

Review of the District Implementation Manual (DIM) Summary of Key issues

Background

The Ministry of Water and Environment produced the District Implementation Manual (DIM) in 2007 to support and guide sector stakeholders in the implementation of water and sanitation activities. The DIM provides guidelines for sector stakeholders operating at district level, including district local governments and NGOs. The DIM sets out the policy and institutional environment as well as sector stakeholder's roles in line with the SWAP and the sector approaches for harmonized strategies.

Though the DIM was meant to contribute to the improvement of sector performance, five years on, the WASH sector still faces challenges in standardization, harmonization and coordination of rural water service delivery. The WASH sector has not realized significant positive changes in rural water service delivery. A key challenge hindering progress towards the desired goals stems from ineffective coordination and harmonization of actors and interventions as well as the inadequate enforcement of policies and guidelines.

In March 2011, the Triple-S initiative of IRC in Uganda undertook to assess the utilization of the DIM. The purpose of the study was to assess the application and effectiveness of DIM and make recommendations for improvement of the process and quality of implementation of the DIM strategies and approach. One of the key recommendations was that the DIM should be reviewed and updated and that user-friendly versions be produced and disseminated widely.

It is on this basis that IRC/Triple-S in partnership with the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) contracted a consultant to review and update the DIM, produce a user-friendly version and information products to be used by sub county and district level WASH practitioners and service users. To date the consultant has completed the stakeholder consultation and documentary review processes and has produced a draft version of the updated DIM and dissemination strategy. This write up presents the key issues emerging from the process.

Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder consultations were conducted using a qualitative approach. The consultant engaged in in-depth discussions with the selected individuals at national, district and sub-county level. Districts visited include: Mukono, Napak, Kumi, Oyam, Rukungiri, and Kasese. Stakeholders were categorised into government, civil society and development partners. A summary of stakeholders consulted is indicated in the table below.



	Government	Civil Society Organisations	Development Partners
National level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Water and Environment ▪ Ministry of Health, ▪ District Implementation Manual Steering Committee Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET) ▪ WaterAid in Uganda ▪ Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) Uganda, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Royal Danish Embassy (DANIDA) ▪ Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP)-World Bank ▪ African Development Bank (AfDB) ▪ Austrian Development Agency (ADA) ▪ UNICEF-Uganda
District level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Water Officer ▪ Assistant District Water Officers ▪ District Health Officer ▪ District Health Inspector ▪ District Health Educator ▪ Community Development Officer ▪ District Education Officer ▪ District Planner ▪ District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee (DWSCC) ▪ Secretary for Health/Social Services ▪ WASH district-based CBOs and NGOs ▪ Sub County Chief ▪ Community Development Officer/Assistant ▪ Health Assistant and ▪ Sub County Secretary for Health/ Social Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soroti Church of Uganda Diocese (SOCADIDO) ▪ North Kigezi and Kinkizi Dioceses Water and Sanitation Programme 	

Key issues

Stakeholder awareness of the DIM: Generally, there is limited awareness of the DIM. DWD staff, TSU staff and NGO officials are most aware of the DIM, its content and purpose. TSU staff know about the DIM and they have both soft and hard copies. But at district and sub-county level the situation is different. Less than 10% of the district and sub-counties staff interviewed knew about the DIM. NGO staff indicated that they had acquired copies from the DWD while others had accessed online. More still had received copies from UWASNET.

Factors that account for low levels of awareness and knowledge include:

- Packaging of the DIM: DIM was said to be too voluminous and not translated into local languages, especially the sections to be used at community level.
- Inadequate dissemination: The dissemination of the DIM was largely to the TSUs, but it was reported that there was no budget allocation for that matter. Dissemination was mainly done through existing platforms like coordination committee meetings.
- High staff turnover: Some people haven't stayed in the jobs long enough to know about, let alone use the DIM.
- **Age of district.** Government is constantly creating new districts, carved out of older ones. This trend leads staff to change from one post to another across districts. Ultimately, the DIM was relatively better known in older districts than in newly created ones. **Limited information** sharing amongst colleagues

- Inadequate orientation of new staff, partly attributed to lack of clear mechanisms for orientation coupled with inadequate funding for the activity.
- The poor reading culture

Although most WASH actors interviewed were not using the DIM, they were using some of the manuals and guidelines that are synthesized and referenced in the DIM. The most used of these include:

- RWSS: a Handbook for Extension Workers
- The Community Development Handbook
- The National Water Policy
- The Software Steps (Critical Requirements)
- The Sanitation Steps
- The Sector Schedules
- The PPDA Act

Others mentioned by some stakeholders and not widely used include:

- The O&M Framework
- Sector Performance Report
- District Hygiene and Sanitation Conditional Grant formats
- PHAST Tools
- Sanitation Guidelines
- Environmental Health Policy
- Sector Investment Plan 2015
- OP5
- Gender Strategy
- HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming Strategy

Where they find that MWE guidelines do not fit their circumstances, some NGOs have developed their own guidelines, but continue to apply the government guidelines flexibly. Additionally, the NGO guidelines were not found to conflict with or even jeopardize those of the government. Some examples of NGOs that have developed Guidelines include:

- Water Aid: Guidelines on water quality. This was done by drawing from both the GoU and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines.
- NETWAS Uganda: Guidelines on constructing Eco-San latrines. They have also modified the Participatory, Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) Tools to fit the context in which they work. They also facilitate communities to develop six (6)-month O&M Plans rather than three (3) –year plans because as a 3 year period is considered to be too long, unrealistic for the community and would require a long time to formulate.
- SOCADIDO reported that when they are forming WUCs, they may vary the number of members, having fewer or more than the number prescribed by government in order to respond to the situation they find on ground.
- In Oyam, it was reported that World Vision insists on a cash contribution towards capital cost from communities, but leaves it to be kept by the community and later on used as a contribution towards O&M of the water facilities. Initially, World Vision was not insisting on any upfront cash contribution but started doing so upon the advice and insistence of the District as part of the coordination and harmonization efforts.

- The assessment also identified other NGOs such as JSE and Watercan, CRS, and Joy Drilling which have developed Guidelines and Manuals on WASH.

Challenges in adhering to DIM and other guidelines

Political influence/interference: Political leaders send contradictory messages especially with regard to location of new sources; meeting critical requirements and community contribution towards O&M.

Late receipt of funds: This causes district technical personnel to operate under pressure in a rush to consume all funds lest they be labelled as lacking “absorptive capacity”. Under such pressure they often not follow all the steps defined in the DIM.

Inadequate funds: In other cases, some of the steps in the implementation of WASH activities are not implemented because the funds are not available. Implementers reported for instance that they train the WUCs only once, instead of before and after the construction of the water source due to inadequate funds.

Unrealistic guidelines: Some guidelines are seen as over-ambitious and unrealistic, leading implementers to fail to pursue them. For instance, communities cannot be expected to raise money for capital contribution given the poverty levels. Similarly, 95% latrine coverage cannot be achieved in 3 years. It is too demanding to expect communities to develop a 3 year O&M plan, given the low capacities at community level.

Donor influences and requirements: With particular respect to NGOs in the sector, it was reported that some receive funds from donors with time bound plans necessitating to deliver the services quickly or in a particular way that may not fit well with existing government procedures and guidelines.

Community apathy: It was reported that in communities where their previous year’s plans and requests for water were not implemented, people tend to become reluctant to participate in the planning process again claiming it to be a useless and futile exercise.

Inadequate guidelines for some WASH aspects: These include

- Formation of Water Boards in Rural Growth Centres (RGCs)
- Formulation of bye-laws and district ordinances e.g. regarding sanitation
- Land acquisition issues – it was pointed out that whereas guidelines provide that land issues should be resolved, there is inadequate guidance on how land for big schemes such as gravity flow schemes can be acquired and how affected households may be compensated.
- Sanitation on landing sites

Recommendations for revised DIM

1. Packaging: The DIM should be simplified into simpler versions and translated into local languages, especially the sections to be used at community level. The sections should be detailed and well illustrated.

2. Dissemination of the Revised DIM and its Popularization

A more intensive and funded dissemination strategy of the document should be adopted. The Revised DIM should be disseminated both through existing platforms or forums at different levels, as well as through specific events and processes set up for that specific purpose. Some of the already existing avenues for disseminating the DIM include:

- Inter-District Meetings organised by TSUs,

- District Water and Sanitation Coordination Meetings (Quarterly),
- District Technical Planning Committee meetings
- District Executive Committee
- Extension Workers Meetings (held quarterly in some districts such as Napak)
- Barazas at Sub-county level
- Other workshops, implemented as part of usual activities of TSUs and districts
- The DIM should also be available in soft copy for those who have access to internet. An online resource centre should be created, probably on the Ministry's website where all the annexes to the DIM (all manuals and guidelines) can be accessed.
- The DIM can be popularised through information, education and communication (IEC) material/kits on DIM such as posters, and booklets.
- Each district should receive adequate hardcopies and be distributed to all relevant WASH stakeholders at district, sub-county, and parish level.
- Hardcopies of the DIM should also be distributed to the physical libraries/resource centres of leading actors in the sector (UNICEF, UWASNET, Water Aid, NETWAS and any others).
- Finally, undertake a big launch of the document at national level, where copies will be given to participants. CDs/flash disks containing the DIM and all its annexes could also be given out.

3. Enforcement of the DIM

Since the DIM consists of guidelines from several other manuals, policies and guidelines, its enforcement is in effect the enforcement of these several guidelines. Some of the specific actions suggested for monitoring adherence to guidelines include:

- Requiring districts to report on adherence to guidelines as part of their annual sector reporting feeding into the Sector Performance Report
- TSUs should refer to guidelines whenever performing their support supervision visits so that district staff can see how practice fits into guidelines and *vice-versa*

4. Promoting Ownership and Utilization of the DIM

Before the revised DIM is finalized and published, district and sub-county level stakeholders should participate in the discussion and validation processes. A consultative workshop and other stakeholder consultation forums should be organized.

Next steps

The Steering Committee has now received the revised DIM. When the process of reviewing and approving the revised DIM ends, the consultant will embark on the phase of developing simple information products. This phase will comprise the following:

- a) Production of simplified/ popular versions of the District Implementation Manual targeting the district and sub county stakeholders
- b) Development of simple illustrative materials in English for the most used sections of the manual targeting the communities, districts and sub counties users.
- c) Translation of information materials into several languages including: Luo, Luganda, Iteso, Runyakitara, Lugbara, Karimojong and Kiswahili.
- d) Pre-testing of the user-friendly version and the information materials in all the languages to ascertain their usability and suitability to the intended users.
- e) Design of a Dissemination Strategy for the Revised DIM and simplified materials