



# Translating Projects to Policies: Lessons Learned Applying the FW-WASH Advocacy Strategy Methodology in South Africa and Uganda



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**AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP**

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COVER PHOTO: ©Zola Mbuyana/ANDM

CAPTION: CSA's Thando Msomi hosts a site visit with district government representatives and members of the local water board.

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Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group

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# ACRONYMS

ABCG	Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group
ANDM	Alfred Nzo District Municipality
CI	Conservation International
CSA	Conservation South Africa
DWSCC	District Water, Supply, and Sanitation Council
FW-WASH	Integrated Freshwater Conservation and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
IDMS	Infrastructure Development and Municipal Services
IRC	Netherlands based WASH think-and-do-tank
JGI	The Jane Goodall Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UCPP	uMzimvubu Catchment Partnership Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the linkages between water, natural resources and poverty across sub-Saharan Africa, the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group<sup>1</sup> (ABCG) is committed to bringing together conservation, health, and development actors to improve conservation and human well-being outcomes. Sustainable freshwater resources and safe drinking water projects depend on sustainable watershed conservation measures combined with safe, resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and processes to protect against climate change and other threats.

Advocacy plays an important role in creating and sustaining momentum for progress on conservation and human health policies. While multisector initiatives have been gaining attention in recent years, there are still many policy platforms that fail to recognize the critical links between human and ecosystem health (Walter *et al.* 2020).

Building on more than five years of ABCG investments in field-based activities linking freshwater ecosystem conservation with WASH planning and infrastructure maintenance, ABCG partners Conservation International (CI), CI's local affiliate Conservation South Africa (CSA), and the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) partnered with IRC to further this integrated work to protect biodiversity. IRC's extensive, global WASH policy and practice experience assisted CI, CSA and JGI to collaboratively develop the Freshwater Conservation and WASH Advocacy Strategy Workshop: Facilitator's Guide.



*Stakeholders in Masindi district, Uganda pretest tools developed for FW-WASH integration ©Isabirye Edirisa/JGI*

Using the Facilitator's Guide, the ABCG partners then developed policy targets to further support their work in the Mzimvubu Watershed in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and the forest of northern Uganda in local villages in the Albertine rift region of Hoima and Masindi Districts, also known as the Budongo-Bugoma Corridor. Each team developed advocacy strategies for promoting integrated water policies. In July 2019, CSA and JGI held workshops in South Africa and Uganda, with IRC technical guidance and drafted advocacy strategies for implementation with partners. Although the country contexts differed, both country programs focused on forging cross-sectoral mechanisms for improved decision-making at the policy level.

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<sup>1</sup> Members include African Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, The Jane Goodall Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Resources Institute, and World Wildlife Fund.

CSA's team advocacy strategy goal was for the **Alfred Nzo District Municipality Infrastructure Department to institutionalize a coordinated and integrated planning process for water resources by 2022**. The JGI-Uganda's team advocacy strategy goal was for the **District Local Government in the Albertine Rift to establish a coordinating forum, ensuring freshwater conservation is integrated into water supply, sanitation, and hygiene by 2021**.

This report provides lessons learned garnered during the twelve-month period of implementation of the advocacy strategies developed for South Africa and Uganda. Based on key informant interviews with in-country implementation teams and workshop facilitators, the authors identified the following seven overarching lessons from the implementation of the advocacy strategies in Uganda and South Africa:

- The advocacy process requires flexibility and openness to emerging opportunities
- Advocacy leads should understand the formal and informal decision-making structures
- Reaching the target audience requires careful preparation
- Evidence and data bolster the advocacy process effectiveness
- The need to implement can manifest itself at any moment
- Constantly revisit the strategies, adjust, and get better, and
- Work with multisector partners to reach your goals.

These lessons underscore the importance of carefully crafting clear, useful, and creative messaging as the fundamental first step to improving conservation and health policies. African conservation, health, and development practitioners are encouraged to unite and collectively design messaging and activities to urge donors, policymakers, and colleagues to safeguard African biodiversity and human health.

# I. INTRODUCTION

Water, poverty, and environment are interconnected. The poor are the most vulnerable to environmental risk factors such as unsafe water and climate change (Cardona *et al.* 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, millions of people still lack access to necessities like clean water and sanitation.

Though conservation efforts more traditionally intersect with water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) at the rural or community level, the rapid growth of cities, increased water variability related to climate change, and water stress have increased attention on the upstream watersheds that filter and regulate urban water supplies (Edmond *et al.* 2013).

By linking freshwater conservation and WASH, Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) partners aim to reduce watershed degradation and pollution to increase the health of watershed ecosystems and species. This will help conserve freshwater ecosystems and improve efficient use of dwindling water resources due to climate change, leading to increased access to clean water and improved human health (ABCG 2019).

## Box 1. ABCG Overview

ABCG's vision is of an African continent where natural resources and biodiversity are securely conserved in balance with sustained human livelihoods.

### ABCG's MISSION

ABCG's mission is to tackle complex and changing conservation challenges by catalyzing and strengthening collaboration and bringing the best resources from across a continuum of conservation organizations to effectively and efficiently work towards this vision of Africa.

### ABCG's OBJECTIVES

- Promote networking, awareness, information sharing and experience among conservation organization working in Africa.
- Encourage information exchange and idea sharing with African partners.
- Identify and analyze critical and/or emerging conservation issues in Africa as priorities for both future NGO action and donor support.
- Synthesize collective lessons from field activities and share them with a broader multi-sector community in the United States and Africa.

*1 ABCG overview*

## I.1 ABCG'S ROLE WITH WASH, HEALTHY SOCIETIES AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

Since 2015, ABCG has provided methodological guidance to advance a vision that incorporates health outcomes into biodiversity conservation and sustainable development (See Box 1). ABCG promotes integrated freshwater conservation and WASH (FW-WASH) through its integration guidelines and monitoring and evaluation framework as tools for practitioners to use to reduce the impacts of infrastructure and pollution on freshwater ecosystems (ABCG 2020).

In the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, Conservation South Africa (CSA), member of the Conservation International (CI) network, has been implementing their WASH in Watersheds Project in the Mzimvubu Watershed. The headwaters of the Mzimvubu River supplies water to over one million

people in the Eastern Cape Province. The watershed is comprised of more than two million hectares and provides a range of ecosystem services related to the provision of food, water, and livelihoods. For the past five years, CSA – with technical assistance from CI – piloted the ABCG Freshwater Conservation and WASH Integration Guidelines and the M&E Framework in four sites within the Alfred Nzo District Municipality (ANDM.) ANDM is a key partner in this project, as the government body with the mandate to ensure water supply and adequate sanitation facilities for its citizens and governs the use of the region’s extensive natural resources. United under a holistic vision, these partners have been working together to successfully integrate these disciplines and achieve both health and conservation outcomes. Past activities of the partnership have included: spring restoration and protection, capacity building on water quality monitoring, collection of water quality data and continued maintenance of infrastructure to protect natural springs; and peer-to-peer sanitation best practices awareness campaigns. They also conducted participatory stream and river health assessments, accredited training programs on wetland delineation and restoration and donga (deep gullies) rehabilitation, and surface water harvesting and policymaker education on climate change and WASH (Cardona *et al.* 2018).



*CSA is working alongside local community champions to secure the headwaters of uMzimvubu © CI/Patrick Nease*

In Uganda, the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) has been a leader in designing and implementing community conservation programs, which incorporate public health, education, and livelihood programs that have a positive impact on local and regional environmental issues. Since 2015, JGI has piloted WASH activities in local villages in the Albertine Rift region of Hoima and Masindi Districts, also known as the Budongo-Bugoma Corridor - a forest region that is a key habitat for chimpanzee. JGI works with the Hoima and Masindi district councils, local institutions, and schools to reach young people with awareness raising and education campaigns on water conservation and improved sanitation, in addition to renovating protected streams and constructing community rainwater harvest points in schools. Access to potable water and increased hygiene awareness reduces illness and death from disease, leading to improved health, poverty reduction and socio-economic development (Cardona *et al.* 2018). Involving the entire community and the government directly in these projects ensures that communities and the ecosystems in which they live continue to be vibrant and healthy. The establishment of Water User Management Committees in communities and support for the enactment of by-laws for the district to protect water resources covering the target area have helped achieve project goals.

Building on the momentum created by successful FW-WASH demonstration models, CSA, CI and JGI saw a need to translate these on-the-ground successes into policy action. This activity enabled the project teams to scale up their work through influencing key stakeholders and local government to adopt FW-

WASH best practices through the creation of appropriate policies that addressed funding or planning challenges (ABCG 2019).

## I.2 SOUTH AFRICA AND UGANDA ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Advocacy<sup>2</sup> plays a central role in creating and sustaining momentum for progress on conservation and human health policies. While multisectoral initiatives have been gaining attention in recent years, there are still many policy platforms that fail to recognize the critical links between human and ecosystem health. This includes comprehensive water policy that links freshwater ecosystem conservation with WASH planning and infrastructure maintenance. Advocacy is a critical step in enabling FW-WASH management and must be closely tied to on-going stakeholder engagement and field implementation of freshwater management strategies (Walter *et al.*, 2020).

In 2019, CI contracted IRC, a Dutch-based WASH non-governmental organization (NGO) with extensive expertise in WASH advocacy, to adapt their advocacy strategy planning materials to a FW-WASH project context. The Freshwater Conservation and WASH Advocacy Strategy Workshop Facilitator’s Guide (Walters *et al.* 2020) was collaboratively developed for practitioners to guide the development of an advocacy strategy, messaging, and activities to urge donors, policy makers and other stakeholders to unite and join forces to safeguard health through conservation and WASH investments. The Facilitator’s Guide is accompanied by four appendices with supporting documentation to guide facilitators and practitioners through the development of an effective advocacy strategy through the four-day workshop.

IRC conducted advocacy trainings for project teams in the United States, Uganda, and South Africa. The trainings introduced key advocacy concepts and provided the rationale for the important role advocacy and influence play in advancing freshwater conservation and WASH. Advocacy efforts should consider national and sub-national level goals made possible through changes in policies, budgets, or planning practices.

CSA applied the advocacy methodology to their collaboration with the ANDM of South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province. JGI piloted the methodology in local villages in the Albertine Rift region of Hoima and Masindi Districts, in the Budongo-Bugoma Corridor. Each workshop produced an early draft of the site-specific strategies which the teams refined and vetted with partners in government.

The South Africa workshop included three CSA staff members: Alice Barlow-Zambodla, Thando Msomi and Caroline Rose. Joyce Loza, Chairperson of the Mzimvubu Catchment Partnership Programme (UCPP) and Conservation Specialist for the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Programme represented CSA’s field level partnerships. At the end of the training, Joyce said “It was empowering to be a part of this workshop. It’s now clearer how this work aligns with the UCPP and the methodology is something that can be useful beyond CSA’s application of it in this workshop”. Elynn Walter (IRC), Evita Rosenberg (IRC), and Colleen Sorto (CI) facilitated the workshop. After much debate,

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<sup>2</sup> Defined as the process of strategically managing and sharing knowledge to change and/or influence policies and practices that affect people’s lives (Walter *et al.* 2020).

the team’s chosen advocacy goal was: “The ANDM Infrastructure Department institutionalizes a coordinated and integrated planning process for water resources by 2022”.

Following the workshop in South Africa, the first critical milestone was giving a high-level presentation on the benefits of an integrated planning process for water resources to the ANDM Infrastructure Development and Municipal Services (IDMS) Standing Committee. Following some delays, this meeting was scheduled for the day before the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown went into effect, and a decision was made to take the opportunity CSA proposed. This is the only Department within the municipality that deals with water services (water and sanitation) and Environmental Management. IDMS must approve and give the mandate for ANDM to adopt the integrated FW-WASH approach CSA promoted in their advocacy strategy.



*CSA staff sharing ideas for achieving the advocacy strategy goal at the July 2019 workshop © CI/C Sorto*

The presentation to the IDMS Standing Committee created an enabling environment for decision-makers within ANDM to begin understanding and adopting the proposed cost-effective, and sustainable methods of achieving water provision mandate, with a low environmental impact. This increased understanding paved the way to create new streams of revenue for equipment, materials, and technical support, after CSA facilitated site visits with key ANDM officials.

In Uganda, six members of the JGI Uganda programmatic team participated in the training: Peter Apell, Osman Amulla, Robert Atugonza, Timothy Akugizibwe, Tomas Acidri, and Joseph Semuyaba. Methodius Mukhwana, the African Wildlife Foundation’s Program Officer also joined the training. The workshop was facilitated by Elynn Walter (IRC) and Stella Mercurio (JGI). The team also selected a goal related to integrated planning. The Uganda strategy goal was: “By 2021, District Local Governments in the Albertine Rift will have a coordinating forum to ensure freshwater conservation is integrated into water supply, sanitation, and hygiene”.

Following the advocacy workshop, JGI conducted multiple engagement meetings with the technical, administrative, and political leaders as well as with NGOs/Community-based organizations within the Masindi District Local Government that comprises the District Water, Supply, and Sanitation Council (DWSCC). The team identified three advocates to champion FW-WASH and conservation in the district. They included the Senior Environment Officer, Water Officer Masindi, and the Chairperson for Natural Resources, Technical Works, and Social Services Committee (a district councilor). A key outcome was the package of tools for integrating environmental conservation into WASH at the Masindi District level, following the January 2020 workshop to develop and approve the tools. The next step was presenting the tools to the DWSCCs for review and thereafter to the council for adoption. The Council also resolved to conduct bi-annual water coordination meetings. The Sectoral Committee approved the tools adopted by the DWSSC with a few changes and that Council has developed penalties to be levied on staff who

implement projects without undergoing FW conservation screening. The result was a district level mandate for FW-WASH, mechanisms for coordination, and tools to facilitate the delivery of water projects that include both WASH and environmental conservation.

## II. CAPTURING LESSONS LEARNED

In line with ABCG’s mission of shared learning and knowledge exchange, the ABCG FW-WASH task developed a set of questions designed to distill insights on the advocacy process with the in-country team members (See Appendix A). The authors developed a different set of questions geared towards the workshop facilitators and coauthors of the advocacy guide. These questions were also designed as a tool to guide a conversation. In-country team members and facilitators were presented with their respective questions for review a week prior to the interview.

The interviews were conducted through a virtual format and ranged from 30 min to 45 min. Interviews were conducted in a conversational question-answer format. At the start of the interview, participants were reminded that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the questions were simply a tool to guide the conversation. The interviewer took notes throughout the interview process and the interview was recorded with the consent of the participant to ensure accuracy.

Following the interviews, the ABCG team analyzed the notes and recordings and identified important themes and main ideas. The lessons learned presented in this report reflect recurring themes and ideas compiled from all the interviews.

## III. LESSONS LEARNED

### 3.1 THE ADVOCACY PROCESS REQUIRES FLEXIBILITY AND OPENNESS TO EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

According to the Facilitator’s Guide, activities in the advocacy workshop are designed to be sequential. In practice, it is important to identify when the timing is right and the windows of opportunity that will help advance the goal. Understanding the audience is key to identifying opportunities. Activities need to be conducted with the idea that there is always someone listening. There is a thin line between advocacy and action, and often the distinction is a matter of having the right elements and people in place to move from advocating to implementation.

The sudden need to contain the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the critical need for clean water in rural areas. COVID-19 is an example of an unprecedented situation that turned out to be beneficial in catalyzing the implementation of FW-WASH in South Africa. The critical need to provide sanitation

services to rural communities presented the CSA team with an opportunity to respond to ANDM decision-makers, who reached out for support. That sudden window of opportunity was followed by a quick response to support the municipality from the South Africa team.

The Uganda team mapped out a series of sequential activities designed to achieve specific objectives. The team engaged with a group of technically skilled individuals from different disciplines (*e.g.*, Engineering, Natural Resource Management). At this stage of the process stakeholders requested to go beyond the literature and see examples of the project firsthand. The team responded by incorporating into the plan a series of field visits, which had been originally envisioned for later in the process. In this instance field visits to the project sites by the technically skilled individuals turned out to be highly beneficial activity to advance the advocacy goal.

The advocacy plan sets the course, but it is imperative to remain flexible with the implementation order of the activities.

Adjusting the strategies is dependent on the context of the situation.

In the Uganda example, advancing to a later activity was crucial per the request of the stakeholders. Being familiar with the background of individuals can help determine the order of the activities. For example, in Uganda, the technical training of the stakeholders provided a physical example of the project to help the group better conceptualize the project.

#### *Success requires practitioners to trust in the advocacy process*

The advocacy strategies are meant to guide the practitioner through a sequential process. However, throughout the process practitioners will have to adjust the execution of activities. Adjusting the order of activities can cause other activities to be ignored. The process is not linear, it is important to keep in mind the fundamental elements at every point in the process. The process ensures that change is embedded at the policy level. Success of the overarching goals requires practitioners to trust in the advocacy process they developed. Adjusting the order of activities still requires important or key prior steps to be completed. The process is designed to ensure the overarching goals yield long-term results by establishing them within governance systems. Constantly revisiting the advocacy strategies is a crucial step to ensuring long-term results.

## **BOX 2. UNPRECEDENTED CIRCUMSTANCES: COVID-19**

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 disrupted everyday life around the globe. All the countries where ABCG works implemented measures restricting travel and restricting public meetings and other events that bring people together in groups where the virus can be easily spread (ABCG 2020.) Starting in March 2020, ABCG FW-WASH working group members encountered challenges in continuing activities, both in the US and in the country programs in South Africa and Uganda. The ABCG FW-WASH working group remained active and engaged in numerous thought leadership discussions to advance the working group objectives, including the August 2020 launch of the Advocacy Guide through a virtual dialogue. While the field activities were delayed, the increased awareness worldwide of the importance of proper handwashing and hygiene to prevent virus transmission has increased the visibility of this work. Over time, the project teams adjusted and reprogrammed some activities considering the new reality of cautious implementation and monitoring and evaluation of activities.

*2 Unprecedented Circumstances: COVID-19*

## 3.2 ADVOCACY LEADS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

### *A person's reputation and notoriety matter*

Choosing the correct person to convey the message carries immense weight. The person chosen to carry the message is responsible for conveying a positive personal and professional reputation. Established previous relationships can also support efforts in gaining access to influential individuals and decision-makers. The decision-maker needs to be convinced of the validity of the arguments. Speaking from a stance of experience can drive a message home. A more important factor is ensuring the decision-maker associates the person advocating and their work with positive connotations. The first engagement with the decision-maker should not be the first time they have heard of the work. Showcasing positive aspects of the work prior to engaging ensures the decision-maker has some level of familiarity with the project.

Both programs built upon established relationships with government actors. In South Africa, CSA began implementation of their advocacy strategy with a well-established record of collaboration with ANDM officials, especially related to climate change and natural resource management. In Uganda there was already a baseline track record established as the JGI team had already been working in partnership with the district on other ventures. There was a previous relationship established with a healthy collaborative record. Previous work with pilot studies was important to build even more trust and an entry point. The previous relationship also helped readily identify champions within the teams with whom JGI was communicating. These relationships and a previous track record of collaboration helped amplify the team's voice and advocate within the partner organization.

### *The tone and framing of the message can generate support*

The framing of the advocacy request or pitch will vary depending on the audience for the messaging. The framing of the pitch should change depending on the audience. A pitch to a politician will be different than that for a technical expert.

It is important to identify the concerns and interests that motivate the decision-makers and audience for the pitch. For example, it would be unwise to use the biodiversity and conservation avenue with politicians who have limited background in these topics and whose concerns are on other topics. Rather, in this case it is important to identify that motivator and pitch the project through the stance of providing fresh water to communities through cost effective and efficient means. Using a pitch focused on biodiversity benefits should be used if the decision-maker has

### **BOX 3. GENDER DYNAMICS AND ADVOCACY**

ABCG recognizes that women play critical land and natural resource management roles. Minorities and disadvantaged groups are also integral to local conservation constituencies. However, these roles are typically unrecognized or undervalued. Therefore, the role of these groups is especially important to consider in the construction of sustainable conservation strategies. For the FW-WASH advocacy activities, the teams incorporated basic gender considerations into their advocacy plans and implementation (ABCG 2020). During the implementation phase of the pilots, both CSA and JGI had conducted gender analyses which highlighted that, despite geographic and cultural differences, gender plays a significant role in successful conservation and human health (Cardona *et al.* 2017). Future efforts are recommended to incorporate gender-sensitive indicators to measure the extent and in what ways the integrated FW-WASH policies may contribute to gender equality and reducing gaps between males/females and empowering women.

*3 Gender Dynamics and Advocacy*

prior knowledge on the importance of biodiversity or has a special interest in biodiversity and conservation. The pitch will change depending on your audience. Some municipalities already have policies that incorporate conservation, others do not.

### 3.3 REACHING THE TARGET AUDIENCE REQUIRES CAREFUL PREPARATION

The Facilitator's Guide provides the overarching steps to develop the advocacy strategy in broad terms, acknowledging that each country and target area cultural context and norms will be different. As mentioned above in the lesson about having skilled advocates who understand the culturally accepted policymaking process, it is critical to have a solid understanding of the **target audience's interests, positions, and needs**. Identifying champions among decision-makers and understanding their relative power and abilities helps drive the process.

Based on analysis and research of the advocacy target, advocates can increase their comfort and effectiveness in connecting meaningfully with decision-makers on common important areas of interest. During the South Africa and Uganda experiences, staff recognized the utility of regularly cultivating **working relationships** from previous activities, building on previous working relationships, and reinforcing interests and commitments.

This includes the importance of knowing and following the **hierarchy** of decision-makers (policymaking bodies), procedures, and paperwork that must be submitted for government authorities and recognizing formal and informal communications channels. According to the JGI team, their success with the FW-WASH policy process spurred them to routinely identify the decision-makers and influencers throughout their program work.

For the South Africa team, it was important for both the advocacy lead and team to understand how different systems work. When engaging with municipalities, traditional leaders, and politicians, the advocacy lead needs to know how to adjust accordingly. Not understanding the adjustment can easily lead to an offense. Small gestures, dress code, how a person greets and introduces themselves all contribute to the stakeholders' perspective. In many cases not knowing the appropriate norms can be the decisive factor if the message will be received effectively or not.

The participatory nature of the training and workshops allowed the teams to define clear goals to tackle. Success is also dependent on harnessing the skills already present in a team and ensuring that everyone has the required tools to fulfil their respective roles in the advocacy strategy.



*Considerations of interests, positions, and needs began early at the July 2019 Uganda workshop. © JGI/Stella Mercurio*

### **3.4 EVIDENCE AND DATA BOLSTER THE ADVOCACY PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS**

Presenting solid evidence and reputable data are two of the most important factors in the advocacy process. Having solid supporting evidence goes beyond relationship building and cordiality with decision-makers. Both CSA and JGI advocacy teams had experience in the field and their solid examples of the success was crucial in carrying the advocacy message through all channels of decision-making. With fact-based, reputable data and solid evidence, the teams' messages were strengthened.

It is important to present evidence in a variety of different forms that reflect the audience's learning style or preferred means of communication. In some cases, stakeholders would like to review literature, in other cases they would like to physically see the projects. The teams were prepared with literature, videos, testimonials, and project sites that articulated the benefits of implementing FW-WASH. Making use of a variety of different data sources was an important strategy that produced successful outcomes. The teams found it beneficial to have a wide net of options to present to various stakeholders.

The advocacy lead is tasked with paying attention to the stakeholders preferred communication styles. It is important to not overwhelm the audience with information all at once, rather to read the audience and provide the information in the format that they will receive best. Alongside different communication styles, CSA found the experience of a site visit and first-hand experience a powerful tool for "convincing" stakeholders of the legitimacy of data or field-level experiences.

In Uganda, through field visits with technical experts the evidence spoke for itself. Prior to the field visits, the JGI team prepared the audience with the appropriate literature highlighting the benefits and successes of FW-WASH implementation. However, at the request of the technical experts, the field visits were moved up to an earlier date than planned. Being prepared to execute this request reflected positively on the team as it also demonstrated the team's preparedness, professionalism, and dedication.

The South Africa team used the Statistics South Africa 2016 Community Survey as evidence to highlight the lack of progress and backlog in access to basic services. Throughout the advocacy process, the CSA team used FW-WASH approaches as a potential solution to a pressing problem. It was difficult for the audience to refute the problem in light of solid, published evidence, and the CSA team's proposed solution also followed with supporting documentation of success. The team found an advantage to this combination of solid data on existing needs with a potential means for addressing those needs.

### **3.5 THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT CAN MANIFEST ITSELF AT ANY MOMENT**

The Facilitator's Guide lays out steps to establish a foundation that leads to the implementation steps to achieve the team's goal. Stakeholders will not always see the goal as a priority, and it is important to be patient and remain faithful to the process. The CSA team noted the potential to feel like the advocacy process was not moving or that no one was listening to the message. Their persistence and faith are strongly attributed to their achievement of successful results.

COVID-19 presented CSA with an immediate request to deliver their proposed solution for water access by the district government. Thankfully, the team was prepared and able to mobilize, despite the request coming quickly and unanticipated. The team realized their messages were heard by decision-makers when the municipality reached out and requested CSA assistance to pilot provision of reliable water access through CSA's approach of linking low-cost spring protection activities and existing municipal infrastructure.

The CSA team had to quickly leap into implementation mode whenever the municipality reached out to help. The timeline to implementation will always be tentative, but it is critical that if the door of opportunity suddenly opens, the advocacy strategy team must act and potentially shift into "program" mode. Being ready to implement may include having the right connections in the field to implement from the start of the advocacy process. Other important factors for being poised to implement quickly include maintaining good relationships in the communities and a baseline of trust. The CSA experience required them to play more of a facilitation role between ANDM and local communities based on the historically established trust and good relationships.

### **3.6 CONSTANTLY REVISITING THE STRATEGIES AND ADJUSTING ACTIVITIES IMPROVES THE PROCESS**

The JGI team describes the advocacy strategy development process as a "turn-key" process, meaning that by the end of the collaborative working time, the team had assembled a complete strategy ready to be tested and implemented. Setting aside the time to reflect and articulate their collective goals, empowered the team to achieve their advocacy goal.

CSA was faced with a quantum leap that quickly moved them from advocacy to implementation overnight. However, several dimensions of their goal to see integrated, coordinated water resources planning within the municipality remain outstanding. CSA juggled implementation tasks while concurrently revisiting advocacy steps that were skipped. An advantage of jumping to implementation in the CSA approach is that the FW-WASH infrastructure has proven effective in a crisis and can continue to be effective to provide services for the community in the long run. This opportunity has created another avenue to push the advocacy goal further and ensure the FW-WASH infrastructure link is established through policy as the pandemic response changes and hopefully begins to subside.

Extraneous situations or windows of opportunity can advance an advocacy strategy to on-the-ground action. Once implementation happens it is important to go back and ensure that all the steps within an advocacy strategy that will ensure the sustainability of that approach are completed. Following the steps in the guide is an effective way to ensure the advocacy goals yield long lasting results, solidified by policies and structures.

### 3.7 IT IS ESSENTIAL TO WORK WITH MULTISECTORAL PARTNERS TO REACH PLANNED GOALS

The goals and principals embedded in the advocacy strategy are fundamental to effective communication and applicable in many different contexts, beyond the integrated freshwater conservation and WASH sectors. For example, advocating for cross-sectoral programming makes sense in developing country contexts where budgets are devolved to local decision-makers who may prioritize one sector, such as health or development or environment, for quick gains, instead of investing in holistic needs, which may take longer to show benefits.

Both CSA and JGI teams experienced missed opportunities for cross department collaboration between actors working for water security. For example, in Uganda, there was a disconnect between district political staff and technical staff, particularly in having a united vision of planning. Within the technical staff there was also a disconnect; groups like the Natural Resources Department could not clearly see the benefits of integrating FW-WASH in development plans. The Uganda team found it especially important to present tailored evidence that supported the common human well-being and natural resource management benefits of implementing FW-WASH. In South Africa, another finding that impacted opportunities for collaboration was the relationships between actors targeted in the activities. Existing negative relationships can unknowingly stymie advocacy efforts.

There is success when messages are tailored to specific stakeholder groups. Advocating to groups separately allows the team to drive a clear message using the language that resonates best with the stakeholder. Once there appears to be support of an advocacy target by different stakeholders, bringing groups together can create opportunities to collaborate. It is important that each group clearly sees the benefits they stand to gain independently from shared benefits. Synergies within groups, especially publicly serving groups, can create another opportunity to highlight other large-scale benefits. Bringing the groups together and highlighting the overall scaled impact of collaboration provides another layer of incentives to adopt and collaborate. It is also beneficial to highlight the potential to reduce overall costs by sharing resources and reducing risks by working collaboratively.

In Uganda, stakeholders acknowledged the need for multisector planning, implementation, and monitoring across district capital development projects. The FW-WASH infrastructure posed an opportunity to implement the multisector approach that was missing. Stakeholders in the Masindi District Council also recognized the financial incentives of multi-sectoral collaboration. The team in Uganda saw evidence of this when the Masindi District Council informed them that they are developing an inclusive district budget that integrates FW-WASH policy requirements and the measure is set to pass soon.

The Uganda implementation team identified influential people in the public domain outside of the target audience. The team found it beneficial to categorize their champions into primary and secondary level champions. They found secondary champions in the public domain to be effective influencers for politicians and technical staff that were direct decision-makers.

## IV. CONCLUSION

These lessons underscore the importance of thoughtfully crafting clear and focused advocacy goals as the fundamental first step to influencing conservation and health policies. This report highlighted, that effective advocacy is fundamental for translating project-based outcomes into policies for improved conservation, development, WASH, and health. The CSA and JGI advocacy strategies aligned with ABCG's overall goals of biodiversity conservation and human-well-being. Their core messages underscore the need to proactively engage diverse, local community actors in development activities to mitigate impacts and provide compensation for biodiversity loss and deliver positive conservation outcomes. Based on ABCG's experience with FW-WASH integration, advocacy, conservation, health, and development, practitioners are encouraged to unite and collectively design messaging and activities to urge donors, policymakers, and colleagues to safeguard African biodiversity and human health.



*Meeting to publicize integrated FW-WASH bylaws in Rwempisis village, Uganda © JGI-Uganda*

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# Appendix A

## **A. Interview questions for capturing lessons learned during the ABCG FW-WASH advocacy strategy implementation pilot period**

### **In-country implementation teams (including UCPP partner in SA):**

1. In your own words, what was the goal of your team's advocacy strategy?
  - a. *If not clear in the goal:* Would you say this goal was more focused on changing policy, planning, or funding?
  - b. Why was this important as an enabling condition for the government to be able to adopt an integrated, FW-WASH approach?
2. What was your role related to the implementation of the advocacy strategy?
3. How did things go?
  - a. Did your team follow the plan as it was laid out in the advocacy strategy?
  - b. If not, why? What changes were made?
  - c. If so, why? Why do you think the strategy went as planned?
4. What strategies/advocacy activities did you find to be most effective for gaining attention from decision-makers and/or influencers?
5. When implementing the strategy, did you encounter any situation that was unexpected? How did you navigate that?
6. What do you feel was/is your biggest challenge to reaching your advocacy goal? Were there any other unanticipated barriers?
7. Do you feel like decision-makers find the biodiversity benefits an important deciding factor for making the change desired in the strategy? Do you feel WASH had an equal or greater effect?
8. Were there any skills or capacities that your team did not have that you think would have resulted in greater success?
9. What advice would you give to someone designing their own advocacy strategy, especially if they also were using advocacy to expand the reach of program-level success, similar to your experience?
10. Are there any other details that you feel are relevant to add as a lesson learned you would like to share?

## **B. Interview questions for capturing lessons learned during the ABCG FW-WASH advocacy strategy implementation pilot period**

### **Co-authors and workshop facilitators:**

1. What was your role in the creation of the advocacy strategies for the South Africa and Uganda teams?

2. What do you hope the implementation teams gained from piloting the strategies developed by using this methodology?
3. What do you think may have been their greatest challenge (besides the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic) when implementing their strategy?
4. Did you engage with the teams during their implementation period? What impressions did you have about the process or what they were learning?
5. Did you learn anything about advocacy while working on this project?
6. What advice would you give to someone designing their own advocacy strategy, especially if they also were using advocacy to expand the reach of program-level success, similar to your experience?
7. Are there any other details that you feel are relevant to add as a lesson learned you would like to share?