

NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

Community-Managed Water for Nakuru's Informal Settlements

A community-managed water model combining delegated management, pre-paid Water ATMs and a commercial refilling enterprise to bring reliable, affordable water to Rhonda and Kaptembwa.

NAKURU CITY · NAKURU COUNTY · WATER SECTOR · FSTP SHOWCASE

This Project is supported by the Strengthening Civil Society Engagement for a Just and Sustainable Urbanization (SCEJU) which is co-funded by the European Union and implemented by the Consortium Partners of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Kenya office, Civil Society Urban Development Platform (CSUDP) and Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA).



The project at a glance

01. The Problem

In Rhonda and Kaptembwa the water crisis is less about missing pipes than unreliable distribution. The January 2026 baseline found that 72.6 percent of households receive water three days a week or fewer, 55 percent spend over an hour collecting it, and 44.1 percent reported a water-related illness in six months.

Households turn to vendors and cartels at unpredictable prices, six kiosks have recently been demolished and some Kaptembwa boreholes are fluoride-contaminated, with the burden falling on women and children. A better system has to fix distribution and governance, not only pipes.

02. The Solution

FlamingoNET runs the Nakuru Informal Settlements Water Project (NISWP) under the SCEJU Financial Support to Third Parties programme: delegated management by community Master Operators, pre-paid Water ATMs that dispense treated water around the clock, and a commercial refilling enterprise that cross-subsidises community supply.

A January 2026 baseline survey validated the project's Theory of Change, and delivery targets 500 new household connections and a 10 percent expansion in coverage by 2026. FlamingoNET has been hosted within the county's Department of Water for ten years, and that embedding is what makes delegation credible.

03. Policy Engagement

Nakuru County Government and NAWASSCO are the project's principal institutional partners: the county provides the policy envelope, NAWASSCO the bulk supply, and FlamingoNET manages the last mile. NISWP strengthens existing utility systems rather than running parallel to them.

The project operationalises the Water Act (2016), the Nakuru County Water and Sanitation Act (2021) and the county's CIDP water targets. A formal delegated-management agreement with NAWASSCO is the next step.

04. The Innovation

Rather than treat water as an infrastructure problem, NISWP integrates four pillars into one community-managed service, assessed against the national FSTP innovation framework as particularly strong on governance integration, social inclusion and policy alignment:

- 🔗 **Delegated management** — Master Operators run distribution, repairs and collection.
- 🔗 **Pre-paid Water ATMs** — self-serve treated water around the clock, no cartel mark-ups.
- 🔗 **Cross-subsidy enterprise** — commercial refilling and bottling funds community water access.
- 🔗 **Community governance** — a water actors' network with one seat at the county table.

05. The Impact

Grounded in a validated Theory of Change, the project is moving informal water actors, women and youth from fragmented vending to organised, community-owned water enterprise in Nakuru's informal settlements.



500

New household connections targeted by 2026



10%

Expansion in water supply coverage targeted in Rhonda and Kaptembwa



70%+

Reported gain in unit cost and collection time from pre-paid ATMs



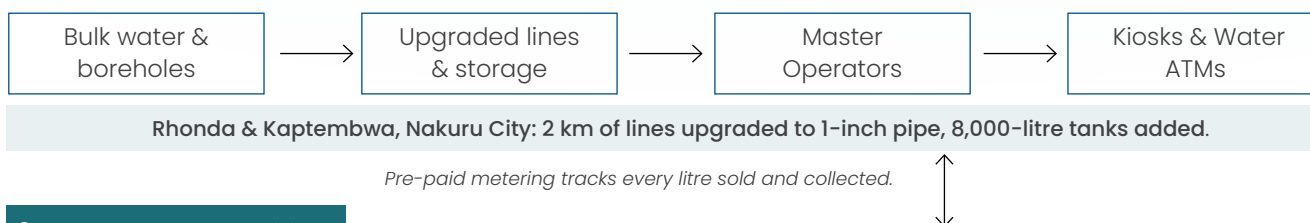
100

Women in explicit leadership roles, alongside 60+ youth

How NISWP Works

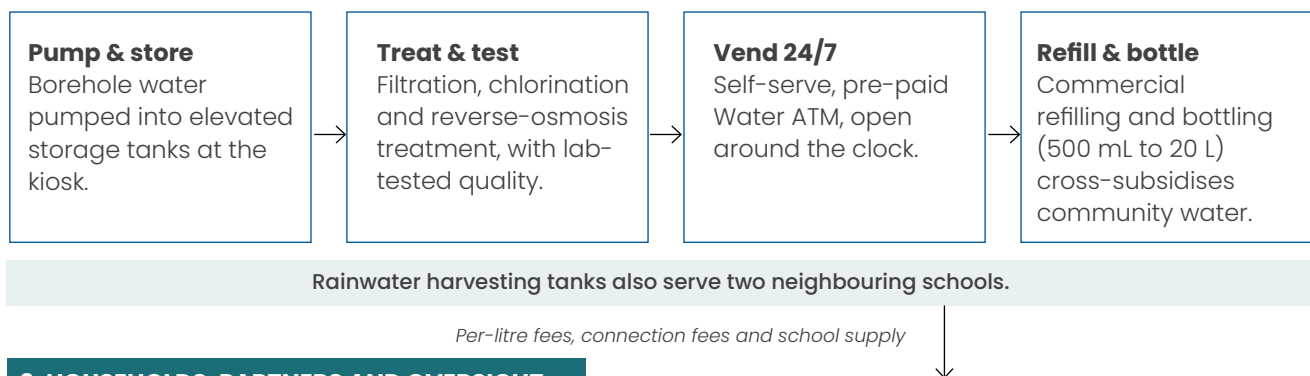
From the bulk line to the household jerrycan: one community-managed service links Rhonda and Kaptembwa households, Master Operators and pre-paid Water ATM kiosks, with a commercial enterprise cross-subsidising access.

1. SUPPLY: FROM BULK WATER TO THE KIOSK

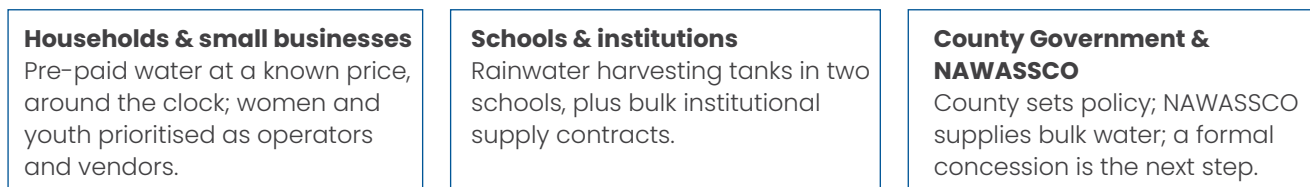


2. THE WATER ATM KIOSK

One kiosk, four steps to safe, affordable water



3. HOUSEHOLDS, PARTNERS AND OVERSIGHT



10 years hosted within Nakuru County's Department of Water

Now scaling delegated management and pre-paid water access under SCEJU, with EU support.



Anchored In County Institutions

Nakuru County Government and NAWASSCO as principal partners · Water Act (2016) · Nakuru County Water and Sanitation Act (2021) · County CIDP water targets

Policy Engagement

Anchored in County Institutions

FlamingoNET has been hosted free of charge within Nakuru County Government's Department of Water for ten years, and sits on the County Water Sector Coordination Committee, the Water Sector Forum, the Environment Committee and NACOSTEC. The project is operationally tied to NAWASSCO's pro-poor strategy, with the county providing the policy envelope.

NISWP strengthens existing utility and county systems rather than creating parallel structures, and the assessment rated governance integration at the top of the scale. Sustaining results and replicating them in other low-income areas will depend on continued county engagement, including integration of delegated management into the CIDP and county budgets.

Delegated management & stakeholder validation

Under the Delegated Management Model, NAWASSCO sells bulk water to community-contracted Master Operators who handle last-mile distribution, minor repairs and revenue collection, with women and youth prioritised as operators and ATM vendors. NAWASSCO offloads the costly management of informal settlements while keeping its bulk revenue, and a Community Water Management Network gives fragmented water actors a single seat at the county table.

The January 2026 baseline, by DOEM Impact Evaluation Consultants, tested the project's core assumptions.

Institutional details reflect the FSTP Innovation Technical Brief (July 2026), the SCEJU Business Model Compendium (July 2026) and the NISWP budget proposal. Coverage, connection and cost figures are baseline findings, assessment results or project targets, not reported delivery results.

4 County water and environment bodies where FlamingoNET holds a seat

2 Specific objectives: expanding coverage by 10% and piloting community water enterprises

72.6 Of households receive water three days a week or fewer (January 2026 baseline)

The Ask

Two things unlock the next stage of NISWP:



WATER LINE AND KIOSK EXPANSION

Investment in further water line rehabilitation and Water ATM kiosk expansion to new zones, with community management training and a maintenance reserve, moving NISWP from two settlements to a wider service.



FORMAL UTILITY PARTNERSHIP

A formal delegated-management or concession agreement with NAWASSCO, building on ten years of embedding in the county so that community Master Operators become part of Nakuru's water service, backed by viability gap funding to keep water affordable for the poorest households.



Together, investment and partnership move Nakuru's informal water actors from vendors at the margins to **recognised, equipped and community-managed enterprises** in the county's water service.

“Before NISWP, we were buying water from vendors at prices that changed every week. Now I know what water costs, I can plan for it, and my children have clean water at school. The committee manages it properly — that is the difference.

NISWP HOUSEHOLD BENEFICIARY · Nakuru informal settlement



ABOUT FLAMINGO LAKES CONSERVATION NETWORK

Flamingo Lakes Conservation Network (FlamingoNET), where a conservation mission meets everyday community needs, has been hosted within Nakuru County's Department of Water for ten years. Its Nakuru Informal Settlements Water Project brings pre-paid Water ATMs, delegated management and a commercial refilling enterprise to Rhonda and Kaptembwa. One of six enterprises competitively selected under the SCEJU FSTP mechanism from 9,000+ mapped water and waste actors.

10

Years hosted within Nakuru County's Department of Water



2

Settlements served: Rhonda and Kaptembwa



500

New household connections targeted by 2026



1 of 6

SCEJU FSTP enterprises, from 9,000+ actors



Let's bring reliable water to Nakuru's informal settlements.

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"SAVE WATER, SAVE LAKES."

PROJECT PARTNER

Nakuru County Government and NAWASSCO — principal institutional partners

PROGRAMME & FUNDING

SCEJU Programme · Co-funded by the European Union

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