3.1 Cambodia

Background

SusWASH is focused on system strengthening at national, provincial and district levels, specifically in Kampong Chhnang Province where 93% of the population lives in rural areas. Kampong Chhnang is one of Cambodia's 25 provinces located in the central part of the country.

We selected Kampong Chhnang Province (and the target districts) based on a list of criteria – which included the openness and reception of the relevant provincial/district governments. Despite this, we spent significant time building trust with the government, which allowed us to make progress.

WASH system analysis

Cambodia has not enshrined the human rights to water and sanitation in its constitution. The National Policy for Water Supply and Sanitation gives direction for providing WASH in urban and rural sub-sectors. Investments in the rural sub-sector are guided by the National Action Plan 2019–2023 (NAP), which articulates the costs of achieving universal access by 2025.

In 2020, the Ministry of Interior announced the official decentralisation of administrative functions from national level to all provinces and districts in Cambodia – with the formal transfer of functions and resources for sanitation and the operation and maintenance (O&M) of rural water supply.

Figure 5: Location of districts in Kampong Chhnang where SusWASH is implemented in Cambodia.
Key blockages to inclusive WASH provision and sustainability:

- **Institutional arrangements:** High turnover of government staff, particularly after elections, results in capacity gaps and the need for new relationships to be forged on an ongoing basis. All bilateral or multilateral projects are channelled through Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), which causes top-down implementation in a limited number of geographic areas.

- **Finance:** Inadequate budget allocations for WASH and heavy dependence on external support.

- **Coordination and planning:** Absence of a joint roadmap across MRD and Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISTI) for effectively institutionalising and facilitating the engagement of the private sector.

- **Service delivery:** Absence of sustainable post-construction support arrangement in the rural water supply subsector.

- **Monitoring:** The new MIS is operational but only 50% of the indicators are being collected. This still needs to materialise into evidence-based planning and budgeting.

- **Accountability and regulation:** Limited enforcement of regulations by service authorities vis-à-vis service providers for water quality or faecal sludge management.

**Topline findings from participatory context analysis in Kampong Chhnang Province:**

- **Willingness and ability of stakeholders to effect change:** Key barriers raised by those who were willing, but felt unable, included limited finance, human capacity, transportation and technical support. Working to alleviate these barriers was identified as a means of unlocking the energy of local government staff who could act as WASH champions.

- **Motivations of local stakeholders to effect change:** This revealed public recognition, financial incentives and the ability to learn new skills as motivational factors.
• **Marginalisation** was also examined to understand which people are most marginalised and excluded from WASH access – this analysis examined health status, age, gender, disability, disaster exposure, economic status and ethnic group.

• **Building block assessment:** The results of which are presented in Figure 7. The building blocks that are faded were added to the building block framework after 2017 when the assessment took place.

To respond to the identified weaknesses in the WASH system, we focused our efforts on strengthening national and sub-national government leadership, planning and monitoring processes; local level institutional arrangements; accountability of private water suppliers towards marginalised people; and the voice of marginalised people to demand their rights to water and sanitation.

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**Figure 7: Results of participatory building block assessment in Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and integration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Financing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability and regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service delivery and behaviour change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment and water resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and social inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active and empowered people and communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Outcome 1: Inclusive and sustainable WASH delivery models

3.1.1 Towards safely managed water in Kampong Chhnang Province

In support of the national government’s ambitions to achieve SDG 6.1 (safe affordable drinking water for all), we partnered with Sevea Consulting to undertake an assessment of the current and potential water supply service delivery options in every commune of Kampong Chhnang Province. The aim of the assessment was to develop a concrete set of recommendations and tools for improving sustainable access to safely managed water supply services. The study took into account: water resource availability, water demand and availability of water service providers. It sought to map out the feasibility of different service delivery models accordingly (see Figure 9). The recommendations and tools were targeted at government, investors, NGOs and technical suppliers.

Kangkep Village, Chranouk Commune, Kampong Leaeng district, Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia, April 2019.
The assessment categorised communes into four types (easy, challenging, hybrid and non-viable) based on the viability of delivering commune-wide piped water supplies. 18 communes were categorised as ‘easy’ (fully coverable by licensed private piped supply) while nine were considered ‘non-viable’. 21 and 17 communes were categorised as ‘challenging’ and ‘hybrid’ respectively.

Alternative or complementary service options were proposed in areas where piped water was non-viable or in areas where it would be necessary to complement piped water services with other water supply options to reach full coverage (hybrid). Other water supply options included community or privately-run water kiosks dispensing bottled water, rainwater harvesting and water tankers, as well as micro-scale piped systems (for less than 450 households) and franchised or decentralised piped models, not currently implemented in Cambodia.

Evidence of change

Finance:

- Study results attracted additional investment in WASH in the province. Following the dissemination of the study results, the World Bank decided to expand its focus to include Kampong Chhnang Province as part of its $30 million support loan and technical assistance package to MISTI.
- The study results were used by one district and one private sector actor to direct investments in hand pump-based water supply services in two ‘non-viable’ areas.

Government leadership:

- MISTI has approached Sevea Consulting to scale-up the study to all other provinces in Cambodia. They plan to use the results to inform investment decisions and licensing application approvals.

Figure 9: A map illustrating areas of Kampong Chhnang Province which are most viable for developing piped water supply services.

Results: Expected level of viability of commune-wide pipe services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ease of Development</th>
<th>Number of Communes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>18 communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>21 communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>17 communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-viable</td>
<td>9 communes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sevea, 2018
System strengthening for inclusive, lasting WASH that transforms people’s lives

• Following a request from the Minister of Rural Development, WaterAid, with Sevea Consulting, have now developed a decision making tool to support implementers (state and non-state) in identifying the most appropriate water service delivery model for their context. It then sets out the minimum requirements for each water supply option and the steps needed to establish the service.

Coordination:
• The tool and study results are helping to improve coordination between MRD and MISTI, both of whom have mandates to improve rural water supplies.

Lessons learned
• Different levels of government approach water supply planning differently. At sub-national level, they seem more concerned with ensuring services are delivered to the people who need them. While the national level seems more influenced by theory, politics and big-picture approaches.
• Bringing the two Ministries together for joint planning is not a short-term or quick fix. There are entrenched attitudes and competition for funds that prevent this. However, given the right materials to discuss and with the right people in the room, we think we are making some progress.
• Overall, we found working with MISTI, who oversees private-sector water supply, to be really refreshing. MISTI are very focused on regulation and innovation. They show initiative and seem to align behind a vision where all Cambodians have safely managed water. This internal culture definitely influenced how the study was taken up by MISTI. The leadership of MISTI, by the former head of the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, may have helped to create this culture.

Outcome 2: Improved planning, monitoring, financing and coordination

3.1.2 Strengthening national and provincial monitoring and planning for rural WASH

We worked with the MRD and development partners to strengthen the national MIS for rural WASH. We also supported the review and development of national and provincial WASH action plans (NAP and PAP).

In 2016, the first national action plan (NAP1) was launched presenting a roadmap towards universal, sustainable WASH in Cambodia. However, at that time, there was no comprehensive database from which to set a baseline or support planning and investment. The NAP1 therefore called for the establishment and regular updating of an MIS.

MRD set up and led a collaborative sector working group tasked with developing a national MIS. Our role was to support with tool development, orientation and training, data analysis and report writing. The first phase of the MIS gathered data on six output indicators including: number of villages triggered, certified open defecation-free (ODF) and sustaining ODF status; availability of affordable sanitation materials; and number of communes allocating budget for WASH in plans.

As part of the review of the NAP and PAP, we also worked with the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), the MRD, the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD), and the Provincial Department of Planning (PDP) in Kampong Chhnang to conduct a pilot WASH service level survey. The 2018 survey was the first province-wide baseline of WASH service levels, aligned to the JMP in the country. The pilot fed into development of PAPs, informed WASH programme priorities, and built the capacity of authorities at provincial and district levels to collect WASH service level data.


We recognised the NIS as experts in data collection and monitoring and paid for its support with data cleaning and analysis. Finance to maintain the MIS and act on the data remains a challenge. The MRD has strong ownership of the MIS and leads the annual process. However, the MRD still relies on external partner budgets for training and data verification. Now a member of SWA (see case study 3.1.5), the Government of Cambodia is committed to developing a clearer national financing strategy for WASH which would include government financing for the MIS. We continue to work with MRD to ensure it has the capacity and allocates sufficient budget for ongoing data collection and analysis in the future.

Evidence of change

Improved planning, monitoring, financing and coordination:

- The results of the province-wide WASH service level survey were used as the baseline for the four-year PAP2 for Kampong Chhnang. Furthermore, the JMP indicators have since been integrated into the national census survey, thereby helping to track progress towards SDG 6 on a national scale long after SusWASH ends.
- Supporting the development of the national MIS for rural WASH has resulted in data on six indicators being gathered and used to inform the review of the NAP1. Having seen value in the data collected, the MRD increased the number of indicators to review the NAP2 from six to 32 indicators (51% of the indicators in the NAP).
- The data and final report are being used to inform and better coordinate national government and development partner investment in WASH.

Figure 10: Key activities and milestones in development of MIS phase one.
Lessons learned

- Assigning focal points in each institution helped to maintain momentum and ensured participation throughout the process.
- Data was useful when it was ‘good enough’. With several people reviewing the data submitted, there could have been endless revisions of the data and the report. MRD made a judgement call to finalise and disseminate the results on the principle that it is better to share good data for timely decision making than to share perfect data after decisions are made.
- It was important to identify the incentives of stakeholders involved in collective action to ensure a successful outcome. Bringing together individuals from the NIS and the MRD revealed divergent political incentives for monitoring and reporting. The PDRD needed data quickly to develop a PAP to meet a nationally-set deadline. For the NIS, the service level baseline was an opportunity to develop WASH indicators that align to the JMP.
- We identified our strengths, weaknesses and role early on. Throughout the process, we played a convening role, supporting the clear division of roles and responsibilities, coordinating logistics and supporting with development of and training on the survey. Our role has already reduced as MRD has become more confident in all parts of the process.

Box 3: Practical lessons learned during province-wide service level baseline data collection

- **Ensure enumerators receive adequate training**: language barriers and misunderstanding of technical terms and processes among enumerators led to instances of ‘insufficient data’ and data error.
- **Set formal government agreements with enumerators**: no formal commitment for enumerators to collect data once trained led to instances of enumerator drop-out.
- **Factor in time for bureaucracy**: enumerators required formal letters from local authorities slowing data collection.
- **Factor study limitations into the results**: distance to remote communities (particularly floating communities) was a challenge in rainy season, selected households were sometimes unavailable or unwilling to take part, leading to potential data bias.

*Sokhun Pon, 39, is a private sector water supply businessman who connects piped water to people living in Ra Village. Tbaeng Khpos Commune, Sammaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province, December 2018.*
Outcome 3: Active, empowered people and strong accountability mechanisms

3.1.3 Strengthening accountability of private water service providers

In 2015, the Government of Cambodia launched the Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) in an effort to improve public services through community empowerment and strengthened accountability mechanisms. Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs) play a principal role in empowering community members to engage in social accountability processes. We delivered training to the CAFs working in Rolea Bier district to raise their awareness of the importance of WASH and good sanitation and hygiene behaviours.

In collaboration with the Cambodian Water Association (CWA), we delivered training on the roles and responsibilities of private water operators, users and the sub-national authorities to strengthen accountability and increase consumer satisfaction. The training included issues of equity, inclusion and affordability, and exposed the issue of the high initial connection cost preventing poorer households from connecting to piped schemes. We also supported the CWA to conduct exposure visits to a water treatment plant for sub-national authority staff and private water operators to learn about the process of water treatment to ensure safe water quality. Participants had a chance to learn how to do water quality testing, which is a responsibility of the local authorities.

Private water operators receive a licence from MISTI that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the operator, community, local authorities and MISTI, but it was not well understood or enforced by MISTI prior to this work. We initiated accountability and community feedback forums between operators, community members and local service authorities.

Evidence of change

Clear institutional arrangements:
- Following the training, sub-national authorities, community members and private water operators reported better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the provision of water supply.

Inclusive and sustainable WASH delivery models:
- Some private operators used their own revenues to discount the connection fee for poorer families, as well as for some schools, health centres and commune offices. However, to our knowledge there is no official policy for reducing the connection fee for poor and vulnerable households; as such these instances were more a gesture of goodwill/charity on the part of operators. Furthermore, a recent evaluation found that one of the biggest needs is subsidy for network expansion, as the poorest households live a long distance away from existing networks.
- Overall, there were 5,915 new connections from November 2019 to March 2020 to private piped networks. This was an increase of 1,861 connections over the same period in the previous year (2018–19).
Lessons learned

- Facilitating meetings between different parties (sub-national authorities, community representatives and private operators) provided opportunities to discuss concerns and identify solutions.
- Opportunities to practically learn about issues raised (e.g. by visiting a water treatment plant) can help build shared understanding and identify mutually-beneficial solutions. More work is needed to ensure coordination and accountability mechanisms remain functional in the long term.

3.1.4 Empowering marginalised people to demand their human rights to water and sanitation

In an effort to strengthen government accountability towards marginalised people and ensure WASH is inclusive of everyone, we initiated a participatory barrier analysis to better understand the WASH experiences of marginalised people. In collaboration with a local CSO, we identified representatives from marginalised groups in 11 communities. We first supported them to understand their human rights to water and sanitation and coached them on power dynamic analysis and concepts. This helped to overcome some of their reluctance to participate and increased their confidence to exercise their rights, raise their voices and orientate their communities on the same concepts.

Group representatives were also trained to use pictures to facilitate focus group discussions about the attitudinal, environmental, communication and institutional barriers affecting their WASH access. Community focus

Navy, 29, Kro Lanh Village, Orussey Commune, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia, April 2019.
groups also drew pictures to demonstrate their WASH experiences and vision for future WASH services. Following the discussions, we held a workshop in which these community representatives shared their experiences with local and national leaders. We also supported sub-national leaders to visit the communities to see and hear first-hand their WASH situation and discuss how decision makers and communities can work together to improve WASH services. For some local leaders with limited resources it was the first time they had visited the communities.

In addition, we trained District WASH Committee members in Rolea Bier district to apply MRD’s inclusive WASH guidelines, to mainstream equity and inclusion (E&I) into their work, and to undertake accessibility and safety assessments of existing WASH facilities. Through the training, the committee realised the different needs and barriers marginalised groups face by imagining themselves in their situation.

We also worked with Rolea Bier District to set up an inclusive WASH learning hub. Through the learning hub, the District WASH Committee have raised awareness of inclusive WASH among other local leaders, including monks. With their large following and influence in communities, monks can be role models of best practice and deliver WASH messages to their congregations.

For information about how we sought to increase the leadership, participation and influence of women in WASH decision making, see case study 3.1.5.

Evidence of change

Inclusive and sustainable WASH delivery models:
• Since receiving E&I training, we have observed that district and commune councillors now mainstream inclusive WASH concepts into hygiene behaviour change activities. The District WASH Committee has also trained and worked with local monks to build accessible toilets at pagodas. One commune council has also upgraded the WASH facilities in their community meeting hall to be more accessible for people with disabilities (PWD). They have observed an increase in the number of PWD using the facilities as a result.
• The understanding of WASH inclusion issues in the Rolea Bier district has increased, so they now feel confident to train others. Some other NGOs and districts have held exchange visits to Rolea Bier district to learn about inclusive toilet standards.

Lessons learned
• Initially some marginalised people did not consider themselves to be marginalised and were reluctant to engage in the process. We also found that some marginalised people did not want to draw attention to themselves and were concerned that participation might put them in a difficult position with authorities. We were able to overcome this by first sensitising them about their rights to water and sanitation and power dynamic concepts.
Outcome 4: Clear institutional arrangements and strong government leadership

3.1.5 Strengthening women’s voice in WASH decision making and government leadership at multiple levels

Seeking to strengthen government leadership, institutional arrangements, and women’s participation in WASH at sub-national levels, we partnered with WaterSHED\(^\text{xii}\) to deliver a leadership development programme called Civic Champions. The Civic Champions programme focuses on building leadership skills and motivating individuals to become leaders in their communities.\(^3\)\(^2\) Civic Champions directly engages sub-national government staff at all levels (commune, district and province) as facilitators, advisers and advocates.

With support from WaterSHED, we provided a training of trainers for provincial and district staff, of which 58% were women. Training focused on building skills such as goal-setting, public speaking, planning, creating a shared vision for a community and measuring progress. These trainers then facilitated training workshops which allowed participants to learn and exchange ideas about how to design a strategy that achieves WASH goals in their area. District and commune councillors were supported to set sanitation coverage targets for their respective areas and develop action plans for how they would achieve them. Provincial trainers provided coaching and mentoring support to district staff, and district staff provided the same to participating commune staff. Rewards were given to the communes who had made most progress in terms of number of latrines constructed. Incentives and motivations for achieving sanitation targets included the opportunity to compete for a leadership award and cash prize, along with public recognition of good performance.

Our gender scoping assessments and gender power analysis (involving discussions with both men and women) revealed that while some women hold high positions in sub-national government, they continue to face constraints and are hesitant to lead action. Through discussions with them, women expressed concerns about the attitude of men in not trusting their capacity and skills. To address these issues, efforts were specifically targeted at strengthening the leadership and participation of women government leaders in WASH decision making. WaterAid collaborated with a local NGO, Center for Sustainable Water, to design a leadership training curriculum for female government staff from districts and provincial departments. The training aimed to equip women with knowledge and skills to unlock their leadership potential. Training covered topics of leadership, facilitation, communication, advocacy, coaching and power dynamic analysis.

We also sought to strengthen government commitment and leadership for WASH at senior provincial and national levels. To do this, we undertook a PEA to understand the motivations and incentives of key government stakeholders. Through this, we identified the Provincial Director of PDRD as a keen cyclist and devised a ‘Cycle for Sanitation’ event. We also worked in collaboration with other INGOs (UNICEF, Plan International, WSSCC) to lobby and influence national level government to become a member of SWA.

Evidence of change

Inclusive and sustainable WASH delivery models:

- The Civic Champions programme contributed towards the two focus SusWASH districts (Rolea Bier and Samakki Meanchey) reporting the greatest increase in sanitation coverage of all 15 districts which have received decentralised responsibilities across the country.\(^\text{xiii}\) Of the households who have gained access to improved sanitation, about 10% are considered to be marginalised.

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\(^{xii}\) WaterShed is a Cambodian-based NGO specialised in WASH system approaches. WaterSHED Ventures is a social enterprise specialising in WASH products. More information about the Civic Champions programme is available online at: watershedasia.org/civic-champions (accessed 29 Jul 2020).

\(^{xiii}\) A review by SNV revealed that the average sanitation increase between June 2018 and May 2019 in Kampong Chhnang Province was the highest of the three provinces receiving decentralised functions. Samakki Meanchey district reported an increase of 13% in household sanitation access in one year, the highest of the 15 districts. Rolear Bier district reported a 12% increase, the second highest of the 15 districts. In both districts at the start of SusWASH, open defecation was reportedly just above 30%.
Clear institutional arrangements and strong government leadership:

• In late 2019, the Provincial Governor and the Director of PDRD made a public commitment to achieve province-wide ODF status by 2023.

• The MRD and Ministry of Interior have committed to institutionalise the Civic Champions programme into the nationwide training programme for sub-national government staff. PDRD have committed to support its roll out to all districts in Kampong Chhnang. We are supporting PDRD in this roll-out – helping to set-up five more district WASH committees and highlighting the need for women in senior and decision making roles.

• The Government of Cambodia (MRD) has become a partner in SWA. As part of this, the Government of Cambodia has agreed to develop a national financing strategy for WASH and to continue to enhance the national WASH MIS.

• Female government staff at district level have transferred their new knowledge and skills to other women in their communities. They are playing an active role in district WASH committees and report an increased sense of confidence in sharing their perspectives and challenging their male leaders to allocate the administration's budget towards improving marginalised people's access to WASH. However, a lack of female government staff working in some districts remains a challenge.

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xiv. SWA is a global platform for technical and finance ministers to share learning and advocacy between countries towards achievement of SDG 6. SWA is a global mechanism which helps hold national governments to account for their public WASH commitments.
Lessons learned

• Media engagement motivated and inspired local leaders to act. When commune and district leaders were interviewed by national media about their role in improving sanitation through the Civic Champions programme, they said they felt more motivated by becoming ‘famous’ in their provinces. Other leaders contacted the featured leaders to ask how they too could become even stronger leaders. This lesson supports our initial baseline finding that public recognition is a key motivation of local stakeholders to do their job.

• Learning about the incentives that motivate local leaders to fulfil their roles, sparked us to launch a similar Family Champions initiative. Applying a similar model to Civic Champions, Family Champions seeks to identify and reward ‘model’ families who practise and uphold good hygiene behaviours.

• Having clearly-defined joint district WASH plans stimulated coordinated and collective action. Notably, this has strengthened relationships between districts and communes.

• High-level commitment and support of the district governors and commune leaders was a success factor for implementing the Civic Champions programme.

• Providing technical training on WASH issues to complement leadership skills made commune councillors more confident to promote WASH services and reach their targets.

• Learning exchanges and ongoing coaching was an effective approach to ensure district trainers clearly understood their roles and knew how to provide technical and leadership support to commune councillors.

• Limited capacity of commune and village focal points in data collection, monitoring and quality assurance, and a lack of harmonised, simplified village, commune and district data management systems were challenges that require ongoing attention.

• Demonstrating success of the Civic Champions programme in extending sanitation coverage in two districts, and analysing the motivations of the provincial governor, helped to secure national buy-in for the institutionalisation of the Civic Champions programme into the nationwide government training programme for sub-national authorities.

• Adaptive planning and management gave us, the local government and our partners space for flexibility and collective decision making within the Civic Champions programme.

• Facilitating separate discussions with men and women about their roles and capabilities in WASH decision making helped build a safe and open dialogue around issues of gender equality and inclusion among district staff. Conversations about gender, equity and social inclusion need to go beyond the district as many decisions are made at higher levels. This could restrict the involvement of women and PWD as responsibilities are delegated to sub-national levels.

• Treasury involvement in technical working group discussions may help to leverage more WASH finance and we are working to encourage their participation.

Conclusion

In line with our theory of change, we have observed stronger government leadership on WASH issues, greater understanding among government staff of their WASH roles and responsibilities, and stronger monitoring and planning processes.

These changes have helped to attract investment in water supply services in Kampong Chhnang and contributed towards improvements in WASH service levels and WASH inclusion in Rolea Bier and Samakki Meanchey districts. Interactions and interdependencies between WASH system components and our efforts to strengthen them are clear.

Strengthening national and provincial monitoring processes had knock-on effects for improved planning and attracting sector finance. Understanding the incentives and motivations of key government staff at provincial and local levels built government leadership for improved planning, coordination and more inclusive and sustainable service delivery.