



ENDLINE EVALUATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR WATER PROGRAM

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfW	Accountability for Water
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
GAG	Global Advisory Groups
KEWASNET	Kenya Water and Sanitation CSO Network
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoWIE	Ministry of Water Irrigation and Energy
MoW	Ministry of Water
MoWSI	Ministry of Water Sanitation and Irrigation
NAG	National Advisory Groups
PASGR	Partnership for African Social Governance Research
PI	Principal Investigator
PRF	Professional Research Fellowships
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SWM	Shahidi Wa Maji
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WWE	Water Witness Ethiopia
WWI	Water Witness International



Background

The Accountability for Water programme was funded by the William and Hewlett Foundation and implemented by the Accountability for Water Consortium, comprising Partnership for African Social Governance Research (PASGR), Water Witness International (WWI), Water Witness Ethiopia (WWE), Kenya Water and Sanitation CSO Network (KEWASNET), and Shahidi Wa Maji (SWM). The mission of the consortium is to improve accountability for water, sanitation and hygiene service delivery and water resources management globally, and in three priority target countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, through research uptake, action, and advocacy. The consortium is supported and advised by Global and National Advisory Groups comprising national government representatives, civil society, funders, and research institutions.

The purpose of the end line evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the Accountability for Water Program. The evaluation sought to provide feedback on the processes, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the Accountability for water phase I programme, and make recommendations for future interventions. The specific purpose of the evaluation was threefold:

- a. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Accountability for Water programmatic approach and draw out practical implications for future programme work, producing a qualitative evaluation report.
- b. To evaluate the extent to which the Accountability for Water structure and activities successfully implemented de-colonial governance and implementation, producing a qualitative governance report and recommendations for phase II; and
- c. To produce guidance and programmed documentation for phase II of the programme; specifically: a 'way of working' partnership guidance documentation to ensure that findings from this evaluation are implemented; recommendations of 'most valued' elements from phase I are incorporated in phase II, and recommendations of elements that should be reconsidered; and a monitoring, evaluation and learning outline plan for phase II, including data collection and responsibilities, in collaboration with consortium partners.



Methods

The AfW end-line Evaluation applied an outcome harvesting approach which involved generation of primary data using a mix of quantitative (stakeholder survey) and qualitative methods (key informants' interviews and review of data from secondary sources). Qualitative data was collected via key informant interviews (KIIs) and desk review. Quantitative data was gathered through an email survey approach, using a stakeholder survey questionnaire. The survey targeted the AfW stakeholders. As at close of data collection on 20th September, 2023; a total of 45 fully filled e-forms had been received back to the submission server. The data from e-survey was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Exploratory analysis was first performed to ensure that the output was free from the effects of outliers and the effect of missing responses. Descriptive statistics were the data analysis techniques applied on the survey data. For qualitative data, the transcribed texts were transferred to NVIVO 12 qualitative analysis software and analyzed. Following coding of the transcripts, a full list of themes was made available for categorization within a hierarchical framework of main and sub-themes.

Key findings

Across the three priority countries, the PRFs respondents collectively shared their perspectives on how the programme's objectives and outputs benefited them and their organizations. They highlighted various aspects of the programme's impact. These included:

01

ENHANCED RESEARCH SKILLS

Several respondents mentioned that the programme provided opportunities to learn new research methodologies, including participatory research and qualitative analysis, which were not commonly employed in their organizations.

02

IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The programme contributed to a better understanding of accountability, both at the country and host organization levels. It helped stakeholders recognize the importance of accountability mechanisms in water governance

03

POSITIVE RECEPTION OF FINDINGS

The respondents noted that the research findings were well-received by various stakeholders, including community members, government counterparts, and regulatory authorities. The findings were considered relevant and actionable.

04

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY

The programme enabled advocacy work based on research findings, offering opportunities to address water-related challenges and advocate for accountability in the water sector.

05

EXPOSURE AND ENGAGEMENT

Some respondents highlighted that the programme exposed civil society organizations to community engagement and opened doors for greater community involvement in water-related issues.

Community engagement emerged as a central theme from several informants, reflecting the program's commitment to involving local communities actively. Utilizing research tools, participatory methods, and dedicated workstreams, the program successfully engaged communities, highlighting the importance of bottom-up approaches in addressing water accountability. The findings highlighted the diversity in community dynamics across different countries and regions. The program's ability to adapt and address specific challenges unique to each context, such as gender-related concerns, community awareness, and regulatory dynamics, underscored its nuanced and context-specific strategies.

The duty-bearer dynamics were explored in different country contexts, revealing complexities in water resource governance at the local level. Issues such as state capture, political influence, and challenges in policy implementation were highlighted. The project aimed to address gaps and issues within policies, laws, and regulations related to water resource management. In Zimbabwe for instance, the project was successful in triggering a government response, leading to improved practices in water disconnection procedures by local authorities. The research empowered citizens with knowledge to demand accountability, emphasizing water as a fundamental right.

Stakeholders, including industries and the government, were identified as crucial in the dynamics of accountability. The lack of time and resources hindered a more comprehensive exploration, but the research provided evidence for discussions on improving accountability relationships between duty bearers, decision makers, and communities. The project's success in generating knowledge across citizen dynamics, duty bearers, and enabling environments was acknowledged. However, the limited action in implementing the evidence raised concerns, indicating a need for future efforts to bridge the gap between knowledge generation and practical action.

Professional Research Fellows played a crucial role in disseminating research findings to various stakeholders, creating awareness of the complexities surrounding water accessibility and accountability. The project also highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability tools, and community awareness in ensuring effective water supply services. In summary, the project demonstrated positive impacts in raising awareness and understanding among duty bearers regarding water accountability, with notable achievements in specific areas. However, challenges in sustained engagement, defining incentives, and translating knowledge into action were recognized, indicating areas for improvement in future phases of the program.

The findings underscored how the programme tailored its approach to meet the specific needs and priorities of each country within the water governance and WASH sector. It emphasized the importance of evidence generation, stakeholder engagement, and context-specific strategies to drive accountability and positive change. In summary, the programme contributed to the water governance and WASH sector in Kenya, Tanzania, Liberia, and Ethiopia by generating evidence, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, promoting community involvement, and raising awareness about specific accountability and governance issues. These efforts aimed to address the sector's needs and priorities and foster positive changes in policy and practice. The emphasis was on selecting the right stakeholders, improving accountability within national programs, addressing pollution and health risks, and ensuring continuous feedback and involvement of key stakeholders in the programme's activities.

From the findings, it was evident that the project's efforts in knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building had a substantial and multifaceted impact on the promotion of accountability for water. It contributed to the development of skills, inspired future researchers and practitioners, and actively engaged with stakeholders at various levels, leaving a legacy in the field of water accountability. Besides, the project's achievements represent substantial progress towards sustainable change in strengthening accountability for water. It has not only produced valuable knowledge but has also effectively shared it with a wide range of stakeholders. Moreover, it has inspired a new generation of researchers and practitioners committed to advancing water accountability, ensuring that the legacy of this project will continue to drive positive change in the water sector for years to come.

The input from the Global Advisory Group (GAG) informants pointed out that delays were experienced during the research preparation phase. These delays stemmed from the diverse backgrounds and work commitments of research fellows. Academic researchers, with more dedicated time, often met deadlines more effectively, while practitioner-researchers faced challenges due to their professional commitments. Informants from the National Advisory Group (NAG) in Kenya acknowledged delays, particularly in the drafting of research outputs and subsequent result dissemination. Program Management Team (PMT) key informants acknowledged that there were delays in disseminating research findings. These delays were primarily due to the time required to conclude research and coordinate review processes. Furthermore, it was noted that the findings were finalized towards the end of the programme, leaving limited time for dissemination and stakeholder engagement.

On sustainability, the programme made a considerable level of effort to strategically integrate with partner organizations to ensure sustainability, aligning with their long-term strategies, and complementing existing interventions. Scalability efforts involve expanding the programme's impact to other countries and mainstreaming accountability issues. Partnerships, resources, and networks play a crucial role in supporting sustainability and scalability, despite challenges in research design and findings. Opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability. Challenges in research design, the need for continuous advocacy, limited resources, the relatively low prioritization of water accountability in project proposals and donor agendas are acknowledged, but opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability.

The alignment of the PRFs concept with programme objectives was generally viewed positively, with a strong emphasis on capacity-building, knowledge generation, and addressing accountability issues. While challenges were noted, the PRF concept was considered effective in achieving its intended goals. To enhance alignment further, improvements in the delivery model and support mechanisms were suggested. Overall, the PRFs concept played a vital role in contributing to the Accountability for Water programme's objectives at both the local and global levels.

Capacity building was identified as a crucial outcome of the program. PRFs reported acquiring new skills and practical knowledge, particularly in conducting participatory action research for policy advocacy in the water sector. This capacity building not only represented a personal gain for the PRFs but also translated into a broader benefit for the water sector. Equipped with enhanced capabilities, PRFs were better positioned to address pressing water-related issues in their respective countries, underscoring the program's impact on building a skilled and empowered workforce in the water sector. In summary, the best experiences of PRFs in the AfW Programme revolved

around the enhancement of confidence and expertise, exposure to best practices, networking and collaboration opportunities, and significant capacity building. These themes collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the positive outcomes and impacts of the program on the professional development and effectiveness of PRFs in the water sector.

The research carried out within the framework of the Accountability for Water (AfW) program has unveiled pivotal findings shedding light on various aspects of water governance. One key discovery underscores the significance of grassroots empowerment, emphasizing the crucial role that local communities play in effective water management and decision-making processes. The recommendation stemming from this is to empower these communities, granting them agency in the sustainable management of water resources.

Another noteworthy revelation pertains to the transformative potential of waste. The findings suggest that waste can be converted into a valuable resource, aligning with broader sustainability goals. This insight encourages a shift towards waste management practices that minimize environmental impact and capitalize on the inherent value within waste streams. The research consistently reports a gap between well-crafted governmental policies and their actual implementation, exposing a pervasive challenge in translating policies into tangible actions and outcomes. This points to the need for a more focused approach on policy execution, monitoring, and effective mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy formulation and practical implementation.

Citizen voice and accountability emerged as powerful forces within the water sector. The research underscores the transformative impact of engaged and informed communities in holding duty bearers accountable. This emphasizes the significance of fostering civic engagement and providing platforms that enable citizens to effectively advocate for their rights. Gender dynamics in water governance represent a paramount discovery, emphasizing the intricate interplay of power relations and their impact on decision-making, water service provision, and access. The findings call for inclusiveness in decision-making processes and the need to challenge traditional norms that limit women's participation in these critical domains. Accountability for water pollution stands out as a significant focal point. The research underscores the imperative of creating enabling environments, garnering political support, and empowering duty bearers to respond to water pollution complaints from vulnerable communities. This highlights the holistic nature of addressing water pollution issues and the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

In a broader perspective encompassing multiple countries, the research sheds light on the predominant focus of major donors, such as the World Bank, on the financial aspects of water projects. While acknowledging the importance of financial accountability, the findings underscore the necessity of balancing financial considerations with community participation and effective post-construction management of water facilities. The study consistently reports the detrimental impact of weak accountability structures and a lack of coordination among institutions responsible for water services provision. This lack of coherence hampers service improvement and makes it challenging for citizens to demand accountability effectively. The findings underscore the critical role of harmonization and coordination among institutions to enhance water governance.

In Ethiopia, a significant research discovery reports the adverse consequences of community exclusion in investment planning, particularly concerning water permits granted to private investors. The research emphasizes the importance of involving community members in investment decisions to promote transparency and accountability. Traditional norms and cultural beliefs in Tanzania are reported to obstruct women's participation in water resource management, underlining the need to address these norms for enabling women to actively engage in water governance. Despite being prominently featured in Tanzania, the challenge is acknowledged to cut across countries.

The clarity of roles and responsibilities is reported as an essential aspect of accountability, providing a foundation for effective water governance. In Liberia, the research findings report violations of established standards in water management, disrupting accountability and sustainability. Adherence to set standards is emphasized to ensure efficient water service provision. An intriguing revelation in Kenya is reported around the underutilization of available accountability tools, despite their existence as constitutionally-guaranteed human rights. The findings report the need for greater awareness and accessibility to these instruments for effective service delivery and accountability. Collectively, these findings offer valuable insights for advancing water governance and accountability systems.



Recommendations:

The general recommendations encompass various aspects crucial for the enhancement of future phases of the Accountability for Water (AfW) program. Firstly, respondents stressed the effectiveness of blending physical and online meetings, proposing a mix to encourage better interaction among stakeholders. Additionally, securing commitments and resources from governments was suggested to make programs more impactful. Transparency in budget planning, an open challenge culture, and prompt publication of research findings were also emphasized. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, cross-sector collaboration, community engagement, data accessibility, technological innovation, and long-term impact assessment were identified as essential components.

Moving on to recommendations for changes in the next phase, it was suggested to formulate an operational Memorandum of Understanding at the program's formative stages to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Common learning platforms for mentorship and resource access were recommended, along with addressing concerns related to the ownership of research outcomes. Respondents advocated for a stronger focus on the action component of action research in the next phase, emphasizing practical applications of research findings. The implementation of advocacy plans developed during the research phase was urged to strengthen and sustain accountability in the water sector. The establishment of regional program offices, knowledge-sharing platforms, resource mobilization mechanisms, risk assessment, innovative financing, inclusive research design, and policy integration were also recommended. Furthermore, recommendations on best practices that require further enhancement highlighted the continuation of successful accountability initiatives, citizen awareness programs, effective partnerships, impact on policy, knowledge sharing beyond borders, advocacy campaigns, cross-generational learning, and continued investment in capacity building. These practices, deemed successful, should be extended, expanded, and integrated to foster sustained positive impacts in the water governance sector.

In summary, the recommendations revolve around improving program effectiveness through diverse meeting formats, securing government commitments, enhancing budget transparency, fostering an open challenge culture, and ensuring prompt publication of research findings. The need for robust monitoring and evaluation, cross-sector collaboration, community engagement, accessible research data, technological innovation, and long-term impact assessment was stressed. Additionally, changes for the next phase include the formulation of operational agreements, common learning platforms, addressing ownership concerns, a stronger focus on action, implementation of advocacy plans, and the establishment of regional offices. Best practices requiring further enhancement encompass the continuation of successful initiatives, awareness programs, effective partnerships, policy impact, knowledge-sharing efforts, advocacy campaigns, cross-generational learning, and ongoing capacity building.





SECTION I: **BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION**

Introduction

The Accountability for Water programme is an initiative aimed at improving water governance and service delivery, as well as accelerating the achievement of the SDG 6: *Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*. The programme is designed to address weak accountability in water policies, laws, and programs, as this is often the reason why good water policies fail. The programme has the potential to improve water management in all contexts and promote accountability among all water users and managers.

The first phase of the Accountability for Water programme aimed to produce applicable research for uptake by organizations and professionals working in water resource management and WASH service delivery. Engagement with over 160 stakeholders has identified the themes for exploration, which include enabling and sustaining accountability for water, accountability for communities, and accountability for government. The programme also organized peer-to-peer learning workshops and webinar, and regional events, publishable practice papers, methodological guidance and case studies, and an online knowledge sharing platform.

The programme supported case study research through Professional Research Fellowships (PRFs), with the initial focus on Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and three other African countries (Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Liberia) as well as Cross-country research involving Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania and was co-led by the PIs, the NRCs and the Research Practice Lead.

The Accountability for Water programme was funded by the William and Hewlett Foundation and implemented by the Accountability for Water Consortium, comprising Partnership for African Social Governance Research (PASGR), Water Witness International (WWI), Water Witness Ethiopia (WWE), Kenya Water and Sanitation CSO Network (KEWASNET), and Shahidi Wa Maji (SWM). The mission of the consortium is to improve accountability for water, sanitation and hygiene service delivery and water resources management globally, and in three priority target countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, through research uptake, action, and advocacy. The consortium is supported and advised by Global and National Advisory Groups comprising national government representatives, civil society, funders, and research institutions.

The overarching goal for accountability for water programme is contribute to unlocking enduring and widespread water security for vulnerable communities in Africa through well-informed, strategic action to strengthen citizen voice, government responsiveness and water sector accountability.

The programme outcomes were; firstly, to generate high quality evidence that addresses priority knowledge needs and questions facing stakeholders, enabling them to strengthen accountability for water (Knowledge generation). Secondly, research evidence shared in formats useful to stakeholders to advance accountability for water at the local, national, and international scale (Outreach and uptake) and finally, researchers and practitioners in Africa and globally are better equipped, inspired, networked and thus able to collaborate and advance accountability policy and practice on water in the future (Programme legacy)

Purpose of the Evaluation and Objectives.

The purpose of the end line evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the Accountability for Water Program. The evaluation sought to provide feedback on the achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the Accountability for water phase I programme, and make recommendations for future interventions

The purpose of the evaluation was threefold:

- a. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Accountability for Water programmatic approach and draw practical implications for future programme work, producing a qualitative evaluation report.
- b. To evaluate the extent to which the Accountability for Water Programme structure and activities successfully implemented decolonial governance and implementation, producing a qualitative governance report and recommendations for phase II.
- c. To produce guidance and programme documentation for phase II of the programme; specifically:
 - i. A 'way of working' partnership guidance formulation to ensure that findings from evaluation are implemented
 - ii. Recommendations of 'most valued' elements from phase I and how to incorporate them in phase II, and recommendations of elements that should be reconsidered.
 - iii. A monitoring, evaluation and learning outline plan for phase II, including data collection and responsibilities, in collaboration with consortium partners.

Scope of Work to be undertaken

The scope of work entailed the following: gathering statistics for key indicators as per the log frame through collection of primary and secondary data; draft a MEAL plan for phase II; review and provide strategic input on the AfW phase II documents as guided by the AfW programme evaluation team. Geographically, the study targeted programme stakeholders and the project implementation partners in the three priority target countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.



SECTION II:

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1. Evaluation Approach and Design

The purpose of the AfW evaluation was to facilitate a critical analysis of the programme's contribution to evidence-based changes, in relation to strengthening accountability for water (*Knowledge generation*); knowledge sharing with stakeholders to advance accountability for water at the local, national and international scale (*Outreach and uptake*); and finally, equipping and inspiring researchers and practitioners globally and in Africa to be able to collaborate and advance accountability policy and practice on water in the future (*Programme legacy*).

The AfW end-line Evaluation applied an outcome harvesting approach which involved generation of primary data using a mix of quantitative (stakeholder survey) and qualitative methods (key informants' interviews and review of data from secondary sources namely webinars, the AfW knowledge platform, and PRF reports). Outcome harvesting can be a powerful approach for those interventions whose success depends on influencing policies, practices, actions, and relationships such as those of advocacy interventions especially in documenting and learning about the achievements of interventions. It is a six-step process (See Figure 1) which requires high participation from those who are close to the action and able to create actionable insights based on the needs of the users. The findings from outcome mapping are a mix of quantitative (number of outcomes) and qualitative data (describing the outcomes, change agent contribution, and other important outcome dimensions). One superior aspect of outcome harvesting approach over the traditional evaluation approach is that it does not measure progress towards outcomes, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backward to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change.

Gather data & draft outcome descriptions

- Review informal and external documents
- Draft outcomes

Engage change agents in formulating outcome descriptions

- Face to face interviews, story collection, focus group discussion

Support use of findings

- Share insights
- Facilitates decisions on further use of findings

Substantiate

- Triangulate
- Ensure accountability and credibility

Analyse & interpret

- Interpret results
- Create support for recommend actions

Design the harvest

- Identify harvesting questions
- Identify change agents

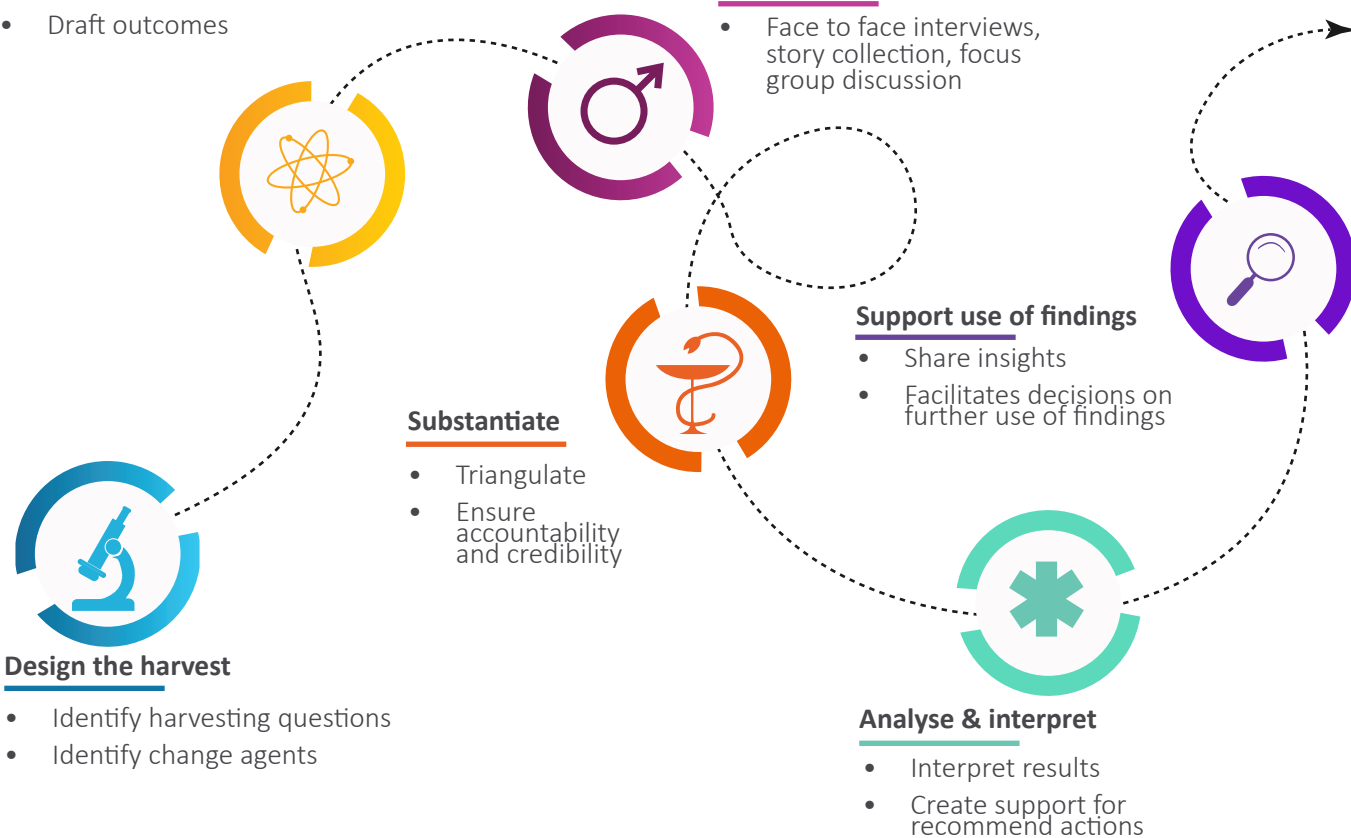


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of outcome harvesting's six step processes

Source: Wilson-Grau (2019).

2.2. Data collection instruments and targeted respondents

2.2.1. Survey Questionnaire

Survey questionnaires were administered to the stakeholders. The questionnaires were pre-tested by the internal consultant team in a mock-survey beforehand. The final questionnaire was then designed in *KoboCollect* Web Survey Platform and links sent to the respondents. This type of data processing is ideal for its accuracy. The questionnaires formatted in *KoboCollect* were then pre-tested using pseudo data to ensure that all the settings were accurate and that the questionnaires would input correctly into the automatically created database.

2.2.2. Key Informants Interview Guide

The Key Informants interviews were used to obtain information that would otherwise not be available from the survey questionnaires but would be critical to the study. Key informant interviews targeted the participants outlined in Table 1 above. KIIs were conducted virtually through tools such as *Google Meet™*, *zoom*, *skype*, *WhatsApp video* etc. for the participants who were not physically available.

2.3. Sample size determination

The quantitative sampling strategy for the evaluation involved purposive sampling to select stakeholders who had participated in the Accountability for Water programme. The stakeholders were identified and a list with relevant contact details provided by the AfW programme team. The survey was conducted amongst a total of 677 stakeholders. To optimize the sample response rate, the e-survey form was sent out to all the stakeholders. As at close of data collection on 20th September, 2023; a total of 45 fully filled e-forms had been received back to the submission server. Key to note is that email surveys commonly have low response rates.

2.4. Team recruitment

The core field team leadership comprised of a team leader (Monitoring & Evaluation Expert), a Qualitative Data manager and a Quantitative Data Analyst. In sum, the core team comprised of 3 experts.

2.5. Data collection approach

2.5.1. Quantitative Survey Data

The data collection simultaneously kicked off immediately after finalization of the tools design. The web survey form was sent in link form via e-mail to all the selected respondents, and emphasis made on the aptness of filling the survey forms to avoid late responses. Quality review of the submitted data was done on an on-going basis

as the submissions were received. Fully filled and approved data forms were marked as “validated” and then archived into the primary database for future retrieval during data analysis. A maximum of 3 follow-up reminders were made on the respondents to fill and submit the e-form. Beyond that, no further reminders were sent out.

2.5.2. Qualitative Survey Data

The team leader organized for administration of KIIs by way of setting up appointments with the targeted respondents or participants. During the KIIs, the interviews upon concession were audio recorded for ease of transcription afterwards and extensive capture of insights from the respondents.

2.6. Data Processing and Analysis

During data enumeration, all the e-forms submitted via the web application were adequately checked for accuracy and completeness before analysis, and any inconsistencies noted were promptly addressed by the consultant team. After all the data was received, the second step of analysis involved generation of syntax commands to ensure that variables were transformed appropriately for ease of analysis. The data from e-survey was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Exploratory analysis was first performed to ensure that the output was free from the effects of outliers and the effect of missing responses. Descriptive statistics were the data analysis techniques applied on the survey data. For qualitative data, the transcribed texts were transferred to NVIVO 12 qualitative analysis software and analyzed. Following coding of the transcripts, a full list of themes was made available for categorization within a hierarchical framework of main and sub-themes. The thematic framework was then systematically applied to all the interview transcripts. Patterns and associations of the themes were identified and compared within and between the different groups of respondents to enhance triangulation of data.

2.7. Engagement of Survey Participants

The study achieved varying response rates for various categories of respondents as targeted. The sampling frame comprised of list of 677 AfW stakeholders. This was a list all persons that had interacted with the AfW programme at some point in time since its inception. The survey questionnaires were shared to all the 677 stakeholders via email. However, after a round of 3 reminders, only 45 responses were realized, representing a 6.7% response rate.



SECTION III: STUDY FINDINGS

3.1. Profile of Stakeholder Survey's Participants

The evaluation was able to capture responses from the key stakeholders of the accountability for water programme among the 45 successfully completed outcome survey forms. The composition of the pool of respondents is as shown below. Majority of the responses recorded were from the PRF and PI group (34%). The category of responses, classified as others were persons coming in as: Freelancers, Independent Consultant, Enterprise, Volunteers, Accountability for Water Trainee, Researcher, and academician.

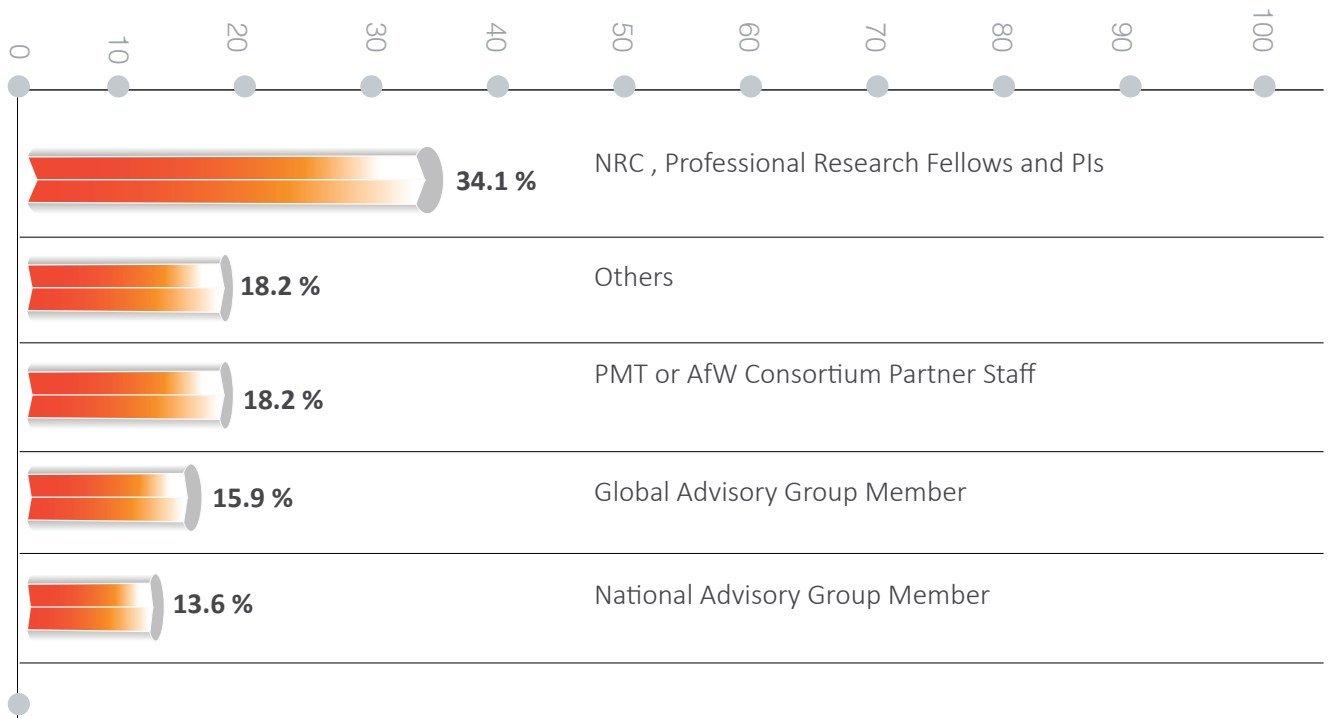


Figure 2: Category of Respondents

3.3. Relevance of the AfW Programme

Relevance of the project was analyzed from three angles. First, if the programme objectives and outputs were beneficial to the consortium partners. Second, if the programme was able to address the three key identified themes for exploration namely: community dynamics of accountability for water; duty-bearer dynamics of accountability for water; and enabling and sustaining accountability for water. Thirdly, how the programme's engagement with stakeholders contributed to ensuring the programme focused on the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH sector, specifically in the programme's priority countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.

3.3.1. Relevance of the Programme to Consortium Partners

In Ethiopia specifically, the PIs (Principal Investigators) and Professional Research Fellows (PRFs) underscored the programme's relevance and its focus on accountability and governance issues in the water sector. They pointed out that accountability and good governance were critical aspects often overlooked in water provision discussions. The respondents noted that the research was designed to provide policy inputs and create awareness among policymakers, civil society organizations, and government functionaries in Ethiopia. They highlighted the importance of improving governance for sustainable water management and achieving SDG goal number six.



“The research question, the design, the output, were very relevant to the parties and the major stakeholders... Much of the problem is about accountability and governance.”

~ PI KII Informant, Ethiopia ~

Across the three priority countries, the PRFs respondents collectively shared their perspectives on how the programme’s objectives and outputs benefited them and their organizations. They highlighted various aspects of the programme’s impact. These included:

- i. Enhanced Research Skills:** Several respondents mentioned that the programme provided opportunities to learn new research methodologies, including participatory research and qualitative analysis, which were not commonly employed in their organizations.
- ii. Improved Understanding of Accountability:** The programme contributed to a better understanding of accountability, both at the country and host organization levels. It helped stakeholders recognize the importance of accountability mechanisms in water governance.
- iii. Positive Reception of Findings:** the respondents noted that the research findings were well-received by various stakeholders, including community members, government counterparts, and regulatory authorities. The findings were considered relevant and actionable.
- iv. Opportunities for Advocacy:** The programme enabled advocacy work based on research findings, offering opportunities to address water-related challenges and advocate for accountability in the water sector.
- v. Exposure and Engagement:** Some respondents highlighted that the programme exposed civil society organizations to community engagement and opened doors for greater community involvement in water-related issues.



“ I would start by saying that to the larger extent... the programme was able to enable us... to engage in research and... produce the results which I think will be useful in addressing water challenges in our context.”

~ PRF KII Informant, Kenya ~

In summary, the PRF respondents noted that the programme had a positive impact on their research skills, understanding of accountability, advocacy efforts, and engagement with stakeholders. They perceived the programme’s outputs as relevant and actionable, contributing to improved water governance and service provision in their respective contexts.

For the PMT (Program Management Team) and respondents drawn from consortium partners, they also collectively shared their perspectives on the programme’s objectives and outputs. They mentioned that the programme aimed to address critical questions about accountability in the water sector, acknowledging that it confirmed the central role of accountability in water sector governance in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. The respondents noted that the programme had successfully embedded this knowledge within the African water sector, creating a community of practice focused on accountability. Additionally, they emphasized that the programme had elevated the profile of accountability in global and regional discussions on water issues. However, they also acknowledged that there were remaining unanswered questions regarding the practical implementation of accountability measures.



“The programme has been successful in confirming that accountability is central to improved water sector governance... it’s helped us to elevate the profile of accountability in global and regional debates about water... we’ve still got these unanswered questions.”

~ PMT KII Informant

Further on, the findings from the stakeholders’ survey also affirmed that a majority of respondents were “satisfied” with their being engaged as stakeholders of the AfW programme. As shown in Figure 3, 27.3% of the sample reported that they were “very satisfied” with 54.5% reporting that they were “fairly satisfied”. Cumulatively, this represents 81.8% of the sample (n=45).

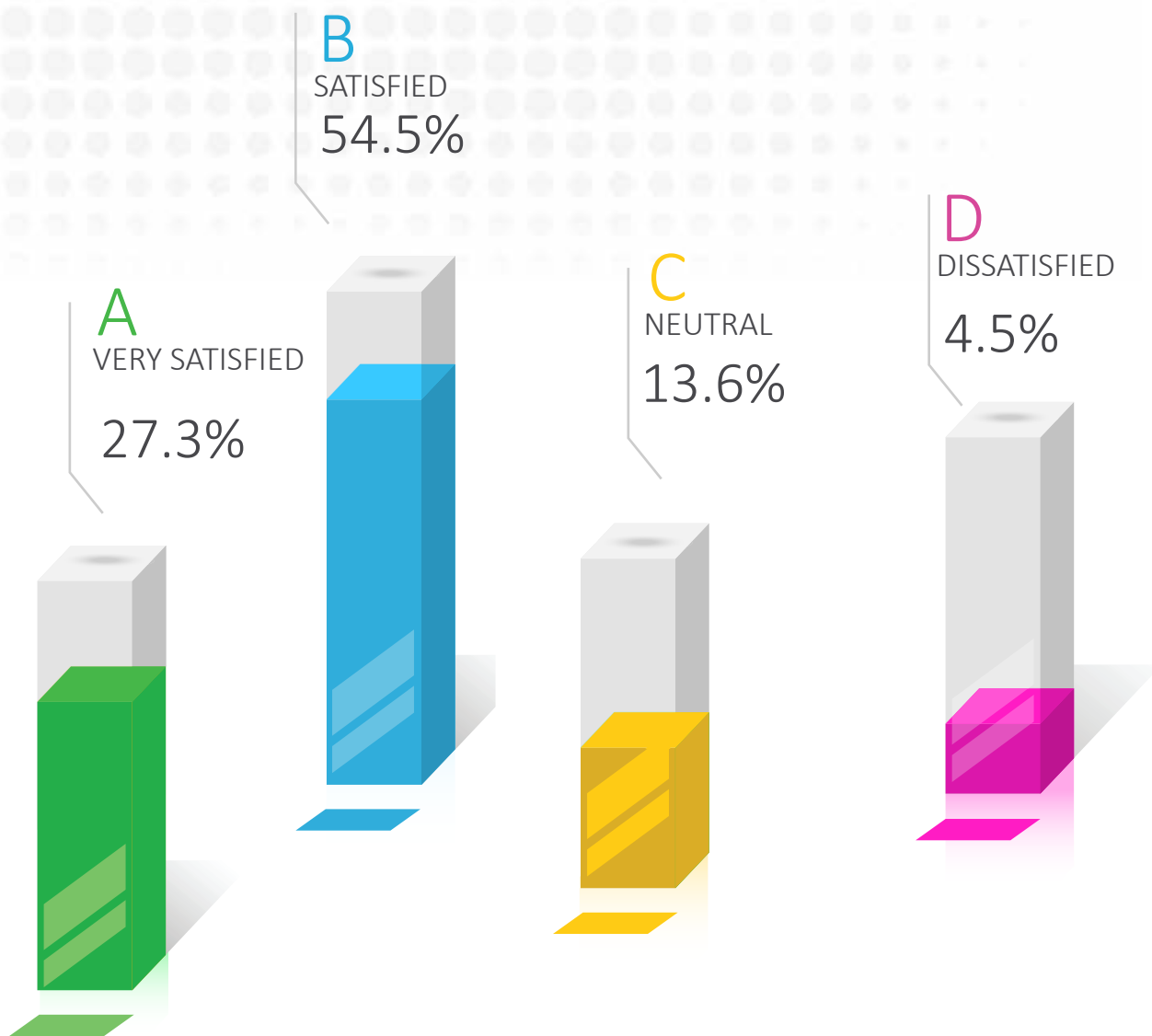


Figure 3: Stakeholder Engagement Satisfaction Levels

3.3.2. Alignment of the Programme to Key Identified Themes for Exploration

Community dynamics for accountability

The programme aimed to address community dynamics of accountability for water through research and community engagement. Feedback from key informants consistently underscored the program’s effectiveness in capturing and understanding community voices, leading to significant takeaways. The positive impact and achievements of the program are evident in the recognition of these valuable insights. A critical conclusion drawn from the informants is the imperative of institutionalizing effective accountability mechanisms within government systems. The GAG informants for example emphasized the importance of sustaining such mechanisms, pointing to the need for embedding accountability practices within broader governance structures. This recognition is crucial for ensuring the long-term impact and sustainability of the program beyond its immediate duration.

“I think a number of the researchers really observed community dynamics and furthering accountability and the duty-bearer dynamics. I think that worked well. I can say major takeaways were made from that. Maybe how to sustain this institutionalization.”

~ GAG KII Respondent

Community engagement emerged as a central theme from several informants, reflecting the program’s commitment to involving local communities actively. Utilizing research tools, participatory methods, and dedicated workstreams, the program successfully engaged communities, highlighting the importance of bottom-up approaches in addressing water accountability.

The findings highlighted the diversity in community dynamics across different countries and regions. The program's ability to adapt and address specific challenges unique to each context, such as gender-related concerns, community awareness, and regulatory dynamics, underscored its nuanced and context-specific strategies. Acknowledgment of challenges, particularly in understanding triggers for community accountability, indicated a realistic assessment of the program's limitations. Recognizing the complexity of community dynamics, especially in relation to government systems and service providers, suggested a commitment to addressing and overcoming these challenges. Informants, notably from the NAG, emphasized the need for further analysis to holistically address community dynamics. This implied a recognition that continuous evaluation and refinement were necessary for ongoing success. Recommendations for deeper analysis indicated a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

“Looking at the community dynamics, where the aim was to understand the beneficiaries of the water systems; I can say that to a big extent, the programme managed to deliver on key lessons, barriers, and also accelerators of community voices on accountability”

~ NAG KII Informant

The program's contribution to advocacy and awareness building was significant. It brought attention to issues such as gender-related discrimination, community rights, and the crucial role of holding service providers accountable. This aligned with a broader goal of fostering informed and empowered communities. Some informants noted that the program primarily focused on research and knowledge generation, with limited action taken during its duration. This observation signaled an area for potential improvement in subsequent program phases, emphasizing the importance of translating research findings into tangible and actionable outcomes. Informants identified opportunities for further research, advocacy, and improvement in subsequent phases of the program. The success of the program provided a foundation for building on achievements and addressing challenges in future iterations, ensuring a continuous and adaptive approach to community dynamics and water accountability.

In summary, the NAG key informants highlighted the programme's role in opening the eyes of duty bearers and enhancing their understanding of accountability in water-related issues. The PMT key informants emphasized the need for defining better incentives for duty bearers and the importance of involving various stakeholders in accountability efforts. The PRFs key informants shared their experiences and observations, emphasizing the impact of the programme in triggering government responses,

addressing state capture, and enhancing transparency and accountability at different levels of governance.

Duty Bearer Dynamics for Accountability

The project, focused on addressing duty-bearer dynamics for water accountability, had notable impacts in various contexts. In Tanzania, the program served as an enabler, opening the eyes of government officials to the importance of water and sanitation issues. While the approach was considered new, it proved fruitful in areas where it was implemented, fostering a better understanding of responsibilities and accountability among the duty bearers. However, some respondents expressed concerns about the limitations in engaging duty bearers, particularly in terms of their participation. The program, being CSO-driven, faced challenges in prompting duty bearers to scrutinize their own actions. The establishment of an advisory board was highlighted as a significant achievement for sustainability, providing a platform for government departments, civil society, and the private sector to collaborate on water accountability.

Challenges and gaps were identified, such as the need to define key incentives for government responsiveness. The role of media and community voices emerged as a potential incentive for duty bearers to respond. The importance of understanding the factors that make the government respond was emphasized, and efforts were being made to gather evidence on the impact of community engagement through media.

The duty-bearer dynamics were explored in different country contexts, revealing complexities in water resource governance at the local level. Issues such as state capture, political influence, and challenges in policy implementation were highlighted. The project aimed to address gaps and issues within policies, laws, and regulations related to water resource management. In Zimbabwe for instance, the project was successful in triggering a government response, leading to improved practices in water disconnection procedures by local authorities. The research empowered citizens with knowledge to demand accountability, emphasizing water as a fundamental right.

Stakeholders, including industries and the government, were identified as crucial in the dynamics of accountability. The lack of time and resources hindered a more comprehensive exploration, but the research provided evidence for discussions on improving accountability relationships between duty bearers, decision makers, and communities. The project's success in generating knowledge across citizen dynamics, duty bearers, and enabling environments was acknowledged. However, the limited action in implementing the evidence raised concerns, indicating a need for future efforts to bridge the gap between knowledge generation and practical action.

Professional Research Fellows played a crucial role in disseminating research findings to various stakeholders, creating awareness of the complexities surrounding water

accessibility and accountability. The project also highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability tools, and community awareness in ensuring effective water supply services. In summary, the project demonstrated positive impacts in raising awareness and understanding among duty bearers regarding water accountability, with notable achievements in specific areas. However, challenges in sustained engagement, defining incentives, and translating knowledge into action were recognized, indicating areas for improvement in future phases of the program.

Enabling and Sustaining Environment of Accountability for Water

The programme was strategically designed with the overarching objective of augmenting accountability within the water sector. This multifaceted approach encompassed initiatives aimed at cultivating awareness, nurturing collaborative partnerships, and facilitating active citizen engagement. The overarching intent was to establish a conducive ecosystem that could effectively nurture and sustain accountability mechanisms pertaining to water resources. Insights gleaned from the perspectives of the respondents serve to illuminate both the accomplishments realized by the programme, the challenges encountered, and the prospective trajectory guiding the programme's efforts towards ensuring accountability in the domain of water resources.

The NAG respondents emphasized the importance of creating awareness and training individuals to ensure sustainability. They highlighted the formation of groups and the training of people, particularly young generations who were aware of the issues of sustainability. The hope is that the knowledge imparted to these individuals will be passed on, albeit not at a 100% success rate. As one respondent stated,

“There should be something a system that will try to enforce or try to manage the sustainability in the area of accountability.”

The PMT respondents acknowledged that while there may not be vivid results yet on sustainability and enabling of the accountability environment, the programme has triggered accountability discussions and actions. They noted that through activities such as dissemination and engagement with duty bearers, accountability issues remain on the agenda. Furthermore, the involvement of media outlets in investigating water-related issues independently indicates growing interest in accountability. The respondents acknowledge that more work needs to be done, particularly in determining incentives for duty bearers and building sustained engagement.

The PRF respondents from various countries shared their insights into how the programme has impacted accountability:

- The PRF informants from Zimbabwe highlighted the role of citizen participation, voice, and mobilization in sustaining accountability for improved water services provision. This has been facilitated by the recognition of water as a socio-economic right in Zimbabwe.
- In Ethiopia, the PRFs commented on the research engagements' potential to generate evidence that indicated a need for a stronger accountability framework in the water sector. The programme influenced discussions among key stakeholders, including government agencies, to identify enablers and the importance of an enabling environment for accountability.
- In Tanzania, the PRFs outlined building of relationships with stakeholders being a significant step in ensuring sustainability.

“In terms of that, maybe on speaking on my experience, the programme has been able to build relationships with these stakeholders, which is a very important step in building sustainability.” ~ PRF KII respondent, Tanzania.

- In Liberia as commented by a PRF respondent, the research identified breaches in water provision policies and recommended adherence to established standards. It also emphasized the importance of citizen awareness in holding the government accountable, promoting principles of human rights-based approaches, and engaging the media to create awareness.
- In Kenya, comments on the need to support action groups in communities to promote accountability and create a more accountable society was emphasized.

Overall, the Accountability for Water programme has made significant strides in addressing the issue of enabling and sustaining accountability for water resources. Respondents from various backgrounds and regions have acknowledged the programme's impact on raising awareness, triggering discussions, and fostering partnerships. While challenges and areas for improvement exist, the programme's efforts in building an enabling environment for accountability are evident.

Sustainability remains a challenge, and it is recognized that further work is needed, particularly in terms of incentivizing duty bearers and empowering communities. The insights shared by the respondents underscore the importance of ongoing dialogue, capacity building, and

a commitment to accountability in the water sector. In conclusion, the Accountability for Water programme laid the foundation for accountability in the water sector, and its continued efforts and partnerships hold promise for a more accountable and sustainable future for water resources management.

3.3.3. Contribution of the Programme to Needs and Priorities of Water Governance and WASH Sectors in the Priority Countries

The programme aimed to contribute to the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) sector in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. In Tanzania for instance, the programme's focus was on ensuring sustainability and accountability within the water and sanitation sector. According to a National Advisory Group (NAG) respondent: "The national advisory team had been working hard to make sure that all the entities concerned with water and sanitation are getting in touch with the issue of sustainability." The NAG in Tanzania actively participated in various platforms, conferences, and webinars to disseminate information related to sustainability and accountability in the water sector. They emphasized the importance of accountability and its role in transforming mindsets over time. They recognized that achieving accountability required sustained engagement with policymakers:

“So, as a NAG in Tanzania, we also understand that the accountability sense of approach is about transformation or the mindsets. So, it needs also time is not one to today's issue. It is it needs time. It also needs more engagement for the policymakers, policymakers are the stakeholders for this and they have power to make this thing to be real and cascade it to the citizens.”

~ NAG KII Respondent, Tanzania

In Kenya, the programme's emphasis was on selecting the right stakeholders and institutions responsible for water governance. The programme was careful in selecting individuals within institutions who were responsible for governance issues, providing them with clear Terms of Reference (ToR) and deliverables. They also emphasized the importance of maintaining focus on water governance and WASH issues.

In Ethiopia, the programme aimed to address water accountability gaps. The programme supported research on various issues, including accountability within the One WASH national programme:

“The accountability in the One WASH national programme of Ethiopia has really contributed a lot because as I said, phase three is coming very soon. And the findings of this research will definitely inform.”

~ NAG KII Respondent, Ethiopia

Additionally, the research programme indirectly contributed to citizen voices by addressing issues such as lack of community consultation by external investors. According to the informants drawn from GAG and NAG, the research findings aimed to address serious problems within the country related to water resources and services. In Ethiopia, the programme's design ensured active engagement with stakeholders in the research process. The Advisory Group and stakeholders had opportunities to provide input into research proposals, consultant selection, and draft report reviews. This collaboration helped ensure that the needs and priorities of the water governance sector were integrated into the research design. As one of the PI key informants noted:

“The programme and the research support was important with respect to Ethiopian water sector, there was a very good participation of the stakeholders from the very beginning”

From the perspective of the PMT key informant respondents, the programme engaged a wide range of stakeholders, both at the national and global levels, to ensure that the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH sector were addressed. A PMT (Program Management Team) respondent highlighted the complexity of the programme's design and engagement:

“And then as we went along, we had obviously the Global Advisory Group and the National Advisory Groups in each country to provide us with constant guidance and of course correction to make sure that we were maintaining focus on the key parts of the governance and accountability environment.”

~ PMT KII Respondent

The programme organized webinars, meetings, and presentations to involve stakeholders in research planning and the review of research findings.

From the perspective of the informants drawn from the PRFs, the following are the specific ways in which the project contributed to the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) sector in the priority countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia (including Liberia):



Table 1: Contribution to the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH

Country	Contribution to the needs and priorities of the water governance and WASH
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating Strong Evidence and Dissemination: The programme in Ethiopia played a significant role in generating strong evidence related to the accountability ecosystem within the water governance and WASH sector. This evidence was then disseminated widely to stakeholders through various channels and platforms. This contributed to building a knowledge base and fostering accountability within the sector. • Engagement of Diverse Stakeholders: The programme was effective in engaging a diverse range of stakeholders. It brought together government decision-makers, politicians, duty-bearers, civil society organizations, and even the private sector. This inclusive approach allowed for a comprehensive dialogue on water governance and accountability. • Policy and Political Economic Analysis: Research conducted as part of the programme included policy and political economic analysis. This analysis provided insights into how political, economic, and social factors impact accountability and drive change within the sector. It helped stakeholders understand the multifaceted nature of the challenges.
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Involvement and Monitoring: In Tanzania, the programme had a strong focus on involving communities in the water governance process. It established a system of “water witnesses” or “Mashahidi wa maji” recruited from local communities. These witnesses played a crucial role in monitoring water resources and reporting issues, particularly related to water pollution. • Engagement of Diverse Stakeholders: Ethiopia, the programme in Tanzania also engaged diverse stakeholders. It included government officials, community members, and civil society organizations. This broad engagement allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and priorities within the Tanzanian water sector. • Sharing Facts and Findings Across Stakeholders: The programme facilitated the sharing of research facts and findings across the water sector stakeholders. This approach helped in building a common understanding of the issues and potential solutions, fostering collaboration and accountability.
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing Key Stakeholders Together: In Kenya, the programme succeeded in bringing together key stakeholders through various platforms, including the National Advisory Group (NAG) and water governance houses. These platforms provided opportunities for researchers to present their projects and receive feedback from stakeholders. • Regulatory Board and County Wash Program Engagement: The programme engaged with institutions such as the Water Service Regulatory Board and the County WASH Program in Kenya. These institutions expressed commitment to addressing accountability issues highlighted by the programme’s research. While concrete actions were pending, the engagement was seen as a positive step.
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and Accountability Promotion: In Liberia, the programme recognized the significant accountability gap within the water sector. It aimed to raise awareness and promote accountability in service delivery. While acknowledging that there was more work to be done, the programme engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including government, international partners, and communities, to initiate discussions and actions related to accountability.

The findings in Table 1 above underscore how the programme tailored its approach to meet the specific needs and priorities of each country within the water governance and WASH sector. It emphasized the importance of evidence generation, stakeholder engagement, and context-specific strategies to drive accountability and positive change. In summary, the programme contributed to the water governance and WASH sector in Kenya, Tanzania, Liberia, and Ethiopia by generating evidence, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, promoting community involvement, and raising awareness about specific accountability and governance issues. These efforts aimed to address the sector’s needs and priorities and foster positive changes in policy and practice. The emphasis was on selecting the right stakeholders, improving accountability within national programs, addressing pollution and health risks, and ensuring continuous feedback and involvement of key stakeholders in the programme’s activities.

3.4. Effectiveness of the AfW Programme

3.4.1. Key Outcomes and their Impacts towards Attainment of Project's Objectives

Effectiveness refers to the extent the project has achieved its intended expected results and activities. Also, which changes can be attributed to the project, whether the activities brought out the expected results. Analysis of effectiveness sought to assess the extent to which the project achieved the following:

- **Knowledge generation** (extent to which the programme was able to generate high quality research to address the knowledge needs of stakeholders, enabling them to strengthen accountability for water);
- **Outreach and uptake** (extent to which the programme was able to package, share and communicate its research products and outputs in a manner that was valuable and of use for stakeholders to advance accountability for water at the local, national, and international scale); and
- **Programme legacy** (extent to which the programme was able to equip and inspire researchers and practitioners globally and in Africa to collaborate towards advancing accountability policy and practice on water in the future). Additional issues captured included the key outcomes from the project (positive and negative); and extent to which the project was able to attain decolonial governance in its approaches. Table 3 presents the positive outcomes derived from the outcome harvesting approach.



Table 2: Outcome Harvesting: Positive Outcomes and their Significance towards Attainment of Sustainable Change

Programme Objective	Key Positive Outcomes: (Progress towards attainment of objective)	Significance of the Positive Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome represents progress towards sustainable change)
<p>1. Strengthening Accountability for Water (Knowledge Generation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Building Workshops: The project organized skills-building workshops in Arusha, Tanzania, and a global event in Mombasa, Kenya. These workshops provided participants with valuable insights and practical skills related to water accountability, enhancing their ability to engage with the issue effectively. • Professional Research Fellows (PRFs): The project recruited and trained PRFs from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, in partnership with IDS Sussex University, WWI, and PASGR. PRFs received professional support to develop research project proposals, refine research questions, and choose appropriate research methods. This capacity-building process helped PRFs generate comprehensive research reports and other products by the end of the programme. • Cross-Country Studies: The project conducted cross-country studies that contributed to the generation of knowledge around accountability for water. These studies likely involved comparative analyses and assessments of water accountability practices and challenges across different regions, providing valuable insights into effective accountability mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Skills Enhancement: The project has focused on strengthening research writing skills, particularly in the context of water accountability. It conducted training and mentoring to equip researchers with the necessary skills for producing high-quality research outputs. This skill development ensures a lasting resource for future research in the field. • Body of Research: The project has successfully generated a significant body of research dedicated to water accountability. This research has been comprehensive, covering various aspects of accountability within the water sector. Importantly, some of these research findings have already been translated into concrete actions, which demonstrates the practical impact of the project’s knowledge generation efforts (For example, in Zimbabwe, the project was successful in triggering a government response, leading to improved practices in water disconnection procedures by local authorities. The research empowered citizens with knowledge to demand accountability, emphasizing water as a fundamental right). • Collaboration and Networking: The project has actively promoted collaboration and networking within and beyond its immediate scope. This approach ensures that the knowledge generated becomes part of a broader conversation in the water sector. These collaborations contribute to the sustainability of accountability initiatives

Programme Objective	Key Positive Outcomes: (Progress towards attainment of objective)	Significance of the Positive Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome represents progress towards sustainable change)
<p>2. Knowledge Sharing with Stakeholders (Outreach and Uptake)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinars and In-Person Meetings: The project actively shared its findings through webinars and in-person meetings. This approach allowed for engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, both in-person and virtually, facilitating discussions and knowledge dissemination (examples of such forums where knowledge dissemination took place include: the global webinar jointly done by all countries, the Stockholm World Water Week 2023, and the New York Water Conference. In Ethiopia there was a panel discussion presentation on water governance at the 21st International Conference of Ethiopian studies held in Addis Ababa). • Participation in National and Global Advisory Group Forums (NAGs and GAGs): The involvement of project members in NAGs and GAGs provided a platform to engage with key stakeholders and share research findings. These advisory groups consisted of experts, policymakers, and practitioners involved in the water sector, enhancing the reach and impact of the project’s knowledge sharing efforts. • Presentations at International Events: Presentations at events such as UN Water and SIWI (Stockholm International Water Institute) conferences played a crucial role in advancing accountability for water at national and international levels. These presentations reached a global audience and contributed to shaping the discourse on water accountability. • Reports Dissemination: The project engaged in extensive dissemination activities, including sharing reports with interested organizations, donors, government entities (GOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This ensured that research findings reached a wide array of stakeholders, fostering awareness and understanding of water accountability issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Understanding: One of the significant achievements was the positive change in the understanding of accountability for water among government officials and key professionals. Through various knowledge-sharing activities, these stakeholders gained insights into the importance of accountability in the water sector. • Lasting Skills and Relationships: The project has not only provided skills development but also fostered lasting relationships with wider networks. This network of professionals, researchers, and stakeholders is likely to continue collaborating and sharing knowledge beyond the project’s duration. • Professional Training: The project delivered online training to 60 professionals from diverse backgrounds within the water sector. This training equipped them with the knowledge and tools needed to actively contribute to accountability initiatives. • Research Outputs: The research conducted has resulted in multiple research papers, cross-country analyses, and policy briefs. These tangible outputs serve as valuable resources for furthering knowledge and informing decision-makers and practitioners in the water sector. • Effective Outreach: The project effectively disseminated its knowledge through various means, including webinars, workshops, and conferences. These activities engaged diverse stakeholders, ranging from local to international levels, facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practices. • Systematic Knowledge Generation: The project’s research systematically identified and explored water accountability problems, confirming existing issues. This systematic approach was instrumental in gaining the trust of governmental bodies, donors, and NGOs. Stakeholders recognized the value of the research findings and recommendations for strengthening accountability mechanisms in the water sector.

Programme Objective	Key Positive Outcomes: (Progress towards attainment of objective)	Significance of the Positive Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome represents progress towards sustainable change)
<p>2. Knowledge Sharing with Stakeholders (Outreach and Uptake)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider Partnership Engagement: The project's efforts encouraged wider collaboration in research across multiple East African countries. This collaborative approach did not only establish recognized research initiatives but also initiated changes in water accountability practices. • Impact Measurement: The project provided hard evidence on how accountability monitoring by community groups and civil society organizations contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6). This evidence-based approach enables development partners, governments, INGOs, and funders to prioritize investments in accountability initiatives effectively. • Academic Contribution: The project's research represents a groundbreaking contribution to the academic understanding of accountability science in the water sector. Publications in referenceable journals enhance the credibility and visibility of accountability research. • Global Recognition and Funding: Accountability has gained prominence globally, as evidenced by its inclusion in the closing plenary of UN Water 2023 and the allocation of new funding for accountability practice, exceeding £4 million. These developments signal the growing recognition of accountability's importance.
<p>3. Equipping and Inspiring Researchers and Practitioners (Program Legacy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-PRF Training: The project conducted pre-PRF training on accountability, research methods, and communication. This training was in advance of PRF selection, and included government officials, NGO representatives, private sector experts, and academia. It equipped participants with the necessary conceptual and research skills related to water accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Leadership: Project Research Fellows (PRFs) actively led the charge for water accountability in their respective countries. They incorporated accountability principles into various research programs and have used their training and research findings in their educational roles.

Programme Objective	Key Positive Outcomes: (Progress towards attainment of objective)	Significance of the Positive Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome represents progress towards sustainable change)
<p>3. Equipping and Inspiring Researchers and Practitioners (Program Legacy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring Young Researchers: The project’s engagement and dissemination events inspired many young researchers and practitioners to focus their efforts on conducting research related to water accountability. This inspiration likely led to a new generation of professionals dedicated to addressing water accountability challenges. • Collaboration Opportunities: The project facilitated collaboration opportunities with various stakeholders, including universities, NGOs, donors, and government entities. This collaborative approach aimed to continue research efforts on water accountability and address multifaceted problems in the water sector. • Regional and National Impact: The project made a regional impact by sharing priorities related to water accountability with UN Water during a regional learning and planning event in Mombasa. It also contributed to the design of the SDG6 Accountability Facility, which can continue to drive accountability efforts in the water sector. • Local and International Dissemination: The project shared its research findings at both local and international levels through workshops, conferences, and collaborations with governmental and non-governmental organizations. This dissemination aimed to raise awareness of water accountability issues and encourage further research and action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Building: The project played a pivotal role in creating a community of practice for water accountability research and practice. This community includes professionals, university educators, researchers, government officials, NGOs, donors, and private sector stakeholders. The ongoing collaboration within this community is expected to drive positive change in water accountability. • Inspiration and Advocacy: Through its activities and outcomes, the project inspired researchers and practitioners to become advocates for water accountability. It empowered them to amplify the voices of marginalized communities and champion the cause of water accountability. • Capacity Building: PRFs underwent extensive capacity building, becoming champions of Accountability for Water (AW). They possess in-depth knowledge, clear concepts, and practical expertise in accountability, enabling them to demand transparency, equitable practices, and accountability in the water sector.

From Table 2 above, it is evident that the project’s efforts in knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building had a substantial and multifaceted impact on the promotion of accountability for water. It contributed to the development of skills, inspired future researchers and practitioners, and actively engaged with stakeholders at various levels, leaving a legacy in the field of water accountability. Besides, the project’s achievements represent substantial progress towards sustainable change in strengthening accountability for water. It has not only produced valuable knowledge but has also effectively shared it with a wide range of stakeholders. Moreover, it has inspired a new generation of researchers and practitioners committed to advancing water accountability, ensuring that the legacy of this project will continue to drive positive change in the water sector for years to come.

Table 3: Outcome Harvesting: Negative Outcomes and How they Undermined Progress towards Sustainable Change

<p>Programme Objective</p>	<p>Key Negative Outcomes: (Deterrence to attainment of objective)</p>	<p>Significance of the Negative Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome undermines progress towards sustainable change)</p>
<p>Strengthening Accountability for Water (Knowledge Generation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation in Research Quality: The responses from the key informants acknowledged that there was variation in the quality of research analyses and writing among project participants (specifically the PRFs). This inconsistency could have hindered the overall effectiveness of the research efforts as research quality was crucial for generating actionable insights and recommendations. • Tight Schedules: PRFs (Professional Research Fellows) faced challenges due to their existing roles as regular staff in their host organizations. They had to juggle their research responsibilities with their day-to-day work, often resorting to utilizing their spare time, including weekends and leave. This could have potentially affected the depth and thoroughness of their research, as time constraints may have limited their ability to conduct in-depth exploration of issues. Some PRFs utilized the services of research assistants to mitigate against this challenge. • Challenges in Scheduling Meetings: The difficulty in coordinating meetings with various stakeholders, including senior officials, factory managers, and communities, posed challenges. This could have delayed data collection and engagement with key stakeholders, impacting the research timeline and overall quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Utilization: The key informants for the study reported that while knowledge was acquired, it could have generated stronger evidence to enhance the programme’s overall outcomes. There were deficiencies around the extent to which findings from research were disseminated. • Time Management Challenges: Although time management problems did not have direct negative impacts on knowledge generation, it’s implied that there were challenges in managing time effectively. This could have affected the depth and thoroughness of the research conducted, potentially limiting the quality of knowledge produced. • Low Workshop Attendance: There was acknowledgment that more people attending knowledge-sharing events could have boosted the positive impact points to a potential issue with stakeholder engagement. Low attendance at workshops may have hindered the dissemination of knowledge and the programme’s ability to inspire change. •

Programme Objective	Key Negative Outcomes: (Deterrence to attainment of objective)	Significance of the Negative Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome undermines progress towards sustainable change)
<p>Knowledge Sharing with Stakeholders (Outreach and Uptake)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in Scheduling Meetings: Setting dates for meetings involving senior experts and officials was challenging due to the need to accommodate a large number of participants. This scheduling issue could have led to delays in knowledge-sharing activities, potentially affecting the project's outreach efforts. • Attendance Challenges: While efforts were made to organize both online and in-person results dissemination meetings, not all invitees attended these events. However, it is noted that those who did participate engaged in lively discussions, suggesting that outreach efforts were partially successful. The challenge here lied in ensuring broader participation in knowledge-sharing activities. • Communication Issues: The findings highlighted communication challenges between project partners, particularly between the lead partner and consortium members. This communication difficulty could have hindered effective coordination, especially in discussions with the donor regarding programme extensions and updates for Phase 2. • Financial Transparency: The lack of transparency in financial management, particularly from the lead partner, was mentioned as a key area of concern. This lack of transparency had the potential of eroding trust and accountability within the project, potentially affecting its overall success. • Understanding by Duty Bearers: The key informants for the study reported that some duty bearers did not fully understand the benefits of the research. This lack of understanding could have hindered their support and engagement with the project's objectives, potentially limiting its impact. • Sensitization of Stakeholders: County (sub-national) and national governments, as well as other stakeholders, needed better sensitization about the importance of supporting studies that promote accountability. Without this understanding, gaining their support for accountability initiatives was challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Decision-Making Delays: Delays in responding to information requests and the resultant confusion regarding grant disbursements, programme timelines, and available funds highlighted communication challenges within the project. These delays could have hindered effective coordination, decision-making, and trust among project partners. This could have therefore directly affected the efficacy of project's outreach plans. • Accountability Challenges: The findings laid emphasis on several accountability challenges within the water sector. Citizens' lack of awareness about water as a human right and the prevalence of corruption in water companies suggest deep-seated issues that can obstruct accountability initiatives. Additionally, weak governance structures and a focus on revenue collection over service delivery in water utilities pose further barriers to accountability efforts.

Programme Objective	Key Negative Outcomes: (Deterrence to attainment of objective)	Significance of the Negative Outcome: (Evidence that the outcome undermines progress towards sustainable change)
<p>Equipping and Inspiring Researchers and Practitioners (Program Legacy):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and Resources: Researchers required adequate resources to conduct their studies effectively. The lack of sufficient funding and stipends for researchers may have limited their ability to dedicate themselves fully to research activities, affecting the quality and depth of their work. • Opportunities for Publication: Ensuring that research findings are published and presented is considered part of the programme’s legacy. This step is crucial to share knowledge widely and sustain the impact of the research. It’s an essential component of creating a lasting legacy. • Continuous Accountability Awareness: To create a lasting legacy, it’s essential to maintain continuous and heightened awareness on accountability. Civil society players and community groups as well should play a role in this, and efforts should be made to educate citizens about their rights and accountability, potentially even integrating it into school curricula. • Research Permits and Funds Disbursement: Delays in obtaining research permits and fund disbursement were noted as challenges. These delays could have compromised research timelines and the ability to execute projects effectively, potentially affecting project outcomes that were time-bound. • Language Limitations: While translating and packaging reports and outcomes in Kiswahili language was a valuable effort, it was not without challenges due to language limitations. Overcoming language barriers is important for reaching a broader audience. • Limited Grassroots Focus: The project faced a situation where there was more national and global attention but limited grassroots devotion and focus. This imbalance might have affected the sustainability of accountability initiatives at the community level, and addressing this issue is essential for long-term impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Interventions and Policy Actors: The need for more time and strategic interventions to address specific accountability challenges indicates that the project might not have fully anticipated the complexity of these issues. The absence of specific policy actors to address broader challenges suggests a gap in the programme’s approach to creating lasting change. • Lack of a Water Users-Centered Approach: The mention of a lack of a water users-centered approach implies that the project may not have sufficiently engaged and empowered water users and communities. A user-centered approach is vital for ensuring that accountability efforts align with the needs and expectations of those directly affected by water policies and practices. In Ethiopia for instance, all research products were in English (but translation wasn’t part of the design in Ethiopia where Amharic and other widely spoken languages exist)

In summary, the insights of Table 3 highlight a range of challenges, from knowledge underutilization and time management issues to communication delays and complex accountability obstacles within the water sector. Addressing these challenges is crucial to maximizing the project’s impact, fostering collaboration, and leaving a lasting legacy of accountability in the water sector.



3.4.2. Other Reported Outcomes of the Project

Other key achievements or outcomes of the Accountability for Water programme, as reported by various respondents, reflect a multifaceted impact on water governance and social accountability across different regions. These achievements encompass improved research quality, effective programme support, and successful dissemination of research findings, all contributing to the programme's goal of fostering accountability and governance in the water sector.

The NAG respondents from Tanzania presented a largely positive perspective on the efficiency of the NAG in achieving intended outcomes. They reported that the performance was highly achieved, with all planned activities successfully completed. The respondent's perception of the accomplishment level was estimated at around 90%. Key achievements included effective communication, successful meetings, and plans that were executed as intended. However, the respondent acknowledged that the size of the country posed challenges to penetration and implied that there was potential for even greater efficiency.

Informants from the NAG in Ethiopia focused on the effectiveness of NAG's support in the context of research initiatives. They highlighted the process from proposal evaluation to financial support, emphasizing that the research papers produced were of high quality. The respondent believed that these papers would be published successfully, indicating the effectiveness of NAG's support. The support from NAG, in conjunction with a principal investigator from Addis Ababa University, was pointed out as instrumental in achieving the intended research outcomes. Overall, the respondent considered both the programme and NAG's support as effective.

Responses from the PMT emphasized on two key achievements. First, the programme successfully confirmed the persistent challenges related to water governance in Tanzania. These challenges included issues such as water pollution, limited access, and the impacts of climate change on water resources. This confirmation served as a critical achievement, highlighting the continued relevance of addressing water governance concerns. Second, the programme focused on empowering communities, aiming to catalyze their voices and enhance their capacity to engage in water-related issues. This approach included media engagement and rethinking strategies for community empowerment. Additionally, the programme had successfully involved key stakeholders and critical voices within the water sector who have raised concerns about accountability. A noteworthy achievement was the programme's efforts to establish collaborations with national parliaments, particularly with the water and public health committees, to integrate water and accountability matters into their programming.

Furthermore, the programme advocated for equitable financing for water resource management and has been actively working to ensure that access to water, especially for marginalized communities like slum dwellers and those affected by drought, is prioritized. The programme's commitment to integrating climate change concerns into discussions about water issues is also commendable. The programme's scope has also expanded beyond water sector institutions to encompass public health, health organizations, and humanitarian factors that contribute to water challenges and scarcity, indicating a broader perspective on accountability and access to clean and safe water. Furthermore, the PMT informants offered a dual perspective on the programme's achievements. From an effectiveness standpoint, the programme was lauded as "amazing" and vital in delivering much-needed outcomes across East Africa. The research conducted was viewed as instrumental in advancing progress in the water sector. However, from a management and finance perspective, there were concerns. The respondent expressed the need for improved collaboration with consortium partners, more regular meetings, and increased transparency in reporting to donors.

Additional comments from the PMT highlighted the programme's ability to enable knowledge exchange between different countries and stakeholders, including those from Kenya and Ethiopia. While specific achievements within the country were not explicitly mentioned, the programme's contribution to broadening understanding regarding water sector dynamics in various countries was regarded as a significant accomplishment.

“The biggest achievement I will say, of the programme was for Shahidi Wa Maji to access knowledge from different contexts of other countries.”

~ PMT KII Respondent.

The PRF informant from Zimbabwe highlighted the programme's achievement in revealing challenges affecting the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms as a key outcome. This included identifying factors such as lack of community knowledge, gender dynamics, economic issues, political influence, and a lack of familiarity with accountability processes. The programme's role in shedding light on these issues was deemed a major achievement.

“The main achievement is that the programme really unravels what really affects the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms in our country.”

~ PRF KII Respondent, Zimbabwe

In Ethiopia, the programme's main achievement as identified by the RFs, was described as the generation of evidence. This evidence was deemed crucial, given the scarcity of research in the region. Additionally, the programme was instrumental in bringing stakeholders together for discussions and dialogues, though this was recognized as an ongoing effort. It was also successful in making accountability a prominent agenda in the water sector, contributing to policy development and discussions. The Tanzanian-based PRF respondents highlighted achievements related to stakeholder engagement. The dissemination and validation of findings among stakeholders were considered pivotal steps, which, when positively received, pave the way for subsequent uptake of proposed solutions. Building relationships with government stakeholders, attending conferences, and networking were other achievements noted. Additionally, the programme contributed to capacity building by imparting new skills and methodologies in social accountability and water governance. The PRF respondents from Kenya cited achievements in networking, gaining new skills, and expanding knowledge. The programme facilitated interactions with a diverse group of individuals and provided opportunities to learn about accountability mechanisms and research methodologies. These skill enhancements were seen as significant personal achievements.

“The key achievement to me is the dissemination, the validation of the findings on part of the stakeholders.”

~ PRF KII Respondent, Tanzania.

“I was able to meet new people, and even old people that have worked within a different forum.”

~ PRF KII Respondent, Kenya.

Liberia's achievements centered on creating awareness within the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation and instigating system changes to address accountability issues. The programme's role in garnering support from government agencies and national partners, such as USAID, was a notable success. Furthermore, the Liberian House of Parliament recognized the research as a valuable tool for enhancing their oversight responsibilities. On a global scale, the programme facilitated knowledge exchange, allowing countries to learn from each other's experiences.

“Our biggest achievement so far is the awareness for the Liberia water and sewer corporation to accept the research that was done, to accept the findings and coming up with systems in place to change some of those things.”

~ PRF KII Respondent, Liberia.

In conclusion, these achievements collectively contributed to a better understanding of and progress in addressing accountability issues within the water sector. The programme's multidimensional impact underscores its significance in advancing water governance and social accountability across East Africa and beyond.

3.4.3. Decolonial Governance

Based on the responses provided by the PMT (Program Management Team) and PRF (Professional Research Fellows) respondents, the following were key emerging thematic issues on whether the programme implementation approach was considered sufficiently decolonial:

- **Mixed Perceptions on Decolonial Approach:** The respondents had mixed opinions regarding whether the programme's implementation approach was sufficiently decolonial. Some believed that it wasn't explicitly designed as a decolonial project, while others saw elements that aligned with decolonization principles.
- **Ground-Up Approach:** Some respondents highlighted that the programme adopted a ground-up approach where research questions were determined by PRFs, and local stakeholders were actively involved in shaping the research agenda. This approach was seen as a positive step toward decolonization. “The research questions were submitted by the PRFs, not predetermined by anybody else. So, it was quite ground up.” ~ PMT Respondent
- **Human Rights-Based Approach:** The programme incorporated a human rights-based approach in its research and implementation. This approach aimed to address issues related to discrimination, equitable distribution of resources, and the outdated colonial-era laws that still governed certain aspects of water management.
- **Equitable Governance:** Efforts were made to ensure that decision-making and leadership within the programme were equitable and not dominated by external partners. African organizations took the lead in grant management and leadership roles.

- **Challenges in Implementation:** While there were intentions to decolonize aspects of the programme, there were challenges related to communication breakdowns, financial management, and the perception of external interference, which affected the equitable nature of decision-making. “There were challenges in communication breakdowns, financial management, and the perception of external interference, affecting equitable decision-making.” ~ PMT Respondent
- **Focus on Transparency and Accountability:** The programme emphasized transparency as an element that enables accountability. By promoting transparency, it aimed to empower communities to voice their concerns and demand accountability from duty bearers.
- **Need for Further Investment:** Respondents identified the need for more investment and research, particularly in addressing issues related to exploitation, pollution, and marginalized communities. Legal backing and support were considered crucial in addressing these challenges. “We really need more support in addressing issues related to exploitation, pollution, and marginalized communities.” ~ PRF Respondent

In summary, while there were efforts to align the programme with decolonization principles, there were challenges and mixed perceptions regarding the extent to which it achieved decolonization. Some elements, such as the ground-up approach and focus on equitable governance, were seen as positive steps, but there were also challenges in implementation that need to be addressed in future phases of the programme.

3.5. Efficiency of the AfW Programme

Efficiency refers to timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the activities – i.e., how well the various activities were transformed into planned results and if the implementation costs could be justified. Efficiency was assessed on the

basis of the following: cost effectiveness of programme implementation; delays in programme’s activities; resource utilization; challenges experienced during implementation; and efficacy of training and capacity building programmes.

3.5.1. Cost Effectiveness of Programme Implementation

During interviews with key informants for the study, there was limited information that could be availed regarding perceived extent of cost effectiveness of the programme implementation. Only response received were from one GAG member, one NAG member, and two members of the PMT. A NAG respondent from Tanzania reported that the programme implementation was cost-effective but noted that budget limitations could have hindered its potential impact. There was an opinion posed that were the budget to be adjusted upwards, the programme could have reached more groups and achieved more substantial results. The GAG respondents expressed uncertainty in assessing the programme’s cost-effectiveness due to their limited involvement in the initial costing of the project. Their lack of direct participation in hosting researchers and fellows affected their ability to provide a definitive evaluation on this metric. The PMT respondents generally considered the programme to be cost-effective, emphasizing that it accomplished a significant amount with a relatively modest budget. However, they also highlighted missed opportunities and challenges that could have further enhanced cost-effectiveness. These challenges included budget allocation issues, the absence of a communication lead, and the need to assist PRFs in improving their writing skills. It was reported that the writing skills’ training and mentorship were meant to just hone or help hone their earlier skills and not to provide basic skills or achieve so much a difference in the programmes’ life time. While they acknowledged cost-effectiveness shortfalls, they suggested areas where improvements could have made the programme even more cost-effective. Additionally, transparency between partners, particularly in financial reporting, was mentioned as an area requiring attention to enhance cost-effectiveness.



3.5.2. Delays in Programme's Activities

Delays, although often unforeseen and unintended, can exert a substantial influence on the overall success and efficiency of programme activities. They manifest as disruptions, setbacks, or deviations from planned timelines, with potential repercussions across various facets of programme implementation. This segment aims to explore the consequences of these delays on programme activities and underscores the significance of proactive strategies for mitigation and management. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of delays, programme managers and stakeholders can better navigate challenges and maintain a course toward achieving their objectives.

The input from the Global Advisory Group (GAG) informants pointed out that delays were experienced during the research preparation phase. These delays stemmed from the diverse backgrounds and work commitments of research fellows. Academic researchers, with more dedicated time, often met deadlines more effectively, while practitioner-researchers faced challenges due to their professional commitments. Achieving timely research outcomes while maintaining academic rigor was identified as a significant challenge.

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“It was very difficult for the PRFs to deliver on time, especially if there's a number of review processes.” ~ GAG Key Informant.

Informants from the National Advisory Group (NAG) in Kenya acknowledged delays, particularly in the drafting of research outputs and subsequent result dissemination. These delays were attributed to variations in workload among principal investigators (PIs) and the number of professional research fellows (PRFs) they oversaw. The need to coordinate activities across multiple stakeholders in different countries also contributed to these delays.

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“One I would say that in terms of getting the draft research outputs, there was a bit of a delay.” ~ NAG Key Informant, Kenya.

Ethiopian NAG informants highlighted a specific delay caused by a PRF's inability to fulfill their research obligations. Despite support efforts, the delay resulted in a decision to request the return of programme funds- which were returned. This delay was attributed to challenges faced by the PRF in effectively managing their workload and was not seen as a fault of the programme's management. The Ethiopian-based PI informant identified various delays related to financial issues, administrative matters, and the intricate design of cross-country research. However, it was noted that, despite these challenges, the programme successfully managed to address and mitigate these delays to a reasonable extent.

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“There were financial issues, administrative issues. And also the designing of the Cross Country research took a lot of time.” ~ PI Key Informant.

Program Management Team (PMT) key informants acknowledged that there were delays in disseminating research findings. These delays were primarily due to the time required to conclude research and coordinate review processes. Furthermore, it was noted that the findings were finalized towards the end of the programme, leaving limited time for dissemination and stakeholder engagement.

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“The dissemination was delayed but delayed because of delay in finalizing the research findings reports.” ~ PMT Key Informant.

The PRFs across the project’s countries shared insights into the nature of delays they experienced during programme activities. These are summarized in Table 4

Table 4: Nature of Delays Reported by Country

Country	Nature of delays reported
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays occurred due to the untimely release of resources for research activities. Responsiveness to project-related queries and report feedback from programme management was lacking. “No response from PASGR when we submitted the report. They acknowledged receipt but did not provide feedback.” ~ PRF Key Informant.
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays were partly attributed to country-specific contexts, including financial procedures and instability. Some stakeholders displayed confusion regarding the research objectives, impacting data collection and understanding of accountability concepts.
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays occurred in data collection and analysis, leading to additional pressure. Disbursement of funds to PRFs faced challenges, and some research deliverables were postponed. PRFs faced difficulties in accessing payments for their work.
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays were observed in project commencement, affecting time and resource allocation. Timeliness of data analysis training was mentioned as an issue. Challenges were faced in obtaining research permits. Delays in project commencement were occasioned by delays in resource allocation
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays were noted in data collection due to difficulty in accessing specific documents. Suggestions were made to revisit research strategies, allocate more resources, and allow for sufficient time for data collection and observation.

3.5.3. Resource Utilization (Time and Finances)

Assessment of resource utilization focused on time and finances. The only responses received were from one GAG member, one NAG member, and two members of the PMT. A NAG respondent from Tanzania reported that time was efficiently utilized considering that the programme was able to apply a mix of in-person and virtual engagements to deliver content to targeted audiences. There was also a suggestion to the effect that finances were effectively utilized, particularly because the programme was led by the private sector and operated within its budget. There was a view that allocation of resources to PRFs and NAGs, was well-costed, but not clear the extent to which the costings were adequate to enable them to sufficiently deliver on their set mandates. The Ethiopian-based NAG respondent highlighted the efficient management of time, with most of the research works done in Ethiopia by the PRFs being completed as per schedule. The PRFs, despite their different competing responsibilities, remained committed and dedicated to utilizing their time effectively.

The PMT respondents offer varied perspectives on time and finances utilization. In Tanzania, they believed that the budget allocation and utilization were well-aligned with programme objectives. They emphasized the importance of integrating findings with other programs, showcasing efficient resource utilization. However, they expressed concerns about transparency in budget cuts and the need for improved communication. In general, the respondents recognize that the programme’s finances were efficiently managed, delivering value for money. However, they highlighted certain instances where better communication and budget allocation could have enhanced efficiency. These include cases of budget cuts, travel expenses, and the need for more transparent communication about financial decisions.

3.5.4. Challenges Experienced During Implementation

The PI informant from Ethiopia highlighted several challenges faced in the programme. Firstly, the institutional aspect of the project posed difficulties as multiple institutions were involved, including PASGR and Water Witness International. This complex institutional structure caused initial challenges but also presented innovative opportunities. The respondent also mentioned challenges related to time constraints and disruptions caused by local context upheavals in Ethiopia. These challenges were a mix of external and internal factors. The respondent noted that communication was both a challenge and an opportunity, emphasizing the need for improved communication strategies. The respondent was of the view that such challenges could have been mitigated by way of enhancing communication protocols among partner institutions, streamlining institutional roles, and developing contingency plans for dealing with external disruptions.

“Some of the challenges were external, some were internal, the institutional aspect, the communication. It was also a challenge...”
~ PI KII Respondent.

According to the PMT key informants, while focusing on financial management, they outlined several challenges faced by the consortium. They expressed difficulty in managing the programme, particularly in obtaining timely responses and detailed budgets from PASGR. This resulted in inconsistent reporting and delays in programme delivery. Additionally, budget allocation issues and shifting timelines created unanticipated complications. The respondents were of the view that such challenges could have been mitigated by way of regular discussions to resolve financial issues, enhance transparency, and establish clear reporting schedules

“I think it’s been a difficult programme to manage... we’ve had to have some challenging conversations with PASGR over not being able to get detailed budgets... we haven’t seen any financial reports...” ~ PMT KII Respondent.

Other challenges raised by the PMT informants were on issues related to communication and decision-making processes. They noted that there was a breakdown in communication regarding decision-making and some of the “international” consortium partners felt that the “local” partners were not adequately engaging in certain aspects of programme management. The respondents were of the view that such challenges could have been mitigated by way of applying a more inclusive approach

to management where all partners could have a chance to air their voices. Regarding financial challenges, there was a feeling by the “local” partner that the “international” partners were overshooting the set expenditure limits. The respondents were of the view that such challenges could have been mitigated by way of closer monitoring of budget allocations to avoid future complications. They defended the project’s transparency and communication but stressed the importance of partners understanding and adhering to project rules.

“The only thing that in my understanding perhaps was not done well was in the engagement of partners at some level of decision making... There were some gaps in that... but the challenge (and other challenges) notwithstanding, could not overshadow the overall programme positive achievements...” ~ PMT KII Respondent

Additionally, the PMT informants outlined challenges stemming from the ambitious nature of the programme. They highlighted the trade-off between control and local ownership, noting that relinquishing some control over research quality was necessary to empower local partners. However, this led to complexities in managing the research process effectively. Another key mention were the challenges related to staff turnover, especially on the PASGR side, which impacted programme accountability, and concerns on the programme meetings often focusing on administration and finances instead of impact and legacy discussions.

The PMT informants also identified timing as a significant challenge, particularly related to PRFs’ time constraints due to their regular job commitments. Budget allocation issues also surfaced, causing complications in fund distribution. The respondent noted that the size of the programme affected government engagement, requiring substantial effort to secure partnerships.

Additionally, communication within the consortium was suboptimal, leading to delays and misunderstandings regarding budgetary changes and reporting schedules. Stress was subjected on the importance of open and transparent communication.

PRF informants from Zimbabwe reported that the major challenge experienced was in the delay in the disbursement of resources from WWI, which led to hurried research implementation to meet project timelines. The delay was attributable to WWI and had to do with some banking challenges. This challenge seemed to be the primary issue encountered. In addition, emphasis was placed on response times, particularly when documents were sent, were critical, and there were delays in getting feedback. This indicated a gap in communication efficiency. Furthermore, concerns were raised about acknowledgment issues, where some participants were

not credited for their contributions during presentations. These issues were perceived as efficiency challenges and could create speculation and negative perceptions.

PRF informants from Ethiopia highlighted several challenges. First, they mentioned instability in the country, which affected data collection and the understanding of accountability due to political sensitivity. Second, budget limitations constrained the scope of research, and obtaining data was challenging, especially concerning accountability and transparency. Third, the lack of available research findings at the country level posed difficulties in referencing existing work on accountability.

PRF informants from Tanzania faced challenges related to delays in obtaining research permits, which significantly affected their timelines and data collection. They also encountered difficulties in coordinating with government officials who had busy schedules. Additionally, they reiterated the importance of direct funds disbursed to researchers and the need for efficient financial management. They also emphasized the need to consider the informal economy in Africa when managing finances

and receipts.

The PRF informant from Liberia highlighted the challenge of collecting information from key actors, especially service providers, who were often reluctant to share sensitive information. This reluctance led to delays and additional efforts in data collection.

PRF informants from Kenya mentioned challenges related to financial management, accountability, and time management. There was a lack of guidance on how to account for research funds, and one of the researchers felt that their organization was not fully engaged in the programme, leading to misconceptions about their motives. Additionally, time management was challenging due to balancing research with other responsibilities.

The PRF respondents were of the view that PRF-specific challenges could have been mitigated by way of applying measures summarized in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Measures that Could have Applied to Mitigate PRF-specific challenges

Mitigation Approach	Brief Description
1. Enhanced Communication and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened communication channels among programme partners to facilitate timely document sharing and feedback, fostering collaboration and morale.
2. Streamlined Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplification of financial processes by directly disbursing research funds to PRFs, reducing bureaucratic delays. Consideration of the informal economy context in Africa when designing financial procedures, allowing flexibility in receipt requirements.
3. Contextualized Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of political and social context considerations into research planning, actively engaging government stakeholders for a smoother research process.
4. Allocated Sufficient Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the research budgets were adequately sized to support comprehensive data collection and analysis.
5. Promoted Research Knowledge Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouragement of the PRFs to disseminate research findings through academic journals and accessible platforms, enhancing knowledge sharing and stimulating further accountability research.
6. Planned for Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and coordination with government officials and key stakeholders well in advance to accommodate their schedules and ensure their active participation in research activities.
7. Built Trust and Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of strategies to instill trust and confidence in key actors, emphasizing the confidentiality of their contributions and the tangible benefits of the research
8. Extended Research Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of extension of research timelines to allow PRFs to effectively balance research with their other responsibilities, improving time management
9. Improved Clarity in Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts should clearly delineate equipment ownership and financial reporting requirements, reducing the potential for misunderstandings
10. Encouraged Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation of PRFs to publish research findings in academic journals, increasing knowledge dissemination and enhancing visibility

In summary, the challenges faced within the programme encompassed institutional complexities, communication breakdowns, budget allocation issues, timing constraints, and the need to balance control and local ownership. Suggestions on ways through which some of these challenges could have been mitigated included enhancing communication channels among programme partners, streamlining financial processes, contextualizing research within the local political and social context, allocating sufficient budgets, and promoting research knowledge sharing through academic journals. Additionally, planning for stakeholder engagement, building trust and confidence, extending research timelines, improving contract clarity, and encouraging publication were advised. These suggestions aim to improve future programme management and contribute to more successful research initiatives. Professional Research Fellows (PRFs) faced challenges related to resource disbursement delays, response times, lack of feedback, acknowledgment issues, political instability, budget constraints, data collection difficulties, and inadequate existing research findings.

3.5.5. Efficacy of Training and Capacity Building Programmes

The programme's effectiveness in providing training and capacity-building opportunities to partners and stakeholders along with access to relevant resources, networks and mentorship was evaluated through the responses of Global Advisory Groups (GAGs), the National Advisory Groups (NAGs), the Project Management Team (PMT) and the Professional Research Fellows (PRFs) from various countries:

Global Advisory Group (GAG)

Key informants drawn from the Global Advisory Group (GAG) were of the view that the programme had been successful in building capacity, particularly for National Advisory Group (NAG) members from the government who possessed expertise in water and sanitation but lacked a deep understanding of accountability and this prompted these members to consider the connections between accountability for water and other institutions such as the auditor's office and parliament. Similarly, GAG key informants mentioned that they primarily remembered capacity-building activities for PRFs, such as a Writeshop and workshops on research design and data collection tools. In contrast, some of the GAG informants mentioned that they did not recall specific training or capacity-building activities for the NAG members and suggested that the programme might have considered NAG members capable

enough to support the Professional Research Fellows (PRFs) without necessarily being trained on accountability for water issues.

National Advisory Group (NAG):

A NAG key informant from Tanzania expressed satisfaction with the programme's effectiveness in providing training and capacity-building opportunities. The informant commented that they had a good platform for discussing accountability for water issues and creating some kind of engagements and mentorship approach. Another NAG key informant from Kenya evaluated the programme's efficiency in providing capacity-building opportunities positively. The key informant elaborated the programme to a big extent provided capacity-building opportunities which included training sessions, such as a workshop held in Arusha, where NAGs and GAGs received training on research areas and analysis. The informant also highlighted the networking opportunities that emerged within the programme.

“Tto me, I think we had good platform for discussing these issues and that also creative kind of engagement and mentorship approach. So, I think it was fine”

~ NAG key informant- Tanzania

Project Management Team (PMT)

PMT key informants acknowledged that the training and mentorship was provided to the PRFs. They cited training that the PRFs were given on Writeshop, data analysis and writing research reports by Sussex University, PASGR and WWI which was very useful to the PRFs in their research work. The key informants also emphasized the need for assessing the capacity levels and gaps among consortium members and expressed the need to create common platforms for resource access and better knowledge sharing. However, another PMT key informant mentioned that there were limited capacity-building opportunities for programme partners and stakeholders which the informant attributed to the impact of COVID-19 on workshops and dissemination events.

“Yes, the PRFs were given training. We had what is called Write Shop that the PRFs were given by from people from university of Sussex and also supported us in data analysis and in writing research reports; that was very useful to the PRFs.”

~ PMT KII Respondent

Professional Research Fellows (PRFs)

The PRFs key informants from Zimbabwe expressed overall satisfaction with the programme's capacity-building efforts. They appreciated that capacity-building was conducted both physically and virtually, providing flexibility. They highly commended the programme's design, especially its training on social accountability and water-related issues. They noted that the programme instilled confidence, built capacity, and guided the development of concepts and projects. They also praised continuous capacity-building, coaching, and the effectiveness of mentors. However, they highlighted an issue with regional PRFs' limited attendance at physical meetings and suggested a need for improvement in this regard.

The PRFs key informants from Ethiopia emphasized and appreciated the significance of capacity-building, mentorship and training provided by Water Witness International and PASGR that was conducted in Arusha. They mentioned that access to research documents and resources, mentorship and support from external investigators were beneficial for their research hence the programme was seen as effective in building capacity in research and accountability-related areas.

For Tanzania, the PRFs key informants lauded the programme's training for introducing them to the concept of accountability, which broadened their perspective. They appreciated the continuous supply of relevant resources including articles and research materials for further reading. Similarly, they highlighted networking opportunities created by the programme, especially through forums where contacts were shared facilitating cross-pollination of knowledge on accountability for water among the PRFs and other relevant programme's stakeholders and partners. However, they indicated variations in mentorship levels between countries and expressed the need for clarification regarding the roles of Principal Investigators (PIs) in the accountability for water programme.

For Liberia, the PRF key informant acknowledged the capacity-building provided during the programme's first phase. The informant highlighted that the programme not only enhanced the PRFs' own capacity but allowed them to train survey teams and provide capacity to other actors in the sector, thereby creating a ripple effect of capacity-building. For Kenya, the PRF key informant indicated a positive perception of the programme's training and capacity-building efforts without providing detailed elaboration.

In summary, the programme seemed to have offered training and capacity-building opportunities, especially for PRFs according to the insights from the four categories of the key informants. However, the extent of capacity-building varied across the groups of key informants. For NAG

and GAG members, some respondents recalled specific activities in regards to training and capacity building while others did not. Majority of PRFs key informants expressed satisfaction with the programme's training and capacity-building opportunities. The PRF key informants highlighted the importance of continuous mentorship, access to resources and networking and mentorship opportunities were also emphasized while some raised concerns about regional disparities in attendance and mentorship. Some key informants from NAG and GAG suggested the need for common platforms to enhance resource access and sharing hence promoting self-learning and cross-country collaboration.

3.6. Sustainability and Scalability of the AfW Programme

The AfW programme had made effort to address the sustainability and scalability of its interventions and outcomes through several strategies as outlined below:

3.6.1. Sustainability and scalability through local empowering

Local Embedding of the programme for Sustainability

The programme focused on embedding its initiatives in local NGOs, training institutions and government agencies. This strategy aimed to ensure that knowledge and practices remained within the country and were not externally driven for the respective institutions to carry on with accountability for water practices beyond the project end. The PRFs from Zimbabwe noted that the programme was embedded in institutions hence sustainability in the sense that accountability for water programme is housed in an institution which will take it to the next level. Similarly, the PRFs noted that funds which were given to these institutions also gave these institutions room for their workers to be able to do the work and developed confidence in accountability for water work hence contributing towards sustainability. The PRF in Tanzania cited sustainability of the accountability for water in terms of the project being able to create researchers who will scale up and continue researching in accountability for water issues. Likewise, another key informant reflected,

“I think it's the effort to embed this in local NGOs and training institutions. So that thing that was a huge achievement by itself... It was not externally driven.” ~ GAG key informant



Capacity Building for Sustainability

The lead organizations involved in the programme were from the Global South. This approach aimed to build local capacity and ensure that learning and findings remained within the region. Similarly, the PRF from Ethiopia noted that the project ensured sustainability in terms of impacting knowledge and skills on PRFs concerning research on accountability for water programme in the first phase of the project which will be used in future similar programs in respective countries and regions. Similarly, another key informant said,

“In terms of capacity, the lead organizations are all from the Global South... learning and findings will stay in the country.” ~ GAG key informant

Youth Engagement for Sustainability

“The programme engaged young people, including those from water and sanitation clubs in schools, with the expectation that they would play a role in sustaining the initiatives. “We’ve been able also to train people... the youngsters have been aware... we feel that sustainability will be there.” ~NAG key informant, Tanzania

3.6.2. Sustainability through Partners

Partnerships and Networking for Scalability

The programme effectively leveraged partnerships and networks, bringing together various sector players. These partnerships provided resources and materials to support the programme and created a community of practice for scalability. The PRFs from Tanzania highlighted having closer engagement and relationship with particular stakeholders for instance the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Authority as a strength in ensuring sustainability and scalability of programme’s realized results

Continuation Efforts

As at the time of this evaluation, the second phase had already been approved and entered its preparatory phase. The second phase is aimed to sustain the efforts and ensure that the programme’s impacts realized from this first phase are continued.

Long-Term Integration of Research Findings

A PMT key informant noted that sustainability builds on how you link the research into your strategic mandate, how the research basically inform your strategy is a long-term thinking of the organization and the long-term

commitment of the organization. Partner organizations are encouraged to integrate research findings into their long-term strategies, making accountability for water a part of their ongoing agenda. The programme had non-binding agreement with the PRF host organizations that they would anchor accountability for water in their internal strategic plans as far as resources and other conditions permitted. Whether this was achieved or not achieved was an issue that needed further follow up.

Alignment with Existing and Future Strategies

The PMT informants highlighted that the programme is closely aligned with partner organizations’ strategies, ensuring that it remains a long-term commitment regardless of the programme’s phases.

“Accountability for water is part and parcel of our strategy, the previous strategy, but also has coincided with the current strategy...” ~ PMT key informant

Complementarity with Existing Interventions

The PMT informants indicated that partners for the accountability for water programme are encouraged to complement their existing and future interventions with the research findings, creating sustainability through ongoing projects. “Sustainability is not all about how you define or integrate findings into specific interventions of your own organization, but also thinking around how do you design future programs with regard to that”.

3.6.3. Scalability through Partners

Expanding Impact to Other Countries

PMT members indicated that efforts are underway to scale up the programme’s impact to other countries, engaging national and global stakeholders to address water security issues and governance challenges.

Mainstreaming Accountability Issues

The PMT informants highlighted the programme’s aim to mainstream accountability issues in both national and global practices, involving key stakeholders to ensure they are captured in policies and implementation for the purpose of sustainability. “The sustainability element that the project tries to achieve is to bring together global and national stakeholders to a collective awareness of accountability issues...” ~ PMT KII Respondent

3.6.4. Leveraging Partnerships, Resources and Networks

Attracting Diverse Partners

The PMT informants noted that partnerships are being formed with various stakeholders to address water security and other critical issues, attracting the attention of donors and partners.

Engaging Key Organizations

The PMT informants identified partnerships with influential organizations like the World Bank and Sanitation and Water for All have been established to scale lessons and secure funding for continuity. The PRFs from Kenya and Ethiopia indicated that the sustainability and scalability of the accountability for water programme are dependent on engaging government and stakeholders. They noted that the formation of water action groups in the community, who can continue collecting data and monitor how accountability is being carried out in the community is pivotal in sustainability of accountability for water

“The World Bank and USAID representatives were also very much interested about partnering with other institutions...” ~ PRF KII Respondent, Ethiopia

Growing Demand for Accountability

The PMTs noted that opportunities for sustainability lie in the growing demand for accountability in the water sector, with NGOs and government institutions increasingly focusing on this issue. “In this country now, accountability at the area of water and other areas is coming to be really an issue, more NGOs and the government institutions are picking on accountability.”

In summary, this subsection of the report has indicated that the programme made a considerable level of effort to strategically integrate with partner organizations to ensure sustainability, aligning with their long-term strategies, and complementing existing interventions. Scalability efforts involve expanding the programme’s impact to other countries and mainstreaming accountability issues. Partnerships, resources, and networks play a crucial role in supporting sustainability and scalability, despite challenges in research design and findings. Opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability. Challenges in research design, the need for continuous advocacy, limited resources, the relatively low prioritization of water accountability in project proposals and donor agendas are acknowledged, but opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability.

3.7. Analysis of Cross-cutting Issues

3.7.1. Alignment of the PRF Approach to the Programme Objectives

Alignment at Country Level:

One recurring theme across the responses is the alignment of the PRFs concept with programme objectives at the country level. GAG respondents generally expressed positive views about this alignment. They highlighted that at the country level, the alignment was good, leading to stronger commitment to monitoring progress and providing advisory inputs. It was evident that the PRFs were seen as contributing to the achievement of programme objectives by focusing on accountability issues related to water governance within specific countries. This alignment was deemed effective in fostering collaboration between PRFs and local stakeholders to address practical issues. However, a challenge mentioned was the capacity and time constraints faced by PRFs, which affected their contributions.

Alignment at the Global Level:

At the global level, alignment between the PRFs concept and programme objectives faced some challenges. GAG respondents noted that virtual interactions hindered the effectiveness of alignment. Lack of regular face-to-face meetings impacted engagement and swift feedback mechanisms. It was evident that the geographical dispersion of stakeholders posed challenges to global alignment. Nevertheless, the strong alignment at the country level compensated for these limitations.

Alignment with NAG Objectives

NAG respondents, particularly from Tanzania, perceived a high level of alignment between the PRF concept and their objectives. They pointed out that the PRF concept significantly contributed to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) six, specifically regarding water accessibility and sanitation. This alignment was attributed to the PRFs’ rigorous appraisal process and guidance in refining research areas. The PRFs’ work was seen as addressing accountability issues within water and sanitation projects through the provision of insights, suggestions, and recommendations. However, it was acknowledged that achieving 100% accountability in some projects might remain a challenge.

Alignment with Global Advisory and NAG Objectives:

Respondents from Kenya also emphasized the alignment of the PRF concept with both the Global Advisory Group (GAG) and NAG objectives. They noted that the PRF concept ensured alignment by guiding the selection of research areas and topics. The rigorous appraisal process contributed to achieving the programme’s objectives effectively.

Alignment with Local Objectives:

In Ethiopia, the NAG's role was to support the PRFs by providing broad guidance and policies. This alignment ensured that the PRFs focused on practical issues relevant to the country's water sector. The NAG's role was not overly technical but aimed to align PRF research with the country's practical challenges.

Alignment with Programme Legacy and Knowledge Generation:

PRFs from Zimbabwe recognized the alignment between their research objectives and the broader programme objectives. They focused on accountability mechanisms affecting water service provision in their country. The PRF concept was also seen as fostering knowledge generation and networking among stakeholders.

Overall view on Alignment to Programmes Objectives:

PRFs from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania expressed positive views about the alignment between the PRF concept and programme objectives. They highlighted the capacity-building aspect and how it contributed to addressing accountability issues in their respective countries. The diverse research areas covered by PRFs were seen as enriching the programme's objectives, considering the unique challenges faced by each country.

In conclusion, the alignment of the PRFs concept with programme objectives was generally viewed positively, with a strong emphasis on capacity-building, knowledge generation, and addressing accountability issues. While challenges were noted, the PRF concept was considered effective in achieving its intended goals. To enhance alignment further, improvements in the delivery model and support mechanisms were suggested. Overall, the PRFs concept played a vital role in contributing to the Accountability for Water programme's objectives at both the local and global levels.

3.7.2. Best Experience and Challenges Faced by PRF under the AfW Programme

Best Experiences of PRFs in the AfW Programme

The best experiences shared by PRFs in the AfW programme are multifaceted and underscore the value of their participation in this initiative.

Enhanced Confidence and Expertise: Many PRFs highlighted how the programme significantly improved their confidence and expertise in addressing social accountability in the water sector. This newfound confidence empowered them to speak authoritatively on water-related issues. They noted that the programme equipped them with valuable information, skills, and techniques related to social accountability in the water sector, making them recognized as experts in this domain. For instance, PRF respondents from Zimbabwe emphasized how they were now regarded as social accountability gurus, and organizations sought their expertise.

“I think this programme really equipped myself and my institution. We are now regarded as a social accountability gurus. Anyone who wants their organization to be trained on social accountability, they will just contact the Combined Harare Association. I think that's the best part. That's what I can say” ~ PRF KII Respondent, Zimbabwe

Exposure to Best Practices: Another common theme among PRFs was the exposure to best practices in the water sector. This exposure extended to new learning, networking, and knowledge exchange with international professionals. PRFs reported that the programme facilitated connections with other institutions and practitioners globally, enriching their understanding of water-related concepts and solutions. This exposure not only benefited individuals but also strengthened their institutions' ability to collaborate with global partners.

Networking and Collaboration: PRFs expressed appreciation for the networking opportunities the programme provided. They spoke of interactions with fellow PRFs and professionals in the water sector, which led to collaborations, technical working groups, and mutual support. These connections were considered invaluable, as they fostered a sense of community and encouraged knowledge sharing among participants.

Capacity Building: The programme was recognized for its role in capacity building. PRFs reported acquiring new skills and practical knowledge in conducting participatory action research for policy advocacy in the water sector. This capacity building was not only seen as a personal gain but also as a benefit to the sector itself, as PRFs were better equipped to address pressing water-related issues in their respective countries.

Challenges Faced by PRFs in the AfW Programme

While the AfW programme offered numerous benefits, PRFs also encountered several challenges during their participation. These are further outlined below:

- a. **Public Concerns and Limited Funds:** PRFs mentioned that they faced backlash from certain quarters due to lack of full understanding on what the research on “accountability issues on water” was all about, especially by public sector agencies. These concerns may have arisen due to the innovative nature of the programme or misconceptions about its objectives. Additionally, limited funds during implementation posed a significant challenge. Adequate funding is crucial for research projects, and delays or shortages in funding can hinder progress.
- b. **Balancing Work and Program Commitments:** Balancing programme commitments with regular office work proved to be a significant challenge for some PRFs. Many had to manage their roles as PRFs alongside their existing job responsibilities, which could be demanding and time-consuming.
- c. **Ownership and Scaling of Work:** Some PRFs expressed difficulties in scaling up the work they had done due to concerns related to the ownership of content produced. Ensuring that research outcomes have a lasting impact can be challenging when navigating issues related to intellectual property or shared ownership.
- d. **Regulatory and Permit Challenges:** PRFs faced regulatory hurdles when seeking research permits from relevant authorities. Obtaining permissions for research in various localities was a time-consuming and sometimes unanticipated process, requiring physical visits to government offices.
- e. **Budgetary and Funding Delays:** Delays in disbursing research funds were noted as a significant challenge. The lengthy process of receiving funds and reconciling receipts led to disruptions in project timelines and sometimes discouraged PRFs.

In conclusion, the AfW programme was a valuable experience for PRFs, offering numerous benefits such as increased confidence, exposure to best practices, networking opportunities, and capacity building. While challenges were encountered, they can be addressed through improved programme management and support. Overall, the programme has made significant strides in enhancing social accountability in the water sector across multiple countries, and these experiences can inform future phases and similar initiatives.

3.7.3. Program Influence on Addressing Accountability Issues and Confidence Building in Research Design and Delivery as an Output of the AfW Program.

Influence on Addressing Accountability Issues

Participants overwhelmingly conveyed that their involvement in the AfW programme had significantly enhanced their ability to address accountability issues. One common theme that emerged is the boost in confidence. Participants reported feeling more comfortable, effective, and informed when discussing accountability issues related to water governance. They noted being better equipped with knowledge and skills to address these concerns.

The programme did not only improve participants’ fundamental understanding of accountability but has also made them more aware of the importance of accountability from an evidence-based approach. Several respondents emphasized the shift from blaming the government for water-related challenges to recognizing that accountability involves efforts from all stakeholders, including citizens, civil society, donors, and the private sector.

The programme’s impact on the ability to design and deliver research has been substantial. Participants have integrated theories of change into their research designs and utilized qualitative data techniques learned during the programme. They emphasized the importance of participatory research methods and their role in generating evidence for advocacy purposes. Participants from different countries noted that these skills have made them more effective and serious in addressing accountability issues.

Impact on Confidence and Ability in Research Design and Delivery

The AfW programme has not only influenced participants in addressing accountability issues but has also significantly impacted their confidence and ability to design and deliver research. Participants from various countries shared their experiences in this regard. Firstly, participants reported feeling more confident in their research capabilities. The programme has exposed them to different research approaches and techniques, expanding their knowledge base. Some participants even pursued certification courses related to qualitative analysis, which they attribute to the programme’s influence. They now approach research more rigorously and skillfully. Secondly, the programme has prompted participants to explore new ways of conducting research. It has introduced them to innovative approaches, enhancing their research skills and broadening their horizons. These new approaches have not only improved their confidence but also their research

quality. Lastly, participants have been encouraged to apply their research skills beyond the water sector. They mentioned utilizing these skills in other areas, such as sanitation, waste management, and political accountability. This demonstrates the programme's transferability and its ability to empower individuals to tackle accountability challenges in various contexts.

In conclusion, the AfW programme proved to be a transformative experience for its participants, not only influencing their approach to addressing accountability issues but also boosting their confidence and abilities in research design and delivery. The programme's emphasis on evidence-based approaches, participatory research methods, and skills development has equipped participants to be more effective advocates for water governance and accountability in their respective regions. This positive impact has far-reaching effects on the water sector and beyond, as programme alumni continue to apply their newfound skills and knowledge in their work.

3.7.4. Outstanding PRF Research Findings

In the pursuit of a more accountable and sustainable water governance system, the Accountability for Water (AfW) programme yielded an array of insightful findings. These findings, originating from diverse regions and research participants, highlight critical cross-cutting issues and underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges within the water sector.

- i. **Grassroots Water Governance:** One of the central findings that emerge from the AfW programme revolves around the significance of grassroots water governance. This finding emphasizes the pivotal role of local communities in water management and decision-making processes. It underscores the need to empower these communities, granting them the agency to manage their water resources effectively. Moreover, it highlights the potential for participatory approaches in water resource management (WRM) and the importance of community involvement as a cornerstone of sustainable water governance.
- ii. **Resource Conversion from Waste:** A noteworthy revelation from the PRFs research underscores the transformative potential of waste. This finding suggests that every waste has the potential to be converted into a resource, offering opportunities for recycling, resource recovery, and waste-to-energy initiatives. This discovery aligns with broader sustainability goals and emphasizes the importance of waste management practices that minimize environmental impact and harness the value within waste streams.

- iii. **Policy Implementation Discrepancy:** The disconnect between well-crafted governmental policies and their actual implementation emerges as a recurring theme within the PRF research findings and the cross-country studies. Despite the existence of robust policies in place, there is a pervasive challenge in translating these policies into tangible actions and outcomes. This raises questions about the effectiveness of policy implementation mechanisms and the need for greater focus on execution and policy monitoring to bridge this gap.
- iv. **Citizen Voice and Accountability:** The research finding underscored the potency of citizen voice when demanding accountability in the water sector. It showcases the transformative power of engaged and informed communities in holding duty bearers accountable. This finding is a testament to the importance of civic engagement and underscores the significance of platforms that enable citizens to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights effectively.
- v. **Gender Power Relations and Water Services:** The intricate interplay of gender power relations and its impact on decision-making, water services provision, and access to water is a paramount discovery. The research calls for inclusiveness in decision-making processes, emphasizing the need to challenge traditional norms that limit women's participation and authority in these domains. A good example of such a norm is limiting the number of women who are part of the community-based water supply management entities; or proportion of women holding key executive positions in Water User Associations (WUAs) or Water Resource User Associations (WRUAs).
- vi. **Accountability for Water Pollution:** The most significant revelation from the research, according to one respondent, centers on accountability for water pollution. It highlights the imperative of creating enabling environments that range from political support to empowering duty bearers to respond to water pollution complaints from vulnerable communities. This finding underscores the holistic nature of addressing water pollution issues and the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- vii. **Donor Focus on Financial Accountability:** In a cross-country perspective, the research sheds light on the predominant focus of major donors, such as the World Bank, on financial aspects of water projects. While financial accountability is crucial, this finding emphasizes the necessity of balancing financial considerations with community participation and effective management of water facilities post-construction. It calls for greater attention to monitoring and accountability in the

post-investment phase of water projects.

- viii. **Weak Accountability and Institutional Coordination:** Across board, there were highlights on the detrimental impact of weak accountability structures and the lack of coordination among institutions responsible for water services provision. This lack of coherence hampers service improvement and makes it challenging for citizens to demand accountability effectively. The research underscores the critical role of harmonization and coordination among institutions to enhance water governance.
- ix. **Lack of Consultation in Investments:** In Ethiopia, a significant research discovery points to the adverse consequences of community exclusion in investment planning, particularly concerning water permits granted to private investors. This omission leads to uncertainties and challenges in project success. A finding from one of the PRFs highlighted the importance of involving community members, local governments, and regional entities in investment decisions, hence promoting transparency and accountability.
- x. **Role of Traditional Norms:** PRF findings from Tanzania predominantly illuminated the obstructive role of traditional norms and cultural beliefs in limiting women's participation in water resource management and decision-making processes. It stresses the need to address these deeply ingrained norms to enable women to actively engage in water governance and demand accountability. Nonetheless, even though the issue was predominantly featured in Tanzania, it is good to point that the challenge cuts across the countries despite significant attempts being made [(e.g., say in Ethiopia, particularly because of Ethiopian Social Accountability Program (ESAP))].
- xi. **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** An essential aspect of accountability highlighted in the research is the clarity of roles and responsibilities. The research findings underline the importance of defining who should do what in the realm of water governance, providing a foundation for accountability mechanisms to function effectively.
- xii. **Standards and Violations:** In Liberia, the research

findings reveal violations of established standards, such as the African benchmark for water management, leading to the overemployment of personnel and financial inefficiencies. These violations disrupt accountability and sustainability and necessitate adherence to set standards to ensure efficient water service provision.

- xiii. **Unutilized Accountability Tools:** An intriguing revelation in Kenya revolves around the underutilization of available accountability tools (e.g., in Kenya, right to access to safe, clean water is a constitutionally-guaranteed human right).¹ Despite the existence of such tools, communities often remain unaware of them, emphasizing the need for greater awareness and accessibility to these instruments for effective service delivery and accountability.

In conclusion, the AfW programme was able to unearth a wealth of invaluable research findings that traverse geographic boundaries and offer holistic insights into water governance challenges. These findings collectively call for a more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable approach to water resource management. They highlight the imperative of community involvement, gender inclusivity, effective policy implementation, and the alignment of financial considerations with the needs of local communities. Addressing these cross-cutting issues is fundamental to achieving equitable access to clean water and fostering responsible stewardship of this precious resource.

¹ Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya: “Every person in Kenya has the right to clean and safe water in adequate quantities and the right to reasonable standards of sanitation.”

3.7.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Programme's Innovative Arrangements

The programme adopted an innovative approach to delivery which aimed to provide ownership of the research to practitioners and sectors stakeholders. This was through: the PRF approach; the National Advisory Groups (the NAGs); the Global Advisory Groups (the GAGs); and the Programme Management Team lead by PASGR and Water Witness International. These are summarized in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses of Innovative Arrangements

Innovative Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
The GAG Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They played a crucial role in addressing weak water policies, programs, and laws. • While their initial intended formal oversight role was rejected due to contractual limitations, they actively supported the programme by attending meetings and providing practical advice and guidance. • Their contributions were instrumental in driving the programme towards success, particularly in securing financial and non-financial partnerships for the second phase. • The GAGs also facilitated knowledge sharing through face-to-face and virtual meetings and provided emotional support to country-level programme staff. • Their diverse composition, including members from various sectors and regions, allowed for a broad spectrum of perspectives, contributing to the programme's overall effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weaknesses of the GAGs primarily stemmed from their reluctance to assume a formal oversight role due to their lack of contractual standing in the programme. This resulted in a less active oversight body than initially envisioned. However, these limitations were compensated for by their advisory role, which remained valuable.
The NAG Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They played a pivotal role in improving water management and promoting accountability at the national level. • NAGs were effective in engaging with government entities, fostering closer government engagement for ultimate ownership of the programme. • They created a cohort of engaged partners in key regions, ensuring that research findings were relevant to stakeholders and influential sector partners. • NAGs provided mentorship, support, and guidance, and their involvement boosted the legitimacy and attendance of government meetings. • The strengths of the NAGs also included regular meetings, the review of programme work, timely feedback, and a positive intention to advocate for change. • Members of the NAGs were highly committed, professionally appropriate, and held influential positions in their respective organizations, making their contributions impactful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weaknesses of the NAGs included challenges related to scheduling meetings that accommodated the busy schedules of high-ranking members. • Coordination efforts were required to ensure active participation. • Additionally, some NAG members lacked familiarity with the concept of water accountability, and their interest in the subject varied. • The sustainability of NAGs also raised concerns, particularly in terms of how their roles would be maintained beyond the research phase. In 2022, Ethiopia had drafted a strategy (ToR) to guide on sustainability of the NAGs (e.g., secretariat and its running costs), but the same was not finalized. Status for Kenya and Tanzania towards developing a sustainability framework for NAGs remained unclear.

Innovative Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multi-disciplinary composition of the National Advisory Groups and consortium members was another strength. It allowed for a diverse range of perspectives, including those from civil society organizations, government entities, NGOs, and academic institutions, fostering a holistic approach to addressing water governance challenges. The diversity among NAG members, including academics, researchers, development practitioners, gender experts, and water experts, enriched the group's perspectives and effectiveness in addressing accountability issues 	
The PMT structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PMT, led by PASGR and Water Witness International, exhibited several strengths. It displayed resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite facing changes in staff and potential disruptions, the team managed to adapt and successfully deliver online training in Arusha, which demonstrated their ability to navigate difficulties. The division of responsibilities among various institutions within the consortium was a notable strength. By not centralizing all functions in one institution, they ensured a balanced approach to programme management, mitigating the risk of concentrating too much power in a single entity. Furthermore, the PMT's extensive reach across 26 African countries, facilitated by PASGR's Pan African network, enabled equitable access and interaction with national institutions. This inclusivity fostered advocacy and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at both the national and global levels. Finally, despite some challenges, the PMT managed to maintain good working relationships among all consortium partners, ensuring a professional and collaborative atmosphere for achieving project goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One significant weakness in the PMT structure was budget management issues. There were instances of overspending by consortium partners, which had to be addressed to keep the programme within budget. Although these challenges were managed, they did create some friction within the consortium. Additionally, leadership changes within the programme management team, like the transition of programme leads, introduced some instability, and affected the overall management and outlook of the project.

Innovative Approach

The PRF approach

Strengths

- They brought essential research skills to the table, producing valuable fieldwork, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys.
- Their ability to generate useful insights through grounded research design was a significant asset.
- Moreover, the PRFs' affiliations with local water sector institutions ensured that accountability issues became integrated into daily work routines. This contributed to the sustainability and institutionalization of water accountability practices at the local level.
- Additionally, the PRFs' commitment and motivation, along with their capacity-building activities, not only enhanced their research skills but also contributed to their respective institutions' research capacity and the broader goal of promoting water accountability.

Weaknesses

- The PRFs faced challenges in terms of analyzing and writing up their research, particularly for those who did not come from academic backgrounds.
- Some academic PRFs tended to produce overly lengthy reports, while all PRFs struggled to complete their research within required deadlines while juggling their regular responsibilities.
- Another weakness was the limited linkage with their host institutions, which impacted their ability to conduct research effectively.
- Dependence on National Research Coordinators (NRC) and Principal Investigators (PI) for guidance also slowed down research progress in some of the countries.
- The selection process for PRFs was crucial, and in some cases, the commitment and dedication of PRFs varied. It was noted that improvements could be made in selecting PRFs who were more committed to the programme's goals. It emerged that selection of PRFs was severely impacted by the onset of COVID-19 pandemic (people didn't have bandwidth to engage and delay meant previously lined up partners didn't engage).
- Furthermore, having PRFs largely drawn from academic backgrounds led to a lack of practical experience from development practitioners, potentially limiting the scope of research insights.
- Lastly, low ability to meet analysis and writing deadlines was a shared weakness among the PRFs. Overcommitment alongside their regular work responsibilities resulted in a backlog of work towards the end of the project.



SECTION IV:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

The purpose of the end line evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the Accountability for Water Program. The evaluation sought to provide feedback on the processes, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the Accountability for water phase I programme, and make recommendations for future interventions. The specific purpose of the evaluation was threefold: a) To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Accountability for Water programmatic approach and draw out practical implications for future programme work, producing a qualitative evaluation report. b) To evaluate the extent to which the Accountability for Water structure and activities successfully implemented decolonial governance and implementation, producing a qualitative governance report and recommendations for phase II; and c) To produce guidance and programme documentation for phase II of the programme; specifically: a 'way of working' partnership guidance documentation to ensure that findings from this evaluation are implemented; recommendations of 'most valued' elements from phase I are incorporated in phase II, and recommendations of elements that should be reconsidered; and a monitoring, evaluation and learning outline plan for phase II, including data collection and responsibilities, in collaboration with consortium partners.

The AfW end-line Evaluation applied an outcome harvesting approach which involved generation of primary data using a mix of quantitative (stakeholder survey) and qualitative methods (key informants' interviews and review of data from secondary sources). Qualitative data was collected via key informant interviews (KIIs) and desk review. Quantitative data was gathered through an email survey approach, using a stakeholder survey questionnaire. The survey targeted the AfW stakeholders. As at close of data collection on 20th September, 2023; a total of 45 fully filled e-form questionnaires had been received back to the submission server. The data from e-survey was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Exploratory analysis was first performed to ensure that the output was free from the effects of outliers and the effect of missing responses. Descriptive statistics were the data analysis techniques applied on the survey data. For qualitative data, the transcribed texts were transferred to NVIVO 12 qualitative analysis software and analyzed. Following coding of the transcripts, a full list of themes was made available for categorization within a hierarchical framework of main and sub-themes.

On relevance of the programme, the PMT respondents collectively emphasized the programme's successes in confirming the importance of accountability while acknowledging the need for further practical solutions. They acknowledged that the programme's strength in terms of bringing higher-level learning through partner collaboration was limited. There were only a few regional events for knowledge exchange. They identified a need for improvement in this aspect to enhance collaboration among partners.

The programme effectively addressed community dynamics related to water accountability through research, training, and awareness-building activities. It identified specific challenges faced by communities, government bodies, and service providers and provided recommendations for improvement. The NAG key informants highlighted the programme's role in opening the eyes of duty bearers and enhancing their understanding of accountability in water-related issues. The PMT key informants emphasized the need for defining better incentives for duty bearers and the importance of involving various stakeholders in accountability efforts (For instance, in Ethiopia, training events, rewarding best performers, professional freedom etc were applied as incentives for duty bearers to deliver their accountability). The PRFs key informants shared their experiences and observations, emphasizing the impact of the programme in triggering government responses, addressing state capture, and enhancing transparency and accountability at different levels of governance.

Sustainability and enabling environment for accountability remains a challenge, and it is recognized that further work is needed, particularly in terms of incentivizing duty bearers and empowering communities. The insights shared by the respondents underscore the importance of ongoing dialogue, capacity building, and a commitment to accountability in the water sector. In conclusion, the Accountability for Water programme laid the foundation for accountability in the water sector, and its continued efforts and partnerships hold promise for a more accountable and sustainable future for water resources management.

On outreach and uptake of research findings, the programme organized webinars, meetings, and presentations to involve stakeholders in research planning and the review of research findings. However, the PMT respondent expressed uncertainty about the programme's effectiveness in addressing the sector's needs and priorities, awaiting feedback from this programme evaluation. The programme contributed to the water governance and WASH sector in Kenya, Tanzania, Liberia, and Ethiopia by generating evidence, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, promoting community involvement, and raising awareness about accountability and governance issues. These efforts aimed to address the sector's needs and priorities and foster positive changes in policy and practice. The emphasis was on selecting the right stakeholders, improving accountability within national programs, addressing pollution and health risks, and ensuring continuous feedback and involvement of key stakeholders in the programme's activities.

On effectiveness, it was evident from the findings that the project's efforts in knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building had a substantial and multifaceted impact on the promotion of accountability for water. It contributed to the development of skills, inspired future researchers and practitioners, and actively engaged with stakeholders at various levels, leaving a legacy in the field of water accountability. Besides, the project's achievements represent substantial progress towards sustainable change in strengthening accountability for water. It has not only produced valuable knowledge but has also effectively shared it with a wide range of stakeholders. Moreover, it has inspired a new generation of researchers and practitioners committed to advancing water accountability, ensuring that the legacy of this project will continue to drive positive change in the water sector for years to come.

Finally, the programme made a considerable level of effort to strategically integrate with partner organizations to ensure sustainability, aligning with their long-term strategies, and complementing existing interventions. Scalability efforts involve expanding the programme's impact to other countries and mainstreaming accountability issues. Partnerships, resources, and networks play a crucial role in supporting sustainability and scalability, despite challenges in research design and findings. Opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability. Challenges in research design, the need for continuous advocacy, limited resources, the relatively low prioritization of water accountability in project proposals and donor agendas are acknowledged, but opportunities exist in the growing demand for water accountability.

4.2. Recommendations

The success of any programme partially relies on the valuable insights and experiences of its participants. In the case of the accountability for water governance programme, the recommendations gathered from the people involved provide a clear path forward for the next phase of this important initiative. These recommendations have been thoughtfully shared by those who have directly contributed to the programme. They cover a wide range of areas, from general strategies to specific changes and the continuation of successful practices.

4.2.1. General Recommendations:

The following recommendations cover overall issues that may need improvement during future phases of the programme:

- **Effectiveness of Meetings:** Respondents emphasized the importance of mixing physical and online meetings. They recommend incorporating both formats, perhaps on a quarterly or biannual basis, to encourage better interaction among stakeholders from different institutions. This would ensure that certain activities are more effective when conducted in person.
- **Government Commitment:** It was suggested that countries participating in programs should secure commitments and allocate resources from duty bearers, including governments for making programs more relevant and impactful within the water sector.
- **Budget Transparency:** Respondents highlighted the need for better budget planning and transparency at the outset of programs. They recommended that budgets should be agreed upon collectively, with each partner managing their allocated budget. Quarterly group meetings to discuss budgets were also suggested to enhance transparency and communication among partners.
- **Open Challenge Culture:** Effective communication and fostering a culture where individuals can openly challenge ideas without feeling criticized were recommended. This open challenge culture is seen to improve processes and outcomes within the programme.
- **Prompt Publication of Research Findings:** It was recommended that research findings should be published promptly as part of research deliverables. This ensures that data does not become outdated and that information reaches a wider audience, thereby maximizing the impact of the research.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is need to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework from the beginning of the programme. This will allow for the continuous assessment of programme activities and outcomes, enabling timely adjustments and improvements. For example, the weekly meetings between PASGR, WWI and NRC were used as regular monitoring mechanisms during phase I, and can be carried forward to phase two as a best practice.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** There is need to encourage collaboration with other sectors, such as health, education, and environmental protection, to address interconnected issues. Water governance often intersects with these sectors, and coordinated efforts can yield more comprehensive solutions. One of the findings of the research from Ethiopia is that this inter-sectoral collaboration, though improving, is still wanting and needs further measures, including making collaboration commitments to be accounted for rather than depend on the volition of member organizations in planned and agreed cooperation or collaboration.
- **Community Engagement:** There is need to place a strong emphasis on community engagement and involvement in decision-making processes related to water governance. Empower local communities to have a voice and participate actively in shaping policies and practices.
- **Data Accessibility:** There is need to ensure that research data collected during the programme is easily accessible and open to the public. This promotes transparency and allows other researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders to build upon the findings.
- **Technological Innovation:** There is need to embrace technological innovations, such as digital tools and data analytics, to enhance data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This can streamline research processes and increase the programme's impact.
- **Long-Term Impact Assessment:** There is need to implement a mechanism for assessing the long-term impact of the programme on water governance and accountability. This could involve periodic reviews or external evaluations to track progress and lessons learned.

4.2.2. Recommendations on Changes for the Next Phase:

The following recommendations arise from aspects of the project's implementation that did not work well that ought to be remedied or improved in future phases of the programme:

- **Operational Memorandum of Understanding:** To avert likely conflicts, communication related challenges, and perceptions of budgetary misappropriations amongst the PMT members and consortium partners, there is need to formulate a memorandum of understanding during the formative stages of the programme so that the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for each consortium partner are clearly spelt out.
- **Common Learning Platforms:** The PRF key informants highlighted the importance of continuous mentorship, access to resources and networking and mentorship opportunities were also emphasized while some raised concerns about regional disparities in attendance and mentorship. Some key informants from NAG and GAG suggested the need for common platforms to enhance resource access and sharing hence promoting self-learning and cross-country collaboration.
- **Ownership and Scaling of Work:** Some PRFs expressed difficulties in scaling up the work they had done due to concerns related to the ownership of content produced. Ensuring that research outcomes have a lasting impact can be challenging when navigating issues related to intellectual property or shared ownership. There is need therefore of establishing a framework of taking up full or partial ownership of research materials that would otherwise be deemed to infringe on intellectual property rights of third-party entities.
- **Stronger Action Focus:** Respondents suggested that in the next phase, there should be a stronger emphasis on the action component of action research. They noted that the first phase primarily focused on research and recommended a more balanced approach in the future. This would involve translating research findings into practical actions and solutions.
- **Advocacy Plan Implementation:** There was a call for the implementation of advocacy plans developed during the research phase. Implementing these plans is seen as a way to strengthen and sustain accountability in the water sector, ensuring that research leads to real-world change.

- **Regional Programme Offices:** Respondents proposed the establishment of regional offices for accountability in the water sector. These offices would facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among institutions in different regions, contributing to a stronger community of practice and better coordination of efforts.
- **Knowledge Sharing Platforms:** Creating platforms for sharing best practices and enabling knowledge exchange between institutions in different countries was recommended. Additionally, respondents suggested sustained coaching and mentoring to support ongoing improvement in accountability efforts. This may involve a few major water NGOs, donors and government from whom the NAG members for phase 2 may be drawn from.
- **Resource Mobilization:** To address resource limitations, the need for resource mobilization mechanisms was highlighted. Finding ways to secure more substantial resources is crucial for making a significant impact in the sector, especially in resource-constrained environments.
- **Risk Assessment:** There is need to conduct a thorough risk assessment at the outset of the next phase to identify potential challenges and develop mitigation strategies. This proactive approach can help prevent disruptions and setbacks.
- **Innovative Financing:** There is need to explore innovative financing mechanisms for sustaining the programme. This could involve partnerships with impact investors, private sector organizations, or philanthropic foundations to secure long-term funding.
- **Inclusive Research Design:** There is need to ensure that the research design is inclusive of marginalized and vulnerable populations. Consider their unique needs and challenges in water governance to promote equity and social justice. It seems like this was not adequately met in Phase I.
- **Policy Integration:** Advocate for the integration of water governance and accountability principles and practices into national and regional policies and legislation. This can help institutionalize good practices and ensure long-term impact. Indeed, most challenging aspect across countries is getting the laws (policies, regulations, standards, etc.) applied.

4.2.3. Recommendations on Best Practices that Require Further Enhancement

The recommendations point to aspects of the programme that worked well that may require further enhancements or scale up in the future phases:

- **Accountability Initiatives:** Respondents expressed gratitude for the accountability initiatives and stressed the importance of their continuation. These initiatives empower citizens to demand their rights and responsibilities, contributing to improved services and accountability in the sector.
- **Citizen Awareness:** The success of programs in heightened awareness among citizens and providing them with a platform to express their concerns and experiences was a best practice that requires further attention in future phases. Continuing to empower communities to voice their issues is seen as a positive aspect to carry forward into the next phase.
- **Effective Partnerships:** Several respondents appreciated the partnerships and collaboration with international and government partners. They emphasized the importance of such collaborations in implementing programs effectively and recommended their continuation.
- **Impact on Policy:** Respondents highlighted their role in contributing to programme design plans carried out by governments and international partners based on the insights and learning they had acquired from the AfW programme. They viewed this as a positive impact on policy design and implementation in their respective countries, underscoring the need to continue such contributions.
- **Knowledge Sharing Beyond Borders:** Expand the programme's knowledge-sharing efforts beyond national borders. Encourage cross-country exchanges of experiences and best practices to foster a regional community of practitioners.
- **Advocacy Campaigns:** Organize advocacy campaigns at the regional and international levels to raise awareness about the importance of water governance and accountability. Engage with global stakeholders to drive policy changes and support.
- **Cross-Generational Learning:** Facilitate cross-generational learning within the programme. Encourage experienced practitioners to mentor younger researchers and leaders, ensuring the transfer of knowledge and expertise.
- **Capacity Building:** Continue to invest in capacity building, not only for researchers but also for community leaders, policymakers, and government officials. Building local expertise is essential for the programme's sustainability.



ANNEXES

Annex 1: Study Tools

A-1. Interview Guide for PMT and Consortium Partner Members

A-2. Interview Guide for Professional Research Fellows

A-3. Interview Guide for Members of GAG and NAG

A-4. Self-filling Outcome Harvesting Matrix

Annex 2: Data Collection Approaches

A.2.1. Qualitative approaches

Qualitative data was collected via key informant interviews (KIIs) and desk review [inclusive of:

- Water Witness International Full Proposal Narrative- Planning Grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.
- Water and Accountability Thinkshop in Tanzania- Event summary and evaluation report.
- Water Accountability Grant Proposal.
- Technical progress reports- Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.
- Professional Research Fellow Reports]. The Key informant interviews (KIIs) targeted stakeholders, programme staff, government staff, local and international partners. As at close of data collection on 20th September, 2023; the number of KIIs administered is as specified in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Distribution of Sampled Key Informants

Target Respondent	Kenya	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Zimbabwe	Liberia	Total
<i>Professional Research Fellows</i>	2	2	3	1	1	9
<i>National Research Coordinators</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1
<i>PIs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>PMT & Consortium Partners</i>	PMT / Consortium Partner					Total
	Water Witness International (UK)					4
	Shahidi wa Maji					2
	Water Witness International (Ethiopia)					2
	PASGR					1
<i>Global Advisory Group Representatives (GAGs)</i>	3					3
<i>National Advisory Group Representatives (NAGs)</i>	6					6

A.2.2. Quantitative Approaches

Quantitative data was gathered through an email survey approach, using a stakeholder survey questionnaire. The survey targeted the AfW stakeholders. As at close of data collection on 20th September, 2023; a total of 45 fully filled e-formed had been received back to the submission server.



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