



MAM Catalytic Support: Impact for Civil Society Organizations

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

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Introduction

During 2022, Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) provided catalytic grants aimed at bolstering sector multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) through engagement with SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM). This catalytic support was provided to civil society organizations (CSOs) and research and learning institutions working in partnership in seven countries: Indonesia, Nepal, Kenya, Niger, Paraguay, Senegal, and the Republic of the Congo. The rationale of the grants is that multi-stakeholder platforms are a necessary base for the promotion of accountability – a human rights principle which is central to the SWA partnership.

Although the sums made available were modest – US\$15,000 in total per country – the impacts were often significant. This is an encouraging sign that the principles of bringing sector actors together are strongly held within the SWA partnership. It also demonstrates the value of investment in multi-stakeholder engagement as a means to support sector progress.

The grants supported CSOs to implement projects focused on strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms and accountability. This was done through, for example, promoting opportunities for dialogue, engaging new sector actors, building on sector advocacy efforts and strengthening capacity within existing platforms.

In parallel to the activities of CSOs, the grants also supported national research and learning institutions to examine the enabling factors required for effective multi-stakeholder engagement and mutual accountability. This research analysed the challenges to building and sustaining effective MSPs, which SWA has published in a separate report ([available here](#)). The report includes actionable recommendations for SWA and the water, sanitation and hygiene sector as a whole. This research element of the grant funding has also resulted in anticipated secondary benefits. It has brought new research and learning national partners to the SWA partnership, while focusing and strengthening their engagement with national MSPs. The effects of these new connections could be profound and long-lasting.

Some of the highlights, lessons and recommendations of the catalytic support funding for CSOs are explored below – including a short overview summarizing the experiences of the recipient countries.

SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism

SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM) is the only global accountability process in the sector that is dedicated to all stakeholders working together, towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation services. SWA approaches mutual accountability as a way to catalyse collective action and achieve goals quicker.

Commitments tabled under the MAM are based on national policies and are formulated to enable monitoring. In just four years since the mechanism's launch, over 400 commitments have been tabled, with half of them coming from 60 national governments, covering all regions.

Commitments are periodically monitored by partners at the national and global levels, and the first MAM Global Report can be found [here](#).

Key observations, lessons, and recommendations

1. Small amounts of funding focused on strengthening multistakeholder engagement, if used in a targeted and strategic way, can catalyse significant impact.
2. SWA partners in the targeted countries understand the benefits of multi-stakeholder engagement for sector progress. There is a clear and significant demand for strengthening them further – which requires adequate funding.
3. The response to the call for proposals was significantly oversubscribed, indicating that there is considerable ongoing demand from countries seeking ways to strengthen and develop their multi-stakeholder work in the sector, suggesting further funding opportunities.
4. Catalytic grants can lead to significant outcomes, so we encourage our partners to explore this avenue and support civil society advocacy in the sector whenever possible.
5. CSO partners highlighted the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder approaches not just at national level, but also at the sub-national level. It is important to ensure greater interconnections and mutual reinforcement of national and subnational multistakeholder engagement processes.

Highlights from the seven countries

Below are highlights from the seven countries that successfully bid for the funding. Their stories are overwhelmingly positive and illustrate how a relatively small amount of funding can catalyze action. It is clear from these snapshots that, if planned for and used strategically, catalytic grants can trigger momentum and build principles of broad co-operation and mutual accountability. They have the potential to grow and benefit the sector, ultimately contributing to the universal access to water and sanitation.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, funding was primarily used to increase the range of actors coming together to discuss the water, sanitation and hygiene sector's future and collaborate. The WASH network Jejaring AMPL and the think-tank Center for Regulation Policy and Governance (CPRG) organized a successful webinar series to increase sector collaboration ahead of the SWA 2022 Sector Ministers' Meeting. The webinars enhanced awareness about SWA, and helped develop a new set of MAM commitments. The interactive webinars targeted CSOs (138 participants), R&Ls (293 participants), general businesses and philanthropy (102 participants) and private sector actors (113 participants).

This work aimed to address two key challenges. Firstly, that existing platforms bringing together different actors did not yet discuss commitments or provide a forum for mutual accountability. Secondly, that actors such as research organizations, private sector and local grass-roots organizations had limited participation within sector discussions, to date.



Benefits

- The webinars brought in 'new' actors to sector conversations, and even led to additional funding from different organizations, in order to keep dialogues moving forward and expand their reach and impact.
- There was strong support from and interaction with the Government, leading to the development of a new set of multi-stakeholder, government-led MAM commitments.
- Progress was also made on designing a process to review MAM commitments collaboratively.
- CPRG agreed to join forces with other research and learning organizations, co-leading the organization of Indonesia's first academic conference dedicated to water and sanitation, scheduled for March 2023.
- With this catalytic grant, the research showed that SWA was perceived by sector actors as a 'neutral platform' to convene stakeholders, reduce sensitivities and to shift from coordination to mutual accountability.

Takeaways

- The investment of 'catalytic' support generated significant momentum across new and existing sector actors to engage and jointly further progress on SDGs 6.1 and 6.2.
- Stakeholders agreed ways to formalize processes related to the MAM, in order to maintain independency and legitimacy. However, the lack of dedicated ongoing funding generated concern around the sustainability of multi-stakeholder efforts to hold each other to account.

Kenya

In Kenya, the grant primarily contributed to the organization of multi-stakeholder dialogue. One event focused on developing a strategy to revive the National Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Inter-Agency Coordination Committee (ICC) – an important multi-stakeholder platform which had gone dormant at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders also met to review Kenya’s existing MAM commitments. Activities were led by the WASH Alliance Kenya and Umma University.

The work aimed to increase the level of commitment to multi-stakeholder action and regular engagement with one another, and to strengthen the commitment making and review processes.

Benefits

- The funding helped to broaden national sector dialogue, involving a significant number of representatives from government, donor organisations, INGOs, NGOs, and UN agencies.
- The dialogue furthered the national sector conversation on inclusivity – for example how to increase the inclusion of people living with disabilities and young people in sector conversations.
- The funding enabled Kenya’s multi-stakeholder commitments to be reviewed and kept up to date.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the associated research process prompted reflections on multi-stakeholder engagement and mutual accountability, with strengthened appreciation of the urgency of these functions in the sector.

Takeaways

- Activities were held during the country’s national election period. This made it harder to engage government representatives and to focus on longer-term objectives.
- The grant was able to bring the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee stakeholders back together, and to generate strengthened trust and informal relationships amongst relevant representatives. However, further resources will need to be identified to ensure they are convened monthly, as per the participants’ wishes.
- The WASH stakeholders’ platform on the MAM is currently the only all-inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement platform active in the sector.
- Development partners have not been as active as other stakeholders in reporting progress on their MAM commitments.

Nepal

In Nepal, activities implemented by the CSO Rural Awareness and Development Organization (RADO-Nepal) and the R&L Nepal Philosophical Research Center (NPR) included the mapping of and outreach to private sector actors, utilities & regulators, external support agencies and parliamentarians, followed by consultation meetings to identify areas for cooperation. Funds were also used to engage

with WASH coordination committees and CSOs at provincial and municipal levels.

The work aimed to address gaps in participation in multi-stakeholder processes and to strengthen the functioning of the National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee at different levels.



Benefits

- The project was successful at triggering increased overall participation in multi-stakeholder platforms. It delivered capacity-building events for community-based organisations and raised awareness of SWA and the MAM.
- A meeting of Nepal's WASH multi-stakeholder platform, the National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee was convened. This meeting was an opportunity to start the restructuring of the committee, where stakeholders plan to have assigned roles and responsibilities.
- To implement activities, RADO and NPRC worked closely with the Ministry of Water Supply, UNICEF, Water Health Organization, Water Aid, WHO, the Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users and FANSA, a network of 400+ civil society organizations working in South Asia.
- The initiative also catalyzed the making and monitoring of commitments, which were showcased by the minister at the SWA 2022 Sector Ministers' Meeting. In addition, CSOs and R&L organizations agreed to use their commitments to support the Government's commitments – and to report on them.

Takeaways

- Sub-national governments play a key role in the delivery of WASH services in Nepal, and yet it is challenging to ensure multi-stakeholder coordination at that level. Recommendations include the activation of provincial-, district- and municipal-level multi-stakeholder platforms.

- Sector actors recommended increasing opportunities for civil society to hold the Government to account on WASH during national sector conversations, such as during Joint Sector Reviews.
- Stakeholders also highlighted the need to ensure the Government continues to support Nepal's sector Management Information System, to ensure robust data is available to inform policy design and monitor progress.
- It is intended that the National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee will further engage with the MAM going forward.

Niger

In Niger, the catalytic grant supported a well-attended 'Parliamentarians' Day', to engage high-level decision-makers. It also funded the organization of a workshop and the publication of a study on mutual accountability in Niger. Activities were led by the civil society organisations Chambre de Concertation des ONG et Association de Développement (CCOAD) and Réseau des Journalistes pour l'Eau, l'Hygiène et l'Assainissement, in partnership with the Abdou Moumouni University.

The activities sought to strengthen the frameworks for consultation and dialogue between actors in the sector, and broaden stakeholders' understanding of mutual accountability.



Benefits

- The 'Parliamentarians' Day' allowed for direct engagement with decision-makers to increase political will and advocate for the improvement of access to water and sanitation services. Parliamentarians welcomed the initiative and moves to additional future discussions to raise awareness on the 2030 Agenda.
- The grant also supported work to promote a culture of accountability, for example by raising awareness about existing accountability mechanisms in the country, including the MAM.
- The workshops attracted many youth participants, based on an aspiration to establish a parliamentary youth network for water and sanitation.

Takeaways

- The parliamentary network has the ability to influence policy through budget voting and laws and yet political differences undermine the dynamism of this network.
- Further efforts are needed to improve the consultation framework between the state and CSOs, as well as strengthening stakeholder engagement on monitoring.
- The implementation suffered delays as a result of a combination of the grant payment schedule and the budget constraints of the CSOs. Future rounds will take ability to pre-finance activities into account as part of the way support is offered to organisations, as well as continue to seek partners with more flexible payment modalities to lead such initiatives.

Paraguay

In Paraguay, the catalytic funding was used to support several objectives to improve multi-stakeholder engagement in the sector. This included specific aims, such as engaging 'new' sector actors, focusing on increasing gender inclusion, and reviving a platform that brings together different CSOs, in the form of the Citizen's Water and Sanitation Observatory. The objective was for the latter group to provide a means to better guarantee of human rights to water and sanitation, through increase access to information, transparency and accountability. Activities were led by the NGO Centro de Estudios Ambientales y Sociales (CEAMSO) in partnership with the Asunción Catholic University.

Benefits

- Workshops focused on the role of women leading the WASH sector in Paraguay with an aspiration to incorporate a strengthened gender perspective in the national plans based on evidence of gender gaps at national and local levels.
- Efforts were made to develop a strategy for the Citizen's Water and Sanitation Observatory, a network of CSOs working in the sector, which could then act as a platform for coordinated engagement between government and CSOs.

Takeaways

- The Government was not as engaged as hoped, curtailing the fulfilment of the project's objectives. This underscores the importance of either establishing and maintaining government buy-in, or ensuring that impact can be realized that does not rely on government support.
- The Citizen's Water and Sanitation Observatory as a coordinating mechanism for different CSOs requires strengthened leadership, secretariat support and financing to help guarantee its continuity and contribution to the sector.

Republic of the Congo

The catalytic funding for the Republic of the Congo was earmarked to engage multiple stakeholders in a national review of the country's 2018 sector roadmap.

Benefits

- The funding helped the sector develop specific commitments from actors across the sector to support the review and implementation of the national sector policy.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue articulated clear goals to define sector responsibilities and activities. It also expressed the intention to improve and guide inclusion of research institutions, civil society actors and private sector in the country's sector coordination mechanism.

Takeaway

- There were challenges engaging with the Government. While many sector actors in the country were fully invested in the project, there were some challenges associated with developing relationships with multiple constituencies in a country that only recently joined SWA.

Senegal

In Senegal, the catalytic grant funding complemented other existing funding provided to the non-governmental organization Plateforme pour l'eau et l'assainissement (POSCEAS). Resources were primarily used towards the development and training of a digital application tool to inform WASH sector actors and communities.

Benefits

- The 'app' is designed to improve sector communications, increasing transparency and promoting 'continuous accountability'. It forms part of moves to disseminate plans and commitments made by the Government at the national level, helping to engage stakeholders across the country.
- Five sub-national multi-stakeholder partnerships were established and engaged in activities linked to the World Water Forum, hosted in Senegal. POSCEAS aim to engage nine more.

Takeaway

- The CSO partner had challenges engaging both the Government and the research and learning organization partner in this initiative. There is a need to ensure the scope and parameters of any future catalytic funding project is understood fully, and has the full buy-in of all relevant actors so that the objective of strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms may be achieved.