

Sustainability Check of Inception Report 'Water for Lakes State'

Desk study

SOUTH SUDAN



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Advisory Report by the Dutch Sustainability Unit

Subject: Sustainability Check of Inception Report 'Water for Lakes State'

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 2 |
| 1.1 Request to the DSU | 2 |
| 1.2 Context and background information..... | 2 |
| 1.3 DSU approach | 3 |
| 2. FOLLOW-UP OF 2012 DSU RECOMMENDATIONS IN IR..... | 4 |
| 3. DETAILED REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY ASPECTS IN IR..... | 7 |
| 3.1 Sustainability general | 7 |
| 3.2 Suggestions for improvement of sustainability per component | 8 |
| 4. DETAILED REVIEW OF GENDER EQUALITY ASPECTS IN IR..... | 12 |
| 4.1 Gender equality general | 12 |
| 4.2 Suggestions for improvement of gender equality aspects..... | 13 |
| 4.2.1 Gender equality in the programme's aims, components, results & indicators | 13 |
| 4.2.2 Gender issues related to specific issues of the IR..... | 15 |

1. Introduction

1.1 Request to the DSU

The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Juba, South Sudan, requested DSU support to review the Inception Report 'Water for Lakes' and to comment on/make suggestions to improve the quality of the document specifically related to the integration of sustainability aspects (defined in terms of environment, climate change and gender equality) included in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) sections of the programme. In addition, the Embassy asked to comment on a separate draft document on Sustainable Development, produced by the consultants.

The review has been conducted as a desk study based on the following documents:

- First Annual Plan of Operations & Inception Report – Water for Lakes State Programme, South Sudan, Ref: FEZ/IM-314, Final Version, November 2014, Mott Macdonald consortium (MM);
- Appraisal of 3 programme formulation and tender documents for the Water Sector between South Sudan and the Netherlands – DSU Advisory reports, 20 July and 31 July 2012;
- Water for Lakes State Programme, South Sudan, Sustainable Development, November 2014, MM consortium.

The DSU has approached two experts (see colophon) to contribute with their specific expertise to provide suggestions for better integration of environment, climate change and gender equality aspects in the Inception Report, including suggestions for sustainability indicators for M&E. The gender aspects of the request are covered by an expert of the Gender Resource Facility (GRF).

1.2 Context and background information

In July 2012, the DSU advised on 3 programme formulation documents and on 3 tender documents for Lakes State, Eastern Equatoria State (EES) and PSGK (From Policy and Strategy to Governance and Knowledge, with Central Government of South Sudan). In June 2013, DGIS and the Embassy asked the DSU to look at the tender documents including the ToR for Lakes and Eastern Equatoria, with the aim to better include sustainability aspects, especially in the award criteria. In August 2013, the Embassy asked to do a Gender review of the tender documents for PSGK. Late 2013, all 3 programmes had been awarded.

Currently the Inception Report (IR) for Water for Lakes (W4L) is ready, the one on Eastern Equatoria had been finalised two weeks earlier, in October 2014. The PSGK programme, implying direct contribution to the central Government is put on hold, as long as there is no clear progress towards peace in the country.

The Technical Assistance for W4L contract took effect in November 2013. The Inception phase was postponed due to the ongoing conflict in the country since December 2013, and has been conducted in the period of May 2014 to October 2014. Field movements that are only possible in the dry season (typically in the period January – June) were not encouraged because of the security situation. As a result the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) has conducted very few visits to the field, the counties and the communities, and the IR is mostly based on fact finding in Juba and Rumbek, meetings with Government representatives and on desk studies.

As PSGK has been under temporary suspension, this will influence Component 5 (IWRM-KCD) of the W4L programme because of the various inter-linkages with PSGK.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) still need to be established to convene their first meeting amongst other things to approve the IR and the Annual Plan of Operations (APO) as well as the Six Month Activity Plan (SMAP) that are combined into one report. Delays in establishing these structures will delay decision making, implementation and affect sustainability.

The project area in Lakes is an extremely difficult region to operate, due to its geographical size and conditions, the absence of all-weather roads, the general lack of development, the political volatility, the security situation including banditry, tribal and inter-clan violence, the lack of functional government institutions, the traditional and conservative culture of self-subsistence agro-pastoralists, the humanitarian aid dependency that has developed over the years, the recurrent outbreaks of epidemic diseases, the occurrence of droughts and flooding, amongst others. It must be acknowledged that the majority of the population is living in a “survival mode” and that the project objectives, including issues of sustainability, environment, climate change and gender equality are not amongst their first priorities. These substandard implementation modalities may likely cause a gap between programme targets/expectations and actual implementation/sustainability of the programme.

1.3 DSU approach

In Chapter 2, the DSU summarises its main recommendations that were given for W4L, while conducting an appraisal of the Tender Documents in July 2012. For each of these recommendations, the DSU gives its first impression on whether, and how, these recommendations have been met in the IR.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the appraisal of some general sustainability issues followed by detailed review of the main components of the IR of the W4L programme.

Chapter 4 does the same, applying a gender lens, paying special attention to:

- gender sensitive interventions that can contribute to more equal gender relations, thereby improving the performance and sustainability of the programme;
- gender related requirements, such as the need for a gender strategy, gender indicators, and gender disaggregated monitoring.

Chapter 3 and 4 also contain recommendations for each of the DSU observations made.

2. Follow-up of 2012 DSU recommendations in IR

The DSU conducted an appraisal of the Tender Documents in July 2012. The following recommendations were made with respect to sustainability, environment, climate change and gender equality. The DSU has reviewed whether the recommendations are addressed in the IR. In case the recommendations have not (yet) been met, the DSU gives recommendations how to remedy this lacking information.

Biodiversity

The northern and eastern parts of Lakes State are covered with extensive floodplains and marshes of the Bahr el Gazhal and Sudd. These wetlands are an important habitat for many wetland species and migratory species. Interventions in water management may influence wildlife habitat in these areas and changes in land use patterns, particularly when related to water holes and cattle.

No mention is made in the IR of these biodiversity values. The DSU **recommends** MM to address this in the IWRM component.

Lands Policy and Environmental Policy

Water resources management, development, utilization and provision of sanitary services are part of the Economic Development Pillar of the South Sudan Development Plan. Two policy frameworks are expected to be adopted, the Lands Policy and the Environmental Policy. Both policies are significant for the development of IWRM. The current Lands Act and Environmental Bill are in fact anticipating these policies, but amendments are expected following the endorsement of the policies.

The IR does not refer to these documents. The DSU therefore **recommends** MM to pay more attention to this issue in component 5: IWRM-KCD

Environment

Strategic environmental assessments (SEA), and environmental impact assessments (EIA) must be conducted during implementation of the project.

The IR does not mention this aspect. "Environment" is a cross cutting issue in the South Sudan Development Plan, and all development programmes and projects must be subject to (strategic) environmental and social impact assessments in accordance with the Environmental Protection Bill (2010). Therefore DSU **recommends** MM to include in the final IR a paragraph elaborating on how the consortium plans to assist the Lakes authorities in application of SEA or EIA for interventions which are expected to impact the (socio-economic) environment. Chapter 3.2 below gives some suggestions for interventions which could benefit from EIA application. But there is also scope for SEA under the IWRM component, for instance related to result 6.2. River sub-basin studies and 6.3. Draft Lakes State Water Management Policy.

Indicators for monitoring

The monitoring and evaluation protocol requires the development of specific indicators for monitoring of impacts related to environment and climate change such as vegetation cover, water river discharge versus precipitation, and biodiversity related indicators.

After the first year of implementation, it has not been possible to establish the baseline with quantifiable indicators for monitoring of programme activities and impacts. This is fully understandable given the general lack of reliable data and the conditions in the field, although the IR states that 'much more knowledge has been obtained on IWRM in LS' (p. 15). However, the need to have some indicators is important, considering that 20% of Programme duration has already passed. The DSU **recommends** MM to be very selective and to determine a few basic and robust indicators that can continue to be monitored by the concerned stakeholders, also after the programme has ended (see also observations in 4.2.1 regarding monitoring of gender related issues).

Decentralisation

The relation between Central and some State governments is not very strong. States (and lower level governments) have very limited resources and a limited number of experienced staff. These limitations constitute a risk with regard to the mainstreaming of policies and strategies at the lower administrative levels. To cope with this barrier, intensive collaboration should be sought with the Ministry of Local Government and the UNDP programme to support this ministry with the governance and decentralization process.

The IR does not mention the UNDP decentralisation programme. UNDP neither features in Annex 2: list of meetings held. The DSU therefore **recommends** MM to still establish these contacts or justify in the final IR why this has not been done/was not considered relevant.

Supervision

At national level (PSC) participation is required of the Lands Commission and the Ministry of Environment. At State level (SPAC) participation is required of the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife & Tourism. Coordination with other donor initiatives will be achieved through the participation or liaison with the various coordination and exchange platforms such as the WASH Cluster Group, the Environmental Cluster Group, the Natural Resources Working Group.

The IR refers to the composition of the PSC and Project Coordination Committee (PCC) on p. 16 and 17. The Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism is indeed proposed to be part of the PCC. However no reference is made to the Lands Commission and various Cluster Groups. On page 48, however MM talks about attending a few coordination meetings which could include Cluster group meetings? As both groups still need to be formally established, there is still room to consider inclusion of the Lands Commission. In addition, the DSU **recommends** MM to further elaborate on the coordination with the different Cluster Groups.

Exit strategy

The elaboration of an exit strategy is required to enable smooth taking over of project achievements by beneficiaries, including financial arrangements, maintenance arrangements, reliable filing of activity results, shift of responsibilities, monitoring and activity review procedures, etc. Sustained results depend on a well elaborated exit strategy based on realistic assumptions with regard to technical, financial and institutional sustainability.

The IR does not make mention of any exit strategy. The DSU **recommends** that MM prepares an exit strategy – after all, the Programme is envisaged to end its activities after 2 or 4 years.

Climate change and deforestation

South Sudan is subject to risks due to climate change, which is manifested by (1) desertification, (2) extreme flooding and (3) irregular rainfall resulting in periods of drought. Deforestation (mainly caused by overstocking, forest fires, cultivation and charcoal burning) results in flash-floods, reduction of infiltration, erosion, siltation of rivers and hence a reduction of water availability. Hence, combined impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are a threat to water infrastructure. It is recommended to integrate a strategy to address factors causing erosion and siltation in catchment areas dealing with risks related to climate change and deforestation.

The IR only briefly touches upon risks related to climate change in Table 18 (p. 65) and identifies some risk management strategies, which are however not translated into project activities in the APO. Climate change may impact on the project area and the livelihoods of the people through the possible occurrence of extended duration of dry spells and heat waves, or through an increase in the occurrence or the severity of rain storms and river flooding. Successful implementation of the IWRM component will render the project area and the population more resilient to cope with such impacts. Within this context, the DSU **recommends** MM to prioritize Component 5 and to pay particular emphasis to catchment conservation measures. On the other hand, the Programme may further aggravate/accelerate the possible impacts of climate change, when certain activities result in degradation or higher pressure on the natural resources, notably through agriculture and livestock development (as a result of an increase in the cultivated area and in livestock numbers). Therefore the DSU also **recommends** that MM pays specific attention to the topic of climate change with respect to the possible impacts of Component 1 (Water for Livestock) and Component 3 (Water for Agriculture).

Gender equality

It was recommended to propose a gender strategy for the programme, particularly in the SWIS component.

The IR does not present a gender strategy. It indicates the importance of a ‘gender balanced approach’¹ to the programme and mentions the development of a ToR for a gender consultant for the inception period. However, the TAT could not find a good candidate who was available during this period. The IR does not elaborate on the content of the ToR, such as tasks and expected results or whether a gender strategy would have been part of the duties. A gender expert has been contracted for a first mission in December 2014.

The DSU **recommends** that the gender consultant conducts a gender analysis, based on existing information² and own data collection, and develops a gender strategy for the W4L Programme. This gender strategy will need to be operationalized by integrating gender issues in activities for all relevant result areas. Cooperation with TAT colleagues and consultants is crucial. To ensure measurement of its results and effects, gender sensitive and gender specific indicators for the logical framework need to be adopted as well. Apart from attention to gender equality in SWIS, it is relevant to address gender issues in other components/result areas, such as conflict reduction and water for agricultural production.

3. Detailed review of sustainability aspects in IR

3.1 Sustainability general

In Chapter 4.6 of the IR, Component nr. 5 is referred to as ‘IWRM-KCD’ whereas in Chapter 6.6 the same Component is referred to as ‘Sustainable Development’, that reports on IWRM activities. On p.50 it is also proposed to rename Component 5. Sustainable development is however much wider than IWRM that has ‘water as the entry point’. It also creates confusion, because there is a separate (draft) report with the same title ‘Sustainable Development’ that deals with the general principles of sustainability and their relevance to the W4L programme.

The DSU **recommends** to change the title of Chapter 6.6 in line with the one used in the TOR for component 5 i.e. ‘IWRM – KCD’ and thus to keep a sharp focus on IWRM.

The draft report “Sustainable Development” provides a good overview of sustainability principles (Bellagio, ISO 26000, CMER, FIETS, etc.) with a set of specific recommendations for the W4L programme. The emphasis that is placed on sustainability in a separate report is much appreciated with valuable observations. However, sustainability is a cross cutting theme and should be (also) integrated in each component of the Programme.

¹ The DSU assumes that references to a gender balanced approach not only indicate ‘balanced’ in terms of numbers of men and women, but also in the sense that it addresses roles, needs, access to resources and decision making of both women and men (i.e. a gender equitable approach).

² For example: Challenges to Security, Livelihoods and Gender justice in South Sudan. The situation of Dinka agro-pastoralists in Lakes and Warrap States. Ingrid Kircher, Oxfam Research Report, March 2013.
See: <http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/challenges-security-livelihoods-and-gender-justice-south-sudan>

The DSU **recommends** to integrate specific sustainability aspects related to each of the 5 components and deal with these in the chapters of the IR on the relevant components.

The programme will assess sustainability topics that are most relevant and significant to the programme and for that purpose MM will start to prepare a stakeholder list in the Implementation Phase (p. 27). However, a stakeholder analysis should have been conducted in the Inception Phase, before defining the activities and plan of operations for implementation of the various component activities.

The DSU **recommends** to fast track the stakeholder analysis for all relevant components in order to focus on Programme implementation and capacity building as much as possible through these stakeholders. This approach is also confirmed in the IR (p. 27, fifth bullet point: 'pressure for short-term implementation should not undermine sustainable processes e.g. participation').

The IR states that a sustainability baseline has been developed (p. 27). It is not clear whether this refers to the separate Sustainability Report or to another document.

The DSU is not able to comment on this in the absence of the sustainability baseline (the Sustainability Report is not a baseline, but rather provides a possible conceptual framework for sustainability).

The IR states that most interactions have been with government representatives and chiefs and that the Programme is falling short of a wider participation of different groups and stakeholders. It also states that few coordination meetings have been attended, and promises to improve on this (p. 48).

The DSU **recommends** wide and active stakeholder involvement, which is crucial for the long term success and sustainability of the Programme, which is designed to implement activities through various stakeholders and to build capacity of counterpart organisations, stakeholders and communities.

3.2 Suggestions for improvement of sustainability per component

Component 1 – Water for Livestock

The IR states that there are an estimated 1.1m heads of cattle, 1.4m goats and 1.3m sheep in the project area (p. 19). Furthermore, it states that the core problem is a lack of water for livestock during the dry season, for which measures are proposed to increase the availability of water for livestock (p. 8). It is realistic to assume that increased water availability will result in increased livestock numbers.

The IR does not indicate whether the land can sustain higher numbers of livestock heads. The DSU **recommends** that MM provides information on the sustainability of the current number of livestock heads and on an expected increase in the size of the livestock herd on the project area through an environmental impact assessment. This is the more relevant as also the livestock expert advises to adopt a gradual approach as 'it is unknown what will be the impact of extra water points (p. 9)'.

On page 9 the IR recommends water yards for integrated purposes i.e. for people, agriculture and livestock (p. 9). To the knowledge of the DSU, such integration of water use for different purposes is in general not recommended, notably in connection with the spread of diseases and the potential increase of water conflicts.

The DSU **recommends** that MM re-confirms that this approach of integrated water yards is indeed sustainable and that this will not lead to sanitation issues or conflicts over water between different uses and jeopardize sustainability.

The root cause of disputes over water rights between pastoralists is stated as 'no proper system in place for sustainable care of water points' (p.7). One of the proposed activities is to introduce solar powered water yards in three Counties (p. 9 and p. 53). This would imply that the root cause for the currently non-functioning water yards is technical, while the root cause may well be the software (i.e. community ownership, organisation, O&M). The IR rightly states that community engagement and sensitization is needed before completion of the work.

The DSU **recommends** that MM conducts a root cause analysis why current water yards for livestock are not functioning and sustainable (and why solar powered water yards would be sustainable). The DSU emphasizes that the 'software' i.e. community organisation and participation in planning, contribution, implementation and O&M of establishment of new water yards be addressed before embarking on implementing new water supply infrastructure for livestock in view of sustainability.

The IR has selected three locations for water yards and three locations for dredging rivers to improve water availability. It continues to state that it is important to promote active participation of the stakeholders in the O&M of the water infrastructure. It is however as important that the stakeholders are involved in the preceding steps i.e. planning and implementation. It is not clear whether the stakeholders at the proposed locations have been involved in the planning process.

The DSU **recommends** that the stakeholders in the selected locations should be consulted and involved in the planning stages. In addition, the DSU **recommends** that any dredging activity is preceded by an environmental impact assessment.

Component 2 – Water for Agriculture

Agriculture in the project area consists predominantly of low-input rotational subsistence farming, mostly conducted by women, as a secondary activity next to livestock herding (the primary activity). In this context, it will require very sizable, long term and sustained efforts to

improve agricultural practices. The project proposes training of trainers (extension workers), establishing model farms, promote animal traction and providing water for agriculture (irrigation and rain water harvesting).

The DSU would like to caution against a too wide scope in the selection of activities: each of these types of activities in its own would require an intervention of a similar size as the current Programme W4L. The DSU **recommends** MM to remain close to the Programme with 'water as entry point' and to take a focused (and modest) approach in agricultural development, to avoid the risk of raising too high expectations. As an example, the efforts of FAO and WFP to improve only one aspect in agriculture i.e. the provision of agricultural inputs on a humanitarian basis, failed and has proved to be not sustainable. The DSU also **recommends** MM to be very prudent with the introduction/promotion of irrigated agriculture (other than small scale low-input irrigation with crops for local markets), which is typically only sustainable for cash crops that require high investments, O&M costs, inputs and depend on good market access.

Component 3 – Water for fisheries

In many parts of the project area, fishing is an important activity, and there are several cooperatives involved in fishing and processing/marketing.

The DSU **recommends** that these existing cooperatives are considered as a major stakeholder for institutional strengthening and planning/implementation of programme activities (the IR mentions on p. 35 also that their capacity is generally low, which provides an opportunity for their strengthening). This also holds true for the proposal to introduce an ice making machine, which should preferably be owned by the cooperatives or a private entrepreneur (not by government) in view of long term sustainability.

It seems that fisheries have ample potential for improvement, however, information is lacking on the ecosystem, migration routes, current stocks, sustainable catch volumes, etc. This is a result of the delay of the consultancy by a fisheries expert as explained in the IR (p. 36 and 56).

The DSU **recommends** that that this consultancy takes place before embarking on any fish development programme, which should not only focus on production issues but also on environmental sustainability issues (preferably in close collaboration with the cooperatives).

Component 4 – Water for people

Bills of Quantities (BoQs) and Bid Documents have been prepared for the drilling of new boreholes and the rehabilitation of existing boreholes that are now with the procurement expert for follow up as part of the early implementation activities. The selection of the villages and payams was done in combination with the Field Assessments and identification of needs that were carried out in four (4) Counties. For early implementation, MM decided to start with the drilling of new boreholes in each payam in the five (5) initial target Counties. The identification of needs was geared towards listing the most critical sites.

The IR does not provide information whether the targeted communities have been involved in decision-making and site selection. This is believed to be fundamental to create ownership and sustainability from the onset onwards. Apart from using the critical needs as the most important selection parameter, the degree of commitment of the communities to contribute and organize themselves should be an equally important parameter to achieve sustainability. The DSU **recommends** that MM includes community organisation and participation in the procedures (p. 15) to guide planning, implementation and rehabilitation of boreholes (it may be suggested to adopt a demand approach or willingness to pay approach). In addition, the DSU **recommends** MM to put a stronger focus on the creation, training and functioning of Water Uses Committees (WUC). The WUC is hardly mentioned in the various sections on Component 4 Water for People, while the DSU considers the WUC instrumental in achieving sustainability.

There are numerous non-functioning boreholes in the project area. The IR proposes to rehabilitate these boreholes, and has already prepared BoQs and Bid Documents that are being processed. This is done in view of the need to start early implementation activities.

The IR does not indicate what the root cause is of the non-functioning of the boreholes. Repairing the boreholes without addressing the root cause may perpetuate the current situation. Therefore, the DSU **recommends** that MM conducts a root cause analysis why current boreholes are not functioning or sustainable and that MM proposes alternatives/accompanying measures to enhance sustainability.

The IR proposes to involve all 8 Counties in the WASH activities, in order to contribute to peace building by distributing more equally the programme activities between Dinka and the Jur/Jibeili tribes (p. 49).

The DSU supports this proposal, although the spreading of activities over a vaster area will likely dilute the programme impacts and sustainability. Special emphasis on genuine community participation is **recommended** by the DSU to counter this risk.

Component 5 – IWRM-KCD

Operational hydrological and meteorological data collection will be started by the project as part of IWRM. However, this activity faces major sustainability challenges, since the Directorate of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Rumbek (DoWSH) has not been able to sustain previous TA support from FAO and WFP. It is not clear how the programme will counter this challenge.

The DSU **recommends** that the issue of lack of staff at DoWSH is given special attention and if necessary be escalated to PSC level.

The W4L programme is fortunate in that there are quite some potential partners that can be involved in capacity building such as the Rumbek and Marial Lou University, the St. Peter Training

Centre, and the Amadi Rural Development in adjacent Western Equatoria State. In the APO this activity (7.5) is mentioned as ‘follow-up as a possibility to establish linkage training programmes’.

Capacity Building of existing institutes should receive high priority in view of long term impact of the Programme and the DSU **recommends** that MM prioritises this activity with a special focus on IWRM and WASH.

4. Detailed review of gender equality aspects in IR

4.1 Gender equality general

The purpose of adequately integrating gender issues into the W4L programme would be to ensure that the programme contributes to more equal gender relations thereby:

- enabling men and women to benefit more equally from the programme interventions in terms of improved economic development and livelihoods, increased production in agriculture, livestock and fisheries, reduced conflicts especially related to water resources and improved health due to safe water and improved sanitation;
- improving the programme’s performance and increased likelihood of sustainability by involving both men and women.

To achieve more gender equitable development, gender issues need to be addressed such as the different roles and responsibilities of men and women, their unequal access to and control over resources and gender differences in decision-making, including the unequal power relations between men and women.

Because South Sudan is a highly patriarchal society where women are often seen as inferior to men³, achieving gender equitable development is quite a challenge. It needs to be based on concrete insight in local gender relations as well as best practices of other projects and programmes. The following quote demonstrates the existence of specific gender roles that locally may prevail and can change over time. These roles and related issues such as land ownership and women’s and men’s decision making power may require attention in the design of the programme:

Gender relations in South Sudan are complex: the roles and responsibilities of women, men, boys and girls are clearly delineated but can and do alter. Women and girls have responsibilities for farming, collecting water and firewood, cooking, cleaning, childcare, and brewing beer. Men and boys have responsibilities as decision-makers for the communities and their families, cattle (boys in particular tend to be cattle herders), hunting, fishing and charcoal making⁴.

³ Source: Oxfam Research Report of March 2013, as quoted in previous footnote.

⁴ South Sudan Gender in Brief, CARE (not dated), see:

<http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender%20in%20Brief%20South%20Sudan%20.pdf>

The IR recognises the importance of a 'gender balanced approach' and presents a number of gender issues in section 3.2.1 that emerged from the reports of the anthropologist, the PRA consultant and the conflict expert. Furthermore, the IR informs the reader of the first gender consultancy for December 2014.

Nevertheless, a few important general observations remain:

- The IR indicates that women's presence during workshops held in the inception phase was very low, even when their participation was 'required'. This demonstrates that achieving adequate women's meaningful participation in W4L activities may require special attention, further demonstrating the need for a proper gender analysis in order to assess the underlying constraints to their meaningful involvement and to identify possible ways to overcome these.
- The IR does not (yet) address gender issues within programme components. The logical framework lacks gender indicators and/or gender disaggregated targets. The population data by county are gender disaggregated, but the surprising gap between numbers of men and women in most counties (some with only 80 women per 100 men) remains unexplained.
- The information tends to focus on women, which in itself is explainable because women more often are in a disadvantaged position. Gender responsive development should also pay attention to the roles, responsibilities and decision-making of men, for example, in sharing responsibility for a family's hygiene condition, or in giving space for women to play a meaningful role in Water User Committees.

South Sudan apparently is not yet a member of AMCOW, the African Ministers' Council on Water, and hence not yet a signatory of AMCOW's 2011 Policy on Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa. Considering that it is not unlikely that South Sudan will join AMCOW, it seems opportune that donor supported water projects in South Sudan already adhere to this gender policy⁵ and may use it as a source of inspiration for development of their own projects.

4.2 Suggestions for improvement of gender equality aspects

This section provides comments on specific issues or sections of the IR, especially those related to gender equality.

4.2.1 Gender equality in the programme's aims, components, results & indicators

Project aim and logical framework

Considering that section 3.2.1 of the IR on Gender emphasises the importance of a 'gender balanced approach' to the W4L programme, it is disappointing that this is not reflected in the programme aim, the component objectives and/or any of the results, or in the corresponding indicators.

⁵ See: http://www.amcow-online.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=274&Itemid=143&lang=en

The DSU **recommends** reflecting gender equality explicitly in the programme's aim as formulated in the logical framework (Annex 1 of the IR). This can be achieved by adding that development will be 'gender equitable' and/or 'contributing to gender equality' to the current description of the aim. The DSU further suggests that gender equality is reflected in the other sections of the logical framework, including by identifying gender specific and gender sensitive indicators. The DSU **recommends** that this will be done after the gender consultant has conducted a gender analysis, including analysis of best practices from gender related interventions in other similar projects, which will result in a gender strategy for the programme and suggestions for gender integration into the programme's activities. The AMCOW Policy on Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa can be used as a source of inspiration for developing the gender strategy.

Gender disaggregated data

The IR does not include commitments to gender disaggregated data collection or monitoring and/or gender data collection as part of the baseline survey. The report section on Result Measurement (7.2) does state that gender guidelines will be worked on. These gender guidelines, together with other plans and guidelines, will form the basis for the programme's detailed monitoring framework (see section 7.2).

The DSU **recommends** that the W4L Programme commits itself to gender disaggregated data collection and data analysis, meaning gender data collection and analysis as part of the baseline survey, including assessment of the baseline values of gender indicators. It is suggested that the baseline survey also collects data disaggregated for men and women (and boys and girls) instead of only using households as a unit of measurement (e.g. related to access to water or land, food security status, etc.).

Monitoring by the Project Coordination Committee (PCC)

It is commendable that the ToR of the PCC includes monitoring of the programme in line with the 'do no harm principle' and other cross-cutting guidelines such as 'gender'. Reviewing the proposed composition of the PCC, the availability of gender expertise within the PCC, however, is questionable.

The DSU **recommends** adding an extra PCC member with gender expertise, for example a representative of the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs at State level. In addition, it is suggested that for gender equality the ambition is higher than 'do no harm'. Rather the programme may wish to aim to contribute to more equal gender relations as a result of its interventions.

Proposed Changes in project objectives and results

Table 14 of the IR presents proposed changes in the project objectives and results. Several changes, however, seem to alter the focus of the programme in such a way that women may be affected disproportionately. This applies to the following three changes:

- Specific objective 3: 'Enhanced agricultural development' is proposed instead of 'enhanced food security and diversification of diets'. By changing this focus, the programme may only address the agricultural production pillar of food security, neglecting the pillars of access to food and of a balanced diet (nutrition). The latter pillars are often more critical to women than men, as women may be responsible for household food security but men may decide whether to grow market or subsistence crops and/or whether to raise cattle. More production of market crops or cattle raising could reduce women's access to subsistence crops and they may have less financial means to purchase food. As such, women may have less influence on the daily diet, whereas malnourishment among (pregnant) women is often more serious than among men.
- Result 4.2 (new: 3.2): 'Improved marketing' of agricultural products is proposed instead of 'improved value chains'. By focusing only on marketing, and not on value chains, options for food processing seem no longer within the programme's focus. With women often active in the food processing segments of value chains, this means that the programme may neglect looking into potential economic options or improvements that may particularly benefit women. For example, the SWOT analysis for the fish value chain in the IR lists processing of fish into dried fish powder as an opportunity. Only focusing on marketing may exclude any such activities by the programme.
- Result 8.1 (new: 7.1): 'Stakeholders are aware, knowledgeable and capacitated to sustain programme interventions' instead of 'communities are aware ...'. The justification for this change is fitting (communities are not the only stakeholders in the programme). However, by not explicitly mentioning communities anymore, the risk increases that communities will no longer be the focus of capacity building.

DSU **recommends** that the changes for specific objective 3 and result 4.2 are reconsidered, keeping food security, diversified diets (nutrition) and value chain in the formulation of the concerned objective and result. The DSU **recommends** to add 'including communities' in result 8.1.

4.2.2 Gender issues related to specific issues of the IR

Working with stakeholders and communities

The IR often refers to 'stakeholders', 'communities', and/or 'farmers' without elaborating which stakeholders or categories of community members/farmers will be targeted. If this is not clearly elaborated at an early stage of the programme, there is a risk that mainly the easy-to-reach stakeholders, community members or farmers may become involved and activities may be developed in their area of interest, leaving out the more marginalized groups as women (or women's groups/women farmers) and poor men.

DSU **recommends** to better clarify in the IR which categories of community members will be targeted when referring to community members, possibly also identifying mechanisms how they will be reached. In the IR it is estimated that 80% of farm labour for crop production is contributed by women whereas men prefer to look after cattle. Hence, it is important that references to farmers are made explicit in including female (and male) farmers. When preparing the stakeholder list (activity contributing to result 7.1) representatives of women's groups and organisations as well as marginalised community groups such as the poor need to be included.

Water User Committees

The IR refers to the formation and training of Water User Committees, apparently outsourced to an external service provider. Though one can conclude that these WUCs will be responsible for O&M of the water yards and hand pumps, the IR remains vague on the concrete responsibilities and the composition and organisational structure of the WUCs. The report does not address questions such as: Who will be its members? Are women targeted for WUC membership and/or for pump O&M? Do the WUCs 'own' the pumps? How sustainable are the WUCs after completion of the W4L programme?

DSU **recommends** to better elaborate the concept of the WUCs, also considering experiences of other interventions in South Sudan. In particular, targets need to be set for women's participation in the WUCs, including as potential pump operator and as board members. Moreover, adequate attention needs to be given from the start to the sustainability of the newly established committees to promote that the new (or rehabilitated) facilities remain operational. This will include proper training (some training is already foreseen) and may require bodies or mechanisms that could provide support to WUCs after the programme has ended, especially in case of conflicts or other problems. See also recommendations on exit strategy in Chapter 2 above.

Sanitation / CLTS approach

The IR (including the logical framework) does not include any targets for domestic sanitation and/or for communities to achieve ODF status (Open Defecation Free). Though domestic sanitation is mentioned as part of result 5.1, there is no performance indicator representing the ambitions in this field. Considering that domestic sanitation –in particular a 100% coverage or ODF status– is highly important to achieve a substantial health impact, and is a dignity issue for especially women, it seems appropriate to pay more attention. The IR is vague in explaining how domestic sanitation will be achieved, except that in the work plan for next year the procurement of a CLTS/hygiene promotion service provider for two payams is included. It is not clear whether more payams will be covered in subsequent years.

DSU **recommends** more explicit commitment to domestic sanitation and the application of the CLTS approach to ensure demand triggering for domestic latrines (and not only hygiene promotion) and to include targets for its scale of implementation, also within the selected payams. It is important that the CLTS approach is aligned with that of any other organisations in the region promoting domestic sanitation by CLTS. The ToR for the service provider may require the need for proven gender expertise within CLTS.

Pro-poor approach

The IR does not refer to a possible pro-poor policy, especially to ensure access to safe water and to domestic sanitation for all, also for the poorest households. The IR rather proposes full cost recovery for O&M of the water infrastructure, which in itself is appropriate in case the ability to pay by households and individuals of all socio-economic classes (including the poor) is addressed. The same applies to domestic sanitation: CLTS involves that households

construct their own latrine, which in itself is a main success factor in this approach. To achieve 100% ODF status, poor households (among whom female headed households may be overrepresented) also need to get a proper latrine. Social pressure, an element of the CLTS approach, may lead to very poor households spending on latrine construction instead of food or other essentials.

The DSU stresses the importance of analysing the poor's ability to pay for water supply and latrines and **recommends** a pro-poor approach, preferably in line with approaches applied by other organisations working in the WASH sector. Such an approach could include mechanisms that support the poor (including poor female headed households, if present) in constructing their latrines, in particular in procuring construction materials that are not available as a free resource (such as slabs). Any pro-poor approach requires a gender lens.

Final recommendation for TAT and staff recruitment

It is commendable that a gender expert has been contracted for a first mission in December 2014, implying that this expert will also do follow-up missions. The availability of gender expertise within this programme is indeed crucial considering the importance of a gender equitable approach, which is also recognized in the IR. The IR does not indicate whether gender expertise is part of other job descriptions and whether the project aims to hire male and female staff. Having a gender balanced team is especially relevant for field staff to encourage a gender-sensitive working environment in which the different interests of women and men from the target group can be addressed.

The DSU **recommends** that gender expertise be adequately available throughout the project period to ensure the proper implementation of the gender strategy (once developed), the collection of gender related baseline and monitoring data and attention to gender integration in reporting. The planning of a special technical report on experiences in integrating gender issues in W4L interventions seems appropriate, considering the importance of gender equality and the identified challenges.

Regarding staff recruitment the DSU **recommends** that integration of gender concerns in their daily work is part of all job descriptions for professional and field staff. The DSU further **recommends** hiring both male and female field staff, such as extension officers (80% of agricultural labour is by women) and other field staff who will work at community level. This may require an extra effort.