Building a Strong and Sustainable WASH System in Bomet County

Update on initiation of the
Master Planning Phase

March 2022

Dig
Deep

Executive Summary

We believe this report will be of interest to anyone working towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 for water and sanitation, and particularly those with an interest in Kenya and/or WASH systems strengthening.

Our aim in writing this report is to share the successes and challenges of our systems strengthening programme and to raise awareness and support for this partnership with Bomet County Government. If you have any questions or are interested in partnering with us, please contact **katherine@digdeep.org.uk**.

Dig Deep has been partnering with Bomet County, Kenya, for over 10 years. In 2020 we initiated our programme: Building a Strong and Sustainable WASH System in Bomet County, which has been developed using the **Agenda for Change District Level Roadmap for Universal Access (A4C)**. This Roadmap has five stages - Visioning, Institutional Strengthening, Assessment, Planning and Implementation.

In 2020-21, Dig Deep worked with the county to successfully to deliver the first three of these stages (Visioning, Institutional Strengthening and Assessment).

In January 2022, we began the planning stage by working with County Government leadership to initiate the creation of a WASH Masterplan for Bomet County. As a result of the high level of senior county government leadership engagement and buy-in, the creation of the WASH Masterplan has been accelerated and is now due to be published in June 2022 (the original publication date was set for mid-2023).

This report sets out:

1. Background on our programme for Building A Strong and Sustainable WASH System in Bomet County
2. The aims of the planning phase
3. A report on the two day Masterplanning workshop held in January 2022 with senior government leadership, which has proven critical to accelerating planning progress
4. An overview of the next steps agreed with the county government for publishing the plan in June 2022

A broader overview of Dig Deep strategy and programme, as well as further context on Bomet County, can be seen **here**.

Background on Dig Deep's programme

At Dig Deep, we believe every resident in Kenya has a fundamental right to the provision of clean water, safe toilets and good hygiene.

Our purpose is to collaborate with the Kenyan government, local businesses and communities, to transform the provision of clean water, sanitation and good hygiene in Bomet County - one of the most challenging and least resourced areas in the country. We take an integrated approach to all our work, using partnerships, education, training and advocacy to create sustainable change for Bomet's I million residents.

From Dig Deep's I0 years of experience of successfully delivering impactful grassroots WASH programmes in Bomet, we know that the primary barrier to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 in the county is the weakness of the county's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) system. We appreciate that the county government is the responsible body with the mandate to lead efforts; we as an external agency must support and build their capacity to lead and succeed, so that the improvements we make together are sustained. In order to achieve this, at the start of 2020, we initiated our programme: Building a Strong and Sustainable WASH System in Bomet County.

This approach has been adapted from the Agenda for Change District Level Roadmap for Universal Access (A4C). We are following the five phases of the roadmap - Visioning, Institutional Strengthening, Assessment, Planning and Implementation.

We have initiated these sequentially (Figure I) - however, as system strengthening processes are rarely linear, many of these phases are taking place in parallel with each other. The impact of COVID-I9 in Kenya has also necessitated the revision of plans, to free up resources for the public health response we have been undertaking with the county government. Nevertheless, our progress with the county on each phase has been far quicker than we had anticipated.

As can be seen from Figure I, we have had significant success over the past two years going through the first three phases of this process. As we are a small NGO, we are adjusting our activities to appropriate scales within the county according to both need and our organisational capabilities.
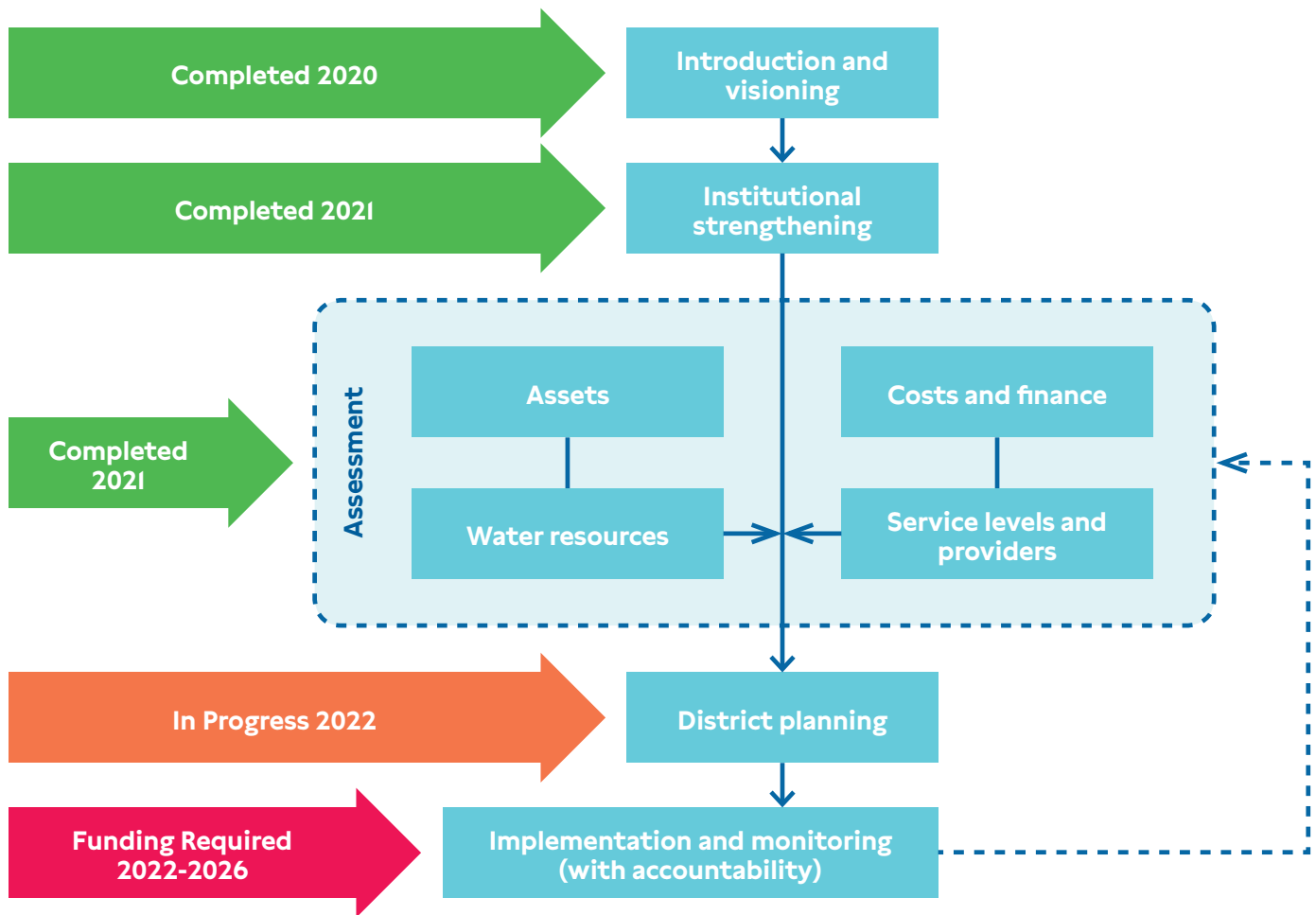
Completed 2020 → Introduction and visioning

Completed 2021 → Institutional strengthening

Completed 2021 → Assessment

| Assets | | Costs and finance |
| Water resources | | Service levels and providers |

In Progress 2022 → District planning

Funding Required 2022-2026 → Implementation and monitoring (with accountability)

Figure I - phase of District level Roadmap for Universal Access to Sustainable WASH services produced by the WASH agenda for change coalition (Agenda for Change, 2017)

Amongst our achievements, we have held a successful visioning meeting with the most senior County WASH officials in attendance, established a **WASH Hub** in the County to coordinate activities, administered household and institutional surveys over a population of **250,000 people**, and through implementation pilots **achieved open-defecation free status for 106 villages and 56,000 residents**.

Aims of the Planning Phase

We initiated the planning phase in collaboration with Bomet County Government (BCG) and civil society partners in January 2022. The aim of this phase is, based on the analysis of collected information, to develop a strategic and financial Masterplan for achieving and sustaining universal access to WASH services and improving hygiene behaviours (**Agenda for Change, 2017**). We are conducting this at both the scale of the county (creating a strategic plan) and the ward level (creating a detailed/fully costed plan). Below is a brief overview of the planning process we are engaging in, with the rest of this report focusing on the 2 day workshop we held in January:

- Hold 1 day workshop feeding back data from assessment phase with senior county officials and local NGOs
- Hold focus group discussion with 200 Bomet County residents
- **Hold 2-day workshop with county staff from Departments of Water and Environmental Services, Public Health and Medical Services, Finance, County Assembly and NGO partners**
- Collate WASH access data from civil society partners and County Government
- Conduct baseline and quarterly follow-up building block assessments with departments of Water and Public Health
- Conduct training sessions with key county staff to use and manage data
- Perform life-cycle cost analysis of existing water and sanitation infrastructure assets
- Perform funding gap analysis for county WASH infrastructure
- Masterplan draft published by June 2022

The Masterplan will include the following:

- The Masterplan will provide a Roadmap towards Universal WASH access for every resident of Bomet County.
- The Masterplan will include plans for improving all areas of WASH in Bomet County (not just infrastructure).
- The Masterplan will be fully costed, and will set out mechanisms for funding.
- This plan will build on and expand existing planning activities e.g. County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) - it's not going to replace anything, and can be incorporated into current planning.

Note: Dig Deep will make a long-term commitment to meeting the capital investment costs for achieving the Masterplan in Ndanai-Abosi ward (population ~50k people). A detailed implementation plan for the ward will be published in November 2022.

January Master Planning Workshop

In January 2022 Dig Deep conducted a successful planning workshop with the objective of launching a WASH masterplan for Bomet County.
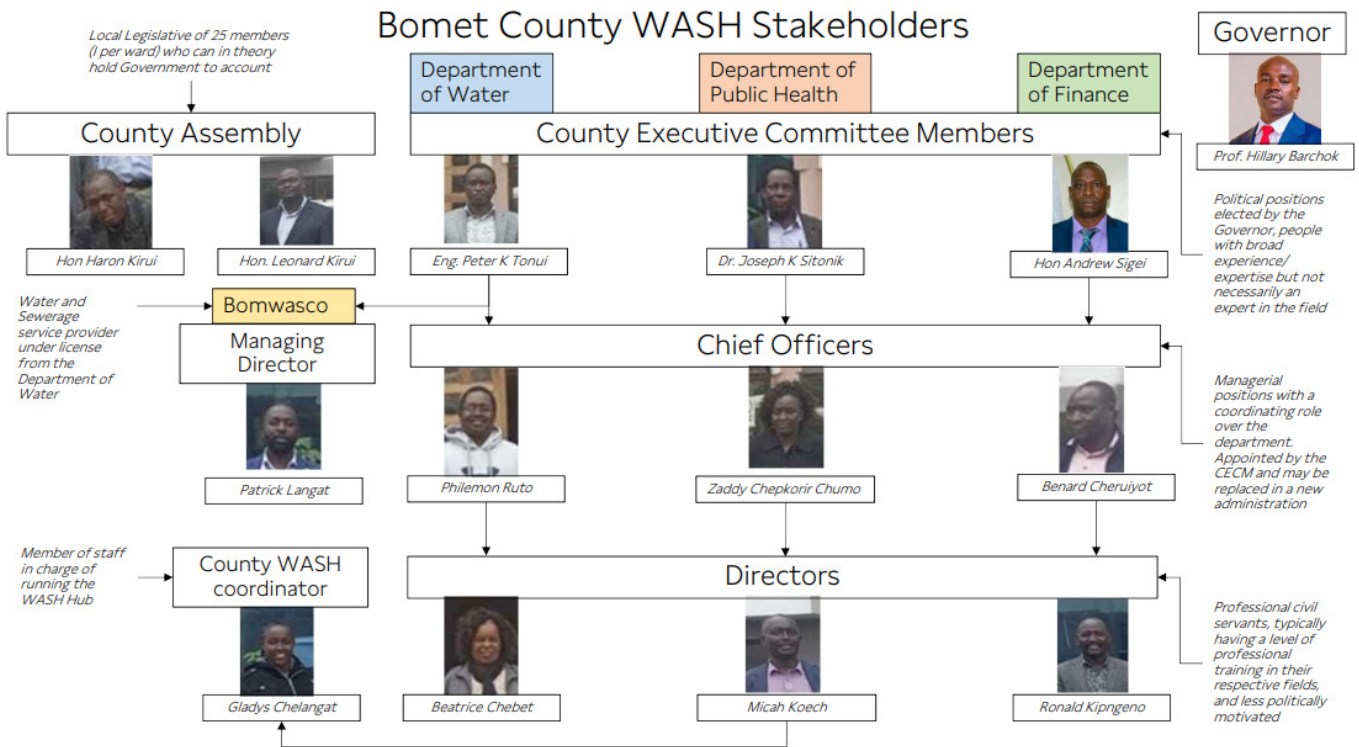
Format and Aims of the workshop

The workshop was an intensive 2 day series of sessions, with the following objectives:

· Ensuring all delegates understood and took personal ownership of the Masterplanning Process
· Agreeing process for creation and date for publication of WASH Masterplan
· Identification of areas to strengthen across 9 building blocks of the WASH system
· Learning outcomes from the workshop
· Agreeing key actions required to strengthen the WASH system (for incorporation into the Masterplan)

Delegates

The Masterplan Workshop we held brought together the county electorates in the County Assembly, County Executive committee members and Departmental Heads (Chief Officers and Directors) from the Water, Finance and Public Health departments. The attendees from the County Government are shown below. Representatives from the Kenya Red Cross and Aqua Clara Kenya also participated.

This level of engagement was a very significant part of the success of the process; having decision-makers in the room for these discussions was both a testament to the work our team have done over the years developing relationships with County Government staff, and to the pressing need for this exercise to happen.

Bomet County WASH Stakeholders

Agreeing process for creation and date for publication of WASH Master Plan

The workshop began auspiciously as the County Executive members committed to bringing forward the deadline for completion of the Masterplan from 2023 to June 2022, as they saw that this will align with the 5-year County Integrated Development Planning (CIDP) process. As the next cycle of this process is from 2023-2027, publishing in June will allow the Masterplan to have an influence on budgetary allocation, and be an effective tool for WASH advocacy within the county. This call, more than anything else, was evidence of the engagement we received from participants and the value they see in the plan.

Identification of areas to strengthen across 9 building blocks of WASH systems

The 9 building blocks are taken from the IRC WASH framework for mapping a district level WASH system. These building blocks are:

Nine essential building blocks of the WASH system, as defined by IRC

The exercises undertaken at the workshop were based on **IRC's WASH system building block assessment tool** and involved participants collaboratively ranking a series of statements related to each of these building blocks for both water and sanitation. Each statement was scored from 1-5, with the combined scores shown in Table 1.

Participant's undertaking building block assessments in multi-disciplinary groups

Building Block	Water Score	Sanitation Score
Institutions	2.8	1.8
Policy & legislation	2.3	2.0
Planning	2.6	2.0
Finance	3.5	3.0
Regulation & accountability	4.5	4.0
Monitoring	3.5	2.5
Infrastructure (development)	3.0	3.3
Infrastructure (management)	2.3	1.5
Water resource management	2.8	3.6
Learning & adaptation	3.2	3.0

Table 1 - Building Block scores for water and sanitation

These scores are not indicative of any objective metric. They are not comparable to a similar exercise undertaken in another district for example, as differences in framing could lead to wildly different scores. Their value is that they provide an overview of where delegates felt there are areas of strength, and areas of relative weakness. For instance, it is interesting to note the relative weakness of sanitation scores when compared to water scores, as well as the low scoring of infrastructure management when compared to infrastructure development.

Qualitative feedback was also given for the exercise. Feedback included comments such as that: "Accountability mechanisms are there for formal water services. Not for citizens within informal supply", "There is a lack of equity for the physically challenged (in sanitation infrastructure)", and "Asset inventories for water and sanitation need updating."

These sessions highlighted a variety of specific challenges to the efficient and effective operation of WASH services. In addition, a subset of broader systemic gaps have been identified, which cut across several or all building blocks. These gaps were used to produce an Action Plan on the second day.

Learning outcomes from the planning meeting

1. Lack of resources is endemic, it affects every aspect of WASH, and a Masterplan can help to solve this

To some extent this is stating the obvious. Annual per capita spend on WASH services in Bomet County is approx. $4, at least an order of magnitude below the required amount for building and maintaining safely managed systems and services. The lack of financial resources is without doubt the most significant barrier to long term WASH system improvements. While there is no magic bullet solution to this, the creation of a WASH Masterplan can be effective to some extent both in mitigating the drawbacks of financial shortfall through the more efficient use of existing resources, and in leveraging more funding.

We think that as well as charting a course for effective investment in WASH services, the Masterplan will be a critical tool in advocating for funds to both national and international bodies. As well as helping to write this Masterplan, Dig Deep will assist the county in using it to advocate in this way.

2. No single voice or decision-making authority for sanitation

The responsibility for delivering sanitation services is split between the Department of Water and Environmental Services (planning and construction of physical infrastructure), the Bomet Water and Sewerage Company (operation and maintenance of infrastructure), and the Department of Public Health and Medical Services (delivery of sanitation-related "software" including hygiene education and Community Led Total Sanitation).

The Department of Education has a mandate over school sanitation, meaning that there are at least four public bodies with some responsibility for the provision of sanitation access in the county, and no final authority with a coordinating role. In response to this, delegates of the workshop set out plans to create a dedicated sanitation directorate under the Department of Water. This body will have consolidated roles and a separate budget allocation.

This will be a remarkable development for sanitation in the county. Sanitation is so often under-prioritised politically when compared to water, that establishing a dedicated resource and responsible authority represents real forethought from county decision-makers. We expect the specific focus given to sanitation provision by this process will lead to an acceleration in the gains already being made in sanitation access in the county.

3. Lack of communication and collaboration between bodies

There was a general appreciation among participants that individual bodies responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene access did not have enough communication between each other. To ameliorate this, the county WASH Hub will be expanded to encompass a broader remit and more resources.

The WASH Hub is a tool to aid the implementation of a Systems Strengthening Approach in Bomet County. To ensure that all WASH systems within the County are complementing each other, in June 2021 Dig Deep facilitated the establishment of the WASH Hub in BCG's central offices. This is in line with the best practice observed from other counties as a way of better coordinating data collection, monitoring and decision making between county departments.

The purpose of the WASH Hub is to:

· Coordinate integrated water, sanitation and hygiene projects within the County
· Be a repository of data regarding water, sanitation and hygiene services in the county, so these can be made available to all relevant parties
· Use all available data to assist in long-term planning activities
· Continue to monitor and analyse the level of water, sanitation and hygiene services in the county, and use this information as an advocacy tool
· Inform WASH practitioners about the current level of service in the county, and any other information useful for the performance of their roles
· Plan teaching and learning activities for WASH practitioners in the county where such activities have been identified as beneficial

The proposed expanded resources of the WASH Hub are to include:

· 2 employees, one provided and paid for by the Bomet County Department of Public Health, and one provided and paid for by Dig Deep.
· Database of Household and Institutional WASH access in the county, to be provided by Surveys carried out by BCG, Dig Deep and other partners
· Maps of WASH access in the county
· Database of water sources and infrastructure assets in the county provided by the Department of Water

These expanded resources will mean the WASH Hub can fill the gap observed in the integration of data and expertise across departments responsible for WASH. Many of the challenges identified in the workshops could be addressed by more effective communication, and enabling this is a key function we can play in strengthening capacity within Bomet County.

4. Under-prioritisation of maintenance budgets versus capital expenditure

There was a consistent narrative that within the administration it was harder to get political buy in for funding maintenance of existing assets. There is no standard inclusion of maintenance budgets during handover of projects from the Department of Water and Environmental Services to Bomwasco, which is unsustainable in the long-term, especially as the number of existing projects increases. As part of the Master Planning process, it has been agreed that dedicated maintenance budgets for both water and sanitation infrastructure will be created.

Key actions agreed to strengthen the WASH system (for incorporation into the Master Plan)

The key actions agreed by all delegates are set out below:

Area to Strengthen	Actions (short and long-term)	Outcomes
Sanitation service delivery models not in place	Introduce private models for exhaustion Build decentralised waste disposal sites Utilise new technologies for waste disposal	Sites identified and funds allocated Increased participation by private sector, possibly supported by subsidy
Regulations are not customised for waste collection/ disposal	Develop/domesticate regulations customised to Bomet/harmonise regulations between departments	Have clear regulations in place
Fragmented responsibilities for sanitation	Create dedicated sanitation directorate with consolidated roles and adequate budgetary allocation Expand WASH Hub to perform a coordinating role	Consolidated budget easier to fund

Negative attitudes to waste disposal	Sensitisation and advocacy campaigns for each sub-county to get citizens on board	Buy in and participation by citizens
Weak enforcement for sanitation	Second staff to Bomwasco/ complete enactment of Bomet environmental health bill	Increased capacity for staff on sanitation enforcement
Some data for water access unavailable	Use data from KNBS, Ministry of Water, incorporate data from Dig Deep, survey to fill in gaps, standardise reporting system	Improve planning for new water projects
Asset inventories for water need updating	Ongoing updating activities by Bomwasco, together with DoW	Quantify Asset value of existing assets, and identify gaps, estimates for Total life-cycle cost (Opex) Combine asset map with survey results
Not enough resource for maintenance budgets	Introduce new dedicated budget line for maintenance	Increase sustainability of new projects

This Action Plan is the primary tangible output of the workshop. From Dig Deep's perspective, the most impressive aspect of this plan has been the follow-up undertaken by all participants, with 4 additional meetings being held to address specific points from this plan during January and February. As part of these meetings, the Departments of Water and Public Health have proposed to expand Dig Deep's initial work in surveying households across the entire county, in which Dig Deep will provide consultancy and training. The continued commitment of our partners in engaging with this process is further evidence of the value they place on the Master Plan , and the importance in maintaining the momentum we have established.

Next Steps

The activities of this workshop, and ongoing meetings Dig Deep and other partners are having with BCG, are aimed towards producing a County Masterplan for WASH. We have formed a working group to collaboratively deliver this project, and are combining our collective resources to ensure its success.

By the end of June, Bomet County Government will publish a WASH Masterplan, which will cover the need for WASH development in Bomet County across the nine building blocks for WASH discussed above. Throughout this process we have been constantly impressed by the level of engagement of partners, and the speed of progress that has been made. We have increased our ambition in line with the request of County Executive Committee Members to bring forward the deadline for publishing from 2023 to June 2022. We have agreed to help roll out a household survey across the entire county in line with the county government's request, and we are delighted that the impetus for these developments has come from our partners. From our interactions, it's clear that we have begun this process at a fertile moment for these ideas to take hold, and we want to take maximum advantage of the enthusiasm and support we have encountered at every stage.

With the Masterplan in place as a tool, we can change the scope of what we are capable of achieving. It will allow Bomet to form partnerships with other implementing organisations, as a researched and costed plan will give greater confidence to future collaborators. It will also serve as a tool to advocate for more investment at the national level. These opportunities will have a multiplicative impact on the work we are doing.

Based on the successes of this programme to date we are confident that these future activities will mean:

- The county government is investing its existing WASH resources much more effectively across the entire county due to having a clear vision, increased institutional capacity, and robust assessment and planning processes.
- The county government is better able to attract additional WASH resources as it will have a robust strategic District Wide Plan for resource mobilisation.
- All of the above will increase the county's ability to coordinate and direct external agencies effectively, further increasing the effectiveness of implementation.

Through transforming the provision of clean water, sanitation and good hygiene in the county, this programme will ultimately improve health, education and livelihoods for Bomet's 1 million residents.

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of <u>The Waterloo Foundation</u>, an independent grant-making Foundation for their support of 'Building a Strong and Sustainable WASH System in Bomet County'. They support programmes that help globally, with particular focus on the disparity of opportunities, wealth and the unsustainable use of the world's natural resources.

Workshop delegates - January 2022

Last updated: March 2022