

Tackling Africa's Sanitation Crisis



Is Africa facing a sanitation crisis?

'Business as usual' is not delivering safe sanitation. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, more than half the population uses unhygienic toilets. Sanitation services are not keeping up with population growth, in fact, the number of people using inadequate sanitation services is increasing. Between 2000 to 2017, those without toilets or who use unhygienic sanitation facilities have increased by 125 million, and the number of people without safe excreta management has risen by 285 million.

Over 200 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to a toilet

Over 80% of human excreta is dumped untreated into the environment

Over 500 million people use unhygienic toilets

Why must this change?

Safely managed sanitation for all is essential for health, environmental protection, and economic development. It is also a basic human right.

Inadequate sanitation has many negative impacts beyond those on health, including feelings of shame, insecurity, and anxiety. It contributes to poverty and poor school attendance, especially for women and girls and other vulnerable groups. Poor sanitation hinders economic development and damages the natural environment, such as the water resources that support

human life. Yet, despite these adverse impacts, inadequate sanitation services are particularly prevalent in Africa.

Did you know that every \$1 spent on safe sanitation can generate \$5 in economic return for African countries?

Each year, African countries lose over three per cent of their GDP due to poor sanitation. Although the capital cost of providing safe sanitation for all in sub-Saharan Africa is high, the potential benefits are enormous. Beyond economic returns, investing in sanitation improves the quality of life of all Africans and can help the whole continent rise to its aspirations.



“For every dollar spent on sanitation, countries can save up to five dollars in terms of healthcare and lost income from tourism”

Delivering safely managed sanitation is not only determined by the extent and state of the infrastructure and services, but also by the policy, institutional, and regulatory environments (together known as the enabling environment). It is this enabling environment that is often weak in many African countries. The African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG) provide guidance on developing effective sanitation policies that are the basis to achieving this enabling environment.

What are the African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG)?

The ASPG are designed to guide African governments on the review, revision, and development of sanitation policy, as well as its implementation strategy. They consist of background information, advice on the policy development process, and suggested contents of a sanitation policy.

Why do we need the ASPG?

Policy is the starting point for establishing an effective enabling environment for delivering sanitation services, and it underpins coherent government action. An assessment of sanitation policies and strategies conducted by the Secretariat of the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW) found that many sanitation policies are unclear, fragmented or even contradictory.²

Without an adequate sanitation policy, it is challenging for countries to harmonise sector actions and mobilise resources and investments. There is a need to overhaul sanitation policies across Africa, and the ASPG provides the necessary guidance to do this. The ASPG have been developed by the AMCOW Secretariat in response to multiple requests from African countries for sanitation policy review and revision assistance.

What is the scope of the ASPG?

Considering the diversity of African countries, it is not possible to create a generic policy document that can be adopted by all. The Guidelines aim to help policymakers assess the current status of their sanitation services and enabling environments, and guide the specific formulation of relevant sanitation policies.

The Guidelines address the safe management of excreta, associated hygiene practices, and the disposal of anal cleansing and menstrual hygiene materials in all settings and situations. They do not address wider aspects of sanitation such as water supply, solid waste management, stormwater and greywater drainage, or food, water and environmental hygiene. However, the ASPG can still inform policymakers who wish to develop a more wide-ranging policy beyond safe management of human excreta.

How are the ASPG structured?

The ASPG are structured in four parts (see below). Part one contains background information; part two provides guidance on the process for policy review and revision; part three suggests appropriate content of a national sanitation policy based on the experience of sector experts in Africa and globally; and part four contains advice on implementation strategy. Additionally, the Annexes provide supplementary resources including a sample outline of a sanitation policy.

“Beyond economic returns, investing in sanitation improves the quality of life of all Africans”

Part One Context of the Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the Guidelines and what are they for? • Who should read them?
Part Two Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision-making process to support policy review and revision • Step-by-step policy review and development process
Part Three Core contents of a sanitation policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, objectives, and principles • Sanitation systems and services • Hygiene and sanitation behaviour change • Institutional arrangements • Regulation • Capacity development • Funding • Monitoring, evaluation, and review
Part Four Developing an implementation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of an implementation strategy and how it differs from policy • The process of developing an implementation strategy
Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary resources for the policy process and contents • Suggested outline of a sanitation policy • Supplementary resources for an implementation strategy • Sources of additional materials • Definition of terms used in the Guidelines

Who are the ASPG for?

They are designed for use by policymakers in national and subnational governments and by other stakeholders involved in supporting policy development and reform initiatives.

Who can provide support to countries?

The Secretariat of the African Ministers' Council on Water, in collaboration with its partners, has put in place mechanisms to support African governments in the review and revision of their sanitation policies and the development of implementation strategies. The AMCOW Secretariat plans to reach out to various countries and governments, to provide the necessary support for uptake and use of the ASPG. However, countries can, in turn, contact the Secretariat for support (see details below). Please use this link (<https://aspgrequests.amcow-online.org/>) to access the ASPG demand form to request for support.

About AMCOW

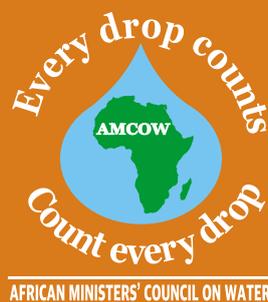
The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) is the Delivery Mechanism on Water and Sanitation for the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union (AU). The executive organ of AMCOW, the Executive Council, is led by a President and Subregional Vice-Presidents for each of the five African subregions. The Secretariat, led by an Executive Secretary, is based in Abuja, Nigeria.

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¹ UNICEF and WHO. *State of the World's Sanitation: An urgent call to transform sanitation for better health, environments, economies and societies*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization, 2020. [Online] Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-sanitation-2020>. [Accessed 19 March 2021].

² AMCOW. *Assessment of sanitation policies and national strategies*. Abuja, Nigeria: African Ministers' Council for Water, 2019. [Online] Available from: https://www.amcow-online.org/storage/aspg/sanitation_policy_assessment_report_2019.pdf. [Accessed 19 March 2021].

