

# Implementing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

## Information brief



### Why WASH?

One of the world's most urgent issues is lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Water-related improvements are crucial to meet the development goals, reduce child mortality, and improve health in a sustainable way.

#### Quick facts

- **2.5 billion** people lack access to improved sanitation.
- **748 million** people lack access to an improved source of drinking water.
- **1 billion** people practice open defecation. Nine out of 10 live in rural areas, but the number in urban areas is increasing.
- Half the countries did not report on access to adequate sanitation in schools or health-care facilities, suggesting a lack of monitoring systems and capacity.
- 34% of primary schools and 25% of rural health-care centres lack improved sanitation facilities.

*For more information: WHO and UNICEF (2014), GLASS (2012)*

### Commitment to progress

In July 2014 the UN Open Working Group (OWG) proposed a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to “**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**”.

#### Sustainable Development Goals: Targets related to WASH

**3.3** by 2030 end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases.

**3.9** by 2030 substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination.

**6.1** by 2030 achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

**6.2** by 2030 achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

**6.a** by 2030 expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.

**6.b** support and strengthen the participation of local communities for improving water and sanitation management.

*Source: OWG (2014)*



The target builds on the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Target 7C, expanded to include hygiene, and non-domestic settings.

To achieve this we must:

- Eliminate **open defecation**;
- Provide universal access to basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for households, **schools and health facilities**;
- Halve the population without **access at home** to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services;
- Eliminate **inequalities in access** to services by population groups.

Only half of development aid for sanitation and drinking-water is targeted to the MDG regions sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and South-eastern Asia where 70% of the global unserved live. Sector budget support from donors for WASH is less than 5% of total WASH aid. Only 7% of aid is directed at maintaining services. (GLAAS 2012)

## Challenges

### • Financing and budgeting process

**Insufficient financing and need for improved targeting and budgeting processes**, possibly due to poor absorption capacity – i.e. difficulties in spending funds that are received. Generally the national budget allocations to sanitation and drinking water are insufficient to meet government targets to provide services to the unserved as well as to maintain existing services. In addition, investment decisions often do not respond to needs, and issues of equity are often not addressed. The problem is greatest where the coverage is lowest.

**Generating revenue through tariffs** is often difficult. In most developing countries tariff structures for water are insufficient to cover basic operation and maintenance.

Funding is **not always targeted** to those in need: just one third of countries consistently applies equity criteria in funding allocations for sanitation and drinking water. Improved **priority-setting and targeting of development aid** remains a challenge and budget allocation tends to favour urban areas.

Drinking-water continues to absorb the majority of WASH funding while **insufficient funding for operation and maintenance undermines the sustainability of services**.

In Brazil, local authorities must show that they have capacity to use budget allocations before funds are disbursed. **Disadvantaged areas** often lack human resources to manage the above processes, so they will not qualify for budget allocations. These conditions must be coupled with mechanisms of support and capacity enhancement.

*Source: UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (2014)*

We must **improve the budgeting** process.

When funds are transferred from national to sub-national government, issues may arise:

**1) Substantial delays** in disbursement of funds at all levels of government. 2) Problems of “leakage” (**funds being improperly diverted**). The World Bank and many other institutions and organizations have used the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) methodology to identify leakages.

*Source: UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (2014)*



### • Water governance

On the governance side, **sustainability** remains a serious challenge. **Deficient institutional and administrative structures, lack of political will, accountability and lack of stakeholder engagement** are part of the problem. For instance, most countries do not include consumers in planning, and only half have established regular review processes.

### • Cost-efficient investments

Making **programmes cost-efficient** is an important challenge. For instance, in the case of groundwater drilling, **cheap drilling** or poor construction quality can lead to premature failure of the well or contamination of the water supply. Boreholes that are subsequently abandoned by the users are clearly not cost-effective. The provision of water points in remote areas and for the most poor and marginalized rural communities (the most difficult to reach) also links to the cost-efficient agenda.

### • Water safety

**Water safety** has also been difficult to meet; even if the water MDG has been met, the safety of the water provided does not always meet the minimum standards. Ensuring safe drinking water in the home is difficult. When there is no improved source available, water is likely to be unsafe due to microbial and especially faecal contamination. Even when water is drawn from an improved, uncontaminated point source – such as a sealed handpump on a protected borehole – it is very often re-contaminated due to unhygienic transport and home storage practices.

### • Staffing

It has been pointed out that there are **insufficient staff** in place to operate and maintain sanitation and drinking-water infrastructure. Half the countries surveyed reported that **women** make up less than a tenth of professional WASH staff. Lack of supply-side **technicians and skilled labour** stands out as a key barrier to the sustainability of services. Half of countries did not report how many WASH staff were in place, indicating a **lack of information on human resources**.

## Tools for implementation

### 1. Increased financing and improved budgeting

Transparent, accountable and results-oriented frameworks for action are needed. In many cases, cost recovery and increased attention on users fees can help to improve the **sustainability of services**.

- Traditional financing has not worked. **Results-Based Financing** (RBF) can foster more efficient and equitable service delivery:
  - The success of RBF instruments depends on behaviour change also at the sector level.
  - A multi-donor trust fund, such as that established for other health-related MDGs, could be established for expanding the use of RBF for sanitation.
  - Performance verification methods are needed to support the use of RBF instruments for improving sanitation.
- Beneficiaries **need to pay** for water services. Subsidies should help those who cannot afford to pay the full cost. Subsidies must be designed to avoid incentives to over-consume water or to over-capitalise capital investments.

### Targeting the poor and vulnerable:

- National WASH systems could be strengthened by increasing budgets where transparency mechanisms exist.
- External support agencies could:
  - Improve targeting of aid to the poor and vulnerable;
  - Consider increasing sector budget support;
  - Consider directing more external funding to support operation and maintenance of existing WASH services.
- **Budget allocations should be in line with human rights** guarantees and obligations. The Sanitation and Water for All Partnership is a good example.
- Government contracts for provision of water and sanitation, including delegating WASH services to third parties, must provide the **best services for the least cost**.
- Governments must ensure spending on WASH does not discriminate. The priority should be areas and populations with less access to services. Government financial reports should demonstrate action to ensure rights to water and sanitation for the most marginalized communities.
- Donors should make information about disbursements **publicly available and accessible**.
- Donors should release promised funds in a **timely** fashion.
- Governments should **monitor and assess the impact of their spending**.
- There is an urgent need to create and track **specific budgets for sanitation and water**.

#### Sanitation and Water for All Partnership

SWA is a global partnership of over 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively. Partners work towards a common vision of universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

SWA provides a transparent, accountable and results-oriented framework for action based on a common vision, values and principles.

Source: <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/>

#### eThekwini Declaration

The eThekwini Declaration was signed by over 30 African government ministers in Durban in February 2008. The declaration recognizes the importance of sanitation and commits signatory governments to public sector budget allocations for sanitation, with the aim of spending 0.5% of GDP on sanitation.

Source: *WSP-Africa (2008)*



## 2. Water governance

Improving governance will require an **enabling and regulatory environment** that allows monitoring and assessing progress in a **transparent and inclusive** way. Engaging all stakeholders at different levels from information to partnerships or co-decision according to the needs.

Some key recommendations include:

- **Planning safely managed systems:** Beyond basic access, we need to improve service levels and ensure services are sustainable. The term “safely managed” is proposed to describe a higher threshold of service.
- **Service levels outside the household** for example schools, hospitals, health centres and prisons, must be set, taking into account the number of people using services, and the people using them. For example, the needs of the elderly or pregnant women may need to be considered for health centres. Water and sanitation services must be accessible in the workplace. It is preferable that this is clarified in employment codes but business can play acceptable role.
- Continue to improve the strength and clarity of leadership for WASH.
- Strengthen national plans for WASH service provision.
- Strengthen system-wide support of the delivery of WASH, and link WASH services to core government systems for planning and resource allocation.
- Human rights principles, such as access to **information, participation, non-discrimination and accountability**, must inform implementation.
- Develop and strengthen **monitoring** and establish national WASH management information systems.
- Encourage **multi-stakeholder participation** in decision-making around WASH.
- All stakeholders should **collaborate harmoniously** among national line agencies, donors and NGOs.
- **Examine outputs**, outcomes and impacts to ensure targets are being met, and the process is not being hijacked by those with more political or economic power.
- Ensure **service providers understand what is required of the service** and how to achieve it, and monitoring and regulatory systems are put in place to ensure compliance.

### WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASHBAT)

WASH-BAT is a sector analysis and monitoring tool developed in 2011 by UNICEF and World Bank as part of the Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks approach. It aims to assess the enabling environment of WASH delivery by tracking the removal of barriers to sustainable and efficient services at national, regional, service provider and community levels. The performance of enabling factors is scored and activities for the removal of each bottleneck are identified, sequenced and prioritised. Funding is then sought and allocated to the activities ranked highest priority. The tool is applied in a collaborative effort (e.g. workshop), involving a range of sector stakeholders and external partners. It provides a rational, evidence-based approach for formulating an investment strategy that meets multiple sector aims of efficiency, equity and sustainability.

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/ircuser/6-hutton-wash-bat>



**UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011)**

To support companies in auctioning the Pledge to provide adequate sanitation for all in the workplace, the WBCSD has developed a self-assessment tool – a checklist of water, sanitation and hygiene reference points to conduct a corporate-wide survey and understand the water, sanitation and hygiene practices being implemented at each of the company’s premises under direct control – as well as guiding principles for implementation.

*Source: UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (2014).*

See also: [www.wbcd.org/work-program/sector-projects/water/WASHatworkplace.aspx](http://www.wbcd.org/work-program/sector-projects/water/WASHatworkplace.aspx)  
<http://www.business-humanrights.org/SpecialRepPortal/Home/Protect-Respect-Remedy-Framework/GuidingPrinciples>

**3. Technology**

As regards the technological aspects, **cost-efficiency** of rural water supply systems and **professionalization of the drilling sector** are key. Codes of Practices are relevant instruments (Rural Water Supply Network, 2010).

Several are the technological tools for ensuring the safety of drinking water, including a framework for Water Safety Plans, toolkit on conducting monitoring and evaluation (“M&E”) activities for household water treatment and safe storage (“HWTS”) programmes and UNICEF’s Handbook on Water Quality and Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS).

**Toolkit on conducting monitoring and evaluation (“M&E”) activities for household water treatment and safe storage (“HWTS”) programmes**

HWTS methods, when used effectively and consistently, can reduce the burden of diarrhoeal disease by improving and maintaining the quality of household drinking water through safe collection, transport, handling, treatment, and storage practices. The toolkit provides a harmonised set of tools and indicators to assist in M&E and ensure that the full health impact potential of HWTS can be achieved, such as 20 harmonized indicators, sample survey, decision tree, and a sample sanitary risk assessment matrix and form.

*Source: [http://www.who.int/household\\_water/resources/toolkit\\_monitoring\\_evaluating/en/](http://www.who.int/household_water/resources/toolkit_monitoring_evaluating/en/)*

**4. Capacity development**

Particularly, hygiene and access to education and information about the transmission of bacteria to water sources is a vital part of the process. Perhaps the biggest challenge still pending is hygiene. Hygiene promotion that focuses on key household practices (washing hands with soap after defecation and before handling food, and the safe disposal of children’s faeces) is an effective way to prevent diarrhoea, especially among young children, who spend most of their time at home. Adequate water and sanitation as part of a healthy school environment significantly improve a child’s prospects to develop and thrive. The promotion of good hygiene behaviour at school can initiate behaviour changes that last a lifetime. An innovative method to deal with hygiene is the Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS), which aims to mobilise communities to eliminate open defecation (OD).



### **Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS)**

Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS), now supported by UNICEF in 50 countries around the world, including crucial ones in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, have already led to more than 39,000 communities, with a total population of over 24 million people, being declared free of open defecation within the last five years. UNICEF estimates that with support from governments and other partners, an additional 88 million people now live in communities free of open defecation.

Source: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_66390.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_66390.html)

### **Realising the human rights to water and sanitation: a handbook by the UN Special Rapporteur Catarina de Albuquerque**

Developed by the UN Special Rapporteur to the Human Right to Water and Sanitation with support from UNICEF and others

The Handbook was developed to provide practical advice and guidance on implementing the human rights to water and sanitation. It seeks to clarify the meaning of the human rights to water and sanitation and the legal obligations arising from them and to explore how duty-bearers can be held to account for delivering on their obligations. The primary target audience is governments (national and sub-national) as well as donors and national regulatory bodies, while still providing useful information for other stakeholders, including civil society and service providers.

Source: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/WaterAndSanitation/SRWater/Pages/Handbook.aspx>

### **The three star approach to WASH in schools**

The Three Star Approach for WASH in Schools is designed to improve the effectiveness of hygiene behaviour change programmes. The approach ensures that healthy habits are taught, practised and integrated into daily school routines. The Three Star Approach helps schools meet the essential criteria for a healthy and protective learning environment for children as part of the broader child-friendly schools initiative. It aims to address the bottlenecks that block the effectiveness and expansion of current WASH in Schools programmes.

In the Three Star Approach, schools are encouraged to take simple, inexpensive steps outlined in this Field Guide. These steps are designed to ensure that all students wash their hands with soap, have access to drinking water, and are provided with clean, gender-segregated toilets at school every day. Group activities drive this incremental approach, beginning with daily, supervised group hand-washing sessions.

Source: [http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/UNICEF\\_Field\\_Guide-3\\_Star-Guide.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/UNICEF_Field_Guide-3_Star-Guide.pdf)

### **WASH in Schools Monitoring Package**

This package is designed to help address the WASH in Schools monitoring deficit at the national level. It is designed as a resource for WASH and Education professionals and practitioners to strengthen national monitoring systems and to improve the quality of monitoring at the project level.

Source: [http://www.unicef.org/wash/files/WASH\\_in\\_Schools\\_Monitoring\\_Package\\_English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wash/files/WASH_in_Schools_Monitoring_Package_English.pdf)



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