nous sollicitons un suivi et évaluation sur la collecte des données pays et puis ces collectes necessites des deplacement dans plusieurs ministères et puis la connexion internet nous sommes très limité financièrement par consequent nous souhaiterons que les points focaux WASSMO et NGOR soient outillés pour pouvoir faire ce travail periodique
- Activities are running. They are working hard, but the result is not yet that good to get all the countries contributing to a good report of sustainable development goals with good data shared
- AMCOW should support the FC to organize a plate form group from other ministry members.
- A consultant and expert should involve in the platform
- Water and environment colleges in the university should be a member
- We wish for AMCOW to continue supporting the country on a technical and financial level.
- I think representation at AMCOW should also include Statistics Offices to ensure more accurate monitoring and reporting.
- More frequency in engaging with my country to support the in-country engagement
- Yes, support is needed to have more experts in WASSMO Focal Points. There should be at least 3 or 4 Focal Points.
- The TAC and Council meetings are still relevant. TAC Meetings should be regular and not wait for the EXCO Meetings as there are a lot of technical matters that require the decision process of TAC as a clearing house for EXCO and Council.
- We recently activated our active participation, but this will depend more on the current government as it's the new ES, especially with regard to the financial management and general governance of the organization.
- More efforts in capacity building
- Oui, 1) que mon pays régularise ses contributions annuelles auprès de AMCOW. La démarche y relative à été relancé et vivement qu'elle aboutisse le plus tôt; 2) que Amcow encourage des exposés des pays (experienxes pays) lors de certaines rencontres sous régionales ou continentales (cas de succès/cas d'échec...) en plus des situations globales ou continentales souvent présentées. Ceci pourrait booster la participation des pays.
- Improve collaboration and synergies with other African-wide organizations in the WASH sector
- Now that covid-19 pandemic is over, there is a need to engage in in-person meetings
- both TAC and Focal points should be active at various functions and regularized the Annual contributions by MS. Reduce the amount to US1000.00 or Zero it
- Find a way to collect the contribution from MS
- Revise the format for data to be both water specific and generalized. They seem too general to me.

B. Please type the gaps, challenges and issues you find with AMCOW's ISS project

- manquement c'était la formation appropriée et le défi c'est la collecte des données et le même qui nécessite de la bonne collaboration avec l'institut de statistique et les autres départements concernés
- Provide standards for data collection and reporting in the water sector and related sectors. update education/learning programs, including nexus WFP. Provide specific and more reliable tools for climate change management for each region. WASSMO software should be improved because some questions are not clear. Also,
- some are confidential.
Lack of supported initiatives at the country level
- The only challenge I realize is the timeline. I believe that with a long time of support,
- the project would add true value to the AMCOW agenda and work programme.
Need to share regularly the reporting to the MS on the progress being made specifically with the support of the donors.
- The issue is that most of the activities are at the AMCOW Secretariat level, but there is a way of providing some seed funds to support initiatives at country levels, that
- would be fine. Even if most countries integrate activities into national plans, there is still a gap in institutional strengthening and coordination at country levels. Efforts should focus there.
improve regional coordination. the TAC must take its rightful place in decision making the shortcomings are mainly of an institutional nature (the institutional setup differs from one country to another), and the challenges are sometimes linked to political instability in certain countries
- Improve more capacity of a country member of AMCOW.
Coordination mechanisms, retirement, and resignations of people in the water and sanitation sectors.
- Institutional Governance - the type of leadership and management of the organization is key.
Prudent Financial Management to ensure the sustainability of the organization
- Knowledge and Human Resources Management- These are key in ensuring the efficient functioning of the organization.
- The ISS beneficiaries were more the Secretariat and not the member countries AMCOW
- needs to be more focused and organized
Faible sensibilisation des décideurs en de la mise sur pied des institutions ou
- mécanismes WASH forts au niveau des pays, des sous-régions et du continent;
2) Participation limitée du privé et des OSC; 3) faible mobilisation ou dotations
- budgétaires des pays pour financer le WASH; 4) participation et implication limitées femmes et des jeunes dans les projets à tous les niveaux (communes, pays, sous région, continent) weak collaboration; lack of ICT working tools.

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- Sometimes member countries are required to submit information to WASSMO on short notice; secondly, many meetings organized by AMCOW are cancelled due to a lack of coordination with similar activities taking place within regional bodies and organizations
- logistical organization during the event
- Nonpayment of memberships contribution is discouraging both the TACs and FPs in their respective countries.
- Online meetings are to be translated into the official languages of AMCOW countries.

C. What are some recommendations for improvement (for the remaining part of the ISS project) considering the gaps and challenges you listed earlier?

- Je recommande l'accompagnement technique et financier
- Provide data collection and reporting standards in the water sector and related sectors. update education/learning programs, including nexus WEF
- Finance support to all African countries to organize workshops to collect information from a platform member
- NGO involvement and country consultants.
- Support some water and sanitation initiatives at the country level, support countries to collect water and sanitation data
- I can only commend the project and hope it continues for a while longer to cement the benefits it is achieving.
- Need to link the WASSMO with the in-country reporting system, like in our case water and sanitation information system known as WIMS.
- Allocate some seed funds to country levels for coordination and institutional strengthening of sub-projects
- Support regular regional meetings
- Continue supporting coordination at the AMCOW Secretariat level
- An annual review could help continue the capacity-building effort and Training
- More finance for AMCOW system reporting of water and sanitation
- Coordination mechanisms need to be strengthened.
- Systems strengthening realized during the ISS project needs to be continued to maintain the active participation by MS. The staff complement at the secretariat in functions of Groundwater, Knowledge Management, and M&E gave AMCOW a lift. More countries such as mine started their contributions after seeing changes in the fiduciary systems in the organization. A lot still needs to be done to reach financial sustainability.
- Provide capacity building for countries.
- Sensibiliser les décideurs et mettre sur pied des institutions ou mécanismes wash forts au niveau des pays, des sous-régions et du continent; 2) encourager le partenariat public-privé-osc; 3) mobiliser davantage des ressources pour le financement à tous les niveaux ; 4) encourager encore plus la participation et l'implication des femmes et des jeunes dans les projets à tous les niveaux (communes, pays, sous région, continent)

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- identify and sign MoU with implementing partners, organize coordination meetings with partners, nominate focal point staff at AMCOW for each collaborative partner, take part in partners' events, and key activities
- Consult member countries from time to time, remind member countries of their obligations and country contributions on a routine basis to mount pressure on member countries
- Engagement of both FPs and TACs simultaneously
- Increase the stakeholder engagement
- Ask experts in hydrology, hydraulics, and hydrogeology to participate in the meetings.



Sweden
Sverige

**11 T. Y. DANJUMA, ASOKORO
ABUJA, NIGERIA**

www.amcow-online.org
secretariat@amcow-online.org



Metolong Dam, Lesotho. Photo credit: Elita Banda, 2022.