**Government of Rwanda**

**Ministry of Infrastructure**

**REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATGY FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SERVICES**

***CONCEPT NOTE***

1. **Background**

Water supply and sanitation play a critical role in preventive healthcare and socio-economic development of Rwanda. Improved access to water supply reduces the time spent searching for water and may improve educational outcomes[[1]](#footnote-1). Evidence suggests that women and girls bear more of the cost of distant water sources in Rwanda. This not only affects their physical conditions adversely but also the economic productivity, as fetching water takes bulk of the time from their hectic daily routine. Lack of appropriate water and sanitation services and poor hygiene also contributes to high stunting among children due to diarrheal diseases and environmental enteropathy.

Recognizing the key role of water and sanitation in protection of public health, socio-economic development and gender empowerment, the Government of Rwanda has committed itself to reaching very ambitious targets in water supply and sanitation, with the vision to attain 100% service coverage by 2017/2018 as per EDPRS 2. The importance of adequate water supply and sanitation services as drivers for social and economic development, poverty reduction and public health is also fully acknowledged in Rwanda’s flagship policy documents and political goals.

In order to achieve the overall water and sanitation sector goals, the Government of Rwanda adopted the National Policy and Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Services in 2010. The Policy presents the sector’s approach on how to achieve the Vision 2020, MDGs and EDPRS objectives and breaks them down into concrete principles, objectives and statements through effective coordination among all the key players including, in particular, the Districts, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Natural Resources, Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC Ltd) the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency (RURA), Private Sector, Civil Society and Development Partners.

1. **Rationale for updating of the 2010 Policy and Strategy**

The water and sanitation sector context in Rwanda has changed considerably since the adoption of the current National Policy and Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Services in 2010 which set the target 100% coverage of rural and urban water supply by 2020 and 2012, respectively and 100% coverage of household sanitation by 2020. The EDPRS 2, which was adapted after the approval of the Policy, has set the targets of attaining 100% water and sanitation service coverage by 2017/2018. Major institutional reforms have also been implemented place since then. RECO and RWASCO and EWSA Ltd are no longer in existence. The implementing agency in water and sanitation sector is Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC ltd) which was separated from Energy Group.

Moreover, several of the targets set in the current Policy need to be critically assessed and revised, based on the current performance. Table 1 presents example of the targets that need revision given the EDPRS 2 targets and progress since adoption of the Policy.

**Table 1. Water and sanitation related targets as per 2010 Policy and Strategy**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Key performance indicator  | Baseline  | Target set in the current Policy  | Latest status-2010/11 (Source: EICV 3) |
| 2010/11 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |  |
| % of rural population within 500 meters of an improved water source | 71 (2008) | 81 | 87 | 89 | 72 |
| % of urban population within 200 meters of an improved water source | 76 (2009) | 80 | 100 | - | 86 |
| % of households with improved sanitation facilities | 45 (2009) | 55 | 65 | 70 | 75 |

As can be seen from Table 1, despite the notable progress made since the adaption of the Policy and Strategy in 2010, the country is not on track toward meeting the stipulated drinking water supply targets. There are also large differentials in access levels across the country - the water supply access levels in rural areas is significantly lower than that in urban areas. Huge disparities also exist between, and even within, individual districts. There are also emerging concerns with regard to quality, functionality and reliability of drinking water supplies, especially in rural areas. Rwanda’s natural resources, particularly water sources, also remain highly vulnerable to climate change effects.

Table 1 also shows that remarkable progress has been made in terms of meeting the stipulated target on household sanitation. Field assessments, however, suggest that most of the existing household latrines are unsanitary and needs to be improved. The prevalence of hygiene practices is also very low - only 10 percent of the households in Rwanda have a place for hand washing (Source: DHS -2010). Among these households, one in five (21 percent) has water and soap for hand washing. The coverage of school WASH facilities also remains very low i.e. 37%, 52% and 37% of primary schools in Rwanda have access to improved water, improved sanitation and hand-washing facility, respectively .

A number of emerging issues were identified in the 2010 Policy but have to be yet fully addressed. These include:

* Decentralization of Water and Sanitation Services;
* Urban Sewerage Systems;
* Solid waste and storm water management;
* Sector financing mechanisms and access to funding for decentralized actors ( district, Communities, private operators );
* Performance of Public Private Partnership arrangements
* Further sector harmonization towards Sector Wide Approach

Keeping the above in view, the Government of Rwanda plans to update the current Policy and Strategy so as to align it with EDPRS 2 with due consideration to the changed context, emerging issues and best practices and lessons learned.

1. **Policy review process**

The final National Policy and Strategy document will be the result of a comprehensive discussion and wide stakeholder consultation process led by a dedicated Tasks Force that will be created to this end. It is envisaged that there will be sector retreats, provincial workshops and a national validation workshops to ensure adequate participation of all sector stakeholders, both in internal and external. The key steps involved in the process are listed as follows:

1. Notification of the “Policy Review Task Force”, comprising key ministries and selected partners, to oversee the policy review process;
2. Review/approval of the concept paper by the task force;
3. Presentation of the concept paper to the Sector Working Group;
4. Engagement of the consultants;
5. Preparation of the background paper(s) by the consultants;
6. Consultations on the background paper at provincial level;
7. Preparation of the draft updated policy;
8. Stakeholders consultations on the draft Policy and revision (provincial and central level);
9. Presentation of the draft Policy to the Task Force and subsequent revision;
10. Presentation of the draft policy to sector working group (national validation workshop);
11. Revision of the draft in light of comments of the sector working group;
12. Release of draft policy for public comments;
13. Revision of the policy and final review by the Task Force;
14. Revision/finalization of the draft Policy;
15. Presentation to the Cabinet; and
16. Printing and dissemination
17. **Task Force**

A “Policy Review Task Force” will be established to closely oversee, and provide technical support throughout, the review process. The task force will be comprised of the representatives from the following Institutions:

1. Ministry of Infrastructure (Chair)
2. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN);
3. Ministry of Health (MINISANTE);
4. Ministry of Natural Resources (MINIRENA);
5. Ministry of Education(MINEDUC);
6. Ministry for Local Government(MINALOC);
7. Rwanda Utility Regulatory Agency (RURA);
8. Rwanda Environmental Management Agency (REMA);
9. Water and Sanitation Corporation ( WASAC Ltd)
10. Private Sector (Chambers of Commerce and Private Sector Water Operators);
11. JICA;
12. UNICEF;
13. Water Aid;
14. Water for People; and
15. SDC
16. WatSan Secretariat Coordinator, MinInfra (Secretary)
17. **Timeline/ Roadmap**

The proposed timeline for updating of the policy is attached as Annex-1.

1. Source: EDPRS 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)