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By: René van Lieshout and Seleen Suidman  
Review: Marieke Adank

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## Abstract

Achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 is possible, but profoundly challenging. Strong national and local WASH systems are needed to ensure high quality water, sanitation and hygiene services. Since 2017, IRC has developed a WASH systems strengthening approach, as the sector needs to adopt a service delivery approach instead of operating mainly in projects. To monitor WASH system strengthening and IRC's contributions to this, the WASH system is broken down into a number of areas of behavior change and building blocks to deal with the complexity. Through stakeholder workshops, interviews and secondary documentation, IRC's country teams have assessed these areas and provided scores and analyses of all the elements of the WASH system which form the baselines for the IRC country programmes for the period 2017-2030. The scores with narratives describe the current state of WASH in a number of IRC's partner districts. This paper elaborates on these scores and short narratives and portrays the sector through the systems lens. It describes the relative weaknesses and strengths of the system elements at district level and examines the differences and similarities between some of the partner districts –in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Uganda – and between two of the WASH sub-sectors – water and sanitation.

# Introduction

This working paper provides an explanation of the scoring assessments that were conducted in 2017 and 2018. These were done for the baselines of IRC's country programmes using the organisation's WASH systems results framework.

The paper focuses on partner districts in three of IRC's six focus countries: Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda. IRC's present (2017-2030) strategy and theory of change have at their heart a commitment to supporting partner districts in focus countries to achieve universal access to (at least) basic water, sanitation and hygiene services, following the SDG 6 commitment. Success at district level will be used to provide the necessary proof of concept for adoption and replication of lessons learned at national and global level. IRC's theory of change is based on the understanding that providing universal and sustainable access to WASH services requires strong national and local WASH systems. It maps out both the areas (outcomes in IRC's theory of change) that IRC considers to be most critical for the sector to deliver WASH services, and IRC's proposed contribution to those outcomes. The five principal assessment areas are: (1) political and financial commitment, (2) strong partnership, (3) strong WASH systems, (4) strong service delivery models, and (5) strong capacity. The analysis covers each of these areas.



**FIGURE 1:** IRC THEORY OF CHANGE AND RELATED RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The diagram above illustrates the main elements of IRC's theory of change and the related results framework used for monitoring. 'What is done' is monitored with assessments on areas 1,2,4 and 5. 'What that achieves' is the third area - strong WASH systems for SDG 6.

In the section 'Scores overview' a short reflection is made on the scores for the different outcome areas together. Discussed is if there are clearly common areas of strengths or weaknesses in the WASH systems of the three countries. The section 'WASH System Assessment' provides a short explanation of each of the assessment areas (outcomes) and the statements or criteria that are used for the assessment and scoring. A table presents the scores for each district with a short discussion about what the scores indicate with someone who has been directly involved in the assessment or has been consulted about it.

The building blocks define and describe key components to serve as a framework for how we understand, assess, and identify strategic priorities for systems strengthening. Critically, identifying and working with building blocks of the system makes it possible to prioritise actions and measure progress over time at a point upstream of the ultimate goal of improved service delivery. It allows us to test and refine our understanding of how WASH systems work – and to evaluate the relations between aspects of the system and service delivery. (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 16)

## Scores overview

IRC country teams have assessed the focus districts against the indicators related to each of the sector developments and WASH system building blocks. This assessment provides a baseline for monitoring change in the WASH sector at district level in the period 2017-2030. The scoring makes it easy to provide quick overviews and comparisons of relative change within a country and district. The scoring and assessment do not attempt to compare the relative strength of elements of the WASH systems between the districts in different countries. This is mainly because the assessments are of a subjective nature: without clear definitions of assigned scores (between 1 and 5 or between 0 and 100). This is left to the judgement of the people who have carried out the assessments. It is also important to note that not all assessments have been validated yet by a representative group of stakeholders within the districts. The country baseline reports can be used to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the WASH system in more detail. The scoring methodologies are not explained further in the context of this paper.

Despite these disclaimers, a few observations can be made when looking at the four district assessments together.

Firstly, it can be seen that the highest scores for the assessment areas 1,2,4 and 5 are around 60 on a scale of 0-100, with scores for 'Political and Financial Commitment' and 'Strong Capacity' for Uganda and Ethiopia scoring 35 or lower. This is an indication that in terms of the area 'What is done' of IRC's theory of change, there is still a lot to be achieved in all countries.

| Country  | District      | Political and financial commitment | Strong partnership | Strong Service Delivery Models | Strong capacity |
|----------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Uganda   | Kabarole      | 33                                 | 61                 | 40                             | 35              |
| Ethiopia | Mille         | 12                                 | 53                 | 48                             | 20              |
| Ethiopia | South Ari     | 13                                 | 53                 | 48                             | 20              |
| Ghana    | Asutifi North | 45                                 | 38                 | 60                             | 52              |

Comparing the different building blocks of 'Strong WASH Systems for SDG 6 at District Level', shows that the 'Learning and Adaptation' and 'Water Resources Management' score low and 'Institutional' and 'Finance' score relatively high. It is also noted that in general the assessment shows much lower scores for the two Ethiopian districts compared to the districts of Ghana and Uganda.

| Sector     | Country  | District      | Institutional | Legislation | Finance | Planning | Infrastructure Development | Infrastructure Management | Monitoring | Regulation | Learning and Adaptation | Water Resource Management |
|------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Water      | Ethiopia | Mille         | 2,8           | 1,3         | 2,2     | 1,6      | 2,3                        | 1,0                       | 1,3        | 1,0        | 1,0                     | 1,0                       |
|            | Ethiopia | South Ari     | 2,5           | 1,7         | 2,2     | 1,6      | 2,3                        | 1,3                       | 1,5        | 1,0        | 1,0                     | 1,2                       |
|            | Ghana    | Asutifi North | 3,5           | 4,0         | 3,0     | 4,0      | 3,7                        | 3,5                       | 3,5        | 3,0        | 2,4                     | 2,8                       |
|            | Uganda   | Kabarole      | 2,3           | 2,3         | 4,0     | 4,0      | 2,3                        | 2,0                       | 3,0        | 3,0        | 3,0                     | 2,5                       |
| Sanitation | Ghana    | Asutifi North | 3,7           | 4,0         | 3,7     | 3,8      | 3,7                        | 3,0                       | 3,0        | 3,5        | 2,4                     | 2,8                       |
|            | Uganda   | Kabarole      | 3,6           | 2,0         | 3,5     | 3,7      | 2,3                        | 1,5                       | 2,8        | 1,5        | 2,8                     | 2,0                       |

Overall, for almost all the building blocks and assessment areas, plans, guidelines, policies and regulations exist for the improvement of WASH. However, the relative weak political and financial commitment and thus the relative low priority for WASH is still jeopardising progress towards achieving sustainable WASH services for all. Because the lack of urgency among political leadership, in general not enough money is invested in the sector. This leads to insufficient capacity available for the implementation and enforcement of these plans and policies. Capacity includes financial resources, quantities of staff and staff skills. In addition, in the districts support from national level institutions is often mentioned as missing in several elements of the WASH systems; for example, in the institutions and infrastructure building block.

# WASH System Assessment

This section provides results of the assessment of the WASH system in a number of partner districts of IRC's country programmes, along with an explanation and short discussion. To understand this, it is important to consider IRC's WASH system conceptual framework which is based on the following:

- WASH is in fact an abbreviation introduced some 20 years back to emphasise the importance of looking at water, sanitation and hygiene services in an integrated way to achieve health impact. WASH, in fact, consists of sub-sectors, each often with their own independent set-up. In the assessments, they are looked at separately when relevant and taken as one sector when appropriate.
- IRC's WASH system framework follows the same sub-sectors as Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP): water, sanitation, hygiene and extra-household settings. The latter is divided between WASH in health facilities and WASH in schools. However, in this paper we have limited the discussion to the water and sanitation sub-sectors because the assessments of hygiene and extra-household settings is still ongoing at the time of writing of this paper.
- The WASH system framework does not make an explicit separation between urban and rural services but looks at the (strength of) the different ways the services are delivered - Service Delivery Models (SDMs). Such models can (and do) provide services to both rural and urban populations.
- The assessment should be carried out by a representative team of sector stakeholders ideally, or the draft assessments should be at least validated by such a team. This is important because such participation will help to create ownership for the assessments, the analysis and for the actions that will be agreed on. The assessments and scores presented in this paper have in some cases, however, been carried out from an expert perspective by IRC team members and sector partners. In these cases, the validation process is still ongoing.

The assessments are based on a combination of the narrative explanations that were provided with the scores, and the interviews conducted.

## A. POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

At district level political leadership means that the local government takes responsibility for delivering WASH services, it "is committed [- politically and financially -] to achieving and maintaining SDG 6 including through adequate allocation of financial resources" (Moriarty, 2017, p. 25).

Main scoring statement and sub-statements used for the assessment (main score = average of scores sub-statements):  
 Political leadership in district is political and financial commitment to implement the national WASH targets for their district.

1. District political leadership share and own the strategy to achieve the national WASH targets for their district by 2030.
2. District political leadership is pro-actively engaged with the citizens of their constituency on the national WASH-related targets for their district.
3. District political leadership actively mobilise for adequate resourcing to achieve the national WASH targets in their district.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 0 - 100:

| POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENT statements   | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Main: Political leadership in district is politically &amp; financially committed to implement the national WASH targets for their district. (average score)</b> | 12               | 13                   | 45                    | 33                |
| 1: District political leadership share and own the strategy to achieve the national WASH targets for their district by 2030.  | 10               | 15                   | 45                    | 50                |
| 2: District political leadership is pro-actively engaged with the citizens of their constituency on the national WASH-related targets for their district.           | 25               | 25                   | 50                    | 25                |
| 3: District political leadership actively mobilises for adequate resourcing for achieving the national WASH targets in their district.                              | 0                | 0                    | 40                    | 25                |

On a scale of 0-100, the districts in **Ethiopia** only score 12 (Mille) and 13 (South Ari) on this development. Tereza Nega – a communication specialist at IRC Ethiopia – argues, that *“the political leaders say that they are committed and understand the seriousness of the WASH situation, but you cannot see this commitment in the budget and expertise allocated to the WASH sector, you do not see this commitment being implemented”*. For example, in South Ari awareness was raised among political leaders through a discussion on service levels, however, there is no assessment available of what is needed to reach the targets.

The lack of action in the WASH sector in Ethiopia has to do with the country's focus on other sectors; *“we have other issues as well, like health and education. It is difficult for the government to improve everything at once”* (Tereza Nega (TN), IRC Ethiopia). Also, Mathijs Veenkant (MV) – working at IRC Ethiopia – suspects that the focus of the government is on other sectors because [from a national government's perspective] the WASH sector is not a productive sector but a service sector, meaning that every invested dollar does not yield immediate financial returns. The Ethiopian government rather invests in telecoms, airlines, roads, and industries, because the impacts on economic growth are perhaps more easily discernable. When a farmer gets ill from bad WASH services, this does not immediately lead to a reduction in tax income, so it does not readily see a return in tax [revenues] from better WASH conditions. He adds that this does not mean that the government does not care, but that the impacts of poor WASH services may fail to affect decision-making processes that prioritise investment for economic growth.

At the same time, lacking empowerment and awareness of water professionals also influences political and financial commitment, according to MV; *“during a training by IRC of district staff, we looked at district and regional budget and expenditure, and we found that the region had a lot of money that it wasn't spending. We advised the district staff to lobby for redistribution of the region' budget to the districts. They went to the regional office to present their case, which was quite unconventional, since they are used to wait for the government or NGOs to come with funding. Empowering these water professionals and making them realize that it is their job to achieve their mission and to meet the SDGs, and not just to make do with the means given to them, is important in pushing for political leadership. They have to believe that they have agency, that they have the right and the capability to take action”* (MV).

The districts in Ghana and Uganda perform better on this assessment area - respectively 45 and 33 out of 100. In Asutifi North district (**Ghana**) the development of a district WASH masterplan has started. Citizens have been involved in the planning phase and data and financial contributions have been gathered to organise meetings. The planning process has been jointly facilitated by national and regional governmental institutions, the private sector, traditional authorities, and partners from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

In Kabarole (Uganda) there are limited opportunities for WASH joint planning and political commitment on financing priorities. According to Peter Magara (PM) – former IRC Uganda team – *“the vision of Uganda is to move towards a middle-income status. That means that we really need to boost the productive sectors, sectors that will push the GDP higher. The WASH sector, being about basic needs, has to compete with these sectors for the allocation of budget. The national government is really focused on these sectors, due to which WASH is low priority”* (PM).

There is limited engagement of local government with the technical WASH team and limited efforts in WASH fundraising.

Overall, political leadership is most lacking in the Ethiopian districts; the politicians talk about it and are committed but it is not followed by action. In Kabarole district (Uganda), WASH is seen as a service sector and does not help drive the economy. Therefore, less attention is paid by officials to the sector compared to others such as agriculture. According to the narratives there is slightly stronger leadership in the Ghanaian district; planning at local level is done jointly by the different stakeholders.

## B. STRONG PARTNERSHIP

Good partnership at district level is defined by IRC as *“driving actions of [local] government, private sector, civil society and communities that share the vision and the specific roles of partners for national WASH targets”* (monitoring sheet) and *“are working effectively together to deliver it”* (Moriarty, 2017, p. 25).

Main scoring statement and sub-statements used for the assessment (main score = average of scores sub-statements):

District partnership is driving actions of government, private sector, civil society organisations (CSOs) and communities that share the vision and the specific roles of partners for national WASH targets and the systems strengthening mission.

1. District partnership agrees on shared SDG6 vision and systems strengthening mission for the area.
2. District partners of local government, private sector, CSOs and communities adhere to the agreed mechanisms to operationalise the partnership.
3. District partnership have shifted their focus to their specific roles in the WASH systems strengthening mission.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 0 - 100:

| PARTNERSHIP statements  | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Main: District partnership is driving actions of government, private sector, civil society and communities that share the vision and the specific roles of partners for national WASH targets and the systems strengthening mission. (average score)</b> | 53               | 53                   | 38                    | 61                |
| 1: District partnership agrees on shared SDG6 vision and systems strengthening mission for the area.  | 100              | 100                  | 25                    | 33                |
| 2: District partners of local government, private sector, CSOs and communities adhere to the agreed mechanisms to operationalise the partnership.   | 50               | 50                   | 45                    | 75                |
| 3: District partnership have shifted their focus to their specific roles in the WASH systems strengthening mission.   | 10               | 10                   | 45                    | 75                |

The Ethiopian and Ugandan focus districts perform better on partnership than on political commitment, while Ghana scores lower. In both **Ethiopian** districts, – scoring 53 out of 100 – key stakeholders have engaged in a systems strengthening dialogue and adopted a shared vision. They have also agreed on terms of reference for a learning alliance to operationalise the partnership. However, according to TR, “*the partnership among the different NGOs and development partners needs to be strengthened, because now duplication of work and efforts take place. When the partnership is strengthened implementation will improve and coverage of WASH services will increase. The just [recent] implemented learning alliance tries to coordinate all partners and their activities, making the process more efficient*”. This can also be seen by the low scores on the third statement (see table).

Kabarole district (**Uganda**) scores better than the districts of Ethiopia, namely 61 out of 100. The justification for the score is that district WASH planning meetings are held and all district stakeholders have been sensitised on the need for a shared vision to achieve SDG 6. However, they do not fully agree yet on a shared SDG 6 vision and systems strengthening mission (as can be seen in the scores, see table). The mechanisms to operationalise the partnership are in place, and partners have well defined roles in the WASH systems strengthening mission. Overall, the WASH coordination meetings bring together all the district WASH stakeholders and have defined all roles. “*It is important that all stakeholders are called together, whether it is CSOs, government or others, if you want to succeed with WASH. Because, when actors join and are part of the process they will support the work as well*” (Peter Opwanya (PO) - Team Leader Technical Support Unit (TSU) 6). The TSUs are decentralised support teams from the Ministry of Water and Environment that support the community-led water supplies.

Asutifi North district (**Ghana**) has a lower score – 38 out of 100 – on this assessment area compared to the other districts. Ghana’s district is aware of the need to have a shared SDG 6 vision and it has agreed on having mechanisms to operationalise partnerships and specific roles and contributions in the WASH systems strengthening mission, but it is not yet in place [this has changed since the assessment was done in 2017]. According to Hon. Anthony Mensah – the district executive in Asutifi North – “*it is important for us to work in partnerships and meet to know the master plan, to know what each partner is doing, so we can all be on the same page concerning the implementation of the WASH programme*”. Also Jao Ata – the WASH technical coordinator of World Vision International in Ghana – states that a strong partnership and collaboration is important; “*it was good for us to have met to discuss the master plan and to develop the terms and theories of change, and the learning issues around the partnership. And if that goes well, then you can be sure that service delivery will go well, and*

issues around advocacy, policy, and influence will also go well. By and large, we believe this partnership should be able to demonstrate evidence of success for the sector to be able to replicate in other areas". Because there is nothing more concrete as yet, the Ghanaian districts score lower. However, the participatory planning process is giving space to both the key stakeholders at district level and the strategic partners at national level, which is leading to strong collaboration and partnership.

All those interviewed agree on the importance of having district partnerships and that it is paramount that such partnerships are driven by shared visions. For example, in Ghana, in 2018 the shared vision was developed during the district WASH master plan process.

## STRONG WASH SYSTEMS

The third outcome of IRC's system approach looks at the strength of the WASH systems. IRC has divided the WASH system into nine sub-systems: the building blocks. The building blocks are used "as a tool to help reduce the complexity of the WASH system ... and to use that understanding to develop solutions and take action" in order to strengthen it (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 16). The nine building blocks will be briefly explained before analysing them.



### i. Institutions

The 'institutions' building block is defined in IRC's approach as "the structural arrangements that define the roles and responsibilities of different actors" (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 18).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

1. The required institutional setup for the different Service Delivery Models (in particular for the service authority and service provider roles) does exist and is in place.
2. All the required staff positions of the service authority are filled.
3. The service authority receives regular back-up or support from higher levels of government.
4. Service authorities and service providers have a formalised relation addressing accountability (contract, performance agreement, authorisation).

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| INSTITUTIONS  | Water            |                      |                       |                   | Sanitation            |                   |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
|   | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
| Average water sub-sector  | 2.8              | 2.5                  | 3.5                   | 2.3               | 3.7                   | 3.6               |
| 1: The required institutional setup for the different SDMs (in particular for the service authority and service provider roles) does exist and is in place. | 4                | 4                    | 4                     | 5                 | 4                     | 5                 |
| 2: All the required staff positions of the service authority are filled.  | 3                | 2                    | 4                     | 1                 | 3                     | 2.5               |
| 3: The service authority receives regular back-up or support from higher levels of government   | 2                | 2                    | 3                     | 2                 | na                    | 4                 |
| 4: Service authorities and service providers have a formalised relation addressing accountability (contract, performance agreement, authorisation).         | 2                | 2                    | 3                     | 1                 | 4                     | 3                 |

The scores of this building block differ per district and per sub-sector. In the districts in **Ethiopia** there is a clear institutional setup for rural water services defining the roles and responsibilities of the several actors involved. However, some capacity is lacking; where the Mille district is well-staffed, South Ari is understaffed. Moreover, the districts experience insufficient support from 'higher' government level.

Asutifi North district of **Ghana** is performing rather well – between the 3 and 3.7 out of 5 – most of the staff are in place and in line with the government requirements there is an institutional setup, by-laws in place, and technical support is provided. Hon. Anthony Mensah the district executive, gives an example to underline that the district is capable of playing its role [as service authority – in this case using capacity of the private sector]: *“as a government, our mandate is to help providing good water facilities. Not only good facilities, but also sustainable ones”*. A partner of the government that is active in Asutifi North is Aquaya Institute; *“Aquaya institute is a research organisation. We focus on implementation, science and research. At the moment, we are working on addressing water quality needs in the district, specifically with respect to water quality monitoring. We are looking at understanding what are the major water quality concerns within the district and what level of water quality monitoring is going on. Then, we are interested in addressing the key barriers that often prevent places like Asutifi North from having successful water quality monitoring done in their district – financial or motivational. We are planning to do some experimentation looking at how to address these barriers, ultimately with the goal of contributing to a water quality monitoring plan and adequately and sustainably monitor the water supplies to make sure they are providing safe water for those who they are serving”* (AJ Karon)

In **Uganda** the district scores vary significantly between the water and sanitation sub-sectors. The sanitation sector performs the best – 3.6 out of 5. The institutional requirements are in place, there is a technical team to support the service delivery, and there is a contract in place to improve the functionality of the water sources. Peter Opwanyanya (PO) – team leader Technical Support Unit Six in Rwenzori region explains the role of his team: *“our role as technical support unit is to build capacity of the local governments at district level. We train the districts in planning, GIS, management and maintenance of the systems, water sources, and sanitation and hygiene. We do this through training or mentoring. The difficulties encountered are the limited budget to provide these trainings and support the recruitment process”*.

Although in Uganda the roles and responsibilities of the water service authorities and providers are well-defined, the district still faces many institutional challenges. For example, understaffing, which leads to gaps in communication between service authority and 'higher' governmental bodies, and interaction between service authority and the many service providers. Because the sanitation sector does not have many different service providers (and is therefore relative easier to regulate) the district scores lower on the institutional building block for water than for sanitation.

In all districts the institutional set up is in place. However, capacity and support from 'central level' governmental bodies appear to be limited. The extent of capacity fulfillment differs; while Asutifi North has no gaps, the other districts are understaffed.



## ii. Policy and legislation

The policy and legislation building block *“comprises the mechanisms by which a government sets out its vision for the sector (policy) and determines the legal framework for achieving that vision (legislation)”* (Huston & Moriarty, p. 20).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

Water and sanitation

1. By-laws and ordinances for service delivery arrangements are in place.
2. (National) sector legislation is known by local stakeholders.
3. By-laws for hygiene and environmental protection are in place.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1-5:

| POLICY AND LEGISLATION        | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 1.3               | 1.7                  | 4.0                   | 2.3               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 2                    | 4                     | 2                 |
| 2                             | 2                 | 2                    | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 4                     | 3                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 4.0                   | 2.0               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 2                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 2                 |

The scores of the different districts on the policy and legislation building block vary distinctly. The districts of Ethiopia and Uganda both score around 2 out of 5, while the district of Ghana scores much higher with a 4. According to the narratives provided by the IRC country teams, this is because by-laws are in place in Asutifi North district (**Ghana**) and the WASH legislation is available for all stakeholders in the district, while in Ethiopia and Uganda the alignment of policies with the district agenda needs further work. James Ata-era – a city department planner in Asutifi North – explains how plans are aligned with government plans: “we prepared the plan somewhere in 2017 and the government came in with a new policy; that is the agenda for jobs, creating prosperity, and economic opportunities. We had to realign the issues that were identified in the master plan to that of the government policy. So that we are able to link the key issues to the government mission and adapt government policy objectives together with the strategies that will help us to effectively budget for it in our assembly”.

In **Ethiopia**, the policies and legislation are in place, including by-laws for the service providers. But according to TN, the implementation is missing.

The problem in Kabarole (**Uganda**) seems to be not whether there are adequate policies or not, but the implementation and enforcement of the policies and legislations, such as by-laws and ordinances (PM). The challenge with implementation and enforcement of policies and legislations is twofold, according to Peter Magara, “the implementations are not financially backed up, and the human capacity at district level is not adequate to fully implement and enforce the policies. The policies have not been well translated at the implementation level, there is thus a mismatch between policy and practice”. This means that there is a policy that states, for example, that “there has to be a safe water point within 30 minutes round trip for every person in every district and the district is responsible for implementing this. However, while the tasks of the district were extended by the national government, the budget of the district stayed the same. Only districts that have support from NGOs are able to establish and mobilize capacity for the implementation” (PM). Also, Peter Opwanya states that implementation of the guidelines is challenged by limited financing and a capacity gap.

The scores for the performance of the water and sanitation sub-sectors on policy and legislation are quite similar in the district. However, the narrative behind the scores differs; for instance, the district stakeholders are not informed sufficiently about the national legislation in the sanitation sector, while the problem in the water sector is caused by the limited opportunities for sensitising district stakeholders about the legislation. In general, all districts have policies and legislation in place but implementation and enforcement are lacking, according to the narratives and interviewees. The difference between Asutifi North district and the other districts can be explained by the local by-laws and legislation available for all stakeholders in the district.



### iii. Finance

The finance building block “deals with identifying the costs of service delivery, the sources of funding, the roles of different actors in providing finance, effective mechanisms for long-term financial procurement and channels for getting the money where it is needed” (Huston & Moriarty, p. 21).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

Water and sanitation

1. The nationally defined mechanisms for financing Capital Expenditures (CapEx) in place.
2. There is sufficient absorption capacity for and a manageable gap between budget and disbursements to follow planning of service development.
3. The nationally defined mechanisms for Capital Maintenance Expenditures (CapManEx) and Direct Support Expenditures (ExpDS) being applied.
4. The nationally defined subsidy mechanisms (block tariffs, cross subsidies between providers, pro-poor and cross subsidies sewer/on-site, other) applied.
5. There are measures to prioritise WASH in local level planning (e.g. earmarked budget).

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| FINANCE                       | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 2.2               | 2.2                  | 3.0                   | 4.0               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 4                 |
| 2                             | 3                 | 4                    | 3                     | 4                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| 4                             | 3                 | 2                    | 3                     | 4                 |
| 5                             | 3                 | 3                    | 3                     | na                |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3.7                   | 3.5               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 4                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | na                    | 3                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | na                    | na                |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |
| 5                             |                   |                      | 4                     | na                |

As with the institutions building block, the scores of the finance building block differ per district and per WASH sub-sector. In general, both **Ethiopian** districts – South Ari and Mille – are not performing well (2.2 out of 5). There is little knowledge and understanding on how to balance finance mechanisms for the initial investment, major replacement or rehabilitation costs and the costs for local staff and experts. According to TR, most of the budget allocated to WASH at district level is used for the construction of new water schemes and no money was reserved by the water office for maintenance of the existing water schemes. The consequence is, according to MV, that “there can be 10 people sitting in an office, with no money for maintenance or fuel to go in the field and fix the broken systems. And when there is a large system failure, the higher level like the zone or region jumps in” (MV). “But when we showed the asset inventory we did, the water office saw that there were many non-functional schemes and we explained them that with a very small budget they could increase the coverage of the area, so the year after, they had allocated some budget for maintenance and rehabilitation as well” (TR). Due to the small budget allocated to the WASH sector in the two districts, all of it has been spent.

In the water and sanitation sector in Asutifi North, **Ghana**, the district determines the use of their funds based on their plans and budgets, unless they have been earmarked for WASH. “*The hands of the government are tied in regards of going into debt. This demands that you have to look for partners to help resolve issues that have to do with water and sanitation*” (James Ata-era). The water sector has been identified as a priority sector. For the sanitation sector, the process of prioritisation is still going on. The subsidy mechanisms in the sanitation sector are nationally defined, but the implementation differs from place to place.

In **Uganda**, Kabarole performs quite well on the finance building block in the water and sanitation sector. For both sub-sectors the mechanisms for the initial investment are in place. For example, the absorption capacity for the water utility of the district headquarter’s budget was at 100 percent expenditure of the total releases in 2016/2017, meaning that all money available was spent. Another indication of the relative strong finance building block is that the district in order to deal with equity issues provides subsidies for rural piped water systems. As with the previous building block, the performance of the water and sanitation sector is quite similar in the districts of Ghana and Uganda. Plans and mechanisms are in place for the allocation of the funding. However, in all four districts water is prioritised over sanitation.



#### iv. Regulation and accountability

The regulation and accountability building block is defined as “formal regulatory mechanisms and enforcement processes as well as other mechanisms to hold decision makers, service providers and users to account and ensure that the interests of each group of actors are respected” (Trémolet as cited in Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 22).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

##### Water and sanitation

1. The entity equipped with regulatory functions sets (1) tariff regulations and provide tariff calculation guidelines; (2) service level requirements; and, (3) rules that protect consumers.
2. The entity equipped with regulatory functions uses monitoring data to guide performance management, and apply effective enforcement (incentives, penalties) in the three areas of regulation.
3. Platform(s) for citizens (CSOs) to be informed and to be consulted on service delivery issues are in place.
4. A mechanism for citizens (CSOs) to hold service providers to account is in place.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| REGULATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 1.0               | 1.0                  | 3.0                   | 3.0               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| 2                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 5                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 1                 |
| 4                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3.5                   | 1.5               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 4                     | na                |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 1                 |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |

The performance of the districts on the regulation and accountability building block differ between the sub-sectors and between the districts. The districts in **Ethiopia** – South Ari and Mille – have a low score in the water sector, 1 out of 5. According to the narratives provided by IRC's country team in Ethiopia, there are some rules and regulations in order to ensure accountability, however, they are limited in practice. Monitoring data is limited, leading to missing guidance for performance management and apply effective enforcement. An example given by MV, flags a challenge with the standardization of monitoring of the water services. *“There was one district in Ethiopia that held that a water scheme is functional if they could still repair it, while according to the region a scheme is functional when it produces water according to the design standards. This is how each level had its own definition of functionality and produced data accordingly.”* Due to such different interpretations of definitions across governmental levels, reporting may not always be reliable and regulation or oversight becomes difficult. For citizens, little information on service delivery issues is provided to them and there are no mechanisms for citizens to hold service providers accountable.

In **Ghana**, Asutifi North district is performing much better; 3 out of 5 for the water sector and 3.5 for the sanitation sector. The regulatory functions are set and have oversight on tariff setting, service level requirements, and protecting consumers. Moreover, there are meetings, which serve as a platform for the district to engage with the communities and civil society on development issues in the district.

While the sub-sectors perform quite similarly in the district in Ghana, there is a significant difference between the water and sanitation sector in Kabarole (**Uganda**), where the water sector scores 3 out of 5 and sanitation just 1.5. *“In the water sector, the water utilities are regulated but this covers only urban water”* (PM). For rural water and in the sanitation sector there is limited regulation of service providers. As a consequence, sufficient quality of delivered services cannot be guaranteed. Although there is such a difference between the sub-sectors concerning the existing regulating bodies, in both sub-sectors there are limited opportunities for informing district stakeholders.

Because the water and sanitation sub-sectors are scoring quite differently across the statements there is no immediate indication that regulation and accountability is doing better in water than in sanitation or vice versa. In Ethiopia there is no assessment done for the sanitation sector. In general terms it is difficult to compare between the two sectors because the water sector has many more (different) service providers and requires therefore also a different level of regulation.



#### v. Monitoring

The monitoring building block covers the capture, management and dissemination of the information required to effectively manage WASH services at all levels. (Huston & Moriarty, p. 23).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

Water and sanitation

1. The agreed national monitoring system(s) for the specific SDMs are in use in the district.
2. The total of monitoring systems that is in use cover the entire district (all communities, all service providers).
3. Service provider performance data are available
4. The data in the monitoring system used at district level are regularly updated.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| MONITORING                    | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 1.3               | 1.5                  | 3.5                   | 3.0               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 3                 |
| 2                             | 2                 | 2                    | 4                     | 3                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 3                 |
| 4                             | 1                 | 2                    | 4                     | 3                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3.0                   | 2.8               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 5                 |

As in the previous building block (regulation and accountability), the districts in **Ethiopia** are scoring low in the water sector (1.3 and 1.5 out of 5). This is partly because the national monitoring system is not made operational; monitoring is still largely paper-based and incomplete; limited data is available on service provider performance; and the data that has been collected is not regularly updated. One of the issues causing this is the infrastructure of monitoring, according to TR, “for instance, the water offices do not have enough computers and sufficient internet connection to update the data”. To improve the situation for monitoring, the university and the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) have offered to help, they promised to help with capacity building and are able to provide computers (TR).

In Uganda and Ghana the districts score around 3 out of 5 in the water as well as the sanitation sector. In both cases, the national monitoring framework is used in the district. Moreover, data is updated regularly, and, in the case of Kabarole (**Uganda**) the monitoring systems cover the entire district, and data is available on the performance of the service providers. However, there is a difference between the way the water sector is monitored and the sanitation sector, states Peter Magara; “first of all, water is monitored at facility level, where clusters of households (up to 300 people) can access water, monitoring sanitation has to be done at household level. As a consequence, monitoring sanitation is more resource intensive than water. A second difference is the staff available for monitoring water and sanitation. A district water office usually has two or three engineers or staff who are supported by a team of hand pump mechanics to monitor. For sanitation, there are generally one or two people responsible at district level, who have to do the monitoring at household level. So, monitoring sanitation is more resources intensive and at the same time less human resources are available”.

In **Ghana**, the motivation to collect water quality data is a major challenge “this has to do with the fact that water quality testing sometimes only happens once or twice a year. Doing it so infrequently, it is hard to get someone to really commit to make sure that it is happening on the agreed schedule. Moreover, the people responsible for water quality monitoring do not actually have a strong background in understanding water quality, they do not really see the value in water quality data. So we look at where these big motivational barriers are, and how we can press on them and start to alleviate them through different types of programs” (AJ). But at the same time AJ states, that “there is a commitment to collect data: many of the civil servants are involved. I think this is a promising step because we have identified some of the actors that we can rely on for working towards further collection of data that we want to see, such as water quality data”.

While the districts in Uganda and Ghana have a monitoring framework, in Ethiopia this is lacking. The biggest challenge in all districts concerning monitoring seems to be the capacity and motivation available, especially in sanitation.



## vi. Planning

The planning building block is about making short- and long-term plans for achieving the policy goals, including the costing and financial details to execute those plans (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 18, 24).

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

Water and sanitation

1. There are district level WASH targets that link to national targets (multi-annual).
2. These plans take into account equity (access) issues.
3. These plans take into account both capital investment needs and needs to ensure sustainable service delivery (direct support and capital maintenance).
4. These plans are costed with reasonable indication of source of financing.
5. A consultation process with key stakeholders for making the plan is in place.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| PLANNING                      | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 1.6               | 1.6                  | 4.0                   | 4.0               |
| 1                             | 3                 | 3                    | 4                     | 4                 |
| 2                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| 3                             | 2                 | 2                    | 4                     | 2                 |
| 4                             | 1                 | 1                    | 4                     | 5                 |
| 5                             | 1                 | 1                    | 5                     | 5                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3.8                   | 3.7               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 1                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 5                 |
| 5                             |                   |                      | 5                     | 5                 |

The scoring on the planning building block is very diverse: ranging from 1 to 4 out of 5. The two districts of **Ethiopia** perform quite low on this building block in the water sector (1.6 out of 5). Although the plans, policies and targets are set as part of the national 'growth and transformation plan' and they take into account capital investment and maintenance, "Usually Ethiopia has plans, but what lacks is implementation" (MV). One of the reasons implementation is lacking, according to TR, is that "planning is not done jointly. For example, WASH affects health, but the WASH and the health sector do not plan together, making effective implementation difficult". It is not clear whether these plans take into account equity issues.

Moreover, the sources of funding have only been identified for government funding; the plans do not include funding from NGOs – which is almost 50 percent of the water sector funding. In addition, there is no consultative process with key stakeholders in place.

The water and sanitation sector in the districts of **Ghana** and **Uganda** perform quite well in terms of planning. In both districts, the WASH targets at district level are linked to the national targets, the plans take into account capital investment and maintenance, the sources of funding are well indicated, and there is a consultation process with key stakeholders in place. However, like in Ethiopia, in Kabarole, the source of funding has not been

clarified by all actors: “some partners do not want to share budget and plans, so it becomes difficult to know what the resources are for the WASH sector and plan accordingly” (PO).

IRC, along with other development partners, is working in their partner districts with the local government to develop district WASH master plans, detailing the broad vision, programmes and strategies for achieving the targets of SDG Goal 6. The master plan provides a framework for coordinating and aligning efforts of all actors towards achieving the stated goal and vision for WASH in the district. The process of developing the plan is participatory. It involves stakeholders at local, regional and national levels. Examples of the masterplans are available on IRC's website: Asutifi North, Ghana; Kabarole, Uganda

In Asutifi North, “there is a financial strategy of how we intend to mobilize funds to implement the activities, outline and develop, which includes using our own internal mechanisms by revaluing assembly properties, looking for partners to come to our aid, and then sign an agreement”, says James Ata-era – a city department planner in Asutifi North district. Moreover, Robel from World Vision Ghana states, that “having a common vision is important. We have the master plan, we have the theory of change. They show the pathway from the starting point towards our goal”. One difference between the districts of the two countries is that the district of Ghana takes equity issues into account in their plans.

There are plans established, however, implementation of the plans seems to be a problem in some districts. Moreover, in the districts in Ethiopia and Uganda the overview of funding sources is not complete, which is a challenge for planning.



**vii. Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is the essential physical component that actually delivers the service. It comprises not only hardware but also the mechanisms and processes for developing new infrastructure and maintaining existing facilities. (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 24). The assessment ‘infrastructure’ building block is divided into two sets of scoring statements, for development and management. ‘Infrastructure development’ is all aspects of building new infrastructure, while ‘infrastructure management’ includes the systems for maintaining the assets after construction. Amongst the four districts discussed, there are relatively small differences in the performance of the two sides of the infrastructure building block: infrastructure development scoring higher.

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

**Development**

1. The project delivery models and procurement and implementation manuals and procedures for capital investments projects (drinking water infrastructure, including public latrines) are followed.
2. The mechanisms for carrying out due diligence, regulation and procurement are in place.
3. Sufficient capacity for carrying out due diligence and regulation, and for following procurement and implementation manuals is in place.

**Management**

1. Asset ownership is defined in detail between service authority and service provider(s) following the national legal framework.
2. An inventory exists of all (or most) water and sanitation infrastructure assets, including age and current physical state of assets for the focus district.
3. The service authority is fulfilling its role with respect to asset management.
4. The service authorities provide support to service providers to implement operations and maintenance (O&M).

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT    | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 2,3               | 2,3                  | 3,7                   | 2,3               |
| 1                             | 4                 | 4                    | 4                     | 3                 |
| 2                             | 2                 | 2                    | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 2                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3,7                   | 2,3               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 3                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT     |                   |                      |                       |                   |
| Average water sub-sector      | 1,0               | 1,3                  | 3,5                   | 2,0               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 1                    | 4                     | 3                 |
| 2                             | 1                 | 1                    | 4                     | 2                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 4                     | 1                 |
| 4                             | 1                 | 2                    | 2                     | 2                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 3,0                   | 1,5               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 2                     | na                |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 4                     | 1                 |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |

### Infrastructure development

The districts in Ethiopia and Uganda score the same on infrastructure development in the water and sanitation sector – 2.3 out of 5. In South Ari and Mille (**Ethiopia**) the manuals, procedures, and mechanisms for ensuring due diligence and control over procurement are in place, however, capacity to carry this out is insufficient. Moreover, the quality of the work and infrastructure is low.

In Kabarole (**Uganda**) the mechanisms are also in place but capacity is insufficient also. In addition, the enforcement of the mechanisms is limited. There are well documented guidelines and procedures for project delivery models and procurement, but manuals or procedures for implementation are lacking.

Asutifi North district in **Ghana** is performing better on infrastructure development; 3.7 out of 5. In the water sector, there are project delivery models and procurement manuals in place and there are laws at national and district level for guiding the procurement. When required, the districts receive technical support from centralised agencies to carry out due diligence and regulation and follow procurement and implementation manuals.

### Infrastructure management

When the infrastructure is built or implemented, it has to be managed and maintained. The performance of these tasks are scored slightly lower by all districts than on infrastructure development. The districts in **Ethiopia** score differently – scoring 1 and 1.3 out of 5. Recently, an asset inventory has been done defining when water schemes have been built and which schemes are functional and which are not (TN). Based on this information the water offices try to improve the functionality of the existing schemes through O&M (TN). The difficulties, according to TN, are that spare parts are not available throughout the district, there are not enough water technicians, and the water users' associations or WASH committees do not collect tariffs properly, making them unable to pay for the service (TN).

The difference in scoring between the two districts can be explained by the differences in context between South Ari and Mille. The assessment mentioned for example that the availability of a drilling rig for service

providers is not the same in the two districts. TN adds to this, that it also relates to the context of the two districts: Mille is a pastoralist area where the communities do not settle in one place, making it difficult to provide WASH services, whereas South Ari has more permanent settled communities.

The Asutifi North district in **Ghana** scores 3.7 out of 5 on this part of the building block for both the water and sanitation sectors. This relatively high performance is explained by the defined asset ownership in sector documents and the developed asset register and plan in the master planning process of the district. *“You first need to identify all assets within the district, look at their condition, who provides it, and whether it is well managed. Based on this, we were able to come up with our master plan – either a maintenance or management plan – as well as how we are going to make sure the facility keeps working. Without planning, you cannot have very good asset management”* (James Ata-era).

Ownership in the sanitation sector in Asutifi North is defined as follows: households are responsible for their own facilities, while the district is responsible for the public and institutional facilities. There is an inventory of the existing public facilities.

In Kabarole (**Uganda**) there is a legal framework for coordination between the service authorities and providers, and an ongoing process towards establishing an asset inventory of the district, but the analysis of the status of the assets still needs to be undertaken. Every district is supposed to have an association of technicians who are responsible for the provision of O&M, according to Peter Magara: *“when that is not implemented the goal of continuous access to safe water becomes unreachable; there are frequent breakdowns disconnecting people from safe water or forcing them to walk longer distances to fetch water, or using unsafe water sources”* (PM). At the same time, there is limited support from the service authorities to the hand pump mechanics associations, who undertake the O&M.

The districts in Ethiopia and Uganda score more or less the same and lower than the district in Ghana. Both countries have a different explanation for the lower scoring. In the districts in Ethiopia there is insufficient capacity, although an important start has been made by undertaking the asset inventory. In Kabarole the problem lies with a lack of enforcement and implementation. Asutifi North scores generally better.



**viii. Water resource management**

The water resource management building block refers to the coordination and control of how water is allocated to different sectors. Human waste must be contained and treated to protect water resources. (Huston & Moriarty, 2018), page 25, 26.

- For this building block only the water sector has been scored. The statements used for the assessment and scoring:
1. Service providers/service authorities in the district plan for and carry out source protection and preservation activities, such as water safety/water security plans.
  2. Service providers and/or the service authority are able to engage with water resource management decision-making at catchment or basin level.
  3. Service providers and/or authorities develop and expand the water supply and sanitation infrastructure, taking into account water resource availability and variability, including vulnerability to extreme events, as well as impact on receiving water bodies.
  4. There are mechanisms in place for managing any conflicts or rather synergies between users of water for drinking and other uses (agriculture/livestock) or sanitation service users and or between users and service providers that minimise the effect of the performance of schemes (Multiple Use Services approach).
  5. Water Resource Management instruments, such as abstraction permits, abstraction fees, disposal license, etc. are applied.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector   | 1.0              | 1.2                  | 2.8                   | 2.5               |
| 1                          | 1                | 1                    | 2                     | 3                 |
| 2                          | 1                | 1                    | 3                     | 3                 |
| 3                          | 1                | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| 4                          | 1                | 1                    | 3                     | 2                 |
| 5                          | 1                | 1                    | na                    | 2                 |

Water resources management at district level performs relatively low in the four districts. The scores of the districts in Ghana and Uganda are fairly similar – between 2 and 2.8 – but the districts in Ethiopia score only 1 or 1.2 out of 5. In Kabarole, **Uganda**, there are efforts to protect sources, and both service providers and stakeholders are collaborating to achieve this. However, mechanisms for managing conflicts between users of water – such as over drinking water, agriculture and livestock – are relatively weak.

In Asutifi North, **Ghana**, James Ata-era – a city department planner – explains the situation: “we have a representative on the board of the water basin. But currently they do not have sub-offices in the district, they are all being managed at the original capital city: Sunyani. We are liaising with them, but if you look at the plan it is not so detailed, so we need to do better analyses to see what really are the issues. What we know is that there are high levels of water pollution and people farm along the banks. We also intend to plant trees along the main river bodies. However, we need to look at the plan first and see how we can get a clear-cut strategy for addressing the integrated water resource management issues”. Another issue with water resource management is the budget, according to AJ from Aquaya: “finances are the most common problem in the district; they do not have enough money for schools, roads, water or sanitation, basically anything. Under these tight resource constraints, water quality is often something that is left out, because the focus is more on providing water services. As a result, water quality monitoring is considered to be expensive, and often, those costs are secondary to the cost of actually providing the service in the first place. However, we have found that water quality monitoring should not be too constrained by budget. We are really looking at the key places in which budgets are not being fully accounted for, or where there are opportunities to increase collection revenue collection for these water systems, so they can afford to pay for water quality testing”.

Kabarole (Uganda) and Asutifi North district (Ghana) report that efforts to plan and protect water sources are in place, however, **Ethiopia's** districts do not have a plan for this protection and have very weak water resource management in general. One aspect affecting the weak management is the challenge with standards for construction, states TR. According to her, the main challenge is the limited skills and resources of the WASH experts. As a result, boreholes, for example, are located near river beds making them prone to flooding. (TN). Inadequate fencing of the WASH facilities is another issue mentioned. The responsibility for fencing is with the water user associations and water committees, but “these people are not paid or do not have an incentive to do this job, it is done on voluntary basis. As a consequence, they are not active and, for instance, do not fence the facilities. Moreover, the water offices are responsible to check and control the associations and committees, but they do not have the required capacity in terms of number of staff to do so” (TN).

Overall, the scores on this building block are low. Water resources management seems to be weak in all four districts. There are mechanisms and plans in place to protect the resources, but little action is noted in this area, mainly due to lack of priority and capacity.



### ix. Learning and adaptation

The last building block of IRC's system approach is about learning and adaptation and is defined as “the ability to adapt in the face of change: to monitor and maintain progress towards a vision” (Huston & Moriarty, 2018, p. 18)

The statements used for the assessment and scoring:

1. There are institutionalised learning platforms at district level, e.g.: district stakeholder platform, thematic working groups, resource centres, integrated with coordination platform, etc.
2. The learning platforms are sufficiently representative of the different sector stakeholders.
3. The deliberations of the learning platforms are regularly documented and made available for interested stakeholders.
4. The reflections from these platforms are taken up in local policies, strategies etc., e.g. through 'undertakings' (targeted actions).
5. These district learning mechanisms are linked to the national level.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 1 - 5:

| LEARNING AND ADAPTATION       | Ethiopia – Mille  | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Average water sub-sector      | 1.0               | 1.0                  | 2.4                   | 3.0               |
| 1                             | 1                 | 1                    | 2                     | 4                 |
| 2                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 3                 |
| 3                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | 3                 |
| 4                             | 1                 | 1                    | 3                     | na                |
| 5                             | 1                 | 1                    | 1                     | 2                 |
| Average sanitation sub-sector | No data available | No data available    | 2.4                   | 2.8               |
| 1                             |                   |                      | 2                     | 4                 |
| 2                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 2                 |
| 3                             |                   |                      | 3                     | 4                 |
| 4                             |                   |                      | 3                     | na                |
| 5                             |                   |                      | 1                     | 1                 |

The average scoring of the districts on this building block among the different WASH sectors ranges from 1 to 3 out of 5. There were no learning platforms in the water sector in **Ethiopia** at the time of the assessment (early 2018) when the assessment was done, which explains why the score is low. However, according to TR – communication specialist in IRC Ethiopia – since then learning alliances have been established in both Mille and South Ari and four meetings have taken place: “*this platform has given the chance to regularly meet and discuss WASH issues, bring different stakeholders together, and find solutions*”. Present at the meetings are the agriculture, education and health sector, the technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the universities, and NGOs. Since the platforms are new, TN argues, it takes time for the stakeholders to “*fully own the platforms*” instead of seeing them as ‘project platforms’, and to work on systems and not just the hardware to improve WASH – as the government used to do. For now, “*the stakeholders get the idea that working in systems might increase the coverage and provide sustainable WASH services*”, but more time is needed to fully adapt to this approach (TN).

Asutifi North district in **Ghana** performs slightly higher than the Ethiopian districts; the water and the sanitation sectors score the same – 2.4 out of 5. In Asutifi North the district governmental bodies engage with the communities through their information service department, where they also receive feedback from these

communities. There are also face-to-face meetings with the communities and they maintain a website, social media channel, and use the radio to engage with people. Actors also see the partnerships as “opportunities to learn lessons, to be able to implement in other areas” (AJ Karon).

In Kabarole (**Uganda**) the water and sanitation sector perform slightly better than in Asutifi North – around the 3 out of 5. In Uganda there are three levels of learning platforms, according to Peter Magara; “at district level the function of the platform is coordination and harmonization. It coordinates local government, NGOs and the private sector that are active in the sector. And it makes it possible to share plans and resources, and learn from each other. At regional level the aim of the platform is to bring districts together, learn from each other and take the lessons beyond the districts. By doing so, they create a collection of experiences, that form a stronger voice compared to isolated incidents, and influence national policy. This and influencing the allocation of resources is the purpose of the platforms at national level”. There are district stakeholder platforms, thematic working groups and CSO learning activities in Kabarole. At district level the platforms include hand pump mechanics associations, district water officers, CSOs, politicians and representatives from multinational companies. The discussions and decisions are documented in reports and case studies. The district learning mechanisms are also linked to the national level.

In general, the learning platforms in Kabarole are less focused on the sanitation situation than on water issues. At district level the two sub-sectors are combined in one learning platform, since most people working in the water sector are also responsible for sanitation (PM). Water is receiving more attention than sanitation. “Someone has to keep an eye on sanitation and we need to learn how to balance learning on both water and sanitation issues” (PM).

Learning platforms were established in all districts over the past year. In the Ethiopian districts the platforms are relatively new. All districts state that platforms are necessary to learn from each other and share experiences of the sector.

### C. STRONG SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS (SDMS)

A high score on the assessment area of Service Delivery Models (SDMs) means that the tested WASH SDMs are applied by the district actors “for achieving and maintaining national WASH targets in [the] district” (IRC monitoring sheet).

Main scoring statement and sub-statements used for the assessment (main score = average of scores sub-statements):

District actors apply tested WASH SDMs for achieving and maintaining national WASH targets in their district

1. District stakeholders involved in WASH service delivery agree on preferred SDMs in the range of sector contexts in the country.
2. CSOs represent citizens and hold sector actors (duty bearers) to account.
3. District organisations and stakeholders coordinate and align the implementation of policies with bordering sectors: water resource management, health and education
4. All district sector actors jointly plan for service delivery based on equity and sustainability principles.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 0 - 100:

| SDMs   | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|--|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Overall  | 48               | 48                   | 60                    | 40                |
| 1: District stakeholders involved in WASH service delivery agree on preferred SDMs in the range of sector contexts in the country                                      | 75               | 75                   | 55                    | 20                |
| 2: CSOs represent citizens and hold sector actors (duty bearers) to account  | 50               | 50                   | 50                    | 50                |
| 3: District organisations and stakeholders coordinate and align the implementation of policies with bordering sectors: water resource management, health and education | 50               | 50                   | 35                    | 40                |
| 4: All district sector actors jointly plan for service delivery based on equity and sustainability principles.   | 15               | 15                   | 100                   | 50                |

In the **Ethiopian** districts, there is general consensus around the preferred SDMs. It is an approach based on community management in rural areas and on utility management in small towns. Community management entails that “communities manage their water schemes – like a water pump. They do this through the WASHCOs – WASH committees – or WUAs – water users associations. These are voluntary committees consisting of citizens responsible for, for example, tariff collection and everyday small maintenance. Unfortunately, many of these WASHCOs do not function; they have limited staff and skills, and do not collect tariffs. Consequently, minor maintenance is neglected.” (MV). Because WASHCOs are staffed on a voluntary basis, TR argues, responsibility for managing the water scheme comes second to other responsibilities, leading to non-functional committees and associations. An incentive is needed to motivate the people to really care about their water scheme (TN). Moreover, when a scheme fails the woreda (local administrative unit) may step in, reducing WASHCO’s incentive to take care of it (MV). There is, therefore little incentive to make the WUAs and WASHCOs work and manage their own water schemes. Although there are governmental models and policies, in practise many do not function well.

Concerning accountability in the **Ethiopian** districts, CSOs are aware of the need to represent citizens and hold sector actors to account. However, the system does not allow them to act. There is coordination between the sector offices of the districts, but not between the district and the NGOs and private sector.

Concerning equity and sustainability in the SDMs: both issues are low on the agenda (see scoring 4 in the table). Recently however women have become members of some WUAs or WASHCOs as cashiers or operators, which may mean a stronger gender balance in the users’ voice including in planning processes. (TN).

In the Asutifi North district in **Ghana**, the SDMs are prescribed from the national level to guide delivery of WASH. However, the implementation of these SDMs differs from one place to another. Moreover, as part of the national processes, stakeholders share information on their projects with the district to allow alignment of the plans. But this differs depending on the organisation. Equity and sustainability principles are addressed in the national and district planning process. The implementation, however, differs among actors. With the joint plan it is anticipated that the district and the sector actors will align to implement these principles.

In Kabarole (**Uganda**), the several district actors meet quarterly, including the hand pump mechanics association and WASH NGOs. However, the application of tested models is limited due to funding. Equity and sustainability principles are two of the key issues the policy framework tries to address; “ensuring that no one is left behind and that each person has access to safe water all the time” (PM). However, “due to limited budget, districts tend to invest in places that are easier to reach or in technology that is less expensive. As a consequence of this unbalanced distribution, people living in more remote areas have to walk longer distances to fetch water or go to the toilet” (PM).

The scoring of the districts on this assessment area are quite similar ranging between 40 and 60 out of 100. The preferred SDMs depend on the circumstances of the communities. Equity and sustainability principles are not applied in all districts.

## D. STRONG CAPACITY

The final assessment area of IRC’s system approach is capacity. At district level this means that “capacity exists and is being applied in the district to achieve SDG 6” (Moriarty, 2017, p. 25). Capacity is defined in this context as the human resources available: how many people are working in the sector and what their skills are. Capacity, in this sense, can be improved by training and educational programmes. In the current assessment the focus is mainly on the effort by the partners in the district to build the required capacity rather than on the actual capacity available.

Main scoring statement and sub-statements used for the assessment (main score = average of scores sub-statements):

District private, public and civil society actors jointly build and invest in the capacity in the district for the WASH systems strengthening mission.

1. District partnership owns the results of the district capacity assessment for the WASH system strengthening mission.
2. District partnership contributes jointly to the district capacity development plan for the WASH systems strengthening mission.
3. District partners invest in achieving the required capacities of all partners for the WASH systems strengthening mission.

The table below provides the scores on a scale of 0 - 100:

| CAPACITY  | Ethiopia – Mille | Ethiopia – South Ari | Ghana – Asutifi North | Uganda – Kabarole |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Overall: District private, public and civil society actors jointly build and invest in the capacity in the district for the WASH systems strengthening mission. | 20               | 20                   | 52                    | 35                |
| 1: District partnership owns the results of the district capacity assessment for the WASH system strengthening mission.   | 25               | 25                   | 65                    | 40                |
| 2: District partnership contributes jointly to the district capacity development plan for the WASH systems strengthening mission.                               | 25               | 25                   | 50                    | 40                |
| 3: District partners invest in achieving the required capacities of all partners for the WASH systems strengthening mission.                                    | 10               | 10                   | 40                    | 25                |

In the **Ethiopian** districts, elements of capacity have been assessed through a sustainability check exercise in which the key actors participated, although no full assessment of required capacities has been carried out yet. Mille and South Ari score low on this assessment area with just 20 out of 100. “There is a capacity gap. We as IRC are trying to train the Water User Associations (WUAs), federations and district staff. For example, we have trained the WUA of three different water points and they said that they now clearly understood the need to protect the surroundings of the water. So they cleaned it and fenced it. Another example is about collecting tariff from the community. In the beginning the WUA asked 2 or 5 birr [about 0.06 - 0.16 euro] and not everyone was paying. But since the training, where we discussed the importance of tariff collection for the sustainability of the water scheme, they increased the tariff to 15 birr [0.47 euro] and have saved 4,000 birr [125,45 euro] in two months. So when the water scheme needs to be fixed, in one way or another, they now have money on the bank to pay for spare parts and to hire a technician” (TN).

Local government and partners are promoting capacity building in Ethiopia; “the idea is that the NGO builds a system to monitor assets and their status, for example. The NGO does the initial data collection, and starts to train the local sector people how to do this by meeting regularly, discussing some of the challenge, and learning collectively from what has been done. The NGO stays for support. After a while, the people can do it independently and start using the system by themselves” (MV). For example, “IRC trains the trainers, and the trainers train the WUAs, so that they can train independently from IRC” (TN). However, the high turnover of staff members and lack of proper handover are challenges (TN). Many people change their job because of replacement by the government or when they get a better opportunity, and when they go to another job they do not hand over and inform the person who is replacing them (TN). Because of this, capacity is lost.

The district in **Uganda** is not performing highly on this assessment area: 35 out of 100. There is limited investment from the public and private sector in capacity building for WASH in districts. Most of the capacity building initiatives are undertaken by NGOs. However, not all districts have NGOs as partners (PM). Because of this there is a difference between the performance of districts in capacity and capacity building (PM). In addition, there is not a strong WASH partnership in place to strengthen WASH systems.

Asutifi North district in **Ghana**, performs slightly better, 52 out of 100. Capacity assessments are conducted by the government of which the district staff are part of. Based on the result of the assessment, a plan for capacity building is made in the districts. In some cases, NGOs and private partners provide additional training to district staff to meet the specific needs. Some district partners invest in capacity building as well, which means that the assessments are not always aligned, making it difficult to identify gaps.

It seems that in all districts assessed, capacity building is needed. Although people are trained, capacity gets lost due to a high turnover and the lack of handover of tasks and experience. NGOs fill part of the capacity building gap.

## LIST PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

| Interviewee name    | Country  | Role  | Interview date & type  |
|---------------------|----------|---|--|
| Tereza Nega         | Ethiopia | Communication specialist IRC Ethiopia   | 3 December 2018, face-to-face                                  |
| Mathijs Veenkant    | Ethiopia | IRC Ethiopia  | 22 November 2018, face-to-face                                 |
| Jao Ata             | Ghana    | WASH technical coordinator for World Vision International in Ghana  | Transcript<br>Vera van der Grift & Sara Bori<br>September 2018 |
| Hon. Anthony Mensah | Ghana    | District Executive of the Asutifi North district  | Transcript<br>Vera van der Grift & Sara Bori<br>September 2018 |
| Robel               | Ghana    | World Vision Ghana  | Transcript<br>Vera van der Grift & Sara Bori<br>September 2018 |
| James Ata-era       | Ghana    | Zeatera city department planner   | Transcript<br>Vera van der Grift & Sara Bori<br>September 2018 |
| AJ Karon            | Ghana    | Aquaya  | Transcript<br>Vera van der Grift & Sara Bori<br>September 2018 |
| Peter Magara        | Uganda   | Former MEL Advisor –IRC Uganda;<br>IRC Associate  | 6 November 2018, skype   |
| Peter Opwanya       | Uganda   | Team Leader Technical Support Unit Six (6),<br>Rwenzori Region covering up to 13 districts in<br>Western Uganda | 13 November 2018, skype  |

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**Visiting address**  
Bezuidenhoutseweg 2  
2594 AV The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Postal address**  
P.O. Box 82327  
2508 EH The Hague  
The Netherlands

T +31 70 3044000  
info@ircwash.org  
www.ircwash.org

