

IWA WEBINAR · KISUMU, KENYA

Govern what exists

A partnership-based approach to expanding sanitation services in Kisumu.



Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company · Opero Services



PUBLIC–PRIVATE COLLABORATION

Enterprises

Accelerator programmes, technology testing and access to capital, so small businesses can operate and grow.

Utilities and counties

Fund mobilisation, strategic and service planning, standards, and capacity development.

INTRO TO KISUMU

On-site sanitation is the system here, not the exception.

82%

of households with a facility use on-site sanitation

60%

of the population lives in eight major informal settlements

18% → 45%

planned sewer coverage after the largest investment in the city's history. Half will still be on-site

62%

of pits are unlined



- Western Kenya, on the shore of Lake Victoria.
- High water table, seasonal flooding

THE PUBLIC PARTNER: KIWASCO





PUBLIC SIDE

Kisumu Water and Sanitation Company

2019

Kisumu Water and Sewerage Company
to
Kisumu Water and *Sanitation* Company

520,000

people in its service area, Kenya's third-largest city

County-owned

a public utility, regulated nationally by WASREB

2 sites

the Nyalenda lagoons and the Kisat plant receive the city's waste

Licensing

it issues the disposal licences, with the County Public Health Office enforcing practice

WHAT SETS KIWASCO APART

It treats partners as its delivery mechanism, not as competitors for its mandate.

THE PRIVATE PARTNER: THE EMPTYING GROUPS

11

formal enterprises, licensed
and trained

~60

workers in the recognised
system

These enterprises emerged out of an informal sector: unlicensed emptying, done at night.

Organised as KIWIP

A registered CBO formed by the city's FSM operators, and KIWASCO's point of liaison.



“I was a store keeper at a hospital getting fourteen thousand (approx \$110) a month. Here, if the jobs are lined up, I can make that in one or two days.”

AN EMPTIER, ON WHAT THE WORK PAYS

TEN YEARS, SIX KEY ACTIONS



(and none of it dependent on large capital)



WHAT FORMALISING COSTS: THREE LICENCES

To work inside the system, an emptier needs three licences from three different authorities.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Business permit

from ~\$40

a year, from KSh 5,000. The licence to trade at all.

NEMA

Transport licence

~\$115

a year, KSh 15,000. Consent to carry the sludge.

KIWASCO

Disposal licence

~\$115

a month, KSh 15,000. The right to discharge at Nyalenda.

KIWASCO waives the disposal tariff for the manual and semi-mechanised groups as special compensation. Tanker operators pay it. The emptying groups do not.



KSh 130 to the US dollar. The tanker disposal tariff is set under the WASREB tariff.

THE UTILITY ENABLES. IT DOES NOT DELIVER

KIWASCO manages the system without employing any emptiers.

THE UTILITY PROVIDES:

**Standards and
licensing**

**Free disposal
access**

Worker facilities

**Capacity
development**

**Service and
investment
planning**

THE COUNTY ENFORCES IT

Public health officers halt work for sludge spillage or operating without a licence.

“KIWASCO doesn’t try to do everything. It enables others to deliver.”

KIWASCO, MAJIPRENEURS SUMMIT 2026

WHAT OPERO DID WITH THE ENTERPRISES

SIX WORKSTREAMS

Association strengthening

Professionalisation

Branding

Health and safety training

Worker safety research

Equipment testing and trials

THE SERVICE PROVIDERS BIGGEST ASK

Transport

A truck bought in 2026 for the association and held as a shared asset rather than by any one business. It is in testing as a hire model, with income retained in a fund for its repair and maintenance. About 35 jobs a month at peak.



THE IMPACT



33% → 61%

of faecal waste safely managed, 2016 to 2024

1,456

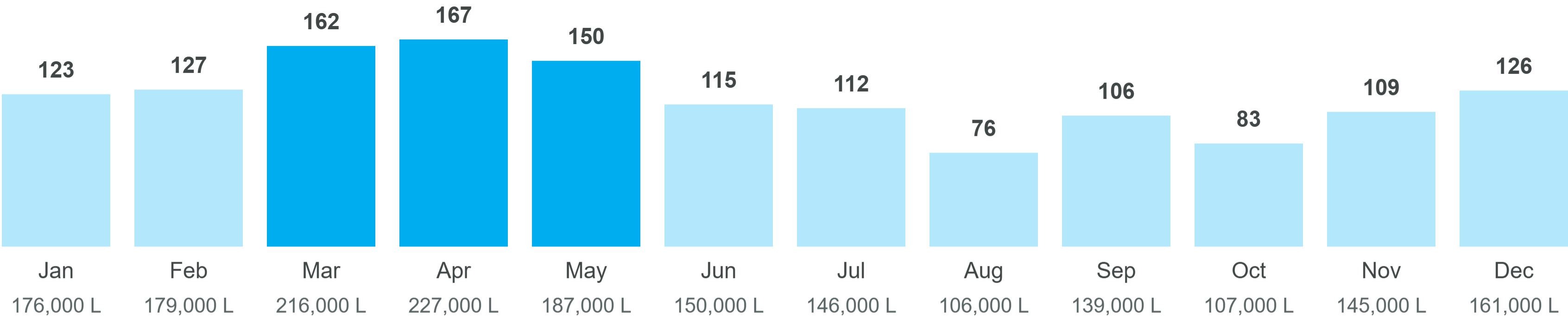
pits emptied and delivered to the disposal site, by hand and by pump

1.9M litres

of faecal sludge safely disposed in 2025, about 1.2 m³ per job

~60

livelihoods in the recognised, licensed system



TESTING THE EMPTYING TECHNOLOGIES



PuPu Pump



PitVaq



Trash Pump



Improved manual



Gulper

Context drives performance more than the choice of tool.

Transport, not extraction, is the binding constraint.

IN KISUMU: WHAT WORKS, WHAT IS STILL A GAP

ENTERPRISES

WORKING

Organised, equipped, trained and protected.

STILL A GAP

No service level agreement with KIWASCO.
No capital
Customers who cannot pay full prices.

UTILITY AND COUNTY

WORKING

Standards, licensing and free disposal, with one counterpart to deal with.

STILL A GAP

No specific treatment plant
No financing model
No contracted relationship with the emptiers.

<20% of low-income households
can afford formal emptying.

50+ informal emptiers work beside the
11 formal groups.

0 financing mechanisms pay for the
value the city gets.

SEVEN PRACTICAL THINGS GOVERNMENT CAN DO

- 1 Write the standards first
- 2 Legitimise the emptiers already working
- 3 Open the disposal site, free of charge
- 4 Deal with an association, not individuals
- 5 Build a wash bay and a store
- 6 Govern the system, let others deliver
- 7 Plan non-sewered sanitation as permanent

Every county already has manual emptiers. Whether to collaborate with them is the choice.

Kisumu's demand conditions are not universal. What transfers is the way the market is governed.

WHAT NEXT: OPERO AS A MARKET CATALYST

PHASE 1 · 2026–28

20 ENTERPRISES

Validate: finish the Kisumu model, prepare a second Kenyan market, test public toilets and reuse.

PHASE 2 · 2029–32

100 ENTERPRISES

Expand: more markets and business models, lower cost per enterprise, a permanent home for the platform.

PHASE 3 · 2033–36

1,000 ENTERPRISES

Partner-led scale: accredited partners deliver the model in further African markets.

JOIN US ON 21 OCTOBER

A practical review of pit latrine emptying technologies

fsmaction.org/event

NICOLA GREENE · OPERO
nicola@opero-services.com

CAROLYNE ODERA ·
KIWASCO
codero@kiwasco.co.ke

JOEL OBUNGA · KIWASCO
jobunga@kiwasco.co.ke

