

Call For Research Concept Notes From On-Going Graduate Students Based In Kenya:

Scenarios for Optimal Operationalization of Sanitation Levies for Sanitation Service Improvements in Urban Areas (OSL Project)

Background:

PREF4WASH is a global community coordinated by the knowledge brokerage section of the Sandec Department at Eawag. The community fosters research collaborations that link researchers, practitioners, and funders to provide timely solutions to water sanitation and hygiene challenges.

In Kenya, the PREF4WASH—Kenya community focuses on bringing together water utilities, the private sector, universities, government agencies, and NGOs to produce timely research that benefits all parties and provides needed solutions in the water and sanitation sector.

The community's activities are currently spearheaded by Nakuru Water and Sanitation Services Company (NAWASSCO), Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), Meru University of Science and Technology, and close collaborations with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, Strathmore University, Egerton University, and the Water Sector Trust Fund, with support from Eawag.

The task

In line with the community's ideals and the current Research Agenda for NAWASSCO, we invite graduate students to submit research concept notes on investigating scenarios for optimal operationalization of sanitation levies for sanitation service improvements in urban areas in light of climate change adaptation. The student(s) will also develop a methodology for implementation that can be adopted by other utilities in Kenya and beyond.

NAWASSCO as a case study will be used to understand the following specifically in light of climate change impacts on water and sanitation service provision:

1. What strategies have select African water utilities used to operationalize sanitation levies to improve sanitation service provision in light of climate change impacts?
2. What organizational barriers and risks do water utilities face when utilizing levies for climate change adaptation interventions related to sanitation?
3. What organizational preparedness strategies can NAWASSCO implement to anticipate and counter barriers and risks to utilizing the sanitation levy identified above?
4. What sanitation interventions present opportunities for investment in NAWASSCO's coverage area, and in what priority?
5. How can sanitation levies be leveraged to promote climate-resilient sanitation infrastructure?

Content of concept notes:

The concept note should comprise the following sections:

1. A concise introduction and problem statement
2. The research's overall and specific objectives
3. A well-thought-out methods section
4. A work plan

Deliverables:

1. A co-supervised draft master's thesis that will potentially lead to a co-authored journal publication (co-supervision/co-authorship by the University supervisor, NAWASSCO, FINISH Mondial staff, and an Eawag researcher)
2. A methodology for optimal operationalization of ring-fenced levies to improve sanitation provision services in light of climate change, including organizational preparedness (10 pages max), including:
 - Organizational preparedness
 - Identifying and prioritizing areas of intervention

Period of assignment:

This assignment is planned to take four months.

The proposed research assignment is designed to be completed within four months, ensuring adequate time for rigorous data collection, analysis, and development of a comprehensive implementation methodology.

Station:

The graduate student will be based at NAWASSCO offices in Nakuru and will frequently travel to the company's urban and peri-urban coverage areas.

Qualifications and requirements:

1. Applicants must be enrolled in a master's program at a recognized university in Kenya and have a research focus on water, sanitation, or a related field.
2. Demonstrate a strong understanding of the impacts of extreme weather and climate events on urban sanitation service provision, considering both organizational and technical perspectives.
3. Commit to further developing the submitted research concept in collaboration with your university supervisor and the PREF4WASH team.
4. Be willing to co-author and publish research findings in peer-reviewed journals to contribute to academic and policy discourse on sustainable urban sanitation.

Application documents to submit:

1. A concept note, **five pages maximum**, in response to the needs of this concept note
2. A CV, **2 pages maximum**, highlighting the competencies relevant to this assignment
3. A motivation letter of **not more than one page** highlighting your suitability
4. A letter of support and intent to collaborate from your university supervisor

Apply before 30 March 2025 by sending the documents to
researchanddevelopment@nakuruwater.co.ke and cc pref4wash@gmail.com

Expected support:

Finish Mondial Kenya and NAWASSCO, in collaboration with Eawag-Sandec, will provide financial and in-kind support for the research position. This includes:

- Expert mentorship from industry professionals to guide the research process.
- Access to workspace and research facilities to enhance productivity.
- A stipend to support research-related expenses.
- Partial logistical support to facilitate fieldwork and data collection.

Additionally, the selected student will collaborate closely with their university supervisor, ensuring the research aligns with academic and industry standards while contributing to practical sanitation solutions.