



# END-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE KENYA RESILIENT ARID LANDS PARTNERSHIP FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT (KENYA RAPID) ACTIVITY

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Cover Photo: *People and livestock wait their turn at a strategic borehole in Kenya, Joyce Kisiangani, Aquaya. (Photo from Kenya RAPID activity)*

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AHADI	Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CCBF	County Capacity Building Fund
CCNA	County Capacity Needs Assessment
CEC	County Executive Committee
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
COP	Chief of Party
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPSC	County Program Steering Committee
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EQ	Evaluation Question
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FH	Food for the Hungry
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GOK	Government of Kenya
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
KES	Kenyan Shilling
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWA	Millennium Water Alliance
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority

NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PCU	Program Coordination Unit
PHO	Public Health Officer
PIFA	Program Implementation using a Facilitation Approach
PMG	Project Management Group
PREG	Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth
PSC	Program Steering Committee
PWD	Person with Disabilities
RAPID	Kenya Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development Activity
RMC	Rangeland Management Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Statement of Work
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/KEA	USAID Kenya and East Africa
WAJWASCO	Wajir Water and Sewerage Company
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASHPaLS	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability
WUA	Water Users Association
WV	World Vision

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EVALUATION PURPOSE, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The performance evaluation was commissioned by the USAID/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) mission in conjunction with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) at the end of Kenya Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development (RAPID's) fifth year. Specifically, it sought to answer the following four evaluation questions (EQ):

1. To what extent is the design of Kenya RAPID appropriate to the context in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs)? (Are the assumptions and theory of change valid? Which approaches were not well suited to this context?)
2. To what extent did bringing diverse partners together within the GDA structure result in broader impacts than would otherwise have been achieved? (What were the resource implications of this type of partnership? What kinds of strategic decisions were undertaken by the steering committee, and how effective was this model for partnership governance?)
3. To what extent was Kenya RAPID able to establish sustainable, replicable and scalable business models? (Were the business models identified appropriate to the ASAL context? Were there any spillover effects or results achieved through private sector engagement?)
4. How effective was the facilitative, governance-focused approach under Kenya RAPID? (Were changes in county government capacity and commitment achieved? To what extent was Kenya RAPID successful in improving community level governance?)

Given the dynamic situation with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Kenya and globally, the Evaluation Team was ultimately advised against travelling or holding face-to-face meetings and thereby conducted the entire evaluation remotely. In spite of the limitations this posed and given that the goal was not to verify and validate actual quantitative outputs, the Evaluation Team is confident that the findings and recommendations provided herein reflect as accurate a picture of the Kenya RAPID activity as has been possible under the circumstances.

A desk review informed the design of primary data collection, based on approximately 70 interviews undertaken via Skype, telephone, or other virtual media. 60 percent of interviewees were based in the five Kenya RAPID counties, 26 percent of whom were women. The team conducted between six and eleven interviews per county.

## ASSESSING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE KENYA RAPID DESIGN (EQ1)

A five-year \$35.5 million public private partnership/Global Development Alliance (GDA) program, Kenya RAPID was funded jointly by USAID, SDC, private sector partners, and Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) international Non-Government Organization (INGO) members. Coordinated by the MWA,<sup>1</sup> Kenya RAPID brings together public, private and civil society institutions and communities to increase access to water and sanitation for people and water for livestock and to rebuild a healthy rangeland-management ecosystem in five ASAL counties (Turkana, Isiolo, Marsabit, Wajir, and Garissa). As documented in the approved Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP), the Kenya RAPID theory of change is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The MWA is implementing KENYA RAPID in collaboration with four of its members in Kenya: CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Food for the Hungry (FH), and World Vision (WV), and in collaboration with its private sector partners: Aqua for All, The KCB Foundation, The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, The Vitol Foundation, IBM Research Africa, SweetSense, Davis & Shirtliff, and Acacia Water.

*IF we build responsive and accountable governance frameworks that ensure sustainable provision of water and pasture in target counties, and develop and operationalize replicable and scalable business models for sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and livestock service delivery, THEN communities in target counties will have increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management, AND THEREFORE, sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands will be achieved.*

Kenya RAPID builds on the successes and lessons learned from USAID's Kenya Arid Lands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (KALDRR-WASH) and the SDC-supported Water for Livestock (W4L) programs, both implemented in Northern Kenya from 2012 to 2014. Kenya RAPID was designed to support five county governments in delivering on their newly devolved responsibilities mandated in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. Three strategic objectives (SO) anchor Kenya RAPID's theory of change:

- **SO1:** A responsive and accountable governance framework is in place and operational at county government level that ensures sustainable provision of water and pasture;
- **SO2:** Replicable and scalable business models for sustainable WASH and livestock service delivery have been developed and operationalized; and
- **SO3:** Communities have increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management.

The overarching assumption is that if the above objectives are met, then sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the ASALs will be achieved.

The Evaluation Team finds the overarching strategic objectives are clear, logical, and generally mutually supporting, albeit not all mutually reliant. A responsive and accountable governance framework that provides clear rules, regulations, and expectations sets the stage for replicable and scalable business models to be introduced, which then can lead to increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management. While the links are clear, achieving SO1 does not automatically ensure that efforts to achieve SO2 and then SO3 will be successful.

The devolution context loomed large in the interviews with many respondents grateful for the contribution that Kenya RAPID was making in support of building county capacity. While Kenya RAPID may have initially sought to apply a somewhat uniform approach, the differences between counties in terms of political cohesion, economic foundations, cultural and religious belief systems, security threats and other aspects appear to have resulted in different levels of uptake across the counties.

Within this context, Kenya RAPID offered a highly ambitious set of activities aimed at supporting county governments to overcome significant capacity gaps. The Evaluation Team was not able to assess how significantly this has changed as a function of Kenya RAPID support. World Bank officials noted that much still needs to be done to put procurement, safeguarding and other systems in place. With the results framework in mind, a potentially more effective reframing would suggest a three-pronged approach with a focus on continued strengthening of county governments, utilities and other community-public institutions, and supporting entry or refining private sector business models. A program of work focused on enhancing the enabling environment and strengthening service providers should result in communities (with greater voice) having increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management, shifting SO3 to an output rather than an objective. In fact, the hypothesis in the original results framework suggests this approach but could go further to seek more transformative approaches that promote greater inclusion and shift (gender and other) norms.

Kenya RAPID assumes that devolution would make county governments eager to be more **accountable to citizens**. Overall, the assumption appears to be valid and Kenya RAPID's design and engagement has made a significant contribution to fostering this greater accountability, through support of policy development with public participation. County officials recognize that the governance framing

documents and the capacity building efforts are critical to their ability to deliver as well as to exercise some control over what development partners, private sector developers/companies, and communities implement on the ground. Framing documents are ultimately being used to guide and secure investments, establish and strengthen utilities and rural water schemes, and provide for the creation of resource governance structures (for water management and rangeland management in particular). Communities in this post-devolution period are participating more in county-level forums and placing greater demands on county officials in an effort to shape priorities and investments. How representative this participation is, and whether there are biases toward certain geographic areas and other demographic considerations, community or wealth groupings, proves difficult to assess.

For health, livelihood and conflict mitigation, Kenya RAPID assumes that natural **integration** across thematic interventions can and should be tackled in a more holistic and inclusive manner. Indeed, the four INGO implementing partners (IPs) bring extensive experience and expertise across WASH, rangeland management, livelihoods, health, and nutrition. Literature from the desk review highlighted a variety of potential sectoral linkages. Except for nutrition and Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), these linkages did not come out clearly in interviews with county officials or IP staff. The key achievement from an integration point of view, thus, appears to be the emphasis on joint planning and coordination at the county level through the County Program Steering Committees and County Coordinating Units with joint community visits from different county departments. In terms of validating the design, this approach could still bear fruit as the seeds have been planted in terms of forging a new understanding at county level of the linkages between previously siloed activity areas. Thus, while the design was optimistically appropriate, implementation may have been hampered by events beyond Kenya RAPID's control and the effort required to galvanize county departments toward a more coordinated approach appears to have taken longer than anticipated.

The overriding assumption is that the five Kenya RAPID counties are now in a stronger position to meet national and donor requirements and have higher absorptive capacity to receive funding, as well as greater legitimacy to lobby on behalf of the ASALs at the national level. The governance framing documents are an important first step and Kenya RAPID's engagement could be seen as providing a stamp of approval, some form of risk underwriting, and some safeguarding against mismanagement.

The Evaluation Team applauds Kenya RAPID's ambition and inclusivity of county governments in the design, management and implementation. Without a clearer overarching framing, it is easy to see how most interviewees saw Kenya RAPID as a series of component parts rather than as an integrated whole. The commitment and enthusiasm from county officials are high, but also with the insistence that Kenya RAPID and its funding streams need to continue for several more years.

## **ASSESSING KENYA RAPID AS A PARTNERSHIP (EQ2)**

Kenya RAPID's theory of change was delivered through a multi-partner, multi-layered arrangement that puts counties at the center of programming. The MWA Program Coordination Unit (PCU) based in Nairobi drove the overall program level and the County Coordination Unit (CCU) played that role in each of the counties in support of County Program Steering Committees (CPSC). Overall, the structures put in place were effective and the partnership spirit very positive. The different levels and the designated roles and responsibilities of various partners were clearly laid out and the organizational design well understood. Under the coordination of a dynamic project leader and PCU, the size of the partnership does not appear to have been a hindrance to progress. That said, it is difficult to assess whether the counterfactual with a smaller program with fewer themes and interventions and a smaller number of counties and partners would have yielded higher impact.

Much effort went in to forging the partnership at all levels. Kenya RAPID partners experienced a slow start to actual implementation over an initial 12–18-month period. Memoranda of Understanding

(MOUs) signed between Kenya RAPID and each of the participating counties appear to have withstood the test of time and administrative turnover as an indication of the relationship between Kenya RAPID and the counties. Having IPs with a solid history of working in the counties proved a real strength. This meant minimal disruption to implementation post-election, even if policy level work was slowed down.

While different partners and individuals may not be completely unified around a **common agenda**, the Program Implementation through a Facilitative Approach (PIFA) has been universally praised as the appropriate approach to support Kenya’s “journey to self-reliance.” Within Kenya RAPID itself, more clarity was needed for partners to understand how their contributions are mutually reinforcing.

Mentioned numerous times by county officials, the data points collected are helpful, particularly borehole sensor data and from Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). County-level interviewees, however, expressed differing degrees of ownership of the data as well as the ICT tools. Thus, the Evaluation Team struggled to assess how Kenya RAPID data was being used in a practical sense by county officials to inform decision-making. Similarly, beyond whether targets were met, from a partnership perspective, it remains unclear how data helped shape Kenya RAPID’s own investment plans, providing an evidence base for modifications, redirections or staying the course.

As the **backbone organization**, MWA received huge appreciation for how it navigated and positioned Kenya RAPID in a neutral way. The Chief of Party (COP) was described as a “great relationships manager”, and the PCU staff members were described as talented, knowledgeable, and supportive. Structures put in place at all levels appear to have been effective at keeping activities on track. That said, post the initial negotiations, how decision-making occurred (e.g., on spending) was difficult to gauge, as were the sorts of issues that were brought to each level of the partnership.

Certainly, an effective PCU is critical to making this kind of partnership work, given its size, scope, and breadth. Often “dragged into logistics and related firefighting challenges,” however, the PCU was seen by many to be too lean in terms of staffing to optimize its role as a knowledge broker across the partnership. While the IPs generally have substantial in-house technical capacity, opportunities may have been missed whereby the PCU could have facilitated deeper exchange and internal reflection, particularly around social inclusion/gender and the business model components of the activity. While financially prudent for the PCU to remain quite lean, this may have presented a false economy for a program of this complexity and size if the technical capacity of key staff was underutilized to meet other more administrative needs.

To provide **overarching direction** to Kenya RAPID, a 12-member Program Steering Committee (PSC) met twice yearly with representation at senior levels from across the partnership plus two representatives from national level government agencies (Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the National Drought Management Authority [NDMA]). An abridged list of the key tasks of the PSC included overseeing implementation, approving program policies and strategies, supervising the PCU, and intervening as a last resort in case of disagreement or conflict. With significant turnover, a key question is whether Kenya RAPID received robust and consistent guidance in terms of strategic direction. On balance though, as a quasi-Board of Directors, the PSC arrangement appears to have been quite standard and not overly cumbersome to manage for the partnership in terms of resource allocation. Keeping partners at a senior level apprised of progress and challenges and providing space to interrogate the pace of progress and to compare notes across counties appears to have made the PSC a useful organizing component of Kenya RAPID.

### **ASSESSING KENYA RAPID’S APPROACH TO BUSINESS MODELS (EQ3)**

According to both the literature and interviewees, the ASALs continue to present a challenging development context of dispersed populations, unclear policy on private sector engagement, insufficient

physical infrastructure, and a culture of not paying for water and sanitation services. Given these factors, the general sense from interviewees was that at present private sector firms remain less likely to invest in the ASALs relative to other regions of the country. Recognizing that, Kenya RAPID is seen to have helpfully encouraged private sector engagement, shifted mindsets somewhat, and even made headway in a few areas, particularly around water service delivery. With public sector resources and capacity unlikely to fill the gap, Kenya RAPID's focus on sustainability of services and strengthening commercial approaches to water service management were appreciated in a context where much of the discussion revolves around expanding service delivery. Ultimately, a more structured approach (combined with a longer time frame for business models to take root) might have seen more direct achievements in this key element of the Kenya RAPID theory of change.

Looking first at strategy, interviewees noted that more work was needed to galvanize understanding on the potential roles of the private sector. In the absence of a more structured analysis, the Evaluation Team is unclear how Kenya RAPID determined: 1) the gaps, needs, and viability of the business models; 2) the potential market size or response of a customer base, including lower quintile customers; and 3) risk mitigation and other enabling aspects needed to encourage a private sector response. Such a framing might have structured conversations at the county level more effectively.

Of note, the key partner with a dedicated responsibility for moving this agenda forward (Aqua for All) rather abruptly left the program in the third year. Rather than a more coordinated effort across the partnership, the onus appears to have been on this lead organization to structure and deliver this component. Despite having put forward over 15 possible business approaches for Kenya RAPID to support, differences in opinion around strategic direction proved insurmountable barriers for Aqua for All from a programmatic perspective. More discussion on analyzing and underwriting the risks of the private sector may have been instructive. Based on interview responses, perceived or real pressure from USAID on reaching the Kenya RAPID targets may also have stymied further risk taking.

Apart from a few exceptions—notably, Davis & Shirliff (an engineering and infrastructure firm) and Maji Milele (the developer of the ATM model)—“private” partners in the Kenya RAPID activity were not actively looking to forge their own sustained transaction-based relationship with households, communities, counties, utilities, other suppliers or service providers. One interviewee framed this in the sense that Kenya RAPID spent a significant amount of time talking *about* but not necessarily *to* that part of the private sector that would be most likely to actively develop business models in the ASALs.

These strategic and analytical aspects notwithstanding, several technologies and approaches for water delivery hold promise in the ASAL region. Numerous interviewees considered that the technological innovations introduced by Kenya RAPID have contributed to solving challenges experienced by communities in the delivery of water services. Despite the program having invested in the initial stages, other technologies and approaches in the sanitation sector (e.g., biogas center, container-based solutions, and converting waste into briquettes) did not see similar success due apparently to a lack of acceptance by the communities, lack of security in some geographic areas to pursue further, and (unverified) claims of competing approaches with free pilots being offered by some INGOs.

ATMs distribute set amounts of water based on a pre-paid token system, helping to reduce non-revenue water. This appears to stem corruption at water points and creates a more reliable and predictable income stream that can be shared between the community water committees and the managers of the overall water scheme. The ATM system could also be introduced as an approach for water for livestock and water bowsers. With the challenges of high salinity of groundwater in most ASAL areas, the desalination technology piloted in Wajir also appears to hold promise. Another promising business approach, an insurance scheme for water system repair and maintenance appears to have expanded in terms of coverage of more community water schemes and holds great potential across the ASAL region

and in Kenya generally. Water Management Committees pay a set annual rate and contracted private sector technical teams make repairs without additional cost to the community.

On the agriculture side, there is some conflation of income generation activities linked to increased food production at the household level with private sector business model initiatives. Income generation activities (e.g., beekeeping, vegetable drying, and milk production) all play an important part in enhancing critical food and livelihood security for poorer households. From a business perspective, a common refrain from interviewees was that more could have been done to support access to farming supplies (e.g., drip irrigation technologies) or creating opportunities for value addition and links to markets.

By all accounts, this component appears to have been stymied by strategy but also by the five-year timeframe. More effort could have been made to bring in private operators and service providers, private product suppliers and private infrastructure providers. Thus, creating a more shared and cohesive vision early on around what needed to occur to promote different commercial solutions and overcome different barriers and what was the balance between Kenya RAPID and county engagement in driving these activities would all have been useful. Given the wide range of responsibilities placed on a small PCU team, more dedicated resources could have helped advance these conversations further between the partners, scan the horizon for potentially viable models, and foster the enabling environment that would encourage the private sector to engage more in these markets. As it is not always easy to predict how a project will progress at the outset, greater flexibility around some of the funding to allow partners to pursue new opportunities as they emerged could have been helpful.

#### **ASSESSING THE FACILITATIVE APPROACH (EQ4)**

Much appreciated by county staff, the PIFA or facilitative approach has been a critical component of Kenya RAPID. IP staff members were embedded in county government offices to: 1) Provide direct support on the drafting and approval of governance framing documents for county priority areas; 2) Support the joint planning and coordination of activities between the county government and Kenya RAPID; 3) Assist the county in integrating priority activities across different departments (e.g., water, sanitation, rangeland management, and nutrition); and 4) Encourage the coordination and integration of other development partner work in the counties within the framing of the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs).

For the WASH, livestock, and rangeland management sectors, Kenya RAPID supported county capacity needs assessments (CCNAs) across three dimensions: the systemic or enabling environment, the organizational, and the individual levels. The County Capacity Building Fund (CCBF) was then created as a joint fund managed by the PCU to solicit requests and administer capacity building efforts on the counties' behalf. Many activities of the CCBF were scheduled later in the five-year activity and thus were significantly slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key challenge of working through a facilitative approach has been staff turnover within the government as a result of elections midway through Kenya RAPID and the general reshuffling of appointees across project-related roles. While instructive in the early years, there does not appear to have been a subsequent updated capacity assessment after the elections. The Evaluation Team was not able to assess the effectiveness or impact of Kenya RAPID-supported training activities, but county officials speak with confidence regarding their ability to address community needs. A key stumbling block remains, however, around staffing levels to cover water resources, sanitation, rangelands, and nutrition. The lack of a focused capacity assessment on nutrition and on the office of the Public Health Officer (PHO) was likely a missed opportunity. However, one government official recognized that the provided trainings were meant to act as a catalyst, in that: "Kenya RAPID may not address everything but can contribute in terms of building skills for the county to go on its own."

Alongside the practical contributions, county officials expressed a growing appreciation for what INGOs bring to the table in terms of experience, expertise, and skills. Interviewees from IPs acknowledged that the skillsets of embedded staff have been as much, if not more, about their facilitation role as about technical knowledge and implementation experience. While progress might be slower than traditional ways of working, the likelihood of ownership by the county, the ability to coordinate across initiatives, and the emphasis on longer-term sustainability through this facilitative approach is likely higher.

Government counterparts were appreciative of Kenya RAPID's support in developing governance framing documents (policies, bills, acts, by-laws), providing structure to county-level governance of water, livestock, and rangeland management. This complicated and time-intensive process required significant back-and-forth across stakeholder groups who may not understand the technical aspects or the options put before them. As a result, the emphasis on capacity assessment and direct hands-on systems strengthening was seen as helping counties deliver on their mandates more directly. Kenya RAPID's modeling of constructive leadership behaviors also appears to have shaped county engagement with other Development Partners. The approach should lead to cost-effectiveness through more integrated planning and efficient logistics during implementation of activities, some greater understanding of how different development priorities can mutually support each other, and a greater sense of ownership of development processes supported by Development Partners at the county level.

Numerous activities were directed at enhancing community-level governance as well, including: 1) Strengthening structures for resource governance (e.g., Water User Associations [WUAs], Water Management Committees, and Rangeland Management Committees [RMCs]); 2) Training communities on the use of different technologies (e.g., ATMs); 3) Training households on different aspects relating to wellbeing (e.g., nutrition, hygiene, and how to treat drinking water); and 4) Setting up of community complaints and feedback mechanisms for water services. While feedback has been positive, a key challenge remains around the ability of county administrations to sustain these efforts with limited staffing levels and insufficient resources. There also remains a residual sense in many communities of dependency with community members still "always expecting to receive something."

In terms of an exit strategy, one respondent noted that the whole facilitative approach is about embedding an exit strategy from the start whereby the IP team becomes more and more invisible as the project progresses. Ultimately, the team questions whether exit had been fully thought through but also whether Kenya RAPID was long enough to prepare for exit in a meaningful way that ensures sustainability of the contribution and approach.

## **CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

The Evaluation Team approached the **gender** component of the evaluation by applying the USAID framework for gender analysis (USAID, 2017). While Kenya RAPID achieved a number of small, yet significant, gains from a gender perspective, limited data and a lean response to gender concepts from which to draw concrete conclusions is seen as a finding in itself.

While the results could not be assessed directly with communities, the concerted effort by Kenya RAPID to understand and respond to deeply rooted cultural norms and beliefs is perhaps most noteworthy in terms of behavior change communication (BCC) and training material design. Kenya RAPID's design included elements that would accommodate women's traditional gender roles of caring for children, being responsible for household nutrition, and water collection. Women appear to have benefited substantially from the introduction of labor-saving technologies particularly the ATM system. Respondents noted that women found this technology to increase efficiency (e.g., reduced time queuing due to increased time options to collect water), and that they could keep the token on a keychain without needing cash to purchase water. Kenya RAPID promoted economic opportunities for women, youth, and the disabled through strengthening women's cooperatives and savings and lending

committees. Evaluation findings also revealed an increase in water access for people with disabilities (PWDs) mainly through inclusive infrastructure design. While findings reveal an increase in *access* to resources, *control* over resources was less clearly in evidence.

Kenya RAPID sought to ensure that policies and laws developed to govern water, land, and livestock would be gender intentional by involving women and PWDs in drafting. Kenya RAPID made consistent and concerted efforts to promote women's participation in all activity-related meetings, following the one-third gender rule (i.e., no more than two-thirds of participants can be of the same gender) as stipulated in Kenya's Gender Policy (Republic of Kenya, 2019). While effective in increasing the participation of women within governance structures, this representative quota does not guarantee increases in women's decision-making power and voice within meetings. Despite efforts to promote participation of women, there appears to be a ceiling whereby women are accepted in mid-level positions or on boards, but rarely, if at all, do they hold senior leadership positions.

Indeed, Kenya RAPID activities brought a number of key benefits to women in a complex environment. An early, more rigorous gender analysis prior to program inception would have informed project activities and the AMEP. Stringent accountability measures in place at all levels would ensure the prioritization of gender-transformative efforts. A dedicated social inclusion and gender staff person, if not a subcontracted team, could provide technical expertise on, as well as prioritize the implementation of, gender analysis findings in activities. Without facing rigid social and gender norms explicitly, the program risks exacerbating vulnerabilities, even while meeting WASH and livelihood targets.

USAID defines **resilience** as “the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.” (USAID, 2012)<sup>2</sup> The main hazards to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods include drought, flooding, livestock disease, pests, and conflict, which can stem from these other pressures. Interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of drought, improving livestock health, and strengthening market linkages all build livelihood resilience. In this context, Kenya RAPID promoted agribusiness models to increase and diversify household food income sources as a means of hedging risk.

Efforts to enhance the water supply infrastructure had positive results. While analysis is still ongoing through an impact evaluation, real-time data transmitted to both county officials and NDMA from borehole sensors is contributing to community and household resilience. Quicker repairs when there is a breakdown ensures borehole pump functionality leading to a more reliable water source. In Garissa, the introduction of piping as an alternative to open canals improved access to water, reduced water losses, saved labor resources, and minimized impact of seasonal flooding. The promotion of basic or primary sanitation facilities was, however, not as effective at building resilience. More advanced sanitation facilities that could withstand seasonal flooding could prove more promising. Some activity in this area had begun toward the end of the project but was stalled by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Overall, the Evaluation Team heard more about promoting income diversification rather than focusing on existing income sources, with little mentioned about coordinating livestock off-take in anticipation of poor rains, which usually results in rising livestock maintenance costs and falling livestock prices. The improved management of grazing lands and water sources would likely make it easier to maintain livestock during a drought, but evidence was not forthcoming of whether households were or were not able to maintain this asset base, which is so fundamental to the pastoral livelihood.

In this context, Kenya RAPID implemented or enabled multiple initiatives that are likely to improve household and livelihood resilience to shocks. The project did not invest, however, in collecting and

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<sup>2</sup> USAID. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crises: USAID Policy and Program Guidance. December 2012, p5. (available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/USAIDResiliencePolicyGuidanceDocument.pdf>)

analyzing data that could demonstrate whether improved resilience was an outcome of these efforts. While Kenya RAPID IPs bring significant experience in resilience, the Evaluation Team was unable to assess how effectively this was harnessed. Furthermore, as Kenya RAPID is fundamentally about building government capacity, how effective county governments are becoming at protecting citizens from recurring external shocks must be considered going forward as one proxy for resilience.

Regarding Kenya RAPID's impact on **conflict**, the Evaluation Team cannot present findings with any degree of confidence given the inability to travel and conduct FGDs at the community level. That said, a number of Kenya RAPID initiatives would logically have supported efforts at conflict mitigation. Kenya RAPID strengthened community governance systems, focusing on the establishment, registration, and training of committees to manage water resources and oversee rangeland management including planned grazing. Feed storage facilities have also mitigated conflict over resources (pastureland in particular) during drought. Resource use mapping has also made it easier to track pastoralist patterns of movement and thus provide targeted support to their production systems. Kenya RAPID also introduced conflict resolution mechanisms through the formation of community dialogues (peace committees) and sought to ensure inclusivity on and ownership through clan and family representation.

From a broader perspective, Kenya RAPID had project work interrupted in some counties due to conflict and insecurity incidences (particularly Al Shabaab threats in Wajir and Garissa). Seen as rather matter of fact by interviewees, Kenya RAPID's task was to navigate around these events as carefully as possible to ensure the safety of staff, but also the continuity of programming where feasible.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Regarding its overarching impact, the Evaluation Team applauds Kenya RAPID's ambition and inclusivity, noting a clear shift in county government officials' attitudes. Within the context of devolution, Kenya RAPID offered an ambitious set of activities aimed at supporting county governments to develop critical policy and related documents and overcome significant capacity gaps. A key achievement was the emphasis on county-level joint planning and cross-department coordination. Overall, the project management structures put in place were effective and the partnership spirit very positive. The facilitative approach was a critical component of Kenya RAPID, with the embedding of IP staff members in county government offices, completion of county capacity needs assessments and the creation of a County Capacity Building Fund (CCBF).

Given the limitations of this evaluation, conducted remotely in its entirety and based on available data, the Evaluation Team is unable to answer whether: 1) counties will continue to work through a multi-themed approach without Kenya RAPID's facilitation support, 2) technologies and data will continue to be used for decision-making, 3) women's empowerment efforts will be sustained without addressing entrenched gender norms, and 4) community structures put in place or strengthened will withstand the test of time.

# **I.0 EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

## **I.1 PURPOSE**

The performance evaluation was commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) mission in conjunction with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) at the end of the Kenya Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development (Kenya RAPID) activity's fifth year. The primary purpose of the evaluation was

to assess the activity's design and implementation in order to inform the design and implementation of future water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); nutrition; livestock; and rangeland management activities in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) undertaken by all Kenya RAPID partners. It will also provide learning on how innovative partnership approaches can sustainably support Kenya on its journey to self-reliance and resilience.

## **I.2 AUDIENCE AND INTENDED USES**

The primary audiences for the evaluation report are USAID/KEA's Office of Economic Growth and Integration (OEGI), SDC, Kenya RAPID partners, and key Government of Kenya (GOK) counterparts. The evaluation report may also inform the policies and approaches of other partners working in these sectors, especially those working in the ASALs. Further, the evaluation findings may be used by USAID/Washington technical staff to inform global efforts in the WASH sector.

## **I.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

The evaluation sought to answer the following evaluation questions (EQs), which were proposed by USAID/KEA in the Statement of Work (SOW, see Annex I).

### **I.3.1 STRATEGIC**

1. To what extent is the design of Kenya RAPID appropriate to the context in the ASALs?
  - Which approaches were not well suited to this context?
  - Are the assumptions and theory of change valid?
  - In particular, were there innovative features of the Kenya RAPID design that the Evaluation Team should consider in determining whether Kenya RAPID effectively responded to beneficiary needs and priorities?
    - Kenya RAPID worked across many levels, from direct engagement with households to systems-level work with the government and private sector;
    - Kenya RAPID combined WASH, livestock, nutrition, and rangeland management interventions within one activity; and
    - Kenya RAPID focused on utilizing market-based approaches to achieve its goals.
2. To what extent did bringing diverse partners together within the Global Development Alliance (GDA) structure result in broader impacts than would otherwise have been achieved?
  - What were the resource implications of this type of partnership?
  - What kind of strategic decisions were undertaken by the steering committee, and how effective was this model for partnership governance?

### **I.3.2 TECHNICAL**

3. To what extent was Kenya RAPID able to establish sustainable, replicable, and scalable business models?
  - Were there any spillover effects or results achieved through private sector engagement?
  - Were the business models identified appropriate to the ASAL context?

4. How effective was the facilitative, governance-focused approach under Kenya RAPID?
  - Were changes in county government capacity and commitment achieved?
  - To what extent was Kenya RAPID successful in improving community level governance?

### I.3.3 CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

In conducting the evaluation, the Evaluation Team also considered the following cross-cutting themes:

- **Gender:** Issues related to gender cut across all Kenya RAPID components. The Evaluation Team addressed gender considerations in all evaluation questions, in particular, noting whether achievements were equitable across gender and whether the program was successful in empowering women.
- **Resilience:** Kenya RAPID is part of USAID's larger efforts to address recurrent shocks and stressors in the ASALs. The Evaluation Team considered how the program's achievements contributed to building resilience among the target population.
- **Conflict Sensitivity:** The Evaluation Team considered issues related to conflict in the ASALs in responding to the questions. Any results related to how the program contributed to the prevention or mitigation of violence were included.

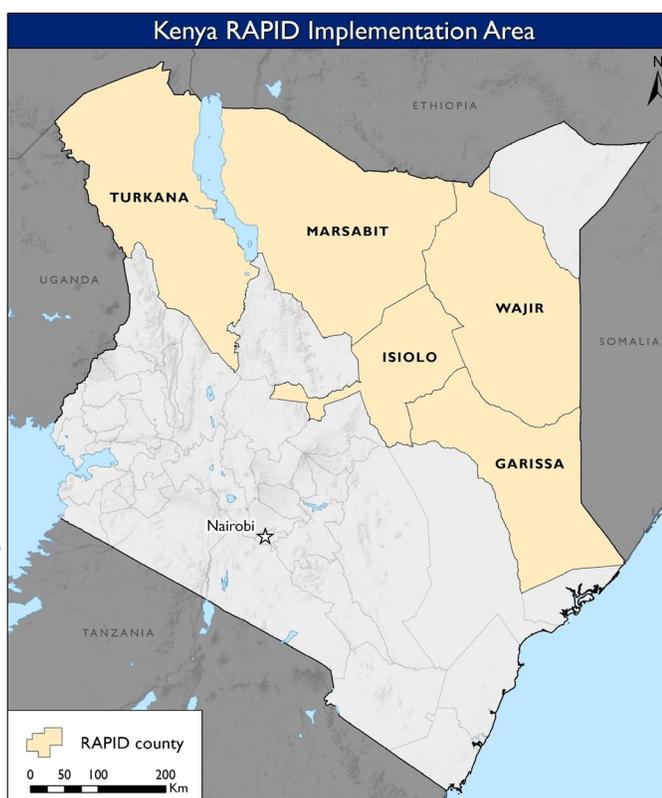
Kenya RAPID's design modalities are ultimately about the partnership, the business models and the facilitative approach with the counties. As there is some overlap across the evaluation questions, efforts have been made to position the findings in this report where they are most relevant in relation to individual EQs.

## 2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Kenya RAPID is a five-year US\$35.5 million public-private partnership/GDA activity that is funded jointly by USAID, SDC, private sector partners, and Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) members. Implementation of Kenya RAPID is coordinated by the MWA.<sup>3</sup> Kenya RAPID brings together public and private sector institutions and communities to increase access to water and sanitation for people, increase access to water for livestock, and to rebuild a healthy rangeland-management ecosystem. The program combines the assets and experience of development actors and private and public institutions by leveraging their capital and investments, innovation, and access to markets to address the complex problems in the WASH sector that culminate in inadequate water access and poor governance of natural resources in the ASALs. The goal of the program is to ensure sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the ASALs. Kenya RAPID has three strategic objectives (SOs) that form the pillars around which the theory of change is anchored:

- **SO1:** A responsive and accountable governance framework is in place and operational at county government level that ensures sustainable provision of water and pasture;
- **SO2:** Replicable and scalable business models for sustainable WASH and livestock service delivery have been developed and operationalized; and
- **SO3:** Communities have increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management.

Working in close collaboration with county governments, Kenya RAPID is implementing activities in five ASAL counties: Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Turkana, and Wajir, and is expecting to reach 450,000 rural Kenyans. Kenya RAPID is part of larger USAID resilience efforts in Kenya's Northern Arid lands to sequence, layer, and integrate emergency relief activities with long-term development programs.



**FIGURE I. KENYA RAPID IMPLEMENTATION AREA**

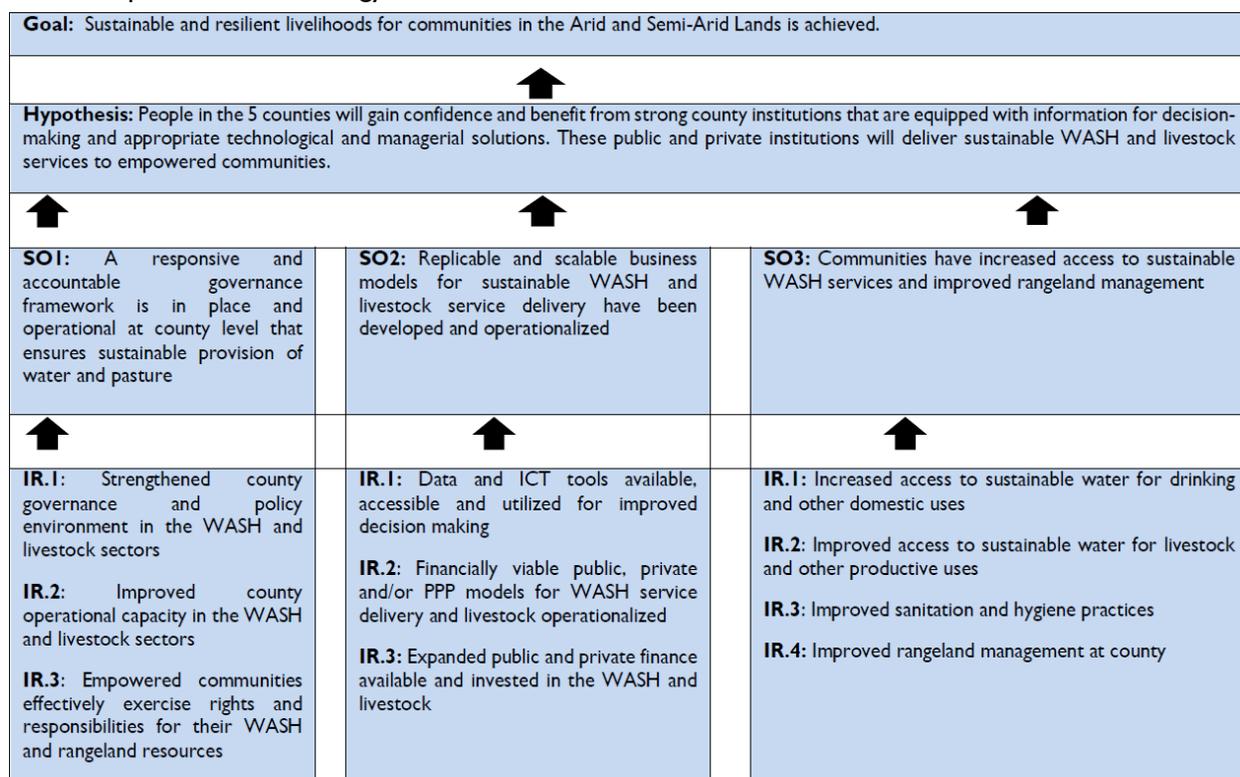
<sup>3</sup> The MWA has been implementing KENYA RAPID in collaboration with four of its members in Kenya: CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Food for the Hungry (FH) and World Vision (WV), and private sector partners: Aqua for All, The KCB Foundation, The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, The Vitrol Foundation, IBM Research Africa, SweetSense, Davis & Shirtliff, and Acacia Water.

## 2.1 DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

As documented in the approved Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP), the Kenya RAPID theory of change is as follows:

*If we build responsive and accountable governance frameworks that ensure sustainable provision of water and pasture in target counties, and develop and operationalize replicable and scalable business models for sustainable WASH and livestock service delivery, THEN communities in target counties will have increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management, AND THEREFORE, sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands will be achieved.*

Ten intermediate results (IRs) further specify activities in relation to the three stated strategic objectives. The results framework from the AMEP is presented in Figure 2 and highlights the Kenya RAPID implementation strategy.



**FIGURE 2. KENYA RAPID RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

## 3.0 EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

### 3.1 EVALUATION METHODS

Given the dynamic situation with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Kenya and globally, the Evaluation Team proposed several options for conducting the performance evaluation to ensure timely and meaningful inputs and as much rigor as possible. The options were distinguished by a series of decision points related to the ability of the team to travel internationally and domestically, and on the ability to congregate in country. Ultimately, team members were advised against travelling or holding face-to-face meetings and thereby conducted the entire evaluation remotely.

Despite the limitations this posed and any resulting omissions or misrepresentations, the Evaluation Team is confident that the findings and recommendations herein reflect as accurate a picture of the Kenya RAPID activity as has been possible under the COVID-19 circumstances. Considering the goal of the performance evaluation was not to verify and validate actual quantitative outputs, but rather to understand the effectiveness of the activity approach and the likely sustainability, it was possible—although not ideal—to conduct a qualitative analysis remotely.

The remote-driven performance evaluation consisted of a desk review with a thorough analysis of relevant written materials (from MWA, GOK, academic, and grey literature on related programs). The desk review and associated findings then informed the design of the primary data collection stage, which was based on a series of interviews with primary key informants, undertaken via Skype, telephone, or other virtual media. A data analysis and reporting phase concluded in this End-Term Performance Evaluation Report and related communications deliverables for submission to USAID, SDC, and Kenya RAPID partners.

### 3.2 DESK REVIEW

As mentioned, prior to primary data collection and in preparation of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Team undertook a detailed desk review of project documents and reports to become familiar with the project design and progress to date. To help understand the context in which Kenya RAPID has been implemented, the desk review also included:

- Relevant national- and county-level GOK documents (i.e. laws, policies, and strategies);
- Relevant background information on WASH, livelihood, and rangeland management and nutrition programs funded by other donors in the ASAL region;
- Documented gender and social inclusion initiatives in the ASAL region highlighting best practices to date; and
- Published academic and grey literature related to relevant sectors (i.e., WASH, livelihood, rangeland management, and nutrition), cross-cutting issues (i.e., gender, resilience, and conflict sensitivity), and devolution in Kenya more generally.

Findings from the desk review were captured in a comprehensive report submitted to USAID and SDC on 19 June 2020 and entitled *Resilient Arid Lands Partnership for Integrated Development (Kenya RAPID): Performance Evaluation Initial Findings Report / Desk Review*. The report included a series of questions that were incorporated in the Key Informant Interview (KII) Guides. Annex IV contains a list of documents reviewed and consulted for the desk review.

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTION

#### 3.3.1 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

By phone or other remote media (primarily Skype and Google Meet), the Evaluation Team conducted interviews with approximately 70 key informants from USAID/KEA, SDC, GOK (national level), Kenya RAPID staff, Kenya RAPID implementing partner (IP) staff, county government officials (for WASH, pastoralist support, rangeland management, health, livestock, and nutrition, among other areas), private sector partners, and utility staff. The first iteration of the interview list was provided by the Kenya RAPID Program Coordination Unit (PCU). Some interviewees, like the Kenya RAPID Chief of Party (COP) and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), were interviewed more than once or contacted with follow-up questions during different stages of the data collection phase to validate shifting or emerging lines of inquiry. An introductory letter from USAID/KEA was used to facilitate access to government counterparts. A list of interviewees is provided in Annex IV.

Approximately 60 percent of interviewees were based in the five counties covered by Kenya RAPID. Twenty-six (26) percent of interviewees were women, while 74 percent were men. The team conducted between six and eleven interviews per county.

KII guides (see Annex III – Data Collection Instruments) were developed by the research team in response to the desk review and a thorough mapping exercise of the Kenya RAPID documents. Interview questions covered all relevant sectors in the evaluation (i.e., WASH, livelihood, rangeland management and nutrition), as well as cross-cutting issues (i.e., gender, resilience and conflict sensitivity). Questions were asked to respondents depending on his or her position and content-area. Cross-cutting questions were asked of all respondents, albeit sometimes in an abridged fashion.

KIIs were typically between 60–90 minutes long and were conducted in English. A two-person team conducted most interviews, with one person guiding the interview while the other person took notes. Interview teams were determined by the content expertise of the respondent; in situations where the content specialist team member was not available due to scheduling, another team member stepped in and systematically followed the KII guide for that specific respondent. In addition to real-time notetaking, interview teams requested permission from interviewees to make an audio recording of the discussion. In all cases, discussions were recorded only after gaining the interviewee’s verbal consent. Transcriptions from the recordings were then used to fill gaps in the notes captured during the discussions.

As agreed with USAID/KEA and SDC, some national-level KIIs were conducted early in the review to provide the Evaluation Team with some initial background on the context in which Kenya RAPID has been operating, and to provide some sense of where Kenya RAPID was making significant progress.

#### 3.3.2 SITE VISITS

As travel was not advisable during the performance evaluation, site visits could not be conducted. The team thus relied on triangulating information through multiple interview sources. While it was unfortunate that the team could not visit communities and see directly the infrastructure that was put in place by Kenya RAPID, the focus of the evaluation was qualitative and not focused on validating impact or verifying targets. To supplement interviews and give a sense of the project area and interventions, the Evaluation Team reviewed photos of Kenya RAPID activities from project reports and the Mid-Term Evaluation Report and screened videos from the Kenya RAPID success story series.

### 3.3.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

As they could not easily be conducted remotely and were particularly inadvisable in-person due to the risk of COVID-19 transmission in groups, no focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted during the performance evaluation.

## 3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

### 3.4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis phase coincided with final interviews. To expedite analysis of qualitative information, the Evaluation Team developed a simple coding tree and set of three to five key codes for each of the evaluation questions, as well as a special code to highlight key quotations from the qualitative data. Cross-cutting considerations received a stand-alone code for analysis. Three members of the team used the Dedoose<sup>4</sup> software platform for data analysis. Dedoose is a cloud-based platform that facilitated the sharing of data across the Evaluation Team and allowed the Team Leader easy access to data for spot-check coding. Using the platform allowed for excerpts from interviews to be grouped by domains (codes based on the evaluation questions) and topics (e.g., water, sanitation, nutrition, etc.). Coded excerpts were then allocated to team members by area of expertise for analysis and to identify patterns of responses by partner group, county and level of seniority. The Team Leader then drafted a general response to each EQ and team members were asked to confirm the findings and provide examples from within their areas of expertise. Secondary data from the desk review and project monitoring data provided contextual background to help explain the results and to triangulate findings from the qualitative analysis. A team discussion was held to reflect further on the responses to each EQ.

The Evaluation Team provided a preliminary oral presentation to USAID/KEA and SDC staff on 17 August 2020 and questions raised during the session were used to refine the analysis and drafting of this report.

## 3.5 DATA MANAGEMENT

### 3.5.1 FILE ARCHITECTURE

The final evaluation outputs were organized in a folder structure with clear, descriptive and unique file names. The evaluation data and the information derived from this were organized and archived in files that can be easily reviewed, audited, reused and shared with USAID/KEA and SDC. All data were sorted and organized according to the mechanism used to generate them, such as transcripts and notes from KIIs. These source data files include:

1. Audio recordings of interviews; and
2. Transcription and translation files in Microsoft Word format, where applicable.

### 3.5.2 DATA FORMAT AND SHARING

The evaluation data and information were converted to the appropriate formats to be shared with USAID per Automated Directives System (ADS) 579 requirements and guidelines. The team will liaise with SDC to determine if this also suffices according to SDC requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dedoose.com/>

### 3.6 LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) Evaluation Team notes the following constraints that affected the delivery of the assignment and the team's mitigation measures, where possible.

- Due to COVID-19, international travel remained unadvisable throughout the term of the assignment. The United Kingdom-based Team Leader was thus unable to travel to Kenya to work with the Evaluation Team directly. Team meetings were conducted on Skype on at least a bi-weekly basis throughout the assignment. Further, lengthy update emails were provided by the Team Leader on at least a weekly basis with regular check-ins with individual team members.
- Due to COVID-19, the Kenya-based team was also advised not to travel; thus, all meetings and interviews were conducted by phone or virtual media, a new norm for county officials. While this proved satisfactory to carry out the assignment, it was not ideal to create the free-flowing and frank discussions that face-to-face opportunities would have afforded.
- Scheduling interviews, particularly with some counterparts in the Kenya RAPID counties, proved challenging and involved multiple efforts to contact interviewees and conduct follow-up. Ultimately, while the team was able to interview about 70 respondents, the scheduling lag affected the timely delivery of the assignment.
- Phone/online interviews were not always optimal due to connection challenges, which consumed some of the limited time available from interviewees in some instances and hindered the ability of the Evaluation Team to forge more in-depth discussions, as would more likely occur in face-to-face interviews.
- The inability to conduct site visits to put the Kenya RAPID project in context more accurately, conduct FGDs with communities, and see the infrastructure and project in situ may have presented some limitations and omissions in the analysis. However, the task of the performance evaluation was not to validate or verify the impact of the activity or the numbers reported by Kenya RAPID. That said, the Evaluation Team looked for evidence that the types of interventions described in the documents and interviews were described consistently and would logically contribute to Kenya RAPID's wider objectives.

## 4.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings and conclusions for the four EQs are presented in this section. The reader should note that the findings do not necessarily track to the Kenya RAPID Results Framework. In practical terms, the Evaluation Questions contain significant overlap particularly with partnership, business models, and the facilitative approach all being key delivery modalities of the Kenya RAPID design. With admittedly some repetition, the Evaluation Team has sought to position the analysis where most relevant but also to signpost throughout where further information is provided.

Recommendations pertaining to each EQ are often embedded in the narrative and provided in list format in Section 5.

### 4.1 EVALUATION QUESTION 1: KENYA RAPID DESIGN

**EQ1 – TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE DESIGN OF KENYA RAPID APPROPRIATE TO THE CONTEXT IN THE ASALS?** (Are the assumptions and theory of change valid? Which approaches were not well suited to this context?)

**Note:** The “design” of Kenya RAPID includes various structural elements that are addressed in sections below in response to EQ2 on partnership, EQ3 on efforts to engage the private sector, and EQ4 on the facilitative approach. The focus of this section thus revolves around:

- The framing of Kenya RAPID;
- The contextual factors to which Kenya RAPID has sought to respond;
- The robustness of the linkages made across the three strategic objectives; and
- Kenya RAPID’s efforts to incorporate a multi-themed approach that integrates WASH, nutrition, rangeland management, and agriculture initiatives.

As noted elsewhere in this report, the performance Evaluation Team was not tasked with validating or verifying the quantity or quality of Kenya RAPID outputs on the ground.

As noted in the MWA Final Approved Proposal, Kenya RAPID builds on the successes and lessons learned from USAID’s Kenya Arid Lands Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program (KALDRR-WASH) and the SDC-supported Water for Livestock (W4L) program, both implemented in Northern Kenya from 2012 to 2014. Kenya RAPID was designed to support five county governments in delivering on their newly devolved power and responsibilities in response to the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. Three strategic objectives form the pillars around which Kenya RAPID’s theory of change is anchored:

#### Contextual Factors in the ASALs

As the name Arid and Semi-Arid Lands suggests, the counties in northern Kenya are faced with significant challenges including harsh climatic conditions and frequent, prolonged droughts. The nomadic lifestyle (in search of scarce pasture and water for livestock) affects WASH and nutrition programming approaches. High poverty levels, insecurity (both internal conflicts and external threats, like that posed by Al-Shabaab), and low literacy levels are also some of the key challenges faced by the counties in the ASAL region. Additionally, traditional gender roles (including those related to livelihoods and asset ownership) in the ASALs remain more deeply entrenched than elsewhere in the country. Counties in the ASALs are among over 30 counties in the country that have in recent years (2015–2019) experienced outbreaks of WASH-related diseases including cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea related ailments.<sup>+</sup> Diarrhea is among the top five morbidity-causing diseases in four of the five RAPID target counties, followed by skin disease and pneumonia.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>+</sup>County Sanitation Profiles 2014; 2017 (GOK/WB).

<sup>‡</sup>County Integrated Development Plans 2018-2022 (Wajir, Garissa, Turkana, Marsabit, Isiolo)

- **SO1:** A responsive and accountable governance framework is in place and operational at county government level that ensures sustainable provision of water and pasture;
- **SO2:** Replicable and scalable business models for sustainable WASH and livestock service delivery have been developed and operationalized; and
- **SO3:** Communities have increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management.

The overarching assumption is that if the above objectives are met, then sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the ASALs will be achieved.

The key programmatic elements of the RAPID design include an emphasis on:

- Supporting the five counties to develop governance framing documents for water and rangeland management;
- Incorporating a multi-themed approach that integrates WASH, nutrition, rangeland management, and agriculture initiatives;
- Supporting and building capacity of recently empowered county governments (elected in 2013) to meet their newly devolved mandates around WASH, rangeland management, agri-nutrition, and other development areas;
- Introducing and embedding technologies and processes that ensure evidence-based policy and investment decision-making;
- Introducing business models that drive more sustainability-minded service delivery as well as expand coverage of services;
- Supporting community structures to manage resources more effectively and with less conflict and ensuring gender equity considerations; and
- Transferring program funds directly to county governments to support the counties' development objectives.

In terms of delivery modalities, the RAPID design included, among other features:

- A Program Steering Committee (PSC) at the national level that brought the partners together;
- Robust Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the counties and Kenya RAPID with clear expectations and mutual commitments;
- Embedded staffing housed in county government offices;
- A partnership approach that brought different international non-governmental organization (INGO) IPs together, each with a different geographic focus and commitments from private sector partners to provide products and services;
- Frequent meetings and communication efforts to share progress and lessons learned;
- The expectation that partners would provide matching funding; and
- Work at the household and community levels to consolidate local governance structures and impart skills and expertise needed for livelihood, dietary, and other advances.

As evaluation questions 2 and 4 focus on the delivery modalities, the response to EQ1 focuses more on the programmatic elements from a design perspective (although leaving the more detailed analysis around RAPID's efforts to develop business models for Section 4.3).

#### 4.1.1 DESIGN AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

The Evaluation Team finds the overarching strategic objectives are clear, logical, and generally mutually supporting, albeit not all mutually reliant. A responsive and accountable governance framework that provides clear rules, regulations, and expectations sets the stage for replicable and scalable business models to be introduced, which then can lead to increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management. While the links are clear, achieving SO1 does not automatically ensure that efforts to achieve SO2 and then SO3 will be successful.

Interestingly, none of the SOs incorporates a particularly pro-poor or equity-based lens. It is understood that this was not a strategic, overt intention of the program with the view that this might have “compromised the focus of being county led, county managed, and county owned.” It is assumed that strengthening governance at the county and community levels benefits all wealth quintiles. As noted by the nature of many of RAPID's activities, poverty alleviation is an obvious focus of the program. As MWA notes, “Communities targeted with WASH improvement activities were jointly identified as underserved in consultative meetings validated by the County Program Steering Committees (CPSCs).” A targeting tool/template (not analyzed by the Evaluation Team) was used to identify sites for construction of water services infrastructure to provide services to the underserved/poor. In addition, joint planning meetings with county departments were held before the start of every financial year where activities were prioritized as guided by the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). After joint prioritization, the IPs used two key tools—the project assessment tool and the community engagement tool—to prioritize more needy communities and households. As a further example, while the activity did not directly target or measure outcomes affecting persons with disabilities (PWDs), Kenya RAPID's prioritization of women's groups in Isiolo to manage kiosks did result in benefits for PWDs in that area, such that the group's commitment to the marginalized ensured dedicated access times for this population. A key exit strategy element will be around how Kenya RAPID managed to institutionalize this focus at the county level.

In the context of devolution, Kenya RAPID offered a highly ambitious set of activities aimed at supporting county governments to overcome significant capacity gaps. The MWA proposal (p.18) notes that, “Absorptive capacity is being tested” with the five Kenya RAPID counties, “returning over Kenyan Shilling (KES) 500 million in WASH sector funding to the national government in 2014 because policies, plans and strategies were not yet in place during the fiscal year.” The Evaluation Team was not able to assess how significantly this has changed as a function of Kenya RAPID support. World Bank officials noted that much still needs to be done to put systems in place (around procurement, safeguarding, and other areas) for counties to qualify for certain funding sources or progress through national funding transfer schemes. However, the emphasis on governance framing documents, as supported by Kenya RAPID, is certainly seen as a necessary step in the right direction.

To meet growing post-devolution expectations at the local level, Kenya RAPID came in at an opportune time to help shape the way forward for counties to develop and deliver on their CIDPs. SO3 allows Kenya RAPID partners the opportunity to offer “business as usual” implementation activities to help meet some of these expectations on the ground through infrastructure investments and training/support activities for sanitation, nutrition, and livelihoods, among others. This is obviously more familiar territory for INGO partners, who have historically been more involved in delivering projects at the local level. Unsurprisingly, given the nature of the expenditures, SO3 constituted the bulk of the budget at 59 percent with SO1 at 20 percent and SO2 at 21 percent. This, however, might lead to false assumptions

about time allocations. It is understood that SO1 in support to counties around governance framing and coordination was certainly and understandably time intensive.

Admittedly for Kenya RAPID, the implementation track, situated under SO3, also gave IPs the opportunity to prove their commitment to meeting the coverage needs in the counties, engage county officials directly in efforts to strengthen their technical skills, and build confidence in and consolidate the relationship between the IPs and the counties, while also being more visible with other actors.

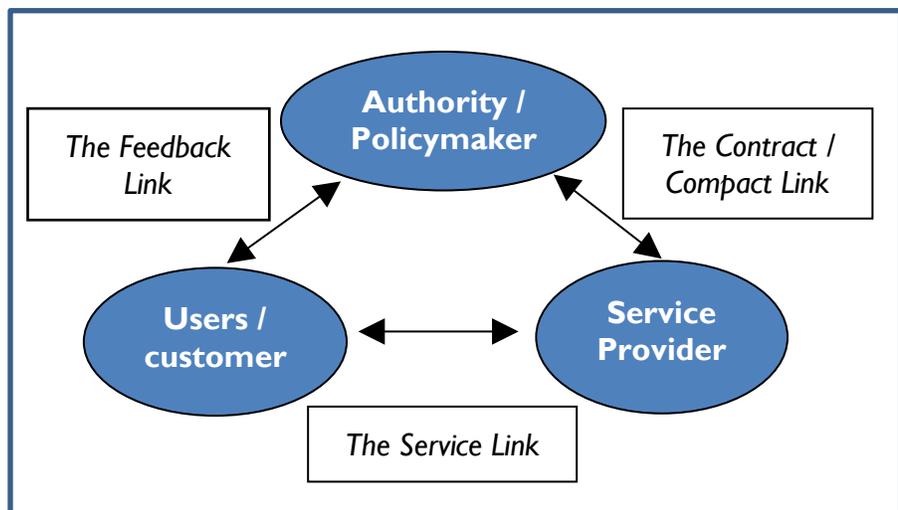
With the results framework in mind, a potentially more effective and coherent reframing would suggest a three-pronged approach with a focus on continued strengthening of:

1. County governments as the overseer and enabler ensuring that services are delivered regardless of the service provider or the specific arrangements, with clear policies and strategies and a strong participation and feedback loop from communities;
2. Utilities (public or quasi-private in the case of small schemes) and other community-public institutions, like Water User Associations, as the delivery agents with a more institutionalized and commercialized approach that emphasizes sustainability of the service and Rangeland Management Committees (RMCs) that focuses on sustainable resource management; and
3. Supporting entry or refining private sector business models that foster wider coverage and sustained service delivery and/or resource management with an emphasis on bringing in market-based approaches to provide other products and services, where appropriate and applicable within the ASAL context, to utilities, Water Management Committees, households, or other customer groups.

While subsidies and other pro-poor elements may need to be put in place, given the gap between public sector capacity and the needs on the ground, this approach emphasizes some form of more commercialized management or market-based delivery of services that is grounded in a pro-poor regulatory environment, i.e., ensuring that equity issues are addressed.

This shift would see SO3 turning into an output rather than an objective. In other words, a program of work focused on enhancing the enabling environment (through governance framing, business model development, and efforts

to channel finance appropriately) and strengthening service providers should indeed result in communities (with greater voice) having increased access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management. In fact, the hypothesis in the original results framework suggests this approach with its emphasis on strengthening institutions but could go even further to seek more transformative approaches that systematically promote greater inclusion



**FIGURE 3. STAKEHOLDER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SERVICE DELIVERY (adapted from 2004 World Bank World Development Report)**

and shift (gender and other) norms.

This is adapted graphically in Figure 3 (previous page) as originally framed in the 2004 World Bank World Development Report that focused on pro-poor and more socially inclusive service delivery through an accountability lens. This could lead to more transformative outcomes socially (e.g., gender and social inclusion), institutionally (e.g., governance) and financially (e.g., private sector investment).

Thus, while the SOs are mutually supporting, the connections could have been spelled out more clearly. As explained above, it is easy to see how the vast majority of interviewees saw the Kenya RAPID work as a series of component parts (focused on governance, the potential contribution from the private sector, and more conventional expansion of services) rather than as an integrated whole.

#### 4.1.2 NESTED ASSUMPTIONS

Nested within the strategic objectives and the activity design, the Evaluation Team notes a few key implicit and explicit assumptions that frame the Kenya RAPID activity.

*Assumption—Devolution would make county governments eager to be more accountable to citizens.* By all accounts, interviewees at the county level understood their mandates and are keen to make an impact at the community level by expanding and ensuring access to services and promoting other development activities. The Evaluation Team notes clear appreciation from county officials on Kenya RAPID IP contributions to the framing and delivery of the CIDPs with mentions of the impact of Kenya RAPID on budgeting exercises and other aspects. One would expect to see clearer evidence relating to how counties are spending their own resources as an indicator of their commitment. It was noted that spending (as opposed to budgeting) is still difficult to track even by senior department officials at the county level. With more of an inside track on the prioritization, planning, and budgeting process as well as with more time, IPs would be in a position to support counties in transparent accounting for budgeting and spending through public budget processes. This is beginning to happen in at least one county, Turkana.

In support of their mandate, county officials recognized that the governance framing documents and the capacity building efforts are critical to their ability to deliver as well as to exercise some control over what development partners, private sector developers/companies, or communities implement on the ground. While more analysis is needed, framing documents are being used to guide and secure investments, establish/strengthen utilities and rural water schemes, and provide for the creation of resource governance structures (for water management and rangeland management in particular). These are important developments and bring promise of greater investor confidence (whether the investor is donors, the private sector, or the national government). It remains early, though, as the frameworks have not been tested or challenged in terms of whether the rules and guidance are sufficient. It is understood that with this overarching framing, more specific policies will still need to be negotiated.

In terms of public participation to hold governments accountable, skeptical of the previous reliance on national-level solutions and funding as well as interference, communities in this post-devolution period are participating more in county-level forums and making greater demands on county officials in an effort to shape priorities and investments. Senior county officials noted that voices are growing louder and county officials are under pressure to deliver. How representative this participation is and whether there are biases toward certain geographic areas, gender, and other demographics, community groupings, or wealth groupings proves difficult for the Evaluation Team to assess. Indeed, the Kenya RAPID activity brings a wealth of experience to be shared on how this accountability relationship is evolving and how to strengthen tools like the National Community Participation Checklist. The emphasis in the design of Kenya RAPID on capacity building that incorporates technical but also management skills will become important in responding to these growing participatory processes.

Overall, the assumption appears to be valid and Kenya RAPID's design and engagement has made a significant contribution to fostering this greater accountability. As noted, beyond the policy realm, some form of public budgeting and further analysis of public participation would further strengthen this accountability. Efforts aimed at reviewing private sector contracting and further strengthening the regulation of small schemes and the work of quasi-public associations would also have an impact.

*Assumption: Viable and expanding business models will increase access to sustainable WASH services and improved rangeland management. As discussed in further detail below in response to EQ3, the assumption itself is not necessarily in question and more commercialized approaches are having an impact through, for example, the pre-paid token system for the water ATMs, which allow for easier tracking of both water usage and payments, and more control of finances. In fairness, Kenya RAPID was largely starting with a blank slate and has planted the seeds for a greater understanding of the potential role that the private sector could play in advancing various development priorities.*

The Evaluation Team remains unclear on whether sufficient strategic analysis occurred of the business requirements (around laws and regulations, procurement processes, ownership models, or physical infrastructure and functioning value chains) to launch different models. More robust analysis to understand the various customer bases, particularly in the context of a pastoralist culture in the ASALs, would also have been instructive. The Evaluation Team finds that significantly more effort and resources would have been needed to really see the advent of viable business models that expanded access in any meaningful way. Much of Kenya RAPID's work was on introducing technologies that may or may not have had a viable business model attached to them. Thus, while the assumption is likely to be correct, the approach may have been insufficiently resourced, the timeframe appears to have been too short, the strategy insufficiently thought through to attract further investments or

### **Integrating Nutrition-Sensitive Activities**

Guided by USAID's WASH and Nutrition Implementation Brief 2015 and the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, 2014–2015, the focus of the Kenya RAPID program was to address the underlying causes of malnutrition through the integration of nutrition-sensitive programming across several sectors, including WASH, health, agriculture, livestock, and rangeland management. For agri-nutrition, a USAID Resource Manual for Agri-Nutrition in Kenya by Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries was used for harmonized training across the county. The effective linkage between nutrition and the other sectors varied from one county to another.

A county official enthusiastically reported that, "Where we have WASH activities, we encourage nutrition matters... Kitchen garden training [has incorporated messages] to enable households to have a balanced diet. In WASH programming areas, we encourage growing of crops, and promote hygiene messages like hand washing. ODF villages are reporting lowering of diarrheal cases."

The level of knowledge on the appropriate messages for the promotion of nutrition was high among county officials interviewed. This aside, integration of nutrition was primarily reported by those at the implementation level and less at the strategic level. "For the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health, we work very closely together in the community. We make field visits together," reported one interviewee.

The establishment of kitchen gardens reportedly had the greatest impact on diversifying the primarily animal and cereal-based diets and consequently improving nutrition outcomes. The greatest challenge to the kitchen gardens is scarcity of water especially for households far from the water points. Wajir County, for example, provided multi-story gardens and pot gardens for household vegetable production, which were within the homesteads and needed little amounts of water.

Kenya RAPID's integrated approach has significantly enhanced the implementation of nutrition activities by augmenting low nutrition programming budgets. While this is certainly helpful, given the differences in these dual strategies of boosting household nutrition and income diversification, further analysis of how effectively these efforts boosted household food security (through greater dietary diversity and consumption of different foods in the off-season) or contributed to household income may be warranted.

encourage businesses to take further risks, and the enabling environment insufficiently supported to ensure business confidence in the county governments' readiness for private sector investment.

*Assumption: Natural linkages among WASH, rangelands/agriculture, and nutrition interventions suggest that these can and should be tackled in a more holistic and inclusive manner.* Kenya RAPID made good strides in addressing a wide range of development challenges in the five ASAL counties. Indeed, the four INGO IPs bring extensive experience and expertise across WASH, rangelands management, livelihoods, health, and nutrition.

From a programmatic standpoint, county officials were appreciative of Kenya RAPID's responsive and flexible approach and willingness to be helpful where needed, but also to support the joint planning and coordination of implementation across county ministries and departments.

*"The multi-sectoral approach is a good one. For the first time I have seen different sectors working together and doing so successfully... Integration of activities by the different departments took place because of the joint planning, implementation, supervision and review meetings. This worked so well—various departments worked in harmony with no hiccups... I have never seen this before. I learnt that no man is an island. We learn from one another. The integration enabled a comprehensive program and the different components provided synergy to the program as a whole."*—County Public Health Officer

The Evaluation Team commends Kenya RAPID on these newfound county structures. The IP role as facilitator allowed for Kenya RAPID to support this coordination of and joint planning across multiple county departments. Questions were raised as to whether the coordinating committee structures put in place could be evolved further down to ward level. Presumably, going forward, this could be piloted with one or two wards in each county with support from RAPID IPs post-RAPID. (That said, it is unclear how much capacity really exists at this time at the ward level for this to be meaningful.)

This solid contribution notwithstanding, it remains unclear what the exit strategy is that will encourage the five counties to maintain this joint planning and coordination. Interviews with IP coordinators suggested that this was still a work in progress.

In terms of the range of interventions, each conversation yielded still further areas of activity for which Kenya RAPID received much credit. For the Evaluation Team though, it was sometimes difficult to understand Kenya RAPID's actual role in terms of advances in coverage in vast and expansive counties. Literature from the desk review highlighted a variety of potential linkages across Kenya RAPID's priority sectors of WASH, rangeland management and nutrition. With a few exceptions like nutrition (see text box above) and Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), the linkages across the different priority areas did not come out clearly in interviews with county officials or IP staff. CLTS triggering activities afforded opportunities to share a wide range of messages on hygiene, nutrition, livelihoods, and other development priorities. The activity also did not seem to approach these efforts with a holistic and transformative approach that a gender lens might offer. Admittedly, had the Evaluation Team been able to visit with communities to see the activities more directly, this integration may have come out more strongly.

Kenya RAPID spent the initial 18 months or so developing the ways of working across the partners and with the counties. According to the IPs, this was also a time of focusing on the governance framing documents starting with water combined with the capacity needs assessments at the county level. The elections then seemed to disrupt much of this work at the middle of the Kenya RAPID timeframe. Efforts in 2018 and 2019 started to incorporate more rangeland related activities as well as nutrition, income generation, sanitation, and other interventions. These were ramping up toward the end of the project with governance framing work and training activities when the COVID-19 crisis halted activities.

The key achievement from an integration point of view appears to be the emphasis on joint planning and coordination at the county level with joint visits at the community level from different county departments. In terms of validating the design, this approach could still bear fruit as the seeds have been planted in terms of forging a new understanding at county level of the linkages between previously siloed activity areas. Thus, while the design was optimistically appropriate, implementation may have been hampered by events beyond Kenya RAPID's control and the effort required to galvanize county departments toward a more coordinated approach appears to have taken longer than anticipated.

#### 4.1.3 PUTTING KENYA RAPID INTO CONTEXT: SOME OBSERVATIONS

The devolution context loomed large in the interviews with many respondents grateful for the contribution that Kenya RAPID was making in support of building county capacity in a variety of ways. The Evaluation Team sensed that Kenya RAPID was initially seeking to apply a somewhat uniform approach across the five counties. Several interviewees referred, however, to the differences between counties with different economic bases and investment trends, different demographics with some counties more homogenous than others, counties operating at different paces with different levels of capacity and with different pressures particularly around local conflict in some counties. This appears to have resulted in different levels of uptake across the different counties with some elements taking longer to get started. This variation is discussed in more detail under responses to the other EQs below.

As such, the region is hardly homogenous with myriad differences across the counties in terms of:

- Political cohesion (allowing for quicker passage of legislation and potentially influencing high growth in private sector investment in Turkana, for example) and demographics;
- A cultural and religious nature that influence belief systems around areas from WASH practices to lending and finance;
- Local resource base and climatic conditions, with more rainfall in some areas (like parts of Marsabit) influencing farming practices among pastoralist communities;
- Security threats in some sub-regions of Garissa and Wajir;
- Gender roles that influence not only decision making at the local level but even construction practices for household enhancements (with women in charge of construction of latrines in Turkana, for example); and
- Levels of education among county staff (with Marsabit reported to have the highest level of qualified staff by academic qualification and Wajir with the lowest).

The Evaluation Team senses that more could have been explored around where there are sufficient similarities as to make an approach or technology viable across the region and where the contextual factors mandate a more nuanced response. It was noted by an international partner that, "With devolution, some counties have gone into thinking big, like with big dam plans, sometimes with some political agenda..." Within this context, Kenya RAPID "tried to create awareness that with little money, you can make more localized solutions." Regardless of the circumstances, whether investment is moving quickly or not, interviewees agreed that it remains important to get the governance framing in place for both effective resource management and service provision.

While the Evaluation Team would likely have pursued this more actively had site visits and FGDs been possible, the pastoralist context did not emerge clearly from the interviews. Although interviewees were asked to elaborate on the specific context of the ASALs, only some general references to conflict across the region and how best to site infrastructure for pastoralists arose. That said, there was recognition that the situation is changing due to the requirement that all children need to be attending school;

thereby pastoralist families are living as part of more semi-permanent communities, with only part of the family being more mobile (men) with seasonal movement across geographies.

Throughout the interview process, the Evaluation Team sought to understand the contextual basis for or analysis of particular issues to understand why certain pathways had been taken by Kenya RAPID. While there was significant work conducted on assessing the capacity at the county level, the framing and contextual analysis was less evident in terms of policy and programmatic direction in the new context of devolution. IPs, perhaps understandably, suggested in one way or another that they had been working in the area for a long time and thus knew what needed to be done. Similarly, having county officials sit more centrally within the partnership may have led to the impression that such studies and analysis were not needed.

#### 4.1.4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE KENYA RAPID DESIGN

The Evaluation Team applauds the level of ambition and the level of inclusivity of county governments in the management and delivery of Kenya RAPID, while still acknowledging the challenges faced. The Evaluation Team notes the somewhat delayed pace and sequencing of the roll out of Kenya RAPID activities (discussed in more detail in response to the other EQs). Given the complexity of the Kenya RAPID design, the challenge of and time required for aligning ways of working across institutions within the INGO community, let alone across the public and private sectors, cannot be underestimated. The familiarity between the IPs and the counties that is required to work through a facilitative approach (as discussed in more detail in response to EQ4 below) takes significant time to emerge. The designation of clear roles and responsibilities of the IP coordinators and their teams also requires a shift in mindset from being the doers to being the facilitators.

The Evaluation Team notes that the overarching framing could have been clearer as described above. This may have sharpened the IPs' understanding of their contribution to strengthening county processes. As it stands, interviewees were mainly able to describe a long list of activities and interventions that quickly made Kenya RAPID feel like it was spread too thinly for both MWA and IP teams with limited staff capacity to properly manage. The initial response from the Evaluation Team was to question whether Kenya RAPID would not have been better off focusing on a more specific set of development gains like household WASH combined perhaps with water for livestock and agriculture, all approached holistically through a social inclusion/gender transformative lens. Other gains then for health, nutrition, and livelihoods would have emerged organically, particularly as the county governments would increasingly make the linkages by coordinating planning of non-RAPID partners. Recognizing that their role was facilitative and opportunistic with the appropriate goal of being responsive to county priorities as they emerged, the wide range of activities might have appeared less scattered had they been fully grounded in and framed somewhat more through a systems strengthening lens. From this perspective, the Kenya RAPID activity, by working in a different way from most development programs, appears to have shifted attitudes and approaches of county governments. The proof of success will only be seen after Kenya RAPID ends.

Thus, acknowledging the pressure to deliver an ambitious, multi-faceted program in a five-year timeframe in a shifting environment, the Evaluation Team agrees with the following summary statement from a Nairobi-based interviewee, whereby Kenya RAPID incorporated:

*“...a lot of complex dimensions... and achieved a number of successful inroads—but not conclusive in terms of behavior change and outcome level changes. ...incrementally we can see pathways very clearly.”*

In terms of the timeframe, another interviewee noted that:

*“...mobilization takes times with hurdles to be cleared—the area RAPID is operating in is even more complicated. It takes like a year to mobilize—then the project starts to take root and then we have three years for implementation and then a final 6 months with no active implementation. It’s like three years for any project cycle. Specifically, when you go to North Eastern, the area is vast and literacy levels are low and there are lots of challenges... So, in terms of design, I would champion for a seven-year set-up.”*

While some reframing based perhaps through the accountability lens presented above might have rallied all stakeholders more around the same overarching design, the Evaluation Team finds that the principal set of assumptions and theory of change are in the main suitable for the ASALs, but overly ambitious. Kenya RAPID’s programmatic approach is sound and the delivery modalities, discussed in subsequent sections of this report, appear to provide a number of game-changing elements. That said, and admittedly it is too early to tell, key questions remain around Kenya RAPID’s overarching impact, whether the timeframe was sufficient to have the desired impact, whether sufficient resources were dedicated to the business models aspect, and whether the case has been sufficiently made for greater integration of activities at implementation level. The Evaluation Team is thus unable to answer if counties will continue to work through a multi-themed approach without Kenya RAPID’s facilitation support, technologies and data will continue to be used for decision-making, women’s empowerment efforts will be sustained without addressing harmful gender norms, and the structures put in place or strengthened will withstand the test of time. The commitment and enthusiasm from county officials are high, but also with the insistence that Kenya RAPID and the funding that the activity brings need to be continued for several more years.

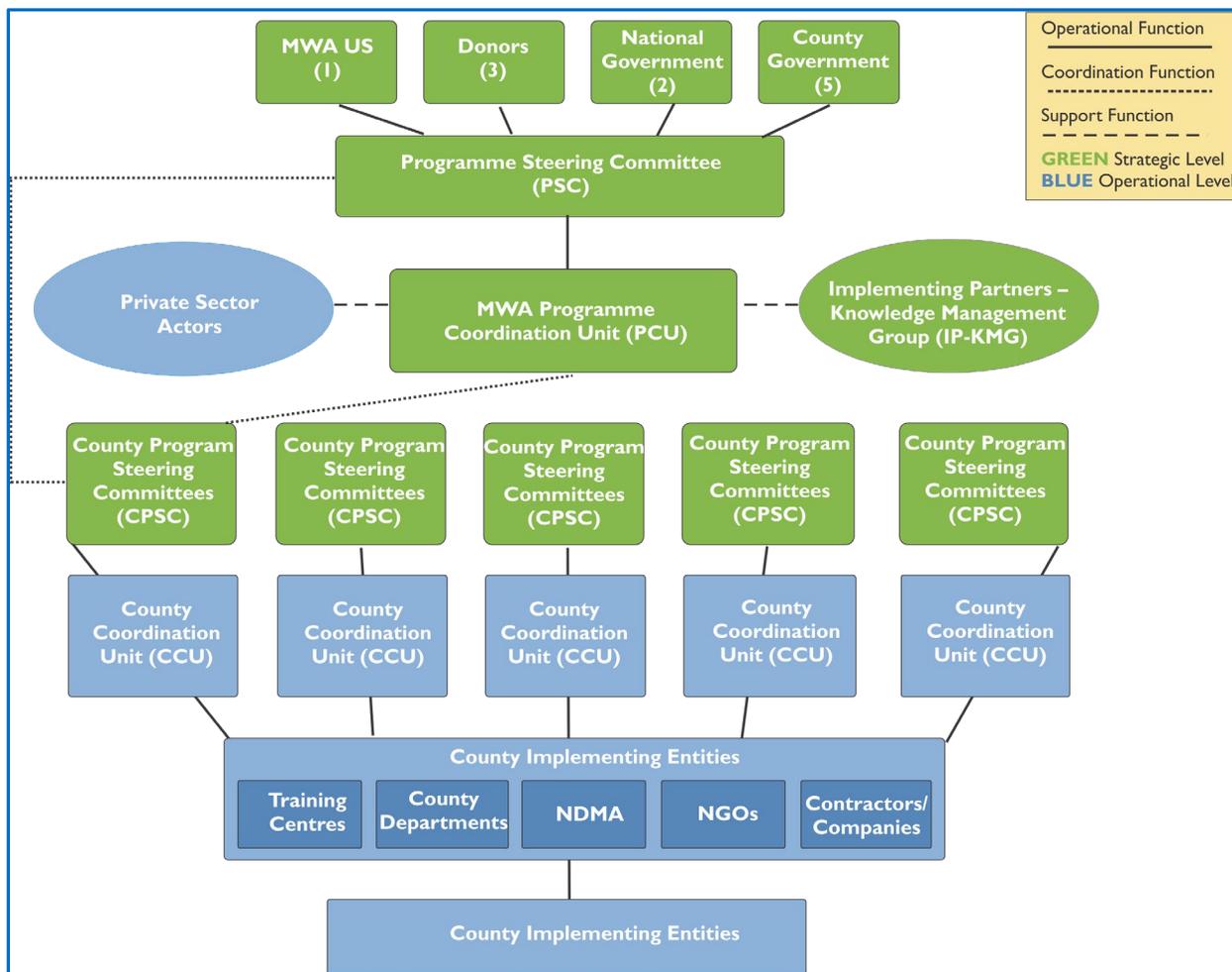
The assumption is that the five Kenya RAPID counties are now in a stronger position to meet national and donor requirements and have higher absorptive capacity to receive funding, as well as greater legitimacy to lobby on behalf of the ASALs at the national level. The governance framing documents are an important first step in this process and Kenya RAPID’s engagement could be seen as providing a stamp of approval, some form of risk underwriting, and some safeguarding against mismanagement. Making the linkages between Kenya RAPID’s contribution over recent years to World Bank, African Development Bank and other funding prospects could provide the evidence required to satisfy that this assumption around county strength and capacity is correct.

## **4.2 EVALUATION QUESTION 2: KENYA RAPID THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP LENS**

**EQ2: TO WHAT EXTENT DID BRINGING DIVERSE PARTNERS TOGETHER WITHIN THE GDA STRUCTURE RESULT IN BROADER IMPACTS THAN WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED?** (What were the resource implications of this type of partnership? What kinds of strategic decisions were undertaken by the steering committee, and how effective was this model for partnership governance?)

The Kenya RAPID theory of change (Section 2.1) has been delivered through a multi-partner, multi-layered arrangement that puts counties at the center of programming. Over 20 partners from across public, private, and civil society sectors have joined forces to deliver the program with and through county governments. The activity has also forged important relationships under the umbrella of the USAID-supported Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG); with Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI); and with other GOK initiatives and agencies, such as the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA).

Paraphrasing from the final approved proposal, in the Kenya RAPID structure, the MWA PCU based in Nairobi drives the overall program level and the County Coordination Unit (CCU) plays that role in each of the counties. Figure 4 (next page) captures the relationships between and among Kenya RAPID’s strategic and operational level structures, with green indicating strategic and blue the more operational structures. Various levels of reporting are represented between and among the different structures (operational noted as a solid black line, coordination as a dotted black line, and support as a dashed black line).



**FIGURE 4. KENYA RAPID ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Overall, the Evaluation Team finds that the structures put in place are effective and the partnership spirit is very positive. Designated roles and responsibilities both of the various partners as well as of the different levels are clearly laid out and the organizational design is well understood. Under the coordination of a dynamic project leader and PCU, the size of the partnership does not appear to have been a hindrance to progress. That said, it is difficult to assess whether the counterfactual with a smaller program with fewer themes being tackled and interventions undertaken, a smaller number of counties involved and fewer partners around the table would have yielded higher impact.

To analyze the Kenya RAPID activity from a partnership perspective, a framing put forward in the article entitled *Collective Impact*<sup>5</sup> has been combined with that based on the Evaluation Team Lead’s own work on partnership accountability. The *Collective Impact* framing revolves around five key elements: Common Agenda, Shared Measurement Systems, Mutually Reinforcing Activities, Continuous Communication and Backbone Support. The team’s own framing underscores the requirements of partnership accountability. This overlays an emphasis on:

1. *Compliance* (i.e., how partners are “held to account”: what structures, agreements, obligations, and targets bind the partners together), which dovetails with a *common agenda, shared measurement systems* and how the *backbone support* is organized;
2. *Transparency* (i.e., how partners “give account” of their successes and failures), which relates to *constant communications*; and
3. *Partner and partnership responsiveness* (i.e., how partners “take account” of shifts and changes both within the partnership and in the wider context), which is in part related to how *shared measurement systems* are designed and how *mutually reinforcing activities* are assured.

#### 4.2.1 COMMON AGENDA

The Kenya RAPID activity is centered on the theory of change, key assumptions, and core design elements, as described above in response to EQ1. The implicit purpose of the partnership is several-fold:

- To leverage Program Implementation using a Facilitation Approach (PIFA), otherwise referred to by the partners as “*business unusual*,” to strengthen the systems, capacity and joint ownership at the county level to meet their development mandates;
- To leverage and connect county context expertise and experience of the INGO partners with sub-sectoral/technical expertise from entities like Acacia Water and SweetSense; and
- To draw on synergies to leverage funds, reach economies of scale, and optimize influence.

While the “agenda” of the different partners and individuals involved may not be completely unified, the project definition is jointly understood and the PIFA is universally praised as the appropriate approach to support Kenya’s “journey to self-reliance.” Again, interviews revealed that the spirit of engagement is overwhelmingly positive.

Much effort appears to have gone into forging the partnership at all levels. As interviewees suggested, Kenya RAPID partners experienced a slow start to actual implementation over an initial 12–18-month period with partners gradually finding their way with the approach, the structures put in place and the emerging designated roles and responsibilities. By all accounts, IPs struggled to synchronize systems and worked hard to engage counties. After this initial period, though, as noted by one interviewee from an IP at the Nairobi level, “The county response to the Kenya RAPID activity began to change... They don’t see Kenya RAPID like an NGO project like in the past. County officials feel more engaged than in previous projects. You would see county officials trying to step up and demonstrate that they are able to move things, like legislation.” A key element of this relationship has been the MOUs signed between Kenya RAPID and each of the participating counties. Along with an explanation of the overarching goals and strategic objectives, this underscored the expected commitments and levels of participation as well as the structures and modalities for communication put in place to administer the partnership. Indeed, the MOUs appear to have withstood the test of time (and new administrations as a result of elections

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<sup>5</sup> Kania, J., and M. Kramer. *Collective Impact*. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011.

midway through the activity) as a reference point for the relationship between the Kenya RAPID IPs and the counties.

As discussed at various points in this report, while there was a clear appreciation for the overarching PIFA, numerous interviewees revealed that Kenya RAPID still has work to do to connect the efforts of all the partners. Even while advocating for and ultimately seeing more linked thinking at the county level, within Kenya RAPID itself, more clarity is needed to understand how the contributions of different partners fit together. Some interviewees suggested that more of a whole systems approach could help harness the strengths of the different contributing partners more effectively into a common agenda that goes below the headlines of the goal and strategic objectives. This would mean, for example, placing more effort on understanding how the different pieces contribute to the whole—e.g., how the data collection technologies contribute to greater county government accountability, how the governance framing documents can be designed in such a way as to encourage private sector engagement, or how efforts to foster community participation link to capacity requirements. As mentioned above, in the absence of these discussions, some partners tended to see their contributions in isolation.

#### 4.2.2 SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

While the Evaluation Team did not analyze the systems and structures of reporting in any detail, a number of observations emerged from the interviews. The Evaluation Team noted it took time for the partners to align their metrics and agree on data collection mechanisms. USAID and SDC had different reporting periods, which proved cumbersome but not insurmountable. Several interviewees mentioned that the funders were interested in different aspects of the program with USAID focusing more on the targets and outputs and SDC more interested in analyzing the outcomes. Albeit with some appreciation for the slower pace of the facilitative approach, the pressure on the targets appears to have won out. According to one IP interviewee from Nairobi, this ended up “sending mixed signals to the implementing partners,” which led to some questions about how much risk was acceptable for Kenya RAPID to take.

In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Kenya RAPID introduced a number of data management tools that, by some measure, are starting to support evidence-based decision-making. For example, according to the COP, “Acacia Water provided water maps for water resources, which have helped in allocation of resources based on need.” Whether the data are effectively linking up and informing interventions across different thematic areas was difficult for the Evaluation Team to gauge, for example across water and feed stocks to support community livelihoods through livestock production.

In the current Kenya RAPID framing (as per the Results Framework), while it was not positioned this way in practice, data and information and communications technology (ICT) tools are seen as linking most closely to SO2 on replicable and scalable business models. In fact, such tools should be framed as helpfully informing all three of these SO components as a critical element of supporting evidence-based investment and anticipating investment requirements. At any rate, county-level interviewees expressed differing degrees of ownership of the data and ICT tools (noting that the E-Maji system, spearheaded by IBM Research, remains a work in progress and is aimed at linking up data points related to water on a unified platform) and a lack of understanding of who owns these platforms. Thus, it was not always clear to the Evaluation Team how Kenya RAPID data was being used in a practical sense on the part of county officials to inform decision-making. By all accounts, the data points being collected are helpful, particularly the borehole sensor data and the data from the ATMs, both of which were mentioned numerous times by county officials.

Similarly, from a partnership perspective, it remains unclear how data helped shape Kenya RAPID’s own investment plans. This speaks to questions around how M&E was designed into the program to provide an evidence base for modifications, redirections or staying the course, in conjunction with reporting to funders. Some interviewees mentioned that the negotiations around specific interventions could have

been more directly tied to a stronger analysis of the evidence base. As one interviewee noted, “Currently there is some instinctive interventions, such as building nice pit latrines, but in the middle of nowhere... and some have to be rebuilt due to flooding... [thus more work is needed to] build resilience of the interventions” balanced by factors that emerge from research and beyond community preference. Indeed, counties are keen to move communities up the sanitation ladder by introducing improved sanitation marketing to those that are already Open Defecation Free (ODF). Introduction of sanitation marketing had begun in some counties just before the COVID-19 interruption. The context referred to by the interviewee reflected this need to shift to the design and implementation of WASH programs more on a development rather than emergency basis. This would incorporate further considerations around climate change and environmental aspects. Further complicating this aspect, others mentioned that the indicators were not necessarily directly tied to the activities in all cases and, by the end, the focus had “shifted to the numbers and then people lost grip on the design...” Thus, the general sense is that the M&E system could have been optimized to be more useful to Kenya RAPID and partners by spurring on greater reflection in addition to measuring whether targets were met.

### 4.2.3 MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

As noted above in the response to EQ1, the Kenya RAPID strategic objectives are certainly mutually reinforcing. The Evaluation Team recognizes that the structures and processes of Kenya RAPID build and support capacity at the county level. The Kenya RAPID support that emphasized joint planning across different government departments at the county level, the sequencing of funding to ensure that Kenya RAPID resources supplemented county spending (to equip county-funded boreholes with sensors, for example), and the role that Kenya RAPID played in fostering a more cohesive approach from non-Kenya RAPID development partners at the county level all suggest Kenya RAPID’s emphasis on ensuring that activities were mutually reinforcing.

Kenya RAPID effectively drew on different tiers and organizational structures of the program whereby, for example, when new governors were elected, the national-level PCU and the Program Steering Committee (PSC) were engaged to provide the introduction to the program. The continuity of having IPs who had been working in the counties for some time and thus could show familiarity with the context proved a real strength. This meant minimal disruption to work at the implementation level, even if policy level work was slowed down. According to county level interviewees, Kenya RAPID leveraged progress from the counties through frequent visits from Nairobi and inter-connections among the partners, thus creating a quasi-competitive environment among the counties to applaud successes. Kenya RAPID also actively sought synergies under the umbrella of the PREG in terms of coordinating resilience responses, AHADI in terms of drafting water and rangeland governance documents, and NDMA for information sharing, among others.

Interviews revealed a clear set of incentives for IPs to be part of this new approach for Kenya as it moves on a journey to self-reliance. IP staff members remain enthusiastic about their new roles embedded in the counties and county officials appreciated and welcomed the more direct support. Incentives for the private sector were perhaps somewhat harder to ascertain in all instances. An angle that could potentially be explored further would be around the contributions that each stakeholder group plays in a multi-stakeholder partnership. It is important to safeguard against international non-governmental organization (INGO) staff becoming co-opted by the system. The need for the values that INGOs bring to the table must not be lost in the process. The emphasis on evidence-based decision-making and a focus on the vulnerable and marginalized, including women and PWDs (see Section 4.5), need to remain front and center of INGO contributions. It appears that more could have been done to foster constructive dialogue and mutual understanding between private and NGO partners about what each is doing, what each brings to the table, and how these contributions fit together. Similarly, more effort was needed to create greater understanding around potential private sector contributions to take nascent understanding at the county level to new levels.

Overall, using the coordinating function of the INGO IPs in county, the general sense is that Kenya RAPID could have done more to connect the interventions more clearly and strategically at the county level. Interviewees, particularly from county government, generally suggested that, beyond the planning stage, interventions were more siloed in nature. As mentioned, apart from nutrition and CLTS triggering events, officials working in one thematic area (e.g., water, rangelands, or livelihood support) rarely mentioned or made the connection to other development priorities, and few approached their thematic area through a conscious social inclusion or gender lens. Perhaps these were implicit, but the Evaluation Team expected to hear more about the linkages around, for example, the need for water to support rangeland or agriculture activities or the connection between gender and resilience. Kenya RAPID partners did not always make these connections either, i.e., that their contributions led to greater or fostered wider outcomes.

#### 4.2.4 CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

The MWA PCU opened a wide range of channels for individuals in the partnership to share information. Coordination meetings occurred at the national and county levels on a quarterly basis. A monthly newsletter was published. An all-inclusive WhatsApp group kept partners apprised of successes, and subsets of WhatsApp groupings, like among the IP county leads, also allowed for regular contact to share ideas, seek guidance, and offer support. Regular reporting also helped keep participants in the frame. That said, as one interviewee noted, so much was going on that, “It was very difficult to keep track of everything.”

Program Management Group (PMG) meetings were held every six months. These four-day sessions brought the whole Kenya RAPID team together to share information and to encourage greater connectedness. Interviewees almost universally noted the positive and supportive atmosphere of these meetings, with some evidence (albeit not easily extracted from interviewees) of examples of learning transfer across the counties (e.g., on value addition from Marsabit and Turkana, on CLTS from Garissa, and on rangeland management [pasture production and planned grazing] from Isiolo). Some interviewees, however, questioned whether these forums provided the optimal mechanism to share information. These were large meetings with 60–75 participants, noted by interviewees in different ways as “mainly focused on successes” and designed in such a way to galvanize the county representatives.

PMG days were described as including a series of presentations that increasingly and appropriately put county officials at the center, with officials delivering the session and the IPs gradually taking more of a backseat. Seemingly more could have been done, however, to interrogate in greater depth the similarities and differences in the contexts across the five counties to understand what is potentially replicable as well as how all the pieces were mutually reinforcing in creating a vision of a more effective county government meeting the development needs of its citizens. For a partnership with this breadth and diversity, engaging more at this level might have yielded more impact in the longer term. (Interestingly, a further channel for sharing information and critically reviewing activities was the Implementing Partner Knowledge Management Group, noted in the organogram. Surprisingly, this grouping did not garner any mentions in any of the interviews.)

Albeit frequent PMG meetings created an important sense of being part of a movement and spurring on a sense of quasi-competition among the counties, given the expense and time commitment, other ways of structuring these exchanges through still non-threatening but more challenging and dynamic facilitation, thematic working groups, focused one-on-one county visits or other mechanisms might have yielded a stronger response around the learning agenda for Kenya RAPID. The Evaluation Team generally understand that there were many communications channels and opportunities under the project but that Kenya RAPID still has a wealth of learning that could be extracted.

#### 4.2.5 BACKBONE ORGANIZATION<sup>6</sup>

MWA receives huge appreciation for how it has navigated and positioned Kenya RAPID in a neutral way. The COP was described as a “great relationships manager” by numerous interviewees, and the PCU staff more generally are seen as talented, knowledgeable, and supportive. The structures put in place at all levels by MWA and the partners appear to have been effective at keeping activities on track. That said, it has been difficult for the Evaluation Team to gauge, post the initial stages of negotiation, how decision-making occurred, on spending for example, and what kinds of issues were brought to each level of the partnership. It appears that most of the resources were largely divided out early in the partnership, leaving less room to adjust in later stages of the project to shift budget lines. The sense from some interviewees was that such flexibility could have allowed for more substantial investments to be made particularly around new technologies and business engagement activities later in the life of the activity.

Often “dragged into logistics and related firefighting challenges,” the PCU was seen by many to be too lean in terms of staffing to optimize its role as a knowledge broker across the partnership. While the IPs generally have substantial in-house technical capacity, like the discussion above on the PMGs, opportunities may have been missed whereby the Kenya RAPID PCU could have facilitated deeper exchange and internal reflection. A slightly expanded staffing base in the PCU could have allowed space and capacity to forge these more technical debates, particularly around social inclusion/gender and the business model components of the activity. (Indeed, a social inclusion/gender focal point dedicated solely to this aspect could have been instrumental both internally within Kenya RAPID but also as a connection point for discussions with a wider set of stakeholders.)

The evaluation question also asks about the resource implications for this kind of partnership. Certainly, an effective PCU (backbone support organization) is critical to making this kind of partnership work, given its size, scope, and breadth. It is difficult to see how Kenya RAPID would have made the gains that it has in terms of county capacity and county commitment to deliver on its mandate without a centralizing focus from the PCU. This, combined with the galvanizing force of being joined to a number of other counties and broader institutional base, requires a central PCU to orchestrate.

At first glance, US\$35 million appears to be a large amount for a capacity strengthening program with some implementation activities and infrastructure investments. That said, with a percentage coming from in-kind contributions and some dedicated to a (lean) PCU, Kenya RAPID funding is stretched over five years and then over five large and sparsely populated counties. As noted, it may have been financially prudent for the PCU to remain quite lean; this may have presented a false economy for a program of this complexity and size if indeed the technical capacity of key staff was underutilized in order to meet other more administrative needs of the program. Apart from the specialisms already in the team, interviewees suggested that more expertise would have been welcomed in the PCU, particularly on private sector engagement and governance and policy support areas. In fairness, the performance evaluation was not tasked with assessing value for money and has not analyzed budgets, spending patterns, or related aspects across the SOs or the partner organizations.

In a very dynamic environment like the devolution context in Kenya, a key function of the backbone support is to ensure that the program is as responsive as possible to new information as it becomes available. This dovetails with the collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) methodology advocated by USAID. Interviewees expressed much appreciation for the flexibility and responsiveness of the Kenya RAPID activity, particularly with regard to meeting county needs. Albeit with targets to meet in specific

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<sup>6</sup> Described in Kania, J., and M. Kramer (2011) as having “a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly.”

intervention areas, the IP county coordinators were able to pivot their efforts to support county priorities as they arose, and, in some cases, to redirect efforts when security risks emerged. That said, some interviewees from the private sector felt that Kenya RAPID could have been more flexible with funding to adopt some new proposals even if they were not in the original design. For example, such proposals could have been aimed at adapting more resilient and sustainable methods of water provision, such as rainwater harvesting, alongside the focus on borehole drilling and the monitoring of water systems to enable a greater understanding of certain technology's impact on water resources. As it stands, it appears that much of the funding was pre-determined early on, leaving some room for maneuver within the IPs, but not across the entire program.

In terms of learning within the partnership, the Evaluation Team has struggled to understand how much emphasis was meaningfully placed on learning from failure by the Kenya RAPID team. One could imagine that whole days could have been spent, for example, thrashing out the approach to business models and the potential contribution of the private sector. In a variety of ways, several interviewees suggested that more discussion on attitudes to risk and the regular revisiting of risk matrices—particularly around analyzing and underwriting the risks of the private sector—would have been instructive. Based on interview responses, it remains unclear whether pressure from USAID (perceived or real) on reaching the targets stymied further risk taking. While this is certainly worthy of further discussion, indeed the Kenya RAPID activity is couched in risks with regard to forging a new paradigm of supporting counties from the inside to meet their development needs.

#### 4.2.6 OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE

To provide overarching steer to Kenya RAPID, a 12-member Program Steering Committee (PSC) was put in place with internal representation at senior levels from across the partnership plus two representatives from national level government agencies, as follows:

- GOK representatives (two appointed from relevant ministries);
- County government representatives (one senior representative from each of the five participating counties);
- Donor representatives (one each from USAID and SDC);
- Private sector representative (one);
- MWA (one from MWA US); and
- MWA partners (one representative).

An abridged list of the key tasks of the PSC includes the following:

- Oversee that all interventions under the Kenya RAPID program are in line with the project document and that the IP (MWA) is appropriately tasked to deliver the expected results;
- Approve program policies and strategies, and provide overall guidance on policy and direction for the program (including strategy and disbursements of the County Capacity Building Fund [CCBF]);
- Approve bi-annual and annual progress reports, financial audits, annual plans, and budgets;
- Supervise the PCU and monitor overall progress of the program; and
- Intervene as a last instance in case of disagreement or conflict.

Meetings took place twice a year throughout the course of the activity with a chair from the county representatives (which rotated on an annual basis) and an MWA United States representative serving as the co-chair. According to the PSC Terms of Reference (TOR, dated 4 February 2016), the key tasks of the chair were to determine the agenda for the meetings in collaboration with the COP and to chair the meetings.

Noting that the first meeting of the PSC was to launch the group, an analysis was conducted of the minutes from the second meeting of the PSC in September 2016 to a special virtual session held in July 2020 (nine meetings analyzed in total). Meetings were generally between three-and-a-half to four hours long and thus not too burdensome on the participants from the perspective of time commitments. In terms of attendance, the Evaluation Team notes that the IP representative on the PSC shifted every meeting. Presumably this was to ensure that all IPs could engage at this level. While it is understood that Kenya RAPID would want to reflect a majority number of seats for the counties, adding three seats so that all IPs could attend does not seem unreasonable. The participation of the national-level stakeholders (NDMA and Ministry of Water and Irrigation) is sporadic in the first years but then drops off completely from the sixth and seventh meetings respectively. The private sector constituency was originally represented by Aqua for All; on their departure, IBM attended once as the private sector representative and SweetSense the remaining times. As noted elsewhere in this report, whether either really reflects *the private sector* targeted by Kenya RAPID or the aim for much of the business model work is unclear.

In terms of the counties, Turkana sent representatives to all nine meetings, but was represented by five different government officials over the period. Garissa had the greatest consistency, attending all nine meetings and represented by only two county officials over the period. Marsabit and Wajir representatives attended six and seven meetings and sent three and four different representatives over the period, respectively. Isiolo attended five of the nine meetings, sending three different representatives over the period. Certainly, some shifts in participation were understandably a result of the elections (with all five counties sending different representatives to the fifth meeting of the PSC in April 2018) and the normal shifts in portfolios of senior county officials. Looking at consistency of participation and thereby guidance to Kenya RAPID, and analyzing attendance based on how many participants attended two meetings in a row, there were always at least five members of the twelve allocated seats identified in the TOR who either had not attended the previous meeting or sent apologies. The key challenge here is whether Kenya RAPID was experiencing robust and consistent guidance in terms of strategic direction. It is also difficult to determine from the minutes the quality of participation of different PSC members.

Using the minutes as the primary historical record of proceedings, early discussions were taken up largely around counties reaffirming their commitment to Kenya RAPID and the approach, private sector models, questions around how to redirect Kenya RAPID toward drought relief, and the more administrative aspects around per diems and related issues. The minutes also reflect an interesting timeline of events with the MOUs for two counties not having been signed by the counties until mid-2017. From mid-2018 onward, the minutes reflect a far more substantive set of discussions with more programmatic action points emerging around the pace of progress, the rationale for certain decisions at the programmatic level and the gaps in programming (like around the lack of business models for non-water components of the program). From the seventh meeting onwards, there are also references to the linkages to the three SOs and the perceived imbalance in the results, particularly with SO1 and SO2 lagging behind effort and results of SO3. While the PSC meetings appear to have been a helpful format to share information about the Kenya RAPID activity, it is unclear whether it functioned more in an advisory or actual decision-making capacity.

#### 4.2.7 CONCLUSIONS ON EQ2

Ultimately, in terms of compliance (“being held to account”), the Evaluation Team recognizes that the procedural approach of the partnership that brings counties to the center is well thought through and notably referenced positively across the interviews. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the different partners have been clearly laid out. Some questions emerged about whether the PCU could have taken on a few more staff to further deliver on effectiveness (around learning agendas and other areas) as much as efficiency. Regarding targets and indicators, more analysis by the partners could be framed around outcomes (county capacity, livelihood outcomes and health and nutrition outcomes, for example) rather than outputs. Again, this would have focused the partnership on the higher goals and ensured greater connectedness among the SOs as well as the partners and the contributions they were making. While the MOUs between Kenya RAPID and the counties have been helpful in structuring the partnership, it could not be determined whether counties lived up to their expected financial commitments.

Regarding transparency (“giving an account”), numerous channels and opportunities were afforded to partners to share information and, albeit with some troubles at the outset, reporting and reviewing procedures appear ultimately to have been straightforward. In terms of the partnership itself, although the Evaluation Team was not tasked with unpacking the financing or other aspects of the power dynamics, the balance of power among the partners (the influence of USAID itself notwithstanding) did not emerge as an issue, indicating that partners felt they had sufficient knowledge of how the partnership worked and how the pieces fit together. That said, the Evaluation Team senses that further analysis of differences in approach and lessons learned could have been harnessed more effectively to help partners build on each other’s work and to influence the way forward.

As to responsiveness (“taking account”), the Kenya RAPID program has generally been able to pivot as new information became available, at least at the IP level. The PIFA allowed IPs to work with counties to address their needs as emergencies arose or priorities shifted. Again, whether funding was already locked in during the last two years of the project is unclear, thus prohibiting Kenya RAPID from optimizing its response during this period, particularly around advancing business models. The role of the embedded IP staff allowed them to tackle a wide range of topics as it was the approach of supporting and facilitating coordination that was critical rather than the technical expertise. As mentioned, the links to the PREG, AHADI, and other outside activities were important in encouraging this responsiveness.

In terms of governance, the Evaluation Team notes that the PSC as a decision-making and strategic steering body did not emerge in any meaningful way from the interviews. An analysis of the minutes suggests that in the early days of the partnership, PSC meetings played an important role in assuring and reaffirming commitment by the counties to the program, but also in further engaging them in the mechanics of how development cooperation works from the perspective of the funders and the IPs. On balance, the PSC arrangement, as a quasi-Board of Directors, appears to be quite standard and not overly cumbersome to manage for the partnership in terms of resource allocation. That said, it is difficult for the Evaluation Team to gauge from the minutes or based on the interviews how effective the PSC was in terms of guiding the activity in any direct way in terms of offering up options and clear instruction. Keeping partners at a senior level apprised of progress and challenges and providing space to interrogate the pace of progress and to compare notes across counties appears to have made the PSC a useful organizing component of Kenya RAPID.

### 4.3 EVALUATION QUESTION 3: KENYA RAPID APPROACH TO BUSINESS MODELS

**EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT WAS KENYA RAPID ABLE TO ESTABLISH SUSTAINABLE, REPLICABLE AND SCALABLE BUSINESS MODELS?** (Were the business models identified appropriate to the ASAL context? Were there any spillover effects or results achieved through private sector engagement?)

A literature review suggests that the ASALs continue to present a challenging development context of dispersed populations across vast areas, emerging but still unclear policy commitments of and (procurement and other) rules set by county governments with regard to private sector engagement, and emerging but still insufficient supporting infrastructure (roads, etc.), and a challenge of overcoming a culture of not paying for water and sanitation services. Given these factors, the general sense from interviewees is that private sector firms remain less likely to invest in the ASALs relative to other regions of the country at this point in time. That said, investments have been made in some areas from water bottling plants in Wajir to investments in veterinary drug stores across several ASAL counties. Hotel, transport, and other logistics support are improving in some parts of the counties as linked to major infrastructure investments like in energy installations in Turkana County. While not within the scope of the Evaluation Team, a robust up-to-date analysis of the business environment across the ASALs would be instructive.

Within this context, interviewees expressed appreciation for Kenya RAPID's efforts to put potential roles for the private sector front and center in the Kenya RAPID activity. Recognizing that such efforts are largely "starting from scratch in the ASALs," Kenya RAPID is seen to have helpfully encouraged private sector engagement, shifted some mindsets somewhat, and even made headway in a few areas. Indeed, as noted by one IP interviewee, "The role of an agency is to keep the conversation going until a case presents itself."

With public sector resources and capacity unlikely to fill the gap, Kenya RAPID's emphasis around private sector technologies and approaches that are as focused on ensuring sustainability of services (through metering and the water ATMs in particular) and strengthening more commercial approaches to water service management are appreciated in a context where much of the discussion understandably revolves around expanding service delivery. Ultimately, a more structured approach (combined perhaps with a longer time frame for business models to take root) might have seen more direct achievements in this key element of the Kenya RAPID theory of change.

#### 4.3.1 KENYA RAPID STRATEGY WITH REGARD TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Looking first at strategy, the overarching sense of the interviewees is that more work is needed to galvanize understanding on the potential roles of the private sector, as noted by one Nairobi-based private sector partner as, "beyond big corporations providing funding through Corporate Social Responsibility programs." The Evaluation Team concurs in the sense that a strategy for and focus on business models appears to have been rather ad hoc and could have been clearer around the entry requirements for different business ventures.

Such a strategy would have unpacked the distinct business models required for: one-off/infrequent product or service purchase (SatoPans, pit latrine emptiers), continuous service or product purchases arrangements (where there is a daily or at least regular relationship between the provider and the customer through water schemes and water ATMs), and infrastructure developers (like borehole drillers). Such a framing would have unpacked the business arrangements as a function of whether target customers are households, communities, county governments (or sub-counties), or utilities, and what are the marketing, sales, and other infrastructure needed to make and maintain those sales. A third area would revolve around who and how best to support risk-taking by the private sector and what

assurances businesses would need to create the necessary supply chains, to invest in the required infrastructure, and so forth. This also relates to identifying any gaps in services related potentially to water, sanitation and agriculture to ensure a viable value chain for the business. In the absence of a more structured analysis of the suggested business models, the Evaluation Team is unclear how Kenya RAPID determined:

1. The gaps, needs, and viability of the business models (including from the perspective of the enabling environment);
2. The potential market size or response of a customer base, including lower quintile customers; and
3. The risks and other aspects needed to encourage a private sector response.

Table I presents an analysis framework<sup>7</sup> that could be helpful in forging discussions that could generate new ideas, understand the gaps and ultimately get the Kenya RAPID partners on the same page in terms of what was required. This framework seeks to support efforts to:

1. Define the problems faced in the interactions between the customer and entrepreneur/private sector participant and
2. Analyze the requirements to address the barriers at different levels (i.e., from the macro-environment to the “last mile”).

Ultimately the focus should be on understanding the opportunity both from the business perspective in terms of viability, but also from the customer perspective in terms of need, affordability, and competing substitutes, among other areas.

**TABLE I. UNPACKING BUSINESS MODELS**

	<b>ONE-OFF/ INFREQUENT PRODUCT PURCHASE OR SERVICE USE</b> (e.g., SatoPans, Pit Latrine Emptiers)	<b>CONTINUOUS SERVICE</b> (e.g., Water Schemes)	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> (e.g., Boreholes, Irrigation Channels, Water Storage)
<b>Problem business is attempting to solve</b>			
• Barriers to customer participation to be solved (e.g., awareness of problem and solution, affordability, purchase process) (WHY)			
• Barriers to private sector participation to be solved (e.g., viability, start-up capital, working capital, market analysis) (WHY)			

<sup>7</sup> The Evaluation Team is grateful to FSG Consulting who supported the adaption of the table from the Sanitation Market System – Framework for Market-Based Sanitation. USAID, 2018. Scaling Market Based Sanitation: Desk review on market-based rural sanitation development programs. Washington, DC., USAID Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) Project. <https://www.globalwaters.org/resources/assets/washpals/rural-mbs-desk-review>

	<b>ONE-OFF/ INFREQUENT PRODUCT PURCHASE OR SERVICE USE</b> (e.g., SatoPans, Pit Latrine Emptiers)	<b>CONTINUOUS SERVICE</b> (e.g., Water Schemes)	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> (e.g., Boreholes, Irrigation Channels, Water Storage)
<b>Business model requirements</b>			
• Target customer (e.g., household, community, government) profile (WHO)			
• Product/service specifications and features (WHAT)			
• Sales and marketing mechanisms (HOW to attract)			
• Delivery mechanism (e.g., turnkey, consortium of linked actors) (HOW to reach)			
• Associated supply chain requirements (e.g., materials/ components, skilled labor)			
<b>Other</b>			
• Infrastructure requirements (e.g., transportation, financing)			
• Market rules requirements/ enabling environment (e.g., fiscal incentives, subsidy, procurement process, regulations and standards)			
• Aspects of social inclusion, gender, and marginalized access			

Such a framing might have structured conversations at the county level more effectively. With a better understanding of the market areas where private sector firms from across the local to international spectrum can invest (e.g., their time, resources, and effort), the risks that the county would have been willing to help underwrite in some way, and other related aspects, the conversation around the contribution of the private sector could have been more focused and more productive. As some donors (like the World Bank or African Development Bank) are, as noted by a Development Partner interviewee, “tied down to working through government,” this would also have helped to position Kenya RAPID more effectively “from a strategic perspective... with the understanding of and the flexibility to invest in other parts of the ecosystem.”

While the Kenya RAPID activity is extensive and complicated, a wider conversation around strategy with regard to business models would thus have helped in linking Kenya RAPID’s work to that of others. For example, seeking support to strengthen the enabling environment for private sector investment, an official noted that the World Bank has funding “sitting at Isiolo for equipment to procure service providers to help engage with the private sector.” Other USAID-funded programs like the Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (KIWASH) Project are also working with utilities and entrepreneurs in other parts of the country with lessons that can be shared. The WASHPaLS Activity has learning around Market-Based Sanitation that can contribute to Kenya RAPID’s thinking. The Securing Water for Food Grand Challenge Fund (SWFF) funded in part by USAID has been supporting entrepreneurs in Kenya working at the interface of water and agriculture that could usefully be linked to the Kenya RAPID work in the ASALs. Some of this engagement is determined by the capacity of the

Kenya RAPID PCU (as noted in the section below), which may have been too stretched to explore these channels. Given its wide portfolio but also exposure across the sector, a key responsibility and contribution of USAID, however, is also to optimize the connections among its programming, and potentially to help scan the market for other options or competing products and services. Although unrelated to business models, the Kenya RAPID links to the PREG and AHADI initiatives does, in fairness, appear to be quite strong.

### 4.3.2 PARTICIPATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

The USAID Global Development Alliance requirements are quite flexible around the kinds of partners that qualify as coming from the “private sector”.<sup>8</sup> Private sector signatory partners involved in Kenya RAPID included a wide range of organizations like Aqua for All (a support group seeking to foster private sector solutions), the KCB Bank, The Coca-Cola Africa and Vitol Foundations, IBM Research Africa, SweetSense, Davis & Shirtliff, and Acacia Water. Apart from a few exceptions, “private” partners in the Kenya RAPID activity like research institutes, product developers and consultant firms and foundations, were not all actively looking to forge their own business models focused on a sustained transaction-based relationship with households, communities, counties, utilities, or other suppliers or service providers.

Two partners, Davis & Shirtliff (an engineering and infrastructure firm) and Maji Milele (the developer of the ATM model), appear as more “conventional” private sector groups who were actively seeking business opportunities in the region. As noted by one IP, for research and consulting partners, the sense is that “the customer will continue to be the donors,” forging contracts with or providing funding for their services, rather than the counties seeking to purchase these services directly. This is not a problem, but the scope for these and other partner organizations to create viable business models in the ASALs, as per the proposed scope of Kenya RAPID, is perhaps more limited. One interviewee framed this in the sense that Kenya RAPID spent a significant amount of time talking *about* but not necessarily *to* that part of the private sector that would be most likely to actively develop business models in the ASALs. Indeed, the key partner with a dedicated responsibility for moving this agenda forward (Aqua for All) rather abruptly left the program in the third year. The team understands that part of the issue was that rather than a more coordinated effort across the partnership, the onus was on this lead organization to structure and deliver this component.

The Evaluation Team understands that Aqua for All put forward a wide range of over 15 possible business approaches to support. However, differences in opinion around strategic direction with regard to which innovations and enterprises to support, how much risk-taking Kenya RAPID should engage in, and subsequently how best to allocate funds to take advantage of opportunities as they arose while also ensuring best value for money proved insurmountable barriers for Aqua for All from a programmatic perspective. Indeed, Aqua for All also had to justify their financial contribution to Kenya RAPID to their funder, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Kenya RAPID eagerly brought private sector partners (like IBM, SweetSense, Maji Milele, Davis & Shirtliff, and others) into the conversations early on but there was clearly much work at this stage still to be done to structure the working relationships between the IPs and the counties. Some interviewees speculated that the private

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*“...we had to incur costs to repair pumps so prepaid meters can fit and be able to accelerate numbers.” – Implementing Partner*

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed there also appears to be conflation whereby INGO fundraising efforts for humanitarian relief also count as a “private sector contribution.”

sector partners were perhaps brought in too soon, creating expectations that would take some time to materialize into real opportunities. Senior county officials confessed struggling with the early expectations around the potential contributions of the private sector and felt “this did not work out very well.” This could also have been a function, as expressed by some, that the sequencing of Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 could have been more purposeful, i.e., get the governance documents in place first that framed the rules, potential roles and relationships with the private sector. This would then have galvanized conversations around how best to meet SO2 on engaging the private sector more effectively. There appears, however, to have been pressure to deliver all the SOs simultaneously, particularly as efforts to enact governance frameworks was taking longer than originally anticipated. Thus, as discussed at length in response to EQ1, the linkages among the SOs could have been forged more robustly to underscore the roles the private sector could play, the regulations that are needed to ensure access, and the incentives that might be needed to encourage private sector interest.

In terms of budgeting, it is unclear whether sufficient flexible funding was available to drive private sector engagement as opportunities emerged later in the program. As noted by one of the interviewees, more analysis would have been helpful to overcome the perception in the ASALs that water service delivery is not a promising opportunity for the private sector, potentially even for less poor quintiles of society.

### 4.3.3 PROMISING TECHNOLOGIES

These strategic and analytical aspects notwithstanding, several technologies and approaches hold promise in the ASAL region. A majority of interviewees considered that the technological innovations introduced by Kenya RAPID have contributed to solving the challenges experienced by communities in the delivery of water services. SweetSense sensors and the Maji Milele ATMs appear to be gaining the most traction within the communities with some emerging commitment from county governments (Marsabit in particular) to make reference to ATMs specifically in the water policy and to invest in these technologies directly through their annual budgets going forward. The ATM sensors allow technicians to track borehole functionality from a distance, saving significant time and resources to monitor. Other technologies and approaches in the sanitation sector (e.g., biogas center, container-based solutions, and converting waste into briquettes) did not see similar success due apparently to a lack of acceptance by the communities, lack of security in some geographic areas to pursue further, and (unverified) claims of competing approaches with free pilots being offered by some INGOs, despite the program having invested in the initial stages.

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*“Households can access the water points anytime, no long queues also, now removed the cartels from those who collect all the water and then go sell... Before, revenue was going into the pockets of the cartels and it was difficult to monitor. Now with this technology, it is easy to plan with the communities to put money back into the system.” – Marsabit County Official speaking about the promise of the ATMs*

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As evidenced by the quote above, the ATMs, which distribute set amounts of water based on a pre-paid token system, help reduce non-revenue water, appear to stem corruption at the water points, and create a more reliable and predictable income stream that can be shared between the community water committees and the managers of the overall water scheme. Such is the appreciation of the ATM innovation that Marsabit County is making it a requirement for all new water projects to have the ATM component. Turkana County is purchasing four ATMs with county funds cost shared with the Lodwar Water and Sanitation Company (the Lodwar utility), and the county is buying several more with its own funds and through support from Oxfam. It appears that the ATM system could also be introduced as an approach for water for livestock and for water bowsers.

With the challenges of high salinity of groundwater in most ASAL areas, the desalination technology piloted in Wajir is seen as a great achievement and appears to hold promise with senior leadership in the county commissioning the plant and promising to expand the use of the technology within the county. A similar reverse osmosis desalination plant has been installed in Isiolo County and, at the time of writing, was awaiting metering. Such investments provide easy access to large volumes of clean water and reduce the need for bottled water, but questions remain as to the investment and running costs of these systems and how these will be covered.

Another promising business approach, an insurance scheme for water system repair and maintenance developed by the Catholic Diocese of Turkana, was subsequently promoted by Kenya RAPID and supported by the county government. To buy into the scheme, Water Management Committees pay a set rate, depending on the kind of water system they have—KES 3,500 per year per handpump and KES 6,500 per borehole. Private sector-contracted technical teams can then be requested at any time there is a breakdown without additional cost to the community. Under the Kenya RAPID activity, the model appears to have expanded in terms of coverage of more community water schemes. While the model is operational in Turkana, it holds great potential across the ASAL region and in Kenya generally.

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*“The desalination plant is now operational in the community. It’s serving a lot of people. People are queuing in the evening. The governor is speaking about putting in more desalination plants.”*

– Interviewee at Wajir Water and Sewerage Company (WAJWASCO)

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#### 4.3.4 INCOME GENERATION VERSUS BUSINESS MODELS

On the agriculture side, there is some conflation by Kenya RAPID of income generation activities linked to increased food production at the household level with private sector business model initiatives. Income generation activities (e.g., beekeeping, vegetable drying, and milk production) all play an important part in enhancing critical food and livelihood security for poorer households. As one interviewee noted, “As we looked at... achieving good nutrition outcomes, we were cognizant of the different pathways (production, income and women’s empowerment). The income pathway for us was critical.” The level of engagement and production varies from one county to another. In Marsabit, for example, the produce from the women’s groups is also sold in Wajir County, having satisfied the local market.

From a business perspective, a common refrain from interviewees was that more could have been done to promote the whole value chain like supporting access to farming supplies (e.g., drip irrigation technologies) or creating opportunities for value addition through greater emphasis on cold storage facilities (to reduce post-harvest losses), juicing facilities, training on camel dairy production, and links to markets. The value addition aspect of the supply chain was limited to a few products and varied from county to county. Even if the focus is primarily on water and agriculture, there is much to be done to enhance water storage in times of drought and ensure greater resilience against flooding which would greatly assist in ensuring sustainable livelihoods and nutrition.

Ultimately, capacity to promote business models remains limited at the county level, particularly in the face of vast land areas and dispersed communities with significant need. Kenya RAPID appears to have been slower to focus on rangeland and agriculture initiatives as compared to water and sanitation and few of the key partners bring expertise in this area. Because challenges in commercialization are often linked to water scarcity, efforts focused more narrowly on the interface between water and agriculture may have gained better traction, rather than more broadly across a wide range of aspects related to rangeland management and agricultural productivity. To some degree, Kenya RAPID did this in terms of investing in community and market water supply in Songot, Kaptir, Kapua, and other places. Otherwise, from a commercial perspective, the focus could be on a number of different types of interventions

around tree seedlings and nurseries for land rehabilitation, tree product harvesting and processing, developing fodder value chains across all five counties, commercial support to sorghum production as well as the oil from the less water-reliant *simsim* (sesame indicum crop), prevention of disease in livestock, and other areas. Although all these options were mentioned in interviews, the question remains around what programs like Kenya RAPID are best placed to support, given skills, expertise, and available resources.

It is also understood that, through PREG, Kenya RAPID partnered with other USAID activities such as the Livestock Market Systems (LMS) and Accelerated Value Chain Development (AVCD), which are already engaged in this space. Efforts to partner ensured unnecessary duplication. This strategy did not come through clearly in the interviews, however. Thus, the Evaluation Team contends that it remains relevant to use the framework in Table I to analyze prospects to determine how to have the greatest impact on livelihoods based on rangeland and agricultural initiatives.

From a gender perspective, nutrition education provided by partners led to income generating activities for women's groups, chiefly through raising poultry and goats and tending kitchen gardens. In addition to dietary diversification, these entrepreneurial activities are believed to have led to income diversification and women's economic empowerment. In Wajir, for instance, one of the agricultural officers interviewed noted that, "The provision of the women's group with poultry unit support was a milestone in enhancing the household's nutrition as well as a livelihood that supported incomes."

Some of the key successes came as a result of women's groups that were given management roles for specific kiosks and collection points; they were not necessarily successful due to a gender mandate from Kenya RAPID or how the design initiated these groups, but rather from their intentional, internal mechanisms that prioritized marginalized community members (including women and girls, and women with disabilities). The Evaluation Team recommends further analysis on why these groups were successful. (See Section 4.5 for more detailed information on Kenya RAPID through a gender lens.)

#### 4.3.5 CONCLUSIONS ON EQ3

Regarding business models, by all accounts, this appears to have been stymied perhaps by strategy but perhaps mainly by the five-year timeframe. While the ASAL region is still uncharted territory for private sector initiatives, Kenya RAPID appears to have laid the groundwork for future advances in this area with county officials. The overarching strategy for analyzing and introducing the potential for private sector engagement appears to have been quite iterative with county officials and communities (and even apparently some IP staff, according to interviewees) to shift them away from a more humanitarian mindset. That said, it is unclear to the Evaluation Team on what basis decisions were made about which business models to pursue, and at what point and under what circumstances pilots could be scaled up. A general risk aversion against failures, for fear that would lead to USAID disapproval, was an undercurrent in the interviews. Beyond the ATMs, it is unclear what analysis of more tried and tested products and services across Kenya was conducted. As noted, more effort could have been made to bring in private operators and service providers, private product suppliers and private infrastructure providers to ensure that these perspectives were incorporated more systematically into the program, including learning from other partner activities that support business models. It is not clear that flexible funding was available for these kinds of activities or whether this was meant to be the sole responsibility of Aqua for All in the initial period of Kenya RAPID.

While the overarching approach was highly appreciated by all stakeholder groups, more work could have been done to incorporate and sequence the work of the NGO partners with that of the private sector. Thus, as interviewees suggested, creating a more shared and cohesive vision early on around what needed to occur to promote different commercial solutions, what sequencing was required to overcome different barriers and what was the balance between Kenya RAPID and county engagement in

driving these activities would all have been useful. Given the wide range of responsibilities placed on a small PCU team, more dedicated resources could have helped advance these conversations further between the partners, scan the horizon for potentially viable models, and analyze the enabling environment that would encourage the private sector to engage more in these markets. As it is not always easy to predict how a project will progress at the outset, greater flexibility around some of the funding to allow the partners to pursue new opportunities as they emerged could have been helpful.

#### **4.4 EVALUATION QUESTION 4: THE FACILITATIVE APPROACH**

**EQ4: HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE FACILITATIVE, GOVERNANCE-FOCUSED APPROACH UNDER KENYA RAPID?** (Were changes in county government capacity and commitment achieved? To what extent was Kenya RAPID successful in improving community level governance?)

The facilitative approach (also referred to as Program Implementation using a Facilitation Approach or PIFA) has been a critical component of the Kenya RAPID activity in the five counties. Applying the PIFA, IP staff members were embedded in county government offices to:

- Provide direct support on the drafting and approval of governance framing documents for county priority areas;
- Support the joint planning and coordination of activities between the county government and Kenya RAPID;
- Assist the county in integrating priority activities across different departments (e.g., water, sanitation, rangeland management, and nutrition); and
- Encourage the coordination and integration of the work in the counties of other IPs within the framing of the CIDPs.

By all accounts, this approach has proven to be successful and appreciated by county staff.

Kenya RAPID was designed to utilize the facilitation approach with five county governments and “each one of the program’s 20 plus partners as co-investors in human and financial software, equipment and other organizational resources which are collectively employed and deployed to achieve transformative and sustainable impacts.”<sup>9</sup> Table 2 lists 11 performance measures applicable to Kenya RAPID’s use of PIFA as a guide for the decision-making and operations of the County Program Steering Committees (CPSCs). In 2020, MWA produced a helpful learning brief on the “use of the facilitation approach to catalyze government investments for increased self-reliance.” (Ibid)

The need to form a foundation of trust and a “new way of doing business” resulted in a slow start up as the partners became familiar with their different systems and learned how to work together and as Kenya RAPID sought to ensure co-creation of activities with the counties. The inception phase allowed time for discussion early on as to what the PIFA principles would mean in practice as highlighted in Table 2 below.

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<sup>9</sup> MWA. Learning Brief: Use of Facilitation Approach to Catalyze Government Investments for Increased Self-Reliance. (Undated)

**TABLE 2. FACILITATION APPROACH BENCHMARKS DEVELOPED JOINTLY BY KENYA RAPID PARTNERS**

<b>AS FACILITATORS, WE HAVE TO STOP</b>	<b>AS FACILITATORS, WE HAVE TO START</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE OF PIFA GUIDING PRINCIPLE TO SUPPORT CPSC</b>
Thinking on behalf of our partners	Supporting our partners	<p><b>Knowledge Management:</b> Design and frequency with which CPSC(s) implement(s) an intentional learning agenda and facilitate(s) regular knowledge management processes (lessons learned and best practices activities).</p> <p><b>Capacity Development:</b> Level to which county governments prioritize capacity development and mobilize resources to address needs.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Level to which CPSC(s) encourage(s) adoption and scaling up of innovations from private sector and other development stakeholders.</p>
Talking on behalf of our partners	Guiding our partners	<p><b>Accountability:</b> Ease of the county government to share budget information with stakeholders and/or beneficiaries frequently, on time, and with the relevant level of details.</p> <p><b>Advocacy:</b> Level to which county governments prioritize interests of communities from public feedback processes (measure public consultations, policy and legislative content, budget allocation).</p>
Deciding on behalf of our partners	Encouraging our partners	<p><b>Decision Making:</b> Level to which CPSC uses evidence to support prioritization in decision making in the program (quality, evidence, quantity/number, analytical capacity, and leadership-seeing decisions through).</p> <p><b>Neutrality:</b> Frequency and detail with which the county shares information on planned government interventions and progress with all stakeholders simultaneously.</p>
Doing on behalf of them our partners	Coaching our partners	<p><b>Coordination:</b> Level of regularity and ease with which the county government organizes and facilitates CPSC coordination meetings.</p> <p><b>Clear Roles and Responsibilities:</b> Ability of county governments to implement/operationalize Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed principles/matrix (develop matrix, articulate clearly roles and responsibilities, measure progress in implementation of the matrix).</p> <p><b>Networking:</b> Presence and functionality of county government database in mobilizing suitable stakeholders from public, civil society, and private sector in program implementation.</p>
Spending money on behalf of our partners	Letting our partners do	<p><b>Financial Management:</b> Level to which incremental transfer of program financial management decisions to counties has been undertaken.</p>

Strong coordination has provided the backbone of the facilitative approach; under Kenya RAPID, this has been enacted on two levels: 1) planning and management, and 2) implementation. Coordination on planning and management was achieved through regular management meetings that built consensus around how best to deliver on CIDPs. Coordination on implementation appears to have varied by county and IP. Major areas of traction include the development of guiding policies and other framework documents and capacity building at the county level, both especially important in the Kenyan context of

devolution (as discussed earlier in this report). Embedded in the results of a comprehensive county capacity needs assessment (CCNA), capacity building manifested in three forms: more traditional formal training, mentoring by embedded staff, and overall systems strengthening support. Examples of systems strengthening include development of policies and training manuals, support with budget analysis, the creation or strengthening of different structures like small town water utilities and Water User Associations, and other activities.

By all accounts, Kenya RAPID IPs enjoy a positive and solid working relationship with the counties. With commitments from IPs to provide support to overcome capacity and financing gaps, the MOUs provided clarity and the PIFA negotiations have ensured county ownership. It took roughly 12–18 months to iron out protocols of communication and permissions, define the precise nature of the supporting relationship, and seek clarity on how best to work within existing hierarchies. As noted by one MWA staff member:

*“There were many things unknown at the start – how to engage with counties, how to ensure activities are integrated in CIDPs, etc. It took time to understand the system, adapting the planning and investment calendar was a big thing... It was a learning process for the program and the donors too.” – MWA Staff*

Day-to-day contact between IP and county staff has fostered a relationship of trust. The positive and quasi-competitive spirit of Kenya RAPID as experienced in the PMG meetings also has galvanized county appreciation of the approach. The modeling of constructive leadership behaviors across the program also appears to have shaped county engagement.

In the context of devolution, county governments are keen to prove themselves capable of addressing the needs of their citizens, recognizing that there is more at stake with the increased powers devolved from national government. The turnover of four of the county governments in the election midway through Kenya RAPID is a testament to the need for county officials to make an impression on citizens that the government is moving in the right direction and is keen to meet the challenge of addressing the development agenda set in the CIDPs. More dynamic leadership, more coordinated strategies, and growing economies—all areas that Kenya RAPID implicitly or explicitly supported—will increasingly attract more investment. As an example, according to interviewees, Kenya RAPID support to county WASH forums that brought together NGOs working in the county helped to link the different programs in relation to integrating community/household income generating activities with water infrastructure, market opportunities, and the delivery of nutrition and health guidance; forging effective sequencing of activities; and filling in knowledge and capacity gaps. Additionally, this support led to more robust county-level funding proposals to other donors.

#### 4.4.1 EMBEDDING STAFF

Kenya RAPID embedded between three and five staff in each of the counties, usually in adjacent offices in county buildings to those of key related county staff. Although with some variation across counties, IP staff generally included a coordinator and a few specialists in areas such as WASH, ICT, food security and nutrition, and livestock, as well as an administrator and a driver. The approach of embedding staff received very positive responses from county officials. Alongside the practical contributions, as a result, there is a growing appreciation for what INGOs bring to the table in terms of experience, expertise, and skills. Unless they have had direct experience of working in an INGO before, which admittedly many county government officials have, INGOs were often seen as seeking to minimize their relationship with county governments, implementing projects with tacit or direct approval but without regular contact at the county level. The Kenya RAPID “*business unusual*” approach has forged a new or certainly more refined appreciation of the challenges that county governments face by INGOs, but also of the development approach of INGOs by county government officials. While this has fostered different

conversations at the county level regarding targeting and participation, in terms of sustainability, the Evaluation Team was unable to unpack how areas like business modeling and social inclusion were incorporated from the policy to the practical levels.

Interviewees from IPs acknowledged that the skillsets of embedded staff are as much, if not more, about their facilitation skills as about technical knowledge and implementation experience. While the pace of progress might be slower in a traditional sense) i.e., how quickly a project can be initiated and delivered), the likelihood of ownership by the county, the ability to coordinate across initiatives (e.g., by bringing in nutrition messages), and the emphasis on longer-term sustainability through this facilitative approach is expected to be higher.

#### 4.4.2 FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Through a closer working relationship with the county, Kenya RAPID financial contributions can be more tailored to the situation, representing a further key advantage to this approach. Investments can be sequenced in such a way that, should county funds be insufficient to complete a project, INGO funding can be used to supplement. For example, the county may have allocated only enough funding for drilling a borehole but then the IP can supplement with the sensor, a kiosk, and other infrastructure. While certainly appropriate, as the Evaluation Team understands it, this has taken significant coordination in practice, as the financial years are not aligned between the counties and Kenya RAPID. Also, as funding expected from national allocations has not always arrived in time, IPs sometimes struggled to determine the best methods to obligate its own funding. A further challenge has been around counties needing to divert funding as a result of emergencies, like droughts and floods, which are frequent in the ASALs. As a result, county funding allocations and actual obligations have not always been easy to determine. This feeds into a wider lack of clarity by the Evaluation Team on the protocols or policies in place in terms of matching levels expected from the counties or how decisions were taken on what Kenya RAPID would fund and what not.

While embedding has afforded access to significantly more information to IP staff, IPs work in tandem with county government systems, which allows them to use their own procurement systems to expedite activity funding. IPs have not, however, had much influence on county procurement systems nor on seemingly influencing spending from major donors. There appeared to be limited information, for example, on major World Bank funding for the ASAL counties (in the Northern and North-Eastern Kenya Development Initiative) for which Kenya RAPID partners may have been able to support counties in getting systems in place for smooth procurement. Although not critical to the program necessarily, it also was not fully clear whether funds committed by county governments were from national, international, or own sources.

#### 4.4.3 CAPACITY BUILDING

Kenya RAPID embarked upon comprehensive county capacity needs assessments (CCNA) from roughly the sixth to eighteenth month after launch. The CCNA outlined three dimensions of support for capacity building in the WASH, livestock, and rangeland management sectors: the institutional level or enabling environment, the organizational level, and the individual level (see text box, next page). An external consultant was hired to gauge the management and technical capacity of related departments, producing a report for each county that then formed the basis for the design of a joint county capacity building program. There appears to have been some delay in getting this activity started and, according to interviews with county officials, there were initial disagreements with some of the counties as to the findings. Kenya RAPID also took some time to establish the County Capacity Building Fund (CCBF), which also delayed capacity building activities. The CCBF is a joint fund that is managed by the PCU to solicit requests and administer capacity building efforts on behalf of the counties.

Accounting perhaps in part for the delay, a key challenge of working through a facilitative approach noted by several national- and county-level IP staff is the issue of staff turnover within the government as a result of elections midway through Kenya RAPID. Although the impact on programming appears to have varied, newly elected governors installed their own senior-level political appointees to manage county ministries. As one IP coordinator noted, “When there is leadership change, the institutional memory goes, all have been removed and the departments no longer have a stake in your program... [and] still need to make budget decisions for our work.” Thus, while the technical staff may be less subject to turnover, support from the political administrators is essential to ensure funding continues to be allocated for the planned work.

Each county presented a somewhat different scenario to the leadership change. For Marsabit County, Food for the Hungry (FH) noted that the transition went well, and the work continued without interruption; the MOU combined with longstanding IP familiarity of the county context and PCU support to engage the new governor helped establish working relationships anew. In comparison, World Vision in Wajir indicated that a change in governor and subsequent change in technical staff at the county level caused work to “grind to a standstill... [and] project timelines were heavily affected.” Catholic Relief Services (CRS) saw contrasting scenarios: while Turkana (the only one of the five counties in which the governor was re-elected) maintained continuity, a new administration in Isiolo (a new County Director for Water and a number of newly hired technical staff after the election) effectively negated the capacity building done in the first two years. In Garissa, a new administration with different priorities wanted to change program plans altogether, a challenge that went up to the national-level PSC to negotiate a reaffirmation of the previous commitments.

The Kenya RAPID DCOP acknowledged that there should have been a “deliberate training plan” for incoming elected officials and appointees, and there does not appear to have been a subsequent updated capacity assessment. Indeed, ministers are often moved around within five-year election cycles with a Minister for Water moving to the health portfolio or Minister for Agriculture moving to take over an education portfolio, for example. One county noted six changes of the water sector County Executive Committee (CEC) designee, bringing about shifts in priorities that may or may not have been tempered by the Kenya RAPID overarching project management structures in place. While it remains unclear how best to handle this, alongside the robust induction plan put in place by Kenya RAPID,<sup>10</sup> clear success stories to show how the design has been institutionalized, and a more frequent even if lighter touch capacity needs assessment would all be instrumental in responding to turnover in leadership.

### Needs Assessment Dimensions

- **Level I, Institutional capacity or the enabling environment,** represents the broad national and county context within which the three sectors (water, livestock, and rangeland management) can develop.
- **Level II, the organizational level,** refers to the wide range of organizational actors involved in the three sectors but within the scope of the county government. These include Water Service Providers in the water sector or various departments and their internal structures, mission and strategy, culture, structure and competencies, processes (internal and external), human resources, financial resources, information resources and infrastructure. processes, systems, and other resources to achieve them.
- **Level III, the individual level,** is the most structured and familiar part of capacity development and includes education and training of the various individuals and the entire workforce in the three departments. Many capacity initiatives ultimately concentrate on the individual, either because this level is considered the most critical, or because it is the easiest to address.

<sup>10</sup> After the 2017 elections, an induction plan was put in place that culminated in a joint induction of all the county governors together in a Nairobi hotel.

A further challenge is the level of familiarity that the new staff bring to the technical area. This was summed up nicely during an interview with an IP:

*“If you look at the composition of the county leadership, the directors, the CECs, they had previously worked in the NGO world. They knew what was happening and it was not a struggle to allocate budgets in the right place. In other places... where directors and CECs bring more political skill and they don’t have the technical expertise, you realize it was trouble. And for example [in one county], the leaders are really not technocrats in their areas, they are learning as they go. So, you find the buy-in for example in allocating the resources for the county, it is wanting...”* – Implementing Partner

The challenges of senior-level turnover combined with insufficient familiarity with the technical area notwithstanding, interviewees across the board noted that county capacity was enhanced through both formal and less-formal channels. County officials speak with confidence regarding their ability to address community needs. A key stumbling block remains, however, around staffing levels to cover water resources, sanitation, rangelands, and nutrition—in essence, all elements of the Kenya RAPID program except for water service delivery. To meet ambitious CIDP targets, further assessments could certainly help make the case for the need to invest in higher staffing levels and ensure that current staff members are sufficiently trained.

Sufficient training is indeed a moving target, not only to boost new or transferred staff, but to respond to evolving needs. For example, expertise in drilling boreholes was not identified as a capacity gap in Turkana, because the county acquired drilling rigs after the assessment was complete.

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*“The program supported various trainings in the county. The leadership challenges were addressed by trainings... Range management training was also well done. There were also senior management training, nutrition training, and businesspeople being trained including milk traders. The CCBF has achieved a lot in supporting the capacity development in the county.”* – County Official

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In another example, the capacity gaps for professionally trained nutritionists were mentioned as a major challenge. A livestock officer stated,

*“There are still gaps in technical aspects of nutrition. We are being assisted by people from other ministries, but the level of commitment and delivery will not be the same as implementation by a nutritionist. For the nutritionist, this is their work and they are expected to do it. The few nutritionists work at managerial level and so do not provide services at the community level—there is a huge gap for nutrition personnel.”* – Nutrition Officer.

Further, the lack of a focused capacity assessment on nutrition and on the office of the Public Health Officer (PHO) was likely a missed opportunity for Kenya RAPID. That said, Kenya RAPID and Feed the Future partners, working through the national food and nutrition linkages Technical Working Group (TWG), contributed to the development of a resource manual for agri-nutrition in Kenya to promote delivering harmonized training across the country. This then led to development of the Agri-Nutrition Strategy, also through the TWG.

Although the needs assessment identified a capacity gap in livestock management and veterinary support services, these gaps were not addressed until late in the program and then delayed further due to COVID-19 restrictions. While Kenya RAPID did implement some capacity building in agriculture and crop production in support of the agri-nutrition component, this area does not come out clearly in the needs assessment.

Finally, gender technical oversight and expertise was missing in the activity. Although the Kenya RAPID team appointed a gender focal point among a senior staff member, limited gender guidance was

transferred to partners. Capacity building efforts in gender-sensitive approaches to WASH and rangeland/livestock management might have produced stronger outcomes for Kenya RAPID in gender and social inclusion (see Section 4.5 for more detail).

However, one government official recognized that the provided trainings were meant to act as a catalyst, in that: “Kenya RAPID may not address everything but can contribute in terms of building skills for the county to go on its own.” Strategies employed to help extend the impact of the capacity assessment are the development of budgeted county training plans, in tandem with the CCBF; development of resource manuals; provision of training with a focus on training of trainers; and identification of locally available trainings.

The capacity assessment instigated the GOK to identify a curriculum, not necessarily full degree courses, to be made available at accredited universities in Kenya that would be appropriate for county-level staff. It is unclear to the Evaluation Team if these would be eligible for support through the CCBF. A county official in Turkana indicated that management-level staff completed courses in project design and management at Jomo Kenyatta University, though the available budget did not stretch to all identified gaps such as report writing and technical specialties such as drilling, submersible pumps, electricians, and solar technology. University courses also include participatory rangeland management and pasture production at the University of Nairobi.

Trainings were conducted across the Kenya RAPID technical portfolio in the areas of health (community health volunteer set up), water (solar systems), sanitation (CLTS triggering, third-party ODF certification, use of the Real Time Monitoring System, sanitation marketing in some counties, and latrine construction), hygiene, agriculture, and nutrition. Integrated training for PHOs, nutritionists, and agriculture officers provided opportunities for specialists to learn about subjects outside their area of expertise and brought together specialists from across all five counties. This provided opportunities to increase the impact of county level staff during limited community contact, for example, allowing a nutritionist to respond to community requests on agriculture, when an agricultural officer was not available due to too few staff or unavailability of transport. Technicians at Wajir Water and Sewerage Company (WAJWASCO) were also trained in the management scheme, including electricians and plumbers being introduced to new technologies and emerging trends.

According to interviewees, some training areas could be taken further for nutritionists, agriculture, and rangeland management specialists as well as training on social marketing, ICT, and M&E. One example of informal mentoring enabled by the co-location of staff on M&E specifically came from an IP who stated, “If they need certain data, we communicate directly with them—agree together on how to collect the data and in some cases we go jointly to the field.” Some IP M&E specialists supported the county M&E staff to develop targets and indicators for the CIDPs.

Ongoing training plans, including university courses, were inevitably interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with only some offerings able to shift to online. The CCBF appears to have been similarly hobbled by the pandemic, albeit a number of training activities were conducted even in the months after lockdown was declared. Overall, the CCBF was meant to coordinate capacity building plans based on needs and priorities, but with increased ownership and co-financing from the counties and ultimately sustainability of county capacity building operations beyond the program. While some counties had started allocating funds to the CCBF, it was still being managed centrally at the national level by the PCU. While the CCBF appeared to be gaining traction by the time of this evaluation, there was some suggestion that it could have been decentralized to the IPs for more effective program tailoring.

The Evaluation Team was not able to assess the effectiveness or impact of Kenya RAPID-supported training activities. Interviewees noted that they participated in and appreciated the offerings. While government officials may have participated in numerous training exercises, newfound pressures on county governments to ensure sound resource management and service delivery may be encouraging

officials to take such training more seriously and to invest appropriately in staffing and staff skills and capacity. As with the embedding element discussed below, it is unclear what the exit strategy is for the CCBF.

#### 4.4.4 SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Government counterparts from each county were appreciative of Kenya RAPID's support in developing governance framing documents (policies, bills, acts, by-laws), providing structure to county-level governance of water, livestock, and rangeland management. This is a complicated and costly process that requires significant back-and-forth across stakeholder groups who may not understand the technical aspects or the options put before them.

Progress on this work stream varied between counties. Wajir County developed three policies, which are moving slowly through the county assembly. Turkana completed a water policy incorporating guidance on the establishment of water user associations, a livestock policy is under development (undergoing the public participation stage), and rangelands framing documents are on the docket next. Kenya RAPID support in Turkana for the Water Act included financing meetings to ensure participation of county-level technical staff and the public, and the county has put in financing to hire a consultant to move to the next stage of publishing rules and regulations. Marsabit and Garissa appear to be farthest along with the creation of the rural water utilities. In Isiolo, a rangeland management policy is in draft and the County Assembly recently passed the Water Bill; government officials are keen to establish a rural water company and appreciated the training provided by Kenya RAPID on the Water Policy. It appears that the passing of a water bill is a gateway for the county to access further funding through the Kenya Water Sector Fund, which may have been intended as an incentive. As discussed in detail in other sections of this report, these efforts have been very much welcomed and appreciated by county officials who recognize their importance.

#### 4.4.5 COMMUNITY LEVEL GOVERNANCE

The Evaluation Team understands from the document review and the interviews that a wide range of activities were directed at enhancing community-level governance. These activities include:

- Strengthening structures for resource governance (e.g., Water User Associations [WUAs], Water Management Committees, and Rangeland Management Committees [RMCs]);
- Training communities on the use of different technologies (e.g., ATMs);
- Training households on different aspects relating to wellbeing (e.g., nutrition, hygiene, and how to treat drinking water); and
- Setting up of the community complaints and feedback mechanism for water services.

The feedback has been very positive, with staff noting that communities accepted these initiatives with much positive “political good will.” That said, a key challenge remains around the ability of county administrations to sustain these efforts with limited staffing levels and insufficient resources dedicated to administering these programs to cover costs associated with allowances and transport provision, among others. There remains a residual sense in some communities of dependency with community members still “always expecting to receive something.”

Alongside these activities, Kenya RAPID support

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*“...Some of the water facilities are being taken care of by the county governments as opposed to previously when they were handed over by the NGOs to communities who did not have the capacity to maintain them. The process has started gaining traction, but change takes time!” – MWA Staff*

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to public participation in the development of governance framework documents was mentioned frequently, though the Evaluation Team cannot comment on how robust or representative this participation was.

In at least one county, the county water act identifies WUAs and the roles they play, especially at community water level. WUAs are noted to cover larger areas (i.e., managing upwards of 10 water points), while Water Management Committees exist on a smaller scale (i.e., one water point). In Turkana, the county proposes to form a water utility at the county level but acknowledges the

importance of having rural WUAs registered at county or even national levels and operating as legal bodies.

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*“[The use of prepaid meters is] now official policy and the communities now gaining benefits – previously couldn’t monitor revenue and when embezzled couldn’t arrest and take people to court and dismantle cartels. ... [This has] brought a transformation in how we share water resources.” – County Official*

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Formation of the WUAs by Kenya RAPID has been useful in supporting the conservation of water catchment areas through better use and management, which is a need highlighted in all five counties’ CIDPs. Communities will need continuous support in the development and enforcement of rules and bylaws. These same groups manage water for livestock; this has increased utilization while mitigating water use conflicts.

Albeit still in nascent stages within Kenya RAPID, the creation or reinforcement of RMCs and Grazing Management Committees is seen as incredibly helpful to mitigate conflict as well as to introduce new technical advances and governance tools. At least in Garissa County, RMCs were well trained with groups linked to credit facilities from private lenders.

Kenya RAPID supported RMCs to register for official status and provided training on grazing land management and development of grazing plans and the establishment of wet and dry season grazing zones. Counties were very appreciative of project support to digitize grazing maps, even identifying areas where additional water infrastructure is needed. Full operationalization of grazing plans entails development of maps and bylaws, though in some areas these additional steps have not yet occurred; there are also many sub-counties/wards in the five counties that have not yet developed grazing plans.

Notable in the CIDPs, grazing land restoration was considered as an important activity by all counties to ensure better resilience to drought events. Kenya RAPID also supported pasture production to ensure pastures are well managed and animals have enough pastureland for grazing. Reseeding activities contributed to increase in vegetation cover, provision of feed, and reduction of soil erosion.

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*“Before Kenya RAPID, there were movements of livestock from all over the place, with many incidences of conflicts from resource use. The programme came when the community was in despair, lacked planned grazing and was more vulnerable. The program supports water availability, pasture availability, farming support and hence the communities happily accepted the program.” – County Official*

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Given the inability to travel and to meet with communities directly, the Evaluation Team is not in a position to make a judgment on the community experience of and gains from Kenya RAPID with any degree of confidence. While the range of activities has been impressive, how far reaching these have been in terms of meeting the needs of vast counties and how sustainable these efforts will remain requires further study.

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*“An end line [capacity assessment] would have been useful to check on the impact; not the number trained, but whether that was effective or not. If the staff stayed, did they utilize what they learned?” – Implementing Partner*

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#### 4.4.6 CONCLUSIONS ON EQ4

The Evaluation Team acknowledges that this is a time of change in the political economy of Kenya's governing structures. Counties have been given significantly more responsibility through the devolution process and citizens are expecting more voice and more delivery at the local level. County officials appear to recognize the opportunities but also the challenges that this brings. There remains an element of "Still looking at the big brother... [with] a dependency syndrome so when an NGO comes in, they expect them to give them everything..." according to one IP at the Nairobi level. On the other hand, there appears to be significant momentum in both the "road to self-reliance" government rhetoric, but also the power and opportunity that is emerging at the county level through devolution. For instance, one interviewee highlighted this transformation in a key metric by noting that the number of candidates running in the second election was markedly higher than that of the first election after devolution.

While there may be other motives as well, county officials are keen to mobilize resources to deliver on their promises. The facilitative approach allows for more integrated and joined up planning and delivery in the counties. By all accounts, learning forums are becoming more of a space for constructive debate about what works and what does not. County officials appear to be more able to see how the contributions of different development partners support or distract from the delivery of their CIDPs.

While it would have been helpful to interview more non-Kenya RAPID partners at both county and national level to validate this perception, the Evaluation Team senses that other development partners may be aware that, through more day-to-day contact, Kenya RAPID has the ability to shape government approaches more effectively and have its activities reflected in and aligned with government priorities. According to county government officials, other Development Partners are seeking to emulate the approach. According to the Kenya RAPID COP and confirmed in discussions with county officials, with reference particularly around joint financing and mutually supportive investments, counties are "Demanding other partners to use a similar approach. For example, in Turkana County, e.g., UNICEF, [United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)], Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)], etc., the county has been pushing them to align to county priorities to deliver as one... with one focal point of coordination."

Beyond the financing arrangements, the Evaluation Team struggled to gain a complete understanding of two areas: ownership of the data generated by various interventions as mentioned elsewhere in this document, and the Kenya RAPID IP exit strategy, with some suggestion of an emerging dependence on the IP coordinators in particular. With regard to the former, county officials provided an inconsistent response in terms of how the information (ICT) systems work, who owns the system and what contractual arrangements are in place for their use going forward.

In terms of an exit strategy, this was not clear across the board. One respondent noted that the whole facilitative approach is about embedding an exit strategy from the start whereby the IP team becomes more and more invisible as the project progresses. Indeed, that is a clear principle of good facilitation and dovetails well with the PIFA principles. The increased role and confidence of the county officials in both PMG and county level meetings with different stakeholders is testament to the IPs taking more of a back seat. That said, it was noted that IP staff are often mistaken for county staff "...because they were always working hand in hand and at the same locations and really understanding the mechanics of the different initiatives that were aimed at building that accountability at the county level."

As noted above, IPs should be careful not to embed too closely so as to lose what INGOs bring to the table in terms of advocating for marginalized populations; innovation, experimentation and risk taking (as allowed within the parameters of funding); and depoliticizing projects and programs with a focus on evidence-based policy and decision-making.

The Evaluation Team sees the facilitative approach as a highly successful mechanism to support counties in their efforts to develop and deliver on their CIDPs. Counties appreciated the approach and have sought to encourage other Development Partners to work also in this way. The emphasis on capacity assessment and direct hands-on systems strengthening is seen as helping counties deliver on their mandates more directly. The approach should lead to cost-effectiveness through more integrated planning and efficient logistics during implementation of activities, some greater understanding of how different development priorities can mutually support each other, and a greater sense of ownership of development processes supported by Development Partners at the county level. Enshrining the approach further in the CIDP process could be instrumental in negotiating county priorities and ensuring that these priorities are budgeted for under annual departmental plans. A key bottleneck as mentioned elsewhere in this report is around the delays in disbursement of funds for co-funded projects and activities. Some linkages to national institutions were mentioned around collaboration to develop a Resource Manual for Agri-Nutrition in Kenya, contact with the University of Nairobi to assess gaps in rangeland management, with NDMA and related organizations on mapping, and helpful conversations with the Water Services Regulatory Board.

Ultimately, the team questions whether the Kenya RAPID activity was long enough to prepare for exit in a meaningful way that ensures sustainability of the contribution and approach. The timeframes notwithstanding, more clarity across the board appears to have been needed around the strategy for closing out the program.

#### **4.5 KENYA RAPID THROUGH A GENDER LENS**

The Evaluation Team approached the gender component of the evaluation by applying the USAID framework for gender analysis (USAID, 2017). This approach specifically focuses on five domains of analysis:

1. Cultural norms and beliefs;
2. Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used;
3. Access to and control over resources;
4. Patterns of power and decision making; and
5. Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices.

These domains will be further explained in this section and applied as anchors to understand the Kenya RAPID approach to gender integration.

The Evaluation Team applied thematic qualitative analysis to collected gender-specific data, drawing heavily on the domains mentioned above as pillars of analysis and triangulating with best practices and recommendations documented in the desk review conducted at the outset of the evaluation exercise that was submitted in the early stages of the assignment. Although strategically developed gender and social inclusion questions were inquired of nearly all key informants, gender-related codes that surfaced from these data were sparse. While minimal data to draw concrete conclusions in this analysis is indeed a limitation, the Evaluation Team sees such a lean response to gender concepts as a finding in itself. Specifically, the activity's approach to gender seems to leave room for improvement. Nevertheless, Kenya RAPID achieved a number of small, yet significant, gains from a gender perspective; this section documents these findings, alongside recommendations for future efforts.

#### 4.5.1 CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Societies uphold particular values around aspirations and appropriate qualities that men and women should attain or carry out. Norms and beliefs that are gender-related influence how men and women may respond to interventions, such as those under the Kenya RAPID activity, affecting issues including participation and project reach. Cultural norms and beliefs may even lead to unintended consequences resulting from an intervention. Although Kenya RAPID did not set out in its approach to alter or transform social norms, including potentially harmful gender norms, the activity's design did include a behavior change communication (BCC) component. Among other objectives, this element sought to address underlying social barriers that impact malnutrition, food insecurity, and psychosocial stress among women and marginalized groups through training.

Evaluation findings confirmed that great attention was given to gender sensitivity in the development of training materials (i.e., Community Dialogue Cards). One MWA staff member noted the following about how these materials underwent extensive testing to ensure inclusivity, specifically ensuring that men and women were observed to be sharing household nutrition responsibilities:

*“Some of those pictures had to change a number of times. We wanted to be sure we weren't just capturing women, but also men. When [household] responsibilities are depicted, [we have to] consider cultural norms...and [we] needed to be sure they were socially appropriate to pass the intended messages. We even looked at sitting postures for the women, and the dress... It was a process, and a lot of considerations were put in, in terms of the male/female elements of the messaging and tools.”*

The concerted effort by Kenya RAPID to understand and respond to cultural norms is noteworthy in terms of BCC and training material design. What is at this point unknown is the result of implementing these trainings with communities whose social norms and beliefs are deeply rooted. One stakeholder in Turkana described the challenges to accomplishing desired activity outcomes:

*“Both women and men were included in the [nutrition] training. [There were] more women in the kitchen garden because men felt that was the work of women. We were telling the men to help women when they are pregnant, but Turkana men are difficult. They say that is the work of the women... Behavior change takes time.”*

Kenya RAPID employs a gender sensitive design in its activities. As such, the activity acknowledges gender norms and inequalities as existing in target locations, and it makes adjustments to and compensations for these norms and inequalities, where possible. Relevant to this domain, a gender sensitive design compares with a gender transformative approach in that the latter seeks to intentionally alter harmful norms and inequalities in and through the intervention. As Kenya RAPID applied a gender sensitive rather than transformative approach, some programmatic elements, as observed in the above quote from Turkana, may not produce the intended result.

#### 4.5.2 GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USED

Labor in societies may be divided into paid (productive market/economic) and unpaid (non-market, including household labor) activities; the roles that individuals play within these distinctions are central to how men and women are able to advance in society. Most often, social norms and beliefs influence the roles and responsibilities that men and women hold in society. Kenya RAPID's design included elements that would accommodate women's traditional gender role of caring for children and being responsible for household nutrition; specifically, Kenya RAPID sought to promote kitchen gardens, educate on food diversification, and train/deploy Community Health Workers for nutrition promotion. Additionally, the activity planned to employ labor-saving technologies at water points, potentially

reducing women's time burden in water collection, again accommodating women's traditional gender role.

Evaluation results highlight the activity's success in this domain, particularly through the introduction of labor-saving technologies. Women appear to have benefited substantially from these tools, namely the metering/token system. This system allows for greater efficiency among women's groups that manage water points, improving record keeping and transparency of sales. For users, respondents noted that women also found this technology to increase efficiency (e.g., reduced time queuing due to increased time options to collect water), and that they could keep the token on a keychain without needing cash to purchase water. For others, according to respondents, women felt the token allowed them to send a child to collect water with the token more easily, relieving them of this responsibility and time burden of waiting in line. As a respondent in Marsabit noted,

*“Cumulatively, all these interventions have empowered women. They have the opportunities to manage the water resources where these ATMs are installed. They participate in all the stages...so women [are] very much at the center of the project.”*

In addition to the positive findings related to women's reduced time burden due to the metering/token system, several participants noted that women's groups were more effective managers of water points. The selection processes for management of water kiosks were competitive (e.g., no affirmative action), and women's groups won the bids most frequently. Many stakeholders viewed the performance of women's groups as better than that of men's groups, due to their distinct management styles.

While Kenya RAPID did not seek to alter gender roles or responsibilities in its approach, there were notable benefits to women within their traditionally accepted role in society.

#### 4.5.3 ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Understanding how men and women are able to access, control, and make use of assets and resources is the premise of this domain, specifically noting how marginalized populations fare in comparison to more dominant groups in society. The Kenya RAPID design incorporated concepts through a number of efforts. First and primarily, the activity sought to provide reliable and accessible access to safe and sufficient water, particularly relevant to women and girls whose traditional role includes water collection. Second, Kenya RAPID planned to promote economic opportunities for women, youth, and the disabled through strengthening women's cooperatives and savings and lending committees. Third, through capacity building efforts, the activity proposed to improve women's sanitation-related small-scale production and marketing skills.

Findings from the evaluation reveal an increase in women's access to resources during the course of the intervention—from direct and streamlined access to water, to access to income generating activities. Women's control over resources was less clearly understood from the evaluation.

Through Kenya RAPID, women's groups participate in various business activities: managing water kiosks for income generation, raising poultry and goats for selling and consuming, and tending kitchen gardens for selling and consuming. According to respondents, women who manage water kiosks are observed to have more resources to better support their families, and they also seem to diversify their expenditures at the household level. These advances are not explicitly a result of Kenya RAPID's design, but this is indeed a positive association with the project's activities.

Evaluation findings also revealed an increase in water access for people with disabilities (PWDs), directly and indirectly attributed to Kenya RAPID. Increasing PWDs' access to improved WASH services is demonstrated in infrastructure designs. Many of the toilets and water points are built with considerations for height and distance, as well as ramp access. The Water Director in Marsabit noted,

“One of the water kiosks is run by people with disability...so people with disability [benefitted from the] joint community venture.” In Isiolo, one women’s group that manages water points has established dedicated access times for PWDs. This concerted effort, though, is attributed to the intentions and commitments of the women’s group, rather than the Kenya RAPID mandate, according to the respondent. Finally, the sanitation BCC on WASH and nutrition benefits disabled individuals, predominantly through messages read aloud (to benefit those unable to see) and door-to-door visits to target those unable to travel.

#### 4.5.4 PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION MAKING

This domain assesses to what degree men and women are able to decide, influence, and exercise control over resources (e.g., human, intellectual, financial). Kenya RAPID’s design sought to engage with communities in reflection processes to strengthen and develop community structures, as well as ensure that women and PWDs participate in and are represented in the various levels of community engagement, specifically in water and livestock sectors. Evaluation findings reveal that Kenya RAPID makes consistent and concerted efforts to promote women’s participation in all activity-related meetings, following the one-third gender rule (i.e., no more than two-thirds of participants can be of the same gender) as stipulated in Kenya’s Gender Policy (Republic of Kenya, 2019). While effective in increasing the participation of women within governance structures, this representative quota does not guarantee increases in women’s decision-making power and voice within meetings. Nevertheless, one Nairobi-based respondent noted that women seem to participate actively and confidently in community meetings; whether this can be attributed to the Kenya RAPID intervention is unclear. This respondent also noted an increase in diversity of participation by age and ethnicity.

In terms of positions of power, findings show that indeed women are at times placed in positions of leadership within community structures, yet often these positions are limited to the secretary or treasurer. One respondent from Garissa commented on the position of treasurer, saying that women are “more trusted with money issues,” suggesting that women were viewed to combat misuse of funds, but are perhaps less valued for other forms of input. Despite Kenya RAPID’s efforts to promote participation of women, there appears to be a ceiling whereby women are accepted in mid-level positions or on boards, but rarely, if at all, do they hold senior leadership positions.

#### 4.5.5 LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

This domain highlights the need to understand the extent to which existing or implemented laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices—as a result of Kenya RAPID—contain explicit or implicit gender biases. At project design, Kenya RAPID sought to ensure policies and laws developed to govern water, land, and livestock would be gender intentional and involve women and PWDs in drafting. Analyzed interview data suggest that success in increasing the diversity of governance processes and policies is mixed. In Garissa, one respondent noted that women are already “very responsive even to attend meetings. They are the first ones to attend, while men [have to] drag themselves.” Another Garissa respondent explained that, “Women [were] given the opportunity to give input and clearly state what they wanted. Kenya RAPID, through donor conditions, made this happen.” However, when asked to reflect on the project’s impact in governance, most respondents cited Kenya’s one-third quota on female participation (see Republic of Kenya, 2019), without elaborating upon other specific strategies to increase engagement in—and reduce barriers around—women and PWDs shaping of policy and governance outcomes.

The above evaluation findings, juxtaposed against the Kenya RAPID design elements and desk review findings, are presented in Table 3 below.

**TABLE 3. KENYA RAPID EVALUATION: GENDER-RELATED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

GENDER DOMAIN	KENYA RAPID DESIGN	DESK REVIEW – LEARNINGS AND BEST PRACTICES FROM LITERATURE	EVALUATION FINDINGS	GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
Cultural Norms and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop gender-sensitive social and behavior change communications to change underlying social and cultural barriers impacting malnutrition, food insecurity, and psycho-social stress among women and marginalized groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programs most successful in increasing women’s empowerment implicitly challenged gender norms by providing women access to life skills training, entrepreneurship classes, and financial tools (Gobin &amp; Santos, 2015; Sanders &amp; Kimani, 2019).</li> <li>Other programs that have explicitly challenged cultural norms and beliefs through education (e.g., Austrian et al., 2018) have not shown success unless the programming is tailored to ASAL cultures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BCC materials on gendered social norms related to nutrition were developed with substantial attention to gender sensitivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand BCC component beyond nutrition to address rigid (e.g., women’s lack of asset ownership) and harmful (e.g., early/forced marriage, female genital mutilation) gender norms in ASAL region.</li> <li>Explicitly evaluate changes in social norms as a result of BCC materials (surveys, FGDs, social norms vignettes).</li> </ul>
Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote kitchen gardens with focus on reaching women and mothers of children under five.</li> <li>Facilitate reliable and accessible access to safe and sufficient water—with specific goals of reducing women’s workload.</li> <li>Educate pastoralist communities (especially women) on diversification of food sources.</li> <li>Train and deploy Community Health Workers (implied they will most likely be working with women).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeting men’s resistance to women’s income diversification and providing women skills (e.g., financial literacy training) to manage household income shows promise in altering household gender roles (Grillos, 2018; Sanders &amp; Kimani, 2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehabilitated water access points and prepaid water meters reduced distance and eliminated queues for water, providing women more time for other activities.</li> <li>Women’s groups won management of water kiosks more frequently and their performance viewed more positively than men’s groups.</li> <li>Nutrition and gardening programs did not appear to reach most rural areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct gender analysis early and incorporate findings into work plans and AMEP.</li> <li>Confront rigid gender roles and responsibilities through targeted and transformative approach.</li> <li>Rather than accommodating women’s high unpaid time burden in the household in programming that meets them where they are, target the norms that restrict women and girls to these roles (e.g., engage men, target couples, normalize women in traditionally male roles through images and materials).</li> </ul>
Access to and Control over Assets and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support delivery of accessible and relevant data and tools for communities, including marginalized groups.</li> <li>Promote economic opportunities for women, youth, and the disabled, through strengthening women’s cooperatives and savings and lending committees.</li> <li>Sanitation marketing, with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A substantial challenge for women is lack of asset ownership. Most women’s tasks are unpaid; livestock ownership is restricted to certain animals and certain areas. Therefore, women lack collateral to apply for credit.</li> <li>The PROFIT program provided loans and financial literacy education for women. It used social messaging, one-on-one mentoring, and life skills training on topics including WASH, maternal and child health, and gender empowerment. In addition to increasing monthly income and savings, women’s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management of water kiosks, kitchen gardens, and small livestock rearing allowed women to diversify expenditures at household level.</li> <li>One water kiosk managed by PWDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community decision-making structures (elders, boards, policies, etc.) to alter current limitations for women in asset ownership (particularly around herds and land), to promote women’s economic growth.</li> <li>Engage men and couples in finance/asset management and joint decision-making related to WASH assets.</li> <li>Provide finance and business skills-</li> </ul>

GENDER DOMAIN	KENYA RAPID DESIGN	DESK REVIEW – LEARNINGS AND BEST PRACTICES FROM LITERATURE	EVALUATION FINDINGS	GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>emphasis on building capacity of women’s groups to become suppliers of latrine slabs and hand-washing stations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and training for women’s groups to manufacture and sell low-cost soap and point of use (POU) products, as well as Menstrual Hygiene Management products.</li> </ul>	<p>decision-making power increased by 20%, leadership grew by 7%, and confidence increased by 27% (Sanders &amp; Kimani, 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A key component of program success appears to be targeting men’s attitudes at the same time that women’s access to financial resources is increased.</li> </ul>		<p>building training to women and women with disabilities in women’s groups, leading to mentorship and internship models for practical exposure and professional growth.</p>
Patterns of Power and Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with communities in a reflection process to strengthen and develop community structures.</li> <li>Ensure that women and the disabled participate and are represented in the civic process of passing laws in the water and livestock sectors.</li> <li>Consult communities to assess information needs as input into development of E-Maji ICT platform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civic education, leadership, and communication training for women, as well as introducing new community development councils and workshops on gender and drought preparedness targeted to men, created greater opportunities for men and women to more collaboratively plan for drought (Grillos, 2018).</li> <li>Formative research on women’s perspectives to inform program recommendations (i.e., drought preparedness lessons for men) improves the efficacy of messaging to men (Grillos, 2018).</li> <li>Providing financial literacy training and start-up loans increased household decision making power for women; intra-consultation between partners increased, in addition to women gaining decision-making power through increased assets (Sanders &amp; Kimani, 2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent and concerted efforts to promote women’s participation in all activities, in line with GOK’s one-third gender rule.</li> <li>Some indication that women more actively and confidently participate in community meetings, but evaluation unable to determine the degree and extent of this finding.</li> <li>Women may be more trusted with group finances and so accepted in the roles of treasurer, but do not move into higher positions of power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage couples in joint decision-making workshops, specifically related to WASH decisions.</li> <li>Engage community decision-making structures (elders, boards, etc.) to create a participation tracker for women’s and PWDs’ participation in meetings and events. The tracker will document active participation in meetings, noting when their voice is acknowledged, and ideas are considered in decisions.</li> <li>Engage women’s groups in confidence-building sessions—a confidential and supportive space for women to grow in their self-esteem and voice, especially in WASH-related decisions.</li> </ul>
Laws, Policies, Regulations and Institutional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure policies and laws developed to govern water, land, and livestock are gender-intentional and involve women and PWDs in drafting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No prior interventions included programming related to this domain, although previous gender analyses in the ASALs have recommended integrating gender into county government sectoral planning and auditing local institutional policies to integrate gender (CARE International, 2014; Dometita, 2017; Osulah &amp; Mbevi, 2019; World Food Programme, 2017).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Garissa County, the WASH policy (with the support of RAPID) included gender and disability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate gender into county government sectoral planning.</li> <li>Audit local institutional policies to integrate gender.</li> <li>Second a gender advisor to the county government WASH office, integrating sound gender technical expertise in gender for budget allocations, policy implementation, and gender and social inclusion advocacy in meetings.</li> </ul>

#### 4.5.6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kenya RAPID designed an initiative in WASH and rangeland management with sensitivity to gender and PWDs. A number of activities emerged to promote these populations, as noted above in the five USAID gender analysis domains, including reduced time burden for women in increased access to water and improved allocation of funds to household nutrition through profits made from kitchen gardens and water kiosk management. While the activity's concerted effort in gender sensitivity indeed succeeded in a number of gender intentional domains, the nature of Kenya RAPID's goals, as well as locations of activities, suggest that the project would benefit from a gender transformational approach in any follow-on efforts. The rigid gender norms and power disparities in the ASAL region alongside the project's desire to follow "do no harm" principles (i.e., preventing the exploitation of gender inequalities in order to achieve outcomes), suggests a design aimed at transforming existing gender norms, rather than merely operating within them. Such an approach will position the intervention to more fully achieve its goals in other areas, beyond gender, by allowing all recipients of project activities to benefit equally, and even flourish collectively.

An advisor to the project agreed with this future approach by noting, "We must confront head-on the harmful gender norms that exist in these communities, not just doing status quo work to remain neutral." It is necessary to address norms that limit women's empowerment within communities and among project stakeholders. Future efforts also have the critical opportunity to address persistent practices with negative consequences (e.g., female genital mutilation, early marriage, menstrual hygiene management stigma and constraints, and land ownership restrictions towards women, among others) as a way to catalyze greater change. Other efforts have shown that unintended consequences can arise from efforts in which such norms are not addressed, and based on evaluation data collected, it is unclear whether this may also hold true among Kenya RAPID beneficiaries. Without facing rigid social and gender norms explicitly, the program risks exacerbating vulnerabilities, even while meeting WASH and livelihood targets.

In addition to a specific focus on gender transformative approaches, as highlighted in Table 3 above, a more rigorous early gender analysis prior to program inception would inform project activities and the AMEP. Additionally, stringent accountability measures in place at all levels would serve to ensure the prioritization of gender-transformative efforts. Finally, but not least, is the observation of the need for a dedicated social inclusion and gender staff person, if not a subcontracted gender team, to provide technical expertise on, as well as prioritize the implementation of, gender analysis findings in the project's activities.

Indeed, Kenya RAPID activities brought a number of key benefits to women in a complex environment. Notwithstanding, the activity may have observed greater benefits among key populations of women and PWDs had a more focused and transformative gender lens been applied across the program. In any subsequent stages of Kenya RAPID, the PIFA might encourage such an approach with recommendations as presented above, leading to more constructive and transformative outcomes.

#### 4.6 KENYA RAPID THROUGH A RESILIENCE LENS

The goal of Kenya RAPID is to achieve sustainable and resilient livelihoods for communities in the ASALs. USAID defines resilience as "the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth." (USAID, 2012)<sup>11</sup> By design, this outcome would be the

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<sup>11</sup> USAID. Building Resilience to Recurrent Crises: USAID Policy and Program Guidance. December 2012, p5. (available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/USAIDResiliencePolicyGuidanceDocument.pdf>)

product of responsive, accountable governance frameworks and the development and operation of scalable business models that together ensure sustainable provision of water, pasture, and livestock services, providing communities with increased access to WASH and livestock services and to well-managed rangelands. Within this framework, all of Kenya RAPID's interventions in each of the ASAL counties contribute in some way, directly or indirectly, to the enhancement of livelihoods resilience and, in turn, to the resilience of households and communities. Although included in USAID's definition of resilience as a primary factor contributing to resilience, "inclusive growth," like support for the poor and vulnerable, is not explicitly included in the Kenya RAPID theory of change. The replication of scalable business models can be associated with inclusive growth if the beneficiaries or clients of these services are drawn from vulnerable households and communities and can leverage access to these services to strengthen their resilience. The main hazards to which the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods in the ASAL counties are vulnerable are drought, followed by flooding, livestock disease, pests, and conflict, which can stem from these other pressures, among others. As such, interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of drought (i.e., through better management of and improved access to water and pasture resources), improving livestock health, and strengthening market linkages all build livelihood resilience.

#### 4.6.1 INTERVENTIONS TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE

Kenya RAPID promoted agribusiness models to increase and diversify household food income sources as a means of hedging risk. These included the introduction or expansion of kitchen gardens and banana cultivation for household consumption and market sales. Value addition through food preservation has been another approach to provide households and markets with more shelf-stable products, such as soured milk (with a one- to three-month shelf life); *sussa*, a dried and salted meat that keeps up to one year; and dehydrated vegetables, produced using solar powered dryers.

Income diversification is a classic resilience building strategy, and the project saw kitchen gardens as a common intervention strategy. In Turkana, strong demand for vegetables with markets well supplied in the growing season is generally followed by scarcity in the off-season or during a drought. Often, produce would be brought in from Kitale, over 150km away, or even imported from Uganda. Support to local food production boosted seasonal production, but led to a glut in the market, reducing profitability and contributing to waste. In response, Kenya RAPID introduced solar-powered drying and food blending techniques to preserve and add value and nutrition to produce, which became available in the off-season and could be more easily transported to markets with less risk of spoilage. Households are still dependent on markets for produce sourced from distant locations, but the local availability contributed to local food access and income. While income sources can be diversified, these sources may still be vulnerable to the same shocks. Poor rainfall and locust infestations can affect pasture availability and livestock conditions as well as the productivity of vegetable gardens.

Efforts to enhance the water supply infrastructure had positive results, according to interviewees. While the analysis is still ongoing through an impact evaluation at the community level, real-time data transmitted to both county officials and NDMA from borehole sensors is contributing to resilience at the community/household level. Quicker repairs when there is a breakdown ensures borehole pump functionality leading to a more reliable water source. In Garissa, the introduction of piping as an alternative to open canals improved access to water, reduced water losses, saved labor resources, and minimized impact of seasonal flooding. Farmers could plant further from riverbanks, reducing the potential impact from flooding and water sources were less susceptible to silting. The project also introduced installation of pre-paid meters as a business model. Anecdotal evidence suggests that households were less likely to waste water they had already paid for.

The promotion of basic or primary sanitation facilities was not as effective at building resilience, as these could not withstand seasonal floods. Advocacy for more advanced sanitation facilities that could

withstand seasonal flooding could still prove more promising. Some activity in this area had begun toward the end of the project but was stalled by the COVID-19 restrictions.

The real or perceived scarcity of natural resources like water and grazing land has long been a source of conflict among pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The strengthening or establishment of RMCs and WUAs has increased resource governance over utilization. Grazing plans and land management strategies introduced by Kenya RAPID improved livestock access to pasture, expanding access among different communities while also reducing tensions. The production and dissemination of grazing maps increases community understanding of local grazing patterns and enabled them to plan for the dry season and prepare for droughts better, encouraging production of feed resources and promoting grazing reserves and fall back grazing areas.

Programming for the longer-term can have a greater impact on resilience than shorter-term interventions to meet immediate needs. However, a balance needed to be struck between the two. One example cited was the introduction of terracing to promote soil conservation, a low-cost intervention that would continue to provide benefits in the longer-term. At the same time, there was a drought and people's primary preoccupation was accessing water, so they arrived at the demonstrations not to benefit from the training, but with empty jerricans to receive water.

Overall, the Evaluation Team heard more about promoting income diversification rather than focusing on existing income sources, namely livestock. Little was heard about efforts to coordinate livestock off-take in anticipation of poor rains and subsequent grazing conditions usually resulting in rising livestock maintenance costs and falling livestock prices. Evidence was not provided of how households were better able to retain their livestock assets in the face of drought conditions. The improved management of grazing lands and water sources would likely make it easier to maintain livestock during a drought, but evidence was not forthcoming of whether households were or were not able to maintain this asset base, which is so fundamental to the pastoral livelihood.

#### 4.6.2 EVIDENCE

The initial Kenya RAPID SOW included two over-arching indicators of resilience: "Depth of Poverty" (a measure of the mean percentage shortfall relative to the \$1.25 poverty line) and prevalence of stunted children under five years of age. The first indicator would reflect the project's impact on household income and the second would reflect the impact on child nutrition. Both of these could be seen as proxies for resilience. If resilience has improved, one would expect to see less variation on income and nutrition as a result of a shock from one evaluation period to the next. These findings would be more significant if this variation could have been compared to historical, pre-intervention data, or to a control population. Even if resilience improves, one would expect some decline in income and nutrition as a result of a shock. The project's impact would be on reducing the degree or slope of that decrease.

According to MWA staff, these overarching indicators that could reflect resilience outcomes were dropped for two reasons.<sup>12</sup> First, resource constraints prevented them from being captured in project areas, let alone in control areas. Second, because multiple factors contribute to income and nutrition, it would be difficult to discern the extent to which this impact was due to project activities or other external factors, and not with any definite degree of certainty within the short timeframe of the project. For example, stunting is now believed to have an inter-generational aspect.

However, without any measure of how households are affected by shocks after they occur, and how quickly they can recover, there is no way to measure whether households are more resilient. The whole

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<sup>12</sup> As noted by USAID, these indicators are still being measured in USAID commissioned population based surveys since no single activity on its own can have a significant impact on the same.

concept of resilience is built around the knowledge that there will always be shocks—increasingly so in areas like northern Kenya—so how can their ability to mitigate impacts be enhanced. In this context, some of the remarks by interviewees were noteworthy. For example, MWA staff stated that shocks are so frequent in northern Kenya, that you may have a successful project, but emergency erodes all previous gains, and households are quickly back to zero. In Turkana, locust invasions proved to be one of the major challenges to the implementation of Kenya RAPID activities, affecting the crop and livestock sectors, demoralizing farmers and making them increasingly vulnerable to future shocks. At the same time, floods affecting farmlands cut farmers off from markets and displaced communities, affecting gains achieved. If the goal of Kenya RAPID has been to improve resilience, these outcomes in response to shocks would imply that it had more limited success.

Under neutral or favorable conditions, the project could achieve temporary gains in access to water and pasture, livestock health, or in income generation; these could be compounded as long as conditions remained stable. Yet when disaster strikes, those gains are eroded, and households have to start over. If disasters will continue to disrupt livelihoods and erode any gains made, the length of recovery becomes a proxy for resilience. Alternatively, Kenya RAPID could have selected the prevalence of certain behaviors or negative coping mechanisms after a shock to indicate whether households were any better able to mitigate the impact. For example, changes in food consumption, school dropouts (which NDMA is monitoring), or sales of productive assets, are among the ways in which households are affected by or cope with shocks. The less we see households resorting to these strategies, the more resilient they can be presumed to be.

Because of the difficulty or costs of obtaining outcome data and in attributing outcomes to project interventions, much of the reporting was based on outputs. These outputs reflect the progress and scale of activities that are known to contribute to resilience, as stated above. One common example is around strategic boreholes where households can source water for household and livestock consumption even during a drought. Rangeland cover is another indicator being tracked.

The project undertook some individual studies in Turkana, Isiolo, and Marsabit to shed light on how households were becoming more resilient, drawing information from field assessments and household interviews. This would give analysts a sense of the changes taking place, as informed by the perceptions of household members themselves.

### 4.6.3 CONCLUSIONS

Resilience is a product of multiple factors. It is not always possible, or even advisable, for a project to try to address all of these factors. Enhanced efforts through institutions like PREG can enable projects and services to coordinate, share information and learn and develop complementary and reinforcing initiatives. As noted, Kenya RAPID has a goal of strengthening resilience through improved community and public management of water and grazing resources and expanded private sector delivery of WASH and livestock services. Its approach has not been to improve resilience by any means necessary. While there are a number of alternative approaches to improving resilience through, for example, risk-based financing or livestock de-stocking, it was not necessarily in the remit of the project to facilitate these services if the private sector was not a willing partner. At the same time, one may have expected to see more interest in private sector initiatives aimed at fodder and feed production, for example.

Kenya RAPID implemented or enabled multiple initiatives through private and/or public sector channels that are likely to improve household and livelihood resilience to shocks. The project did not invest in collecting and analyzing data that could demonstrate whether improved resilience was an outcome of these efforts. The Evaluation Team thus cannot state with confidence which initiatives or combination of initiatives were more or less likely to enhance resilience. Observable gains have been made, but these could be entirely eroded in the face of shocks. This would suggest that, in such instances, the project

was less successful in its goal of building resilience. Much anecdotal evidence suggests how project initiatives have succeeded in delivering services that are known to enhance resilience to shocks. Without more quantitative data, it is difficult to assess impact on resilience overall.

Two reasons cited for not collecting indicators of resilience outcomes were the high cost of collecting the data and the uncertainty of causation between project activities and these outcomes. NDMA, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF other agencies collect data that could be indicative of resilience trends. Given that the project has an established partnership with these institutions, it should be able to access the data for use in its analysis. While it may not be possible to determine the coefficient of determination between project activities and nutritional outcomes, for example, it is worth exploring whether such data might provide at least some supporting evidence. Beyond that, USAID would need to make a cost benefit analysis of the trade-offs between additional investing in program implementation and in program monitoring through the existing project, or (possibly preferably) by identifying other mechanisms to capture the data and conduct the analysis.

Indeed, Kenya RAPID IPs bring significant experience in resilience. The Evaluation Team was unable to assess how effectively this was harnessed, or how extensively this knowledge was shared and debated across the program. Furthermore, as Kenya RAPID is fundamentally about building government capacity, how effective county governments are at protecting citizens from recurring external shocks must be considered going forward as one proxy for resilience.

#### 4.7 KENYA RAPID THROUGH A CONFLICT LENS

From a broader perspective, Kenya RAPID had project work interrupted in some counties due to conflict and insecurity incidences (particularly Al Shabaab threats in Wajir and Garissa). Such incidences were seen as rather matter of fact in the interviews with Kenya RAPID’s task being to navigate around these events as carefully as possible to ensure the safety of staff, but also the continuity of programming where feasible. Other aspects of regional conflict at this level did not emerge strongly in the interviews.

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*“Grazing planning addressed the need for co-existence within communities in the Kipsing area of Isiolo between Turkana and Samburu community. This was done during RMC trainings and during training on poultry production. The groups are now looking at each other as fellow farmers and not as tribes.” – County Livestock Officer*

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The Evaluation Team cannot present findings with any degree of confidence given the inability to travel and conduct focus group discussions at the community level. That said, a number of Kenya RAPID initiatives would logically have supported efforts at conflict mitigation. As noted by one County Livestock Officer, “Before the Kenya RAPID program, there were movements of livestock from all over the place, with many incidences of conflicts from resource use.” Kenya RAPID strengthened community governance systems, a contribution that is appreciated by county officials as having reduced conflicts even during drought seasons as compared to the past. Such

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*“There used to be inter clan conflicts, but with proper planning of project areas this was reduced... The community groups were also trained on the importance of integrating all families and all people in the groups. This way the community felt that ‘This group is ours. This grazing area is ours.’” – County Agriculture Officer*

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governance efforts focused on the establishment, registration, and training of committees with bylaws established and agreed by the communities themselves to manage water resources and oversee rangeland management including planned grazing. Water use plans between farmers and livestock keepers include negotiation of days and even times of use among different communities. Feed storage facilities have also mitigated conflict over resources (pastureland in particular) during drought. Grazing Management Committees have also been brought together to share strategies and adjacent

committees have been supported in dialogue to reduce hostilities over resource rights.

To mitigate potential escalation of conflict further, Kenya RAPID introduced conflict resolution mechanisms through the formation of community dialogues (peace committees) and sought to ensure inclusivity on and ownership through clan and family representation. By training the chiefs and elders on peacebuilding, Kenya RAPID has recognized the important role that community leadership (chiefs and elders) and traditional mechanisms play in conflict mitigation within and between communities, especially in the context of resource management in the ASALs. According to MWA staff, a gender lens also sought to ensure women's participation more deliberately.

As noted by the COP,

*Public participation has also helped in addressing resource-based conflicts... [which have] been common among clans spearheaded by politics. Notably, while conflicts are generally about access to or competition for resources, these take on a political framing and, hence become more pronounced, closer to elections. The National County Participation Checklist is being used by the program [to ensure inclusion].*

Resource use mapping has also made it easier to track pastoralist patterns of movement and thus provide targeted support to their production systems.

While it is difficult for the Evaluation Team to assess the quality and scale of these efforts, county officials credit Kenya RAPID with making significant inroads in addressing sources of conflict and providing mechanisms to safeguard against it.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings and conclusions presented in Section 4, this section presents recommendations for USAID and SDC, Kenya RAPID partners, and county governments. During the course of the evaluation, interviewees offered a series of activity-specific recommendations that the Evaluation Team shall pass on to Kenya RAPID directly. The recommendations herein offer the Evaluation Team's higher-level perspective considering the breadth of the review and the nature of the questions asked.

### 5.1 FOR USAID AND SDC

#### a) With regard to the design of future programming

1. Continue to emphasize integration of interventions encouraging county governments to foster greater linkages through a less siloed and more systems based or systemic approach.
2. Commission robust up-to-date analysis of the business environment across the ASALs, underscoring the differences between county contexts (from demographics and socio-cultural and economic factors; climate change, land use, and resource management aspects; etc.).
3. For consortium composition, determine modalities to engage more private sector partners who are actively seeking or have the wherewithal to forge or take up business opportunities in the ASALs. In an effort to overcome barriers, explore whether a challenge fund approach for private sector innovations could yield further benefits, particularly in sanitation.
4. While connections with PREG and AHADI were effective on resilience and governance aspects, seek to link programs across donor portfolios more effectively (like the USAID-supported Securing Water for Food Grand Challenge Fund (SWFF), KIWASH, FINISH and others) that are focused on private sector development. Likewise, seek to actively tap into wider sector developments, with other Development Partners like the World Bank, to maximize synergies particularly that foster greater integration of interventions, and optimize learning and uptake of promising practices.
5. Encourage greater risk taking by grantees and contractors, particularly with regard to supporting innovations that emerge from the private sector.
6. Given the continuing efforts to strengthen devolved governance, continue to focus on strengthening the capacity of county governments to oversee and enable providers to expand and guarantee service continuity, and expand efforts on effective community participation to continue to foster greater accountability.
7. Use USAID/SDC leverage to develop clearer responses from county governments on their budget allocations and actual spend.

#### b) With regard to procurement and metrics

1. Given the start-up and wind-down periods, consider whether the timeframes (typically five years) for systems strengthening programs like Kenya RAPID are sufficient and realistic.
2. Work with grantees/contractors to reconsider the indicators and targets to determine whether they accurately capture the systems change and systems strengthening ambition of programs like Kenya RAPID, as well as the contextual factors in seemingly similar but potentially disparate counties.

3. Ensure that flexibility is woven into GDA funding packages without fully committing all the funding from the initial stages to allow for the possibility of new partners entering later in the project.
4. Further support grantees and contractors across the Mission and SDC's funded portfolios to explore different ways of collecting and analyzing data that shed light on progress on outcome goals (around resilience, for example).

## **5.2 FOR KENYA RAPID PARTNERS**

### **a) Program design**

1. Reconsider the contextual differences between counties to ensure appropriate tailoring and effective replication of interventions.
2. Reinforce for partners the connections among and ensure joint ownership of all strategic objectives.
3. Ensure that the backbone or hub organization has sufficient capacity (time, resources, skillsets) in technical areas like private sector engagement, social inclusion, gender, as well as facilitation skills to effectively broker knowledge across the partner organizations, including by fostering constructive and mutual understanding about each partner's contribution to the program and how the pieces fit together.
4. Invest in systems, processes, and staffing to harmonize the M&E systems more effectively across partners from the outset and ground M&E processes in a learning as well as a reporting framework. Ensure that indicators are capturing information that more directly reflect the strategic objectives and invest resources to ensure that data can be collected effectively.
5. Through an early rigorous analysis, determine a more transformative agenda to break down social norms relating to social inclusion, gender and people with disabilities. A dedicated social inclusion and gender staff person, if not a subcontracted team, should provide technical expertise on, as well as prioritize the implementation of, recommendations coming out of social inclusion and gender analysis of project activities.
6. Ensure that key county governance framing documents incorporate and institutionalize an emphasis on how counties should best target the poorest.
7. Invest in effective use of the evidence base generated to make clearer business cases to county governments (using data from Kenya RAPID) on the long-term costs and benefits of investing versus not investing in the types of activities supported by Kenya RAPID.
8. Work with counties and IPs to establish an appropriate exit strategy. One aspect is to understand how best to avoid "dependency syndrome" on the IPs through shadowing approaches, capacity building of county staff on facilitation, and related mechanisms.

### **b) Business models and income generation**

1. Unpack the viability requirements for business models (including greater emphasis on sanitation) from initial pilot to scale up stages, understanding risks and related market factors.
2. Place business models in the context of a whole value chain approach and consider what other elements are needed to ensure that a business model takes off.

3. Provide resources (including staffing capacity) to ensure gender, livelihood, and resilience lenses permeate all activities by making better use of the technical expertise within the partner institutions and strengthening a more collective spirit of constructive analysis.
4. At household/community level, focus on strengthening existing income sources alongside an emphasis on income diversification.

c) County capacity building aspects

1. Conduct light-touch, in-house capacity assessment exercises halfway through the project and an end line capacity assessment to gauge impact of capacity building efforts.
2. Capture the progress made in meeting the capacity gaps more actively through follow up with trainees, an end line internal capacity needs reflection with the counties, and other mechanisms.
3. Beyond an induction program, develop a more deliberate training plan for incoming elected officials and appointees.
4. Continue to analyze and share on how accountability relationships across county government, service providers and communities are evolving also with an eye on how best to strengthen the design and application of tools like the National Community Participation Checklist.

d) Investing in learning

1. Ensure sufficient resources are available for critically and constructively unpacking learning including more deliberate analysis across counties/geographic areas.
2. Create mechanisms across smaller, more focused groupings (of county officials, implementing partners, etc.) to optimize learning that can then be shared across the wider partnership.

### **5.3 FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENTS**

a) Governance and accountability aspects

1. With the macro framing documents in place, continue to pursue sub-policy guidance and strategies across different Kenya RAPID sector areas.
2. Anchor tested and proven innovations (like ATMs) in the governance frameworks.
3. Reinforce efforts for ownership of the data and ensure robust cross-department systems are in place to incorporate the data into evidence-based decision-making.
4. Work with partners to introduce and expand participatory budgeting processes.
5. Continue to strengthen the complaints and feedback processes and mechanisms.
6. Create overarching coordination and learning initiatives for the various resource management structures put in place through Kenya RAPID (for example forging links between RMCs to share strategies).

b) County capacity

1. Continue to invest in meeting the staffing gap across all Kenya RAPID sector areas.
2. Continue a process of internal capacity assessment using the Kenya RAPID framing to further identify gaps in skills and expertise and then continue to partner and invest with other counties in the ASALs through the County Capacity Building Fund.

3. Consider how best to pilot the expansion of coordination efforts to the ward level, potentially using county staff as the facilitators (as modeled by Kenya RAPID IPs).

c) Scaling up

1. Given the wealth of knowledge and experience generated through Kenya RAPID, lobby more effectively with other ASAL counties at national level for policies, funding mechanisms, and other aspects that would reinforce the gains made through Kenya RAPID.
2. Consider the best methods to support value chains across the county to enable greater uptake of the suite of livelihood enhancement interventions introduced by Kenya RAPID.
3. Continue to work through the County Program Steering Committee to develop strategies to upscale Kenya RAPID initiatives (on CLTS, nutrition, rangeland management etc.) across the county with Kenya RAPID and non-RAPID partners.

## ANNEXES

[Provided under separate cover]

**Annex I: Evaluation Statement of Work**

**Annex II: Evaluation Methods and Limitations**

**Annex III: Data Collection Instruments**

**Annex IV: Data Sources (including List of Interviewees and Reference List from Desk Review)**

**Annex V: Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest**

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