

Customer Success Story

RTI International Rapidly Tests Surface Waters in Remote Areas of El Salvador



RTI International is an independent non-profit institute that provides research, development and technical services to government and commercial clients worldwide. www.rti.org



Surface waters in El Salvador receive heavy pollution loading from domestic uses, septic tank effluent and raw sewage.

About the CBT

The Aquagenx Compartment Bag Test (CBT) is a portable, simple water quality test kit that lets anyone, anywhere determine if drinking water contains E. coli bacteria and poses a health risk.



Challenge

In July 2013, RTI International began working on the sustainable sanitation component of the Municipal Competitiveness Project in El Salvador, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This component seeks to improve economic development opportunities in municipal tourism areas in El Salvador by helping to improve sanitation through the implementation of decentralized wastewater management systems. Dave Robbins, Senior Water and Sanitation Advisor at RTI, needed a fast, simple way to detect and quantify fecal contamination in surface waters in remote areas of El Salvador where access to electricity and lab equipment was limited.

Solution

Robbins took Aquagenx CBT Kits to El Salvador for rapid technical assessments to identify the specific nature of poor sanitation and its impact on targeted municipalities. His team collected water samples in the field, diluted the samples for environmental sampling where they expected higher levels of bacteria than typically found in drinking water, filled the CBT bags and added the growth medium, and put the bags in their hotel rooms to incubate at ambient temperature. After 24 hours they had their results.

Results

RTI's test results showed high levels of fecal contamination in the surface waters that were tested. Providing rapid results was critical to the success of their mission, enabling them to validate in the field their theory of environmental contamination in testing areas. Being able to share the test data and results with stakeholders and their client during the mission lead to the approval of the next steps in their project.

Says Robbins, "I recommend the Aquagenx CBT to anyone who needs to perform microbial testing on groundwater, surface or drinking water in low resource areas accurately and simply. The CBT offers the same level of accuracy as laboratory analysis at a fraction of the cost, without the additional steps and hassle of transporting samples to the lab."