



## Technical Brief 7

# WATER SECURITY, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE GOVERNANCE

## USAID Water and Development

TECHNICAL SERIES

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guidance note is to provide a common definition of governance for the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) engagement in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and water resources management (WRM) sectors and to describe the process of analysis, strengthening, measuring, and reporting on improvements in WASH and WRM governance.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Governance is more than the government, writing policies, or conducting training.** It encompasses a range of actors, systems, and processes.
- **Improving governance starts with system analysis and thoughtful partnership.** WASH governance is complex, and all interventions should begin with identifying opportunities and constraints and then establishing or strengthening partnerships.
- **Improving governance involves using the right levers,** structuring the right incentives, and strengthening formal and informal or customary institutions (government, civil society, and private sector) to promote transparency, participation, effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability in WASH service delivery and WRM.
- **Measuring governance improvements should focus on incremental changes in performance.** Because governance systems are complex and changes happen slowly, monitoring systems should use multiple indicators and methods to capture progress.

## WHAT IS WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE?

Governance is a concept comprising a set of actors, systems, and processes—including but not limited to government—that determine who gets what type or quality of water, sanitation, or hygiene service, when they get it, how it is paid for, how fast the service is restored if there is an interruption, and who can access water resources. The goal of improving WASH and WRM governance is to ensure all people have access to the high quality services and resources they need, every time they need them, and that they know who to turn to if there are issues. Better WASH governance contributes to increased trust<sup>1</sup> in the government’s ability to manage—and be accountable for—critical and highly visible basic services and resources, with positive ripple effects across other USAID development priorities. Improved sector governance and finance is Development Result 1 in USAID’s Water and Development Plan and underlies success of the other three Development Results, focused on sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water, and WRM.

The actors, systems, and processes in WASH or WRM governance can be formal or informal,<sup>2</sup> national or local,<sup>3</sup> and encompass a complex set of power, politics, and political economy factors that influence nearly every action taken in the system. Under good governance, institutional roles and responsibilities are clear,<sup>4</sup> people are trained and empowered to fulfill their roles, entities (organizations or people) have incentives to do what needs to be done,<sup>5,6</sup> regulations exist and are enforced, and there are consequences for poor performance. Sector organizations, institutions, and people are organized, trained, motivated, and accountable<sup>7</sup> to keep water and sanitation services running and ensure the effective, transparent, equitable, and sustainable management of water resources. Stakeholders are able to participate in governance processes.<sup>8</sup>

There are different types and levels of power and authority in a governance system: national and local governments, budget holders, donors, village elders, municipal officials, community associations, religious leaders, service providers, the media, and advocates all wield different types of power and influence. There are different policies and processes associated with these formal and informal structures, and the institutional framework of governance processes and guidelines is not static. Laws, policies, regulations, incentives, and institutions need to be reviewed for performance and integrity and revised when needed to mitigate against unintended consequences or adjust incentives to support quality services. Policy makers, policy implementers, and a strong civil society that represents those impacted by the policies all have a role to ensure accountability and transparency in WASH service delivery over time and as conditions change.

### CIVIL SOCIETY’S ROLE IN WASH GOVERNANCE

Civil society organizations (CSOs) include community-based, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based groups, the press, academia, advocacy organizations, and professional organizations or associations. CSOs make essential contributions to self-reliance by serving as a bridge between decision-makers and the population to increase participatory processes. They can promote cultures of accountability and transparency by sharing information or creating platforms for dialogue and debate. CSOs are important partners in aligning the needs and expectations of communities and households with policy planning, implementation, and enforcement. CSOs are often especially important for increasing equitable participation in governance and market systems, because they can bring marginalized or underserved voices to the table. CSOs with expertise such as budget tracking, social mobilization, communications, and more may be important partners in addition to those with WASH or WRM expertise.

<sup>1</sup> Open Government Partnership. (2017). *An Open Government Approach to Rebuilding Citizen Trust*.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP, et al. (2013). *User’s Guide on Assessing Water Governance*.

<sup>3</sup> OECD. (2011). *Water Governance in OECD Countries: A Multi-Layered Approach*.

<sup>4</sup> OECD. (2015). *Principles on Water Governance*.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Water and Sanitation Program. (2010). *Monitoring Systems for Incentive Programs: Learning from Large-Scale Rural Sanitation Initiatives in India*.

<sup>6</sup> CEO Water Mandate. (2014). *The Business Case for Investing in Sustainable Water Management*.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility. (2015). *Accountability in WASH: Explaining the Concept*.

<sup>8</sup> OECD. (2015). *Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance*.

## GOVERNANCE MATRIX: PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES OF WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE

Figure 1 illustrates the key pillars and principles of WASH and WRM governance, which are relevant at all levels – from local to global. This has been adapted and simplified from other efforts to depict the complex systems involved in WASH and WRM. This governance matrix can be used as a checklist for ensuring that all components of a governance system have been analyzed and addressed, as needed, in governance-related activities, monitoring, adaptation, and learning.

Pillars of WASH and WRM Governance			
Principles of WASH and WRM Governance	Policy Framework	Institutions	Processes
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• Regulations</li> <li>• Norms</li> <li>• Financing</li> <li>• Incentives</li> <li>• Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making bodies</li> <li>• Formal organizations</li> <li>• Traditional/customary government structures</li> <li>• Informal networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Budget allocation</li> <li>• Policy creation</li> <li>• Negotiation of values</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Roles and Responsibilities</li> </ul>
Participation			
Effectiveness and Efficiency			
Accountability			

FIGURE 1: MATRIX OF PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES OF WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE<sup>9</sup>

Power and authority are key factors in all three pillars of WASH and WRM governance (policy framework, institutions, and processes). The **policy framework** includes constitutions, laws, policies, and tenure systems and cultural context, social norms, and prevailing power structures. Together, these pieces of the framework shape human interactions and guide, support, or constrain WASH governance actions. **Institutions** refers to the formalized bodies or entities, such as decision-making arrangements, co-management bodies, and traditional or customary institutions; and organizations, such as local or national government, private sector entities, and CSOs. Institutions also include informal entities and networks of actors and organizations that make specific contributions to governance, and perform different functions (e.g., producing rules and decisions, enabling management actions). Governance **processes**, which are the means for realizing the functions and the performance of governance, include articulation of institutional mandates, conflict resolution, law making, policy formation, diffusion of information, and application of policy.

The cross-cutting and mutually reinforcing **principles** of good WASH and WRM governance are:<sup>10</sup>

1. **Transparency:** Open sharing of information, needs, priorities, and feedback between citizens/consumers and decision-makers. This includes public access to information concerning WASH services and WRM: budget expenditures, quality of services, breakdowns, water rights/allocations, and other barriers to water and sanitation access to increase accountability and enable joint problem solving.

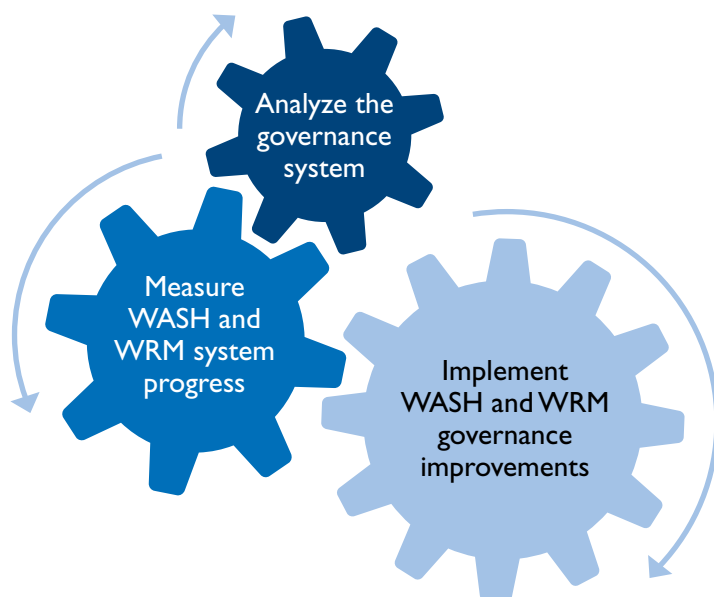
<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Ethiopia's *One WASH National Programme* and from Council of Europe's *12 Principles of Good Governance*.

<sup>10</sup> UNDP et al. (2013). *User's Guide on Assessing Water Governance*.

2. **Participation:** When stakeholders want to contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of water and sanitation policies, regulations and standards, they are able to. A consensus-oriented participatory approach seeks out vulnerable and marginalized groups with services, information, and opportunities to participate and creates space for dialogue, analysis, and debate.
3. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Available resources are directed towards the highest priorities for sustainable WASH services and WRM, while reducing waste and duplication. Effective WASH and WRM governance builds trust and accountability and reinforces transparent and participatory approaches.
4. **Accountability:** A feedback loop between informed stakeholders ensures that policies are strong; budgets are sufficient and aligned to policies; implementation and enforcement of policies and budgets are effective; challenges are addressed openly and quickly; and results are shared. Responsive customer complaint/comment mechanisms are essential to accountable systems.

### EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Governance systems have a significant impact on WASH and WRM outcomes for vulnerable, marginalized, or at-risk communities, such as women and girls, indigenous people, gender non-binary people, youth, and people living with disabilities or chronic illness such as HIV. The principles of good governance will not be fully upheld without an intentional focus on inclusion of all impacted vulnerable and at-risk people. This requires careful use of analytical tools to identify key populations and CSOs or community structures that represent them, as well as the development of approaches targeted to the needs and context of people that activities seek to include. Overlapping vulnerabilities, such as the digital divide; disparities in literacy rates; use of indigenous languages; cultural norms around participating in public spaces; differing physical, intellectual, aural, or verbal abilities; and lack of safety to participate in political processes must all be identified and addressed in order for governance activities to fully address the principles. Civil society plays an essential role in bridging these gaps and building accountability for a fully participatory, transparent, effective, and accountable process.



The pillars and principles interact in dynamic ways and are sensitive to incentives and influencing. The next three sections summarize the practice improving WASH and WRM governance, including analyzing the WASH and WRM governance system, strengthening it, and measuring progress. These steps are not meant to be a linear process, but mutually reinforcing elements of WASH and WRM governance interventions.

**FIGURE 2:** ELEMENTS OF WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS AT USAID

## ANALYZING THE WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

WASH and WRM governance, like any type of governance, is complex due to the many stakeholders involved and a dynamic operating environment, so it is critical to identify strategic entry points for WASH and WRM programming. In order to maximize impact, USAID activities should seek to identify specific points of strength and weakness within WASH or WRM systems that should be addressed through governance activities and specific leverage points and incentives that are most likely to result in the targeted change for the local context. Below are three tools for understanding WASH and WRM governance, each of which helps to answer different types of questions. It is important to be as specific as possible in identifying the problem that needs to be solved and the key questions that need to be answered in order to select the most appropriate analysis tool(s) and get the best results from them. These analytical tools should account for both formal and informal contexts, recognizing that much influencing and decision-making takes place through informal channels. In assessing governance, it is critical to build in time and budget to capture perspectives from all categories of stakeholders—elected and traditional officials, media, any specific communities of interest, NGOs, and civil society.

### ADDRESSING WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

Given the large numbers of people living in fragile contexts, it is increasingly necessary to find an effective means to sustainably raise WASH service levels in fragile contexts. There can sometimes be a tendency to bypass weak institutions or market systems to allow for rapid response to challenges. However, outcomes of such programs are unlikely to be equitable or sustained without simultaneous investments in governance. The steps described in this brief are applicable to contexts across the spectrum of capacity and commitment, including fragile contexts.

## I. POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) is a structured analytical approach to help understand *the underlying reasons why things work the way they do and identify incentives and constraints* impacting stakeholder behavior in a system.<sup>11</sup> It accounts for the political, economic, social, and cultural influences on the system. A PEA should consider three main pillars:

- **Foundational Factors:** Deeply embedded, longer-term national, subnational, and international structures that shape the legitimacy of the state, political system, and socio-economic structures. For a WASH or WRM sector PEA, these might include geographic and demographic features, levels of service delivery, water rights, economic base and growth, tax base, or levels of inequality.<sup>12</sup>
- **Rules of the Game:** Rules and norms of formal and informal institutions that shape the quality of governance and influence actors' behavior; incentives, relationships, power dynamics, and capacity for collective action. These include WASH and WRM sub-sector laws and policies, budgeting regulations, and levels of decentralization. They also include informal institutions, such as customary water rights, roles of traditional leaders, and socio-cultural norms for decision-making.
- **The Here and Now:** How current events and circumstances influence the objectives and behavior of key actors and how they create opportunities for or impediments to change. In the WASH or WRM sectors, these could include leadership changes in key organizations or natural disasters.

<sup>11</sup> USAID. (2018). *Thinking and Working Politically Through Applied Political Economy Analysis*.

<sup>12</sup> Overseas Development Institute. (2012). *Political Economy Analysis for Operations in Water and Sanitation: A Guidance Note*.

After assessing each of these three pillars, the final step in the analytical process is to consider the interactions between these pillars and dynamics in the system. For instance, what features are in flux and may be an opening for change? This analysis should seek to identify the incentives and disincentives for the specific change targeted by an activity. USAID's Applied PEA Framework<sup>13</sup> provides guidance on the kinds of questions that need to be addressed.

PEA can be performed at different levels (e.g., country level, sector specific level) or to better understand a particular problem or challenge related to equitable sustainable service delivery.<sup>14</sup> Analysis that looks at a specific level of governance is useful in designing an overall strategy or project. The more targeted, problem-specific PEA could be used in response to a specific change in the operating environment (e.g., the introduction of a new piece of legislation) or for addressing a barrier to progress during implementation of activities. A problem-specific PEA is also useful for assessing progress mid-stream or for better understanding why a planned approach is not having desired effects.

## 2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis is used to *identify the actors and relationships that influence project outcomes*. Understanding the relationships between actors in a WASH or WRM governance system is a critical first step to establishing and leveraging relationships with key stakeholders. This helps identify areas of shared interest and potential cooperation, avoid duplicating efforts, better understand which actors influence each other, and share knowledge about what works and what needs adjustment.

There are many tools for performing stakeholder analysis.<sup>15</sup> At its simplest, USAID and its partners may develop an informal *map of system actors and influences* during a workshop. Including external stakeholders in the analysis process may yield a more comprehensive list of stakeholders, making for a more thorough analysis. Once stakeholders and their relationships to each have been comprehensively identified, the group can discuss and rate the level of influence each identified actor has on the outcome of interest and identify priority relationships to build or leverage.

*Social network analysis (SNA)* is a more rigorous tool for studying the complex relationships among individuals or organizations in a system.<sup>16</sup> It emphasizes the structural characteristics of a network, such as who are the central actors, how interconnected or fragmented the network is, and what subgroups exist. This information can highlight strengths and weaknesses in communication, the flow of resources, power structures, and the overall functioning of the network.

*Power mapping*<sup>17</sup> is another form of stakeholder analysis that is used to *identify the centers of power*—the stakeholders, influencers, data, messages, and messengers—that need to be leveraged, when to leverage them, and in what form with what purpose, in order to effect changes in the current system. Power mapping considers key questions related to the issue and proposed solution(s): who are the actors and what are their relationships to each other? What are the incentives and decision-makers for those with the power to make decisions? and What is the most likely way to reach decision-makers with messages they will hear and understand?

<sup>13</sup> USAID. (2018). [Applied PEA Framework: Guidance on Questions for Analysis at the Country, Sector and Issue/Problem Levels](#).

<sup>14</sup> WaterAid. (2015). [Political Economy Analysis toolkit](#).

<sup>15</sup> OECD. (2015). [Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance](#). OECD Studies on Water, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<sup>16</sup> Harper, D. (2020). [Using Social Network Analysis in WASH Programs](#).

<sup>17</sup> For example, see Tiberghien, J-E. (2012). [Power Analysis Briefing: Review of Tools and Methods](#).

## TRANSFORMING THE NIGERIAN WATER SECTOR BY FOCUSING ON GOVERNANCE

Almost half of Nigeria's 183 million citizens reside in urban areas, with residential access to piped water dropping significantly from 32 percent in 1990 to just 7 percent in 2015. Acute governance challenges in the water sector are a key bottleneck. State Water Boards (SWBs), created by the Government of Nigeria in 1997 to provide affordable and accessible public water services in each state, are not fully autonomous and rely heavily on financial support from state and national budgets. To improve urban water service delivery, USAID launched the [Effective Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services \(E-WASH\)](#) program in 2018, aimed at strengthening the governance, financial, and technical viability of six SWBs and improving the enabling operating environments in their respective states in Nigeria. In order to better understand unspoken or underlying power dynamics, economic incentives, and benefits affecting stakeholders' willingness to reform water services, E-WASH used PEA to focus on the reform agendas of each state-level water utility and included tailored questions, which were unique to the conditions of each state. Given Nigeria's challenging operating environment, E-WASH paired the PEA exercise with a conflict analysis that included questions specific to gender equity and social inclusion. The results of these PEAs are now being applied.

### 3. SYSTEMS MAPPING

Mapping the factors in a governance system can help to *identify incentives, feedback loops, and potential leverage points* in order to understand what is driving outcomes and underlying causes of problems. Systems mapping can be participatory, with local actors defining key factors to map and discuss how they interact.<sup>18</sup> This allows different stakeholders to learn from each other and discuss areas for collaboration. USAID's 5Rs Framework highlights five key dimensions of systems: Results, Roles, Relationships, Rules, and Resources. Collectively these 5Rs can serve as a lens for assessing local systems and a guide for identifying and monitoring interventions designed to strengthen them.<sup>19</sup>

*Causal Loop Diagrams (CLDs)*<sup>20</sup> are a specific type of systems mapping that are used to model dynamic systems in a holistic manner, mapping how variables influence one another. CLDs are particularly useful in *uncovering informal feedback structures and identifying leverage points* in a system. These diagrams also show constraints in the system, where a project may not be able to create change.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU ANALYZE THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM?

All the tools mentioned in this section can be used at different points of USAID's Program Cycle to inform strategic planning and project design for WASH and WRM governance, by providing critical information about the governance system, institutional arrangements, actors, and incentives. They can also be used to facilitate adaptive management by tracking changes in the governance system over time to ensure that activity approaches remain relevant and effective. Changes in political leadership, new laws, and other changes can affect the operating environment and create demand for adjustments in an activity's approach. These tools can also be used to monitor changes in the governance system in order to measure progress towards objectives and determine if activities are on the right track.

<sup>18</sup> University of Colorado Boulder. (2019). *Factor Mapping for Rural Water and Small Town Sanitation Services*.

<sup>19</sup> USAID. (2016). *The 5Rs Framework in the Program Cycle*. Program Cycle Technical Note.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on CLDs, see LINC. (2020). *Local Systems Practice User Guide*.

## STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE

Changes in governance, such as policy or budget reforms or improved transparency and accountability, often require activities that *influence* the stakeholders and processes with the power to make the targeted change. This means that identifying, supporting, and leveraging the right partners, in the right form, at the right times is essential. USAID should consider a wide range of partnerships for WASH and WRM governance to ensure the ability to influence the stakeholders and processes that are identified, through analysis, as most important to effecting change. WASH and WRM governance projects should translate understanding of key stakeholders, leverage points, influences, and gaps directly into partnerships and activities.

Active partnership is critical to enhancing policy dialogue and facilitating change.<sup>21</sup> This requires careful thinking about which stakeholders should be brought into partnerships for which purposes, and the modalities by which each stakeholder should be engaged. It also requires trust. Influencing governance requires a systems view, which takes into account social norms, policies, and power relations and focuses on partners with the capacities to influence the right leverage points. It is not something USAID can do alone, but it is something USAID can and should facilitate and support.

### BEST PRACTICES IN PARTNERSHIPS

Better WASH and WRM governance can only be achieved in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, such as those described above. Some lessons for maximizing effectiveness of these partnerships in USAID activities include:

1. Engage a wide range of partners as early as possible in the process.
2. Address barriers to participation, such as accessibility of meeting locations or child care needs.
3. Elicit and honor partners' preferences for mode and frequency of participation.
4. Seek to have every interaction be an exchange of benefits, rather than disproportionately benefiting one of the partners or one group of stakeholders.
5. Acknowledge partners' time and contributions related to WASH service delivery and systems or WRM in both oral and written project communications.
6. Share information, results, and challenges—transparent communication is a critical component of building and maintaining trust.

## I. PARTNERING FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Partnering to address governance constraints can take many forms, and may involve different levels of coordination and shared risk taking. The term “collective action” describes a partnership process where stakeholders regularly convene and take joint actions to address shared problems, in which: 1) the problems are complex, and their solutions require deliberation and action by many actors with a variety of capacities; 2) members agree on a shared vision and shared problem definition; and 3) stakeholders clarify responsibilities and hold each other accountable for actions.<sup>22</sup> Collective action can take many forms, such as NGOs forming a coalition for a shared objective, a group of donors engaging in joint work planning with a government, or social mobilization of underserved communities to jointly petition the government for improved access to sanitation services. Regardless of the form, collective action partnerships should address and reflect all four principles of good governance: transparency, participation, effectiveness and efficiency, and

<sup>21</sup> USAID. (2018). *Thinking and Working Politically through Applied Political Economy Analysis*. Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

<sup>22</sup> Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership. (2020). *Defining Collective Action Approaches in WASH*.



accountability. Collective action can take time and resources. Depending on context, less intensive forms of collaboration, such as ad hoc coalitions, may be a good place to start, in order to establish a cohesive and trusting group that is prepared to contribute to more formal or intensive forms of collective action.

One common collective action process is the Joint Sector Review (JSR), usually led by government, which brings together multiple types of stakeholders in regular dialogue to review policy implementation, budget execution, and performance. JSR partners should invest in using a single platform for sector coordination, jointly support efforts to strengthen the governance system, share information transparently, and support the government to lead.<sup>23</sup> USAID can play an important role in facilitating mutual accountability through JSRs by its active participation and by ensuring there are strong voices from civil society and the private sector ready to come to the table.

In order to align with government-led processes, support from USAID and other donors should be “on-budget,”<sup>24</sup> meaning that these funds are accounted for in national and/or local government routine budget planning processes and therefore transparently considered in plans and programs.

## MULTISTAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCOUNTABLE WASH IN KENYA

Under Kenya’s 2010 constitution, the responsibility for water supply provision was devolved to 47 newly established counties. The Kitui County government therefore became responsible for delivering water services to more than one million people in 2013. However, historically, investments largely focused on building infrastructure, leaving users to manage and maintain them after construction, resulting in long and frequent service disruptions. Under USAID’s [Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership \(2016-2021\)](#), Oxford and UNICEF are supporting the [Kitui County WASH Forum](#) to convene county actors including donors, NGOs, government officers, and the private sector. These forums provide a platform for improving sector coordination and systematically documenting plans, interventions, and lessons learned in providing rural water services.

## 2. ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a collection of influencing tactics used to change the priorities and behaviors of decision-makers both in and outside of government. Advocacy targets, tactics, and messengers may be identified through the analyses described above. While advocacy can take different forms based on local cultural and legal contexts, it is common in most countries where it is safe to engage in dialogue about or with the government. Advocacy tactics can include citizen petitions, informational campaigns, press activity, demonstrations or marches, budget tracking, meetings with decision-makers or people who influence them, or drafting recommended language for a new policy provision. Some CSOs specialize in advocacy, while others may be skilled in both advocacy and technical areas such as providing WASH services. Advocacy is a unique capacity that may be a valuable addition to USAID WASH or WRM governance partnerships.

Advocacy can be undertaken by a single entity, such as a WASH or WRM advocacy NGO or an individual community member, or by a coalition of such entities. In some contexts, a smaller-scale advocacy effort may be more effective, relevant, or safer; in others, history may show that only large social movements result in change at scale. USAID activities should consider ways to support locally relevant advocacy and social mobilization capacities through its partnerships and engagement in multi-stakeholder platforms.

<sup>23</sup> See Sanitation and Water for All Partnership Collaborative Behaviors at <https://sanitationandwaterforall.org/about/our-work/priority-areas/collaborative-behaviours>

<sup>24</sup> On budget does not imply Government-to-Government (G2G) financial support where partner governments administer USAID funds, and does include funds channeled through implementing partners that align with host country government-led plans.

## ADVOCACY FOR WATER SECURITY PLANS AND FINANCE IN INDIA

The [USAID and Gap Inc. Women + Water Alliance](#) (2017-2022) aims to improve and sustain the health and well-being of women and communities touched by the apparel industry in India. The W+W Alliance leverages women's voices and improved self-efficacy to advocate for necessary changes for WASH issues with local government officials and within their own households. For example, Alliance partner WaterAid has supported the development and local governments' approval of water security plans for 60 *gram panchayats* (village councils), reaching nearly 102,000 people. In addition to providing women with personal and professional growth training—with the goal of increasing their self-efficacy in advocating for themselves and their communities—the Alliance also supports advocacy to government. WaterAid is currently helping local government bodies find solutions to address issues with service quality. These water security plans, along with WaterAid's functionality assessment of almost 400 schemes, are crucial in communities' ability to advocate for and mobilize additional resources to improve the WASH situation in their villages, including access to piped water supply, a Government of India priority. Finally, Water.org advocacy has focused on increasing the capital flowing into the WASH sector through various financial institutions; as a result, to date the W+W Alliance has provided more than 11,000 affordable loans totaling \$2.4 million to support people and their WASH needs.

### 3. CREATING AND LEVERAGING INCENTIVE STRUCTURES

Incentives are formal and informal motivations designed to shape behavior that are frequently forgotten in policy reform efforts. In the water and sanitation sectors these behaviors can include decisions around investment, breakdown repairs, service upgrades or extensions, tariff-setting, water resource allocations, reporting, and stakeholder consultation. Incentives are an important driver of governance and can be uncovered using the analysis tools in this brief. Incentives must be viewed both as potential barriers and potential opportunities that can influence the quality and sustainability of WASH services and success of WRM efforts. Regular monitoring of outcomes and discussion with stakeholders are important in order to identify any unintended consequences of changed incentives to ensure that “do no harm” principles are consistently applied.

Financial incentives can be generated through performance-based financing or another system that explicitly ties budgets or bonuses to sustainable desired results. Non-financial incentives can include professional development or public recognition. Incentives can be institutionalized in sector regulations, market-based approaches, fines and tax benefits, or can be informal, such as through positive or negative media coverage, civil society action to generate political will for improved WASH or WRM outcomes, or community demands. Using common benchmarks or indicators of success can help to create incentives for all partners to work towards the same goal.

## MOTIVATING OPEN DEFECATION FREE STATUS IN INDIA

The [Swachh Bharat Mission](#) (Clean India Mission or SBM) was launched in 2014 with the goal of making India open defecation free (ODF) by October 2, 2019 – the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. This started with top-level leadership from the Prime Minister, but achieving this ambitious goal also required incentivizing district officials across India to make sanitation a priority. During the SBM program, incentives were aligned to prioritize sanitation, and performance became an indicator that shaped career advancement of government officials across India.

Progress under SBM was monitored using a publicly accessible online portal. Once districts began to meet their targets, their progress was deliberately and publicly celebrated. Not only did this portal allow for holding districts to account, it also provided an opportunity to show off successes. District staff, village leaders, and local committees were held up as examples on social media, invited to receive awards at ceremonies involving local, state, or national dignitaries, and some were given awards by the prime minister himself. As a result, government officials felt that success was achievable and were motivated to work on sanitation. By mid-2019, official figures reported 95 percent sanitation coverage in rural India, up from less than 40 percent at the start of the SBM.

Source: Curtis, V. (2019). [Explaining the Outcomes of the 'Clean India' Campaign: Institutional Behaviour and Sanitation Transformation in India](#). *BMJ Global Health*.

### 4. BEYOND GOVERNMENT TRAINING

In many cases potential partners may require support to fully engage in water resources or WASH governance processes. While capacity building for governments, such as supporting the drafting of a new policy or building technical skills, is an important contributor to self-reliance and is a common approach, it is insufficient. Capacity development should be informed by the local system within which organizations and WASH services and WRM functions are embedded and by analysis described in this brief, and not limited to, or even focused on, the government itself. Capacity building may support an organization's effectiveness, efficiency, or technical approaches to sustainable WASH services or water resources management.<sup>25</sup>

Capacity building goes well beyond training—training alone is never enough to address capacity challenges. Below are some recommended alternatives and complementary approaches that contribute to stronger water and sanitation governance:

- Implement retention and recruitment strategies for the WASH and WRM workforce that focus on performance, such as offering financial incentives, professional development opportunities and promotions, and empowerment and accountability in their current positions.
- Strengthen and increase the professionalization of the WASH and WRM workforce in partnership with training and certification institutes, curriculum development specialists, private sector employers, civil society organizations, and public administration in-service training programs.
- Provide twinning, mentoring, or coaching opportunities among local entities or between local and international organizations to improve civil society's ability to manage its own operations and finances, develop advocacy action plans, mobilize communities, and more.

<sup>25</sup> USAID has compiled approaches for local capacity development, including the [Organizational Capacity Assessment](#) (OCA), a tool to facilitate self-assessment of capacity development needs and priorities and generation of an action plan. Online training on the uses and facilitation of the OCA, as well as updated [Capacity 2.0](#) resources, are available through Learning Lab.

- Host workshops for communities and local CSOs in conducting PEA, systems mapping, and other types of analyses that can sharpen their advocacy strategies.
- Improve linkages with professional associations and establishment of certifications for water and sanitation sector professionals (recognized by the government).
- Educate journalists on WASH and WRM issues to improve the depth of analysis, reporting, and accountability carried out in the press.

## HOW TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON WASH AND WRM GOVERNANCE?

Improvements in governance are not always as tangible and straightforward to measure as WASH access or increased water availability; they can be slow to take effect, and, with multiple stakeholders influencing processes, attribution can be difficult. However, governance is the foundation for achieving and sustaining WASH access and for ensuring sustainable water resources management, and thus measuring governance outcomes is important. Activities should go beyond tracking “numbers of people trained” or “number of policies and regulations” to measure outcomes, for example through measuring improvements in institutional performance. Process-based indicators—with focus on fostering relationships and building trust—can be used as a measure of gradual progress toward higher-level outcomes.<sup>26</sup> This can be done either by direct measurement of the relationships and systems or via indices that measure several aspects of governance at once.

An illustrative list of standard and custom WASH and WRM Governance indicators and indices includes:

- Number of water and sanitation sector institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply and sanitation services as a result of USG assistance (HL.8.3-3)
- Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance (CBLD-9)
- Percent of people in targeted local government units who feel that local government is addressing their WASH and/or WRM concerns
- Number of targeted local government units implementing WASH or WRM investment or development plans with community input
- Ratio of planned expenditure to actual expenditure on WASH (local or national governments, or other implementing organizations).
- Number or percent of local governments allocating budget to implement WASH policies and projects
- Number of civil society organizations engaged in WASH- or WRM-related civic education or social mobilization activities
- Number of groups representing marginalized constituencies in USAID-supported activities trying to affect government policy or conducting oversight of WASH
- Number of CSOs showing improvement on USAID’s [advocacy index](#) or reaching a certain level of expertise on the index (or similar advocacy measurement scales<sup>27</sup>)

<sup>26</sup> Ajroud, B., Hollander, D., Peabody, S. (2020). *Measuring Systems Change in WASH Programming: A Practical Application of Two Tools*. Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership.

<sup>27</sup> For example, see The Aspen Institute. (2010). *Champions and Championness: Measuring Efforts to Create Champions for Policy Change*.

## SELECTED RESOURCES

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3. Open Government Partnership. (2019). [Open Government Partnership Global Report, Public Services Chapter on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#). First Edition.
4. Oxfam. (2019). [An Introduction to Community Engagement in WASH](#).
5. USAID Technical Publications on [Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#).
6. USAID Learning Lab. (2018). [Applied Political Economy Analysis Resources](#).