SUSTAINABILITY INDEX TOOL (SIT)

In 2009 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Rotary International entered into a strategic partnership. The Sustainable Index Tool (SIT) was developed in 2012 during the first evaluation of the projects conducted under the partnership in three countries: Ghana, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic and was further refined in 2013. It is unique among the tools in that it includes a publically available 'product' which guides users through the assessment steps. The cost of applying the SIT is approximately $50,000 per country.

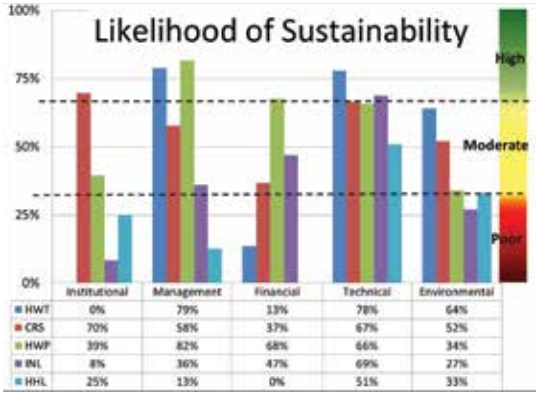
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Target: USAID, implementing partners, local stakeholders.

Objective: Assess the sustainability of the services provided by WASH project interventions.

Areas: Institutional, management, financial, technical and environmental.

Indicators: Designed for each factor with sub-questions, but no weighting is introduced into the scoring.



Methodology: A statistically significant number of households per intervention type is determined and selected at random within each community assessed. Data collection includes: site inspections, household and key informant interviews, focus group discussions at various levels (service provision, district, national), review of policy documents and technical standards and norms. The analysis is carried out separately for each intervention type and responses are aggregated for each indicator and subsequently averaged for each of the five areas.

Outputs: Presented as aggregate scores and graphically for the programme and district level for each of the different WASH interventions; can also be expressed by intervention type.

Tool format and language: PDF and Excel files; English.

Resource link: http://www.washplus.org/rotary-usaid

IMPACT AND FINDINGS

Following the pilot assessment USAID decided to invest additional funds to develop a guidance document for the SIT process. The tool has also been applied to two project in Tanzania and Kenya and will be used in assessments in at least four other countries in Africa. Although the tool has been applied five times, it is too early to tell the extent to which these results have impacted programme planning or operations.

Strengths	Limitations
Balanced assessment of sustainability considering key issues at all levels (community, district, and national)	Demands 'contextualisation' of indicators and sub-questions to local context
Quantitative and rigorous assessment based on statistically significant sampling approaches	Donor tool with lack of ownership of the tool by national and local governments
Includes both urban and rural interventions	Complexity, large number of indicators and cost to implement may be a barrier
High potential for scalability and encouraging signs of uptake by USAID	