# Session 13d.
# WQAP Assessment and Model Language
***Sector mini-session presentation and small-group discussion***

## Summary

Access to safe drinking water is central to the health and development of any community. The increased use of water for agricultural irrigation can also accelerate economic growth and improve livelihoods. USAID supports a range of activities in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and agricultural sectors, many of which entail the establishment of new water access points or the rehabilitation of existing structures or systems. In these scenarios USAID must assure that water supplies meet certain quality criteria for domestic and agricultural purposes. As such, water quality testing and water safety is a key aspect of any water provision effort.

However, water quality testing often presents a practical challenge for project staff. In addition to the logistical demand of initial testing and monitoring across many, potentially dispersed systems or water access points, certain tests may require refrigeration, incubation and laboratory analysis. Specific water quality testing requirements will vary by activity, but generally must account for:

a) a baseline, or initial water quality assessment to determine if water is safe; and
b) a periodic testing or monitoring regime to determine if the water becomes contaminated.

In order to account for these and similar requirements across a range of water-related projects, Africa Bureau typically requires preparation of a Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP). The WQAP requirement is usually included as an IEE condition and implementation of the WQAP is similar to that of an EMMP. Like EMMPs, WQAPs are not centrally reviewed/approved or catalogued, providing little insight on the consistency and effectiveness of WQAPs at the regional level.

Africa Bureau recently completed an assessment of the WQAP approach to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of this mechanism as a means of ensuring the provision of safe water. In general, establishment of the WQAP requirement in activity IEEs has been uneven for most project types, in all Africa sub-regions. Where a WQAP *is* required as a condition of the IEE, it is not clear that these plans have been consistently prepared and implemented. WQAPs that are developed and implemented in accordance with the IEE may or may not achieve their objectives, depending on a variety of factors. Several of the key factors identified through this assessment include:

- Nature and extent of stakeholder/community engagement, as well as transition planning;
- Strength of host-country institutions and enforcement of water quality standards or criteria;
- Access to laboratory facilities and equipment, as well as in-country personnel and expertise.

## Objectives

Discuss key factors or considerations for WQAP success—or failure. Review strengthened standard IEE language for establishment of the WQAP requirement.

## Key Resources

- Standard IEE Language Establishing a Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP) Requirement (Draft)—see attached.