

Delayed water projects cost govt sh65b

By Pascal Kwesiga

The Government has lost over sh65b in additional payments to contractors over the late start of the water and sewerage projects in various parts of the country, according to the latest Auditor General's (AG) report.

In a report which was submitted to Parliament last month, the AG indicates that more than sh65.5b has been lost to contractors in extra payments due to the late start of projects and commencing works at the "wrong time".

For example, the AG states that the Nakivubo wastewater treatment plant has delayed by 34 months, and the delay has attracted additional costs running into over sh12b. The auditors sampled nine water and sanitation infrastructure projects that have been under implementation between 2010 and 2016. The cost of individual projects ranged between sh1.7b and sh210b.

"All projects have experienced construction delays resulting in the

extension of time and additional costs. Whereas justifiable reasons were provided, these should be used as lessons for better planning of future projects," the report says. Some of the projects were delayed by encumbrances in acquiring land, change of designs by consultants and improper definition of scope of work. The National Water and Sewerage Corporation is the client of all the affected projects.

The delay in commencement of construction works on the Kinawataka and Nakivubo sewers by 24 months over change in designs and delay in securing land attracted an additional payment of over sh17b to the contractor.

The improper identification of the scope of rehabilitation works at the Namasuba and Ggaba water facilities translated into supplementary expenses of over sh10.6b.

"Arua W&S (water and sanitation) project delayed by 12 months, attracting an additional cost of sh935m due to the client's delay in securing land. The contractor also delayed in procuring equipment for the

same project," the report notes. "Buloba water supply delayed by five months due to the client's failure to secure sites for reservoirs on Nakabugo and Buloba hills."

According to the report, the Soroti new intake works delayed by 18 months attracting additional costs of sh300m due to the client's lack of stakeholder engagement leading to re-designs and slow progress.

The AG noted that there were "large expenditures" involved in the sewerage projects under the Kampala sanitation programme. While some of the "large expenditures" are justified, the report indicates that there were questionable decisions, that led to huge additional costs.

"For example, Nakivubo waste water treatment plant varied by Euros 5.1m, and the cost of unnecessary works, due to the decision to start construction at the wrong location.

Sewerage networks project were varied twice by Euros 215,166.42 due to commencement of work before securing easements/land," the AG explained.