

WATER FOR LIFE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

The Water for Life Sustainability Rating is a framework designed to help donor organisations identify high performing WASH organisations to fund. It was pilot tested in Honduras in 2011 on a NGO with 20 years of experience implementing WASH interventions. The pilot assessment was conducted as part of an 'Accountability Forum' facilitated by Improve International that brought together WASH NGOs working in Honduras. Feedback from the Forum participants was utilized to refine the framework criteria and methods. Based on the pilot test it is estimated that ratings using the Water for Life framework will cost between \$US 15,000-20,000 per evaluation and require one week of field data collection and three to five months total including preparation and reporting.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Target: Donors that need to identify organisations to fund.

Objective: Assess organisational capacity for implementing sustainable projects.

Areas: Organisational structure, water services, sanitation, hygiene education, project design and construction, water system long-term O&M, water source protection, community commitment & management.

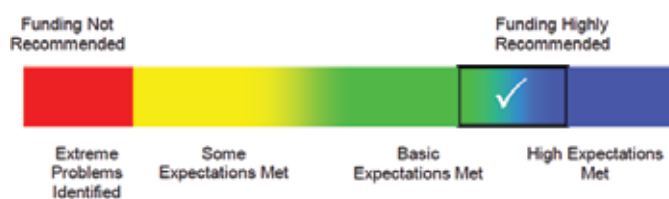
Indicators: There are 22 indicators; each with a series of 2-11 sub-indicator questions. A total of 101 questions were used in the pilot assessment in Honduras.

Methodology: Judgement sampling is used to collect anecdotal evidence in a case study approach. For the pilot assessment 4 communities were randomly selected out of a total of 159 water projects and between 2-16 households were visited in each community (35 households total). Information provided by the implementing organisation that is the focus of the evaluation is triangulated with data obtained through interviews with water boards, random household visits, community focus groups, and infrastructure inspections. Each yes/no question has a designation of 'basic' or 'high', and based upon the responses for each an overall score is determined qualitatively. A quantitative score can be determined by assigning numerical values to the Likert categories and calculating a percentage.

Outputs: A numerical score is given for each organisation evaluated and a four-colour scheme graphic is provided for each indicator as well as for the overall score.

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

Reference link: <http://improveinternational.wordpress.com/programs/accountabilityforum/>



IMPACT AND FINDINGS

The output of the pilot assessment in Honduras was a list of key successes and challenges. An example of a challenge uncovered was the financial capacity of rural communities to cover the replacement costs for aging systems. As a result of the pilot assessment the implementing organisation has begun a loan programme to help communities finance rehabilitation costs. The first rehabilitation project is set to take place and the terms require the community to repay the loan in one year at a competitive interest rate.

Strengths	Limitations
It is independent, using the same criteria across programmes, allowing for comparison	Organisations must submit to an assessment and may be reluctant to do so.
Rapid assessment (1 week in the field)	Large number of question which would require contextualisation (e.g. adjusting benchmarks, thresholds, etc).
	Case study approach may have limited scalability.