System strengthening and empowerment project design toolkit

This document sets out a series of participatory exercises that can be used to design a WASH project that applies a system strengthening way of working for improved WASH sustainability, improved WASH scalability and more inclusive outcomes. On average, it will take 4 days to complete all exercises, although this will vary depending on the depth of the discussions. Relevant institutions (national government, subnational government, local private sector, service providers, regulators, utilities, civil society groups etc.) should participate in the project design process.

These exercises follow a ‘theory of change’ development process whereby participants identify blockages to achievement of sustained, inclusive, universal access. They then set out the change they want to see and identify outcomes and approaches to bring about this change.

Interventions are designed to respond to identified weaknesses in the WASH system. The WASH system is all of the people, behaviours, policies, processes, resources, interactions and institutions necessary for delivery of inclusive, lasting, universal access to WASH (see figure 2).

![Figure 1: Example theory of change](image)

1 For more information about using this toolkit contact Vinny Casey at VincentCasey@wateraid.org, or Hannah Crichton-Smith at HannahCrichtonSmith@wateraid.org

2 System strengthening means understanding that WASH exists in complex systems with many component parts and within different social, economic, political and environmental contexts. It involves identifying and working to address the barriers in behaviours, policies, processes, resources, interactions and institutions that block achievement of inclusive, lasting, universal access to WASH.

These exercises should give you a basic understanding of the context in which you’re working in order to design an outline of your project. The exercises are sequenced in a way to ensure issues at national, sub-national and local levels are analysed. You should consolidate the findings from all of the exercises to inform your project design. This toolkit is not exhaustive; there are numerous other exercises and tools that can help to delve deeper into different areas of the WASH system to better inform your work, some of these are listed at the end.

**Project design process**

**Ice-breaker** encourages participants to discuss the willingness and ability of government to ensure sustainable, inclusive, universal access to WASH. This helps to get participants thinking about the balance of the intervention between strengthening government leadership and sector capacity versus supporting civil society to demand their WASH rights and hold government to account.

**Exercise 1** helps participants to analyse and arrive at a common understanding of the overarching factors and actors that can drive and hinder change - moving beyond superficial symptoms, to more deep-rooted, systemic blockages.
Exercise 2 asks participants to identify the critical processes and functions required for WASH sustainability and inclusion. The facilitator positions these into groups which subsequently form the ‘building blocks’ of the WASH system (government leadership, empowered people, strategic planning, monitoring, coordination and integration, financing, institutional arrangements and capacity, gender and social inclusion, water resources and environment, accountability and regulation, service delivery and behaviour change).

Exercise 3.1 introduces the Building Block Analysis Tool. This exercise encourages participants to discuss the strength of the WASH system in the target district/city. This helps to identify which building blocks could be prioritised in the project.

Exercise 3.2 builds on exercise 3.1 by analysing the extent to which gender is considered across all of the building blocks of the WASH system. It helps to identify where in the WASH system gender-related issues should be strengthened to ensure more inclusive outcomes.

Exercise 4 helps to analyse the power relationships within and between different groups of people using four typologies of power. This helps to identify actions that might shift power dynamics and improve the participation of people who experience marginalisation.

Exercise 5 encourages participants to think about the other sector actors who are already working to strengthen the various building blocks in the district/city. This is to avoid duplicating ongoing efforts and to identify WaterAid’s added value.

Exercise 6 asks participants to identify activities for the project under each building block. To do this, participants should take into account the discussions from the previous exercises about the strength of the WASH system, the factors and actors that drive change, and what other organisations are already doing to strengthen the WASH system in the target area.

Exercise 7 invites participants to vote on the proposed activities to identify which ones are most achievable and impactful within the timeframe of the project.

Exercise 8 asks participants to reflect on the skills and resources required to deliver the project activities and achieve project outcomes.

Exercise 9 draws on the ‘Partnership Training’ exercises which encourage participants to think about the partnerships required for the successful delivery of the intervention.

This is a working document and will be regularly updated and revised.
Ice-breaker: Willingness & ability of government to deliver and sustain WASH for all

Time: 30 minutes

Objective: Participants express where their government is in relation to their willingness and ability to ensure everyone has access to WASH that lasts. This helps to understand how to balance our efforts between strengthening institutional capacity and government leadership versus supporting civil society and strengthening accountability for greater WASH sustainability and inclusion.

Method:

- Print out 4 x A4 copies with ‘Willing & Able’, ‘Willing but unable’, ‘Unwilling but able’ and ‘Unwilling & Unable’.
- Mark a grid on the floor using thick white tape
- Position print-out headings into each of the quadrants (see image below)
- Ask participants to stand in the quadrant where they think their governments is
- Facilitate a discussion about why participants are standing where they are. Tip: you could use some of the guiding questions on page 17 of the HRBA guidelines to facilitate the discussion.

Resources:

- Thick white tape
- 4 x A4 sheets with one bearing ‘Willing & Able’, one with ‘Willing but unable’, one with ‘Unwilling but able’ and one with ‘Unwilling & Unable’.
Exercise 1: Tactical Political Economy Analysis (adapted from PEA toolkit)

Time: 2+ hrs

Objective: to analyse and arrive at a common understanding of the overarching factors and actors that can drive and hinder change

Method: this exercise is made up of a number of steps (explained in detail in the PEA toolkit):

1. Step 1 – What is the issue we want to address? (The ‘Five Whys’). This step helps to go beyond the superficial visual symptoms of poor WASH sustainability and inclusion, to the more deep-rooted, systemic issues. This can help to identify WaterAid’s entry point.
   a. Tip: Categorise the issues identified using the WASHTech dimensions of: social, economic, environmental, institutional and legal, skills and know-how, and technology (see photo).

2. Step 2 – What is the situation now? This step helps to analyse actors involved, legislation and policies, country characteristics, formal and informal ways of working, and ways of thinking.

3. Step 3 – Why are things this way? This step helps to assess the interests, power dynamics, constraints, historical legacies, ideas, issues of inequality that can drive or hinder change.

4. Step 4 – What does this mean for our desired change? This step helps to map how the issues raised in step 2 and 3 might affect the change we want to bring about (identified in step 1).

5. Step 5 – Where can we go now? This step helps to plot a route towards change by homing in on the key actors, factors and decision-makers that can drive change.

Resources:
- WASHTech symbols – printed in A4 in colour
- WASHTech category headings – printed in A4 in black and white
- White tap (for the WASHTech grid)
- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens x 3 colours
- Post-it notes or small coloured card x 3 colours
- Hand-outs (see toolkit)
Exercise 2: What does an ideal WASH sector look like?

Time: 45 mins

Objective: Participants identify what critical processes and functions have to be in place to enable services, and hygiene behaviours, to be delivered to all, managed and sustained. This exercise starts to reveal the building blocks of the WASH system.

Method:

- Introduce session objective and task. Make link from Step 1 of exercise 1 (‘Five Whys’) about root causes of poor WASH sustainability and inclusion.
- Group work. Participants discuss what processes, structures and characteristics need to be in place to enable services, and hygiene behaviours, to be delivered for all, managed and sustained. They write these on post its – just three words max. They try to come up with a minimum of 4
- Groups nominates a reporter to feedback on the identified processes – reporter comes to the front to share cards.
- Facilitator groups these under headings that effectively group the different processes. These headings are the ‘building blocks’ (government leadership, active and empowered people and communities, coordination & integration, strategic planning, financing, monitoring, accountability and regulation, service delivery and behaviour change, environment and water resources, institutional arrangements and capacity).
- Discussion follows about the different areas identified and others that don’t fall neatly under a building block, and who leads on different areas of the system.
- Conclude by explaining what we mean by “WASH system” (“all of the people, behaviours, policies, processes, resources, interactions and institutions necessary for delivery of inclusive, lasting, universal access to WASH”) and the utility of system strengthening to bring about inclusive, lasting, universal access to WASH.

Resources:

- Coloured post-it notes
- Large wall space
- Marker pens
- List of the eight building block headings (to help facilitator to group the identified processes)
Exercise 3.1: **Building block analysis tool (annex 1)**

**Time:** 1hr30

**Objective:** Participants position where their district/city is in relation to the WASH system building blocks. They discuss why the district/city is where it is.

**Method:**

- Set up building blocks grid onto large wall space. Position building block headings down left-hand side of the grid. Position status headings along the top of the grid.
- Split participants into groups
- Ask each group to select a district and think about where their district is in relation to the different building blocks
- Ask participants to stick post-it notes onto the grid on the wall
- Discuss in plenary why participants have stuck post-it notes where they have and what other aspects of the system that lie outside this tool.

**Resources:**

- A3 size coloured print-outs of Building Block Analysis Tool - 2 per group (or 1 between 2 participants)
- Building block headings (Coordination & integration, Strategic planning, Financing, Institutional arrangements, Accountability & regulation, Monitoring, Service delivery and behaviour change, Environment & Water Resources, Gender and social inclusion)
- Status headings (Weak, Medium, Strengthening, Desired)
- Thick white tape
- Large wall space
- Coloured post-it notes
- Marker pens

To undertake more detailed analysis of each building block, see Annex 2 for sub-building blocks and guiding questions.
Exercise 3.2: Building block analysis – a gender perspective (annex 3)

Time: 1hr30

Objective: to gain a deeper understanding of whether gender equality has been considered within each building block and how to enhance gender equality in the WASH system.

Method:

- Provide participants with a definition of each of the new status headings.
- In small groups, read the definitions and plot what ‘level’ the sector is currently at in terms of addressing gender across each building block.
- Facilitate a discussion on why this is the situation (see full gender and system strengthening guidelines for guiding questions and examples).
- Next, facilitate a discussion on what ‘level’ of gender equality the group is aiming for through its work/project. Groups can agree on what is realistically achievable in the project, and how these outcomes could be achieved.
- Document these discussions and bring them into the following exercises and design of the intervention.

Resources:

- Practical guidance document to address gender equality while strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene systems (for definitions, guiding questions and examples to facilitate discussions).
- A3 size coloured print-outs of Building Block Analysis Tool - 2 per group (or 1 between 2 participants)
- Building block headings (Coordination & integration, Strategic planning, Financing, Institutional arrangements and capacity, Accountability & regulation, Monitoring, Service delivery and behaviour change, Environment & water Resources)
- Status headings (Harmful, Inclusive, Empowering, Transformative)
- Thick white tape
- Large wall space
- Coloured post-it notes
- Marker pens
Exercise 4: Power analysis

Time: 1hr45

Objective: to undertake a deeper analysis of the power relationships within and between different groups of people using four typologies of power. This helps to identify actions that might shift power dynamics and improve the participation of people who experience marginalisation.

Method:

- Split participants into small groups
- Provide each group with a pack of cards (see resources list)
- Provide each group with a print-out of the power analysis table from pg. 71 of the ENDI toolkit
- Ask each group to nominate a notetaker/rapporteur
- Ask each group to think about the 4 types of power (listed in the table print-out) in relation to the characteristic written on each card (40 minutes)
- In plenary, ask each group to present back the top discussion points for each characteristic listed (20 minutes)
- Facilitator to write down key points on a flip chart which has the power analysis table written on it
- In plenary, facilitate a discussion about what actions could be taken to shift power dynamics (30 minutes) Tip: you could use guiding questions on page 11 of the HRBA guidelines
- Facilitator writes down suggestions using different coloured pen on same flipchart

Resources:

- See page 70-71 of the ENDI toolkit
- Pack of small cards each with the name of a characteristic (appropriate to the context) e.g. person with disability, older/young person (age), gender, ethnicity, lower/higher caste, low/high education level, stronger/weaker health status, local government, national government.
- Flip chart with power analysis table
- 2 different coloured marker pens
- Pens
Exercise 5: What are others doing in the district?

**Time:** 1hr30

**Objective:** Participants identify which other actors are already working to strengthen the building blocks and shift power dynamics within the district to avoid duplication, ensure efforts are complementary and aligned, and identify WA’s added value is.

**Method:**

- Set flipchart paper on the wall
- Write one building block on each flipchart paper and draw a line across the middle (On the top half write ‘water’, on the bottom half write ‘sanitation’ and ‘hygiene’). Write up two additional flipchart papers for ‘Government leadership’ and ‘Active, empowered people & communities’.
- Introduce activity (high level objectives)
- Split participants into groups to discuss what others are doing to strengthen each building block of the WASH system
- Groups write down 2-3 words per post-it note about who is doing what in the district
- Groups nominates 1 person to stick up post-it notes onto relevant building block flipchart paper and relevant section (water/ sanitation & hygiene)
- Each group rapporteur presents what they’ve written on their post-it notes. If activities have been mentioned before, no need to mention them again.
- Group discussion to answer following question: Is everything captured here? Where are there gaps? Based on this, and the previous exercises, where could WaterAid’s added value be? Guide questions about trends in who is doing what and where WA can add value/support etc.

**Resources:**

- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens
- Post-it notes of 1 colour
Exercise 6: Activity identification

Time: 2hr+

Objective: Participants identify what gaps there are and where more work needs to be done to achieve sustainable, inclusive, universal access to WASH.

Method:

- Use same flipchart papers as previous session.
- Split into groups
- Groups discuss what more needs to be done under each building block to strengthen WASH sustainability and inclusion.
- Write down on post-it notes possible activities under each of the building blocks (max. 3 words)
- Stick post-it notes on relevant flip chart building block
- Plenary discussion to follow on what and why certain activities have been identified

Resources:

- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens
- Coloured post-it notes
Exercise 7: Activity prioritisation & feasibility

Time: 30 minutes

Objective: To identify which proposed activities are achievable within a set timeframe.

Method:
- Introduction to activity (5mins)
- Give each participant 4 sticker dots
- Ask each participant to stick one dot on the four activities they think are most feasible and impactful within the set timeframe of the planned project.
- Wrap-up plenary discussion – identify clusters of activities/outliers (and ask people to explain their decisions) (20mins)

Resources:
- Small sticker dots or marker pens (to identify priority activities)
Exercise 8: Mapping resources & skills required for successful implementation

Time: 1hr

Objective: Participants identify what internal resources are required to deliver the identified activities and achieve project aims

Method:
- Project list of resources/skills required to deliver planned activities:
  - Good understanding of national level policy environment
  - Good working relationship with district/national level government and other key stakeholders
  - Dedicated and experienced project manager who understands systemic blockages to WASH sustainability and inclusion
  - Sufficient finances to cover activity and staff costs
  - Ability to convene multiple stakeholders and facilitate discussions for improved coordination
  - Ability to support government to collect baseline of service levels and asset registry data
  - Understanding of and ability to use data collection and analysis tools (e.g. mWater, Excel)
  - Understanding of and ability to conduct life-cycle costing analysis
  - Ability to support district planning processes
  - Understanding of and ability to support district governments to contextualise national policy, strategy and plans
  - Understanding of and ability to support district governments to adapt and apply global/national monitoring indicators to the district level
  - Understanding of and ability to improve/optimise contracting and procurement processes (particularly for drilling)
  - Understanding of and ability to support local government to improve quality of implementation and selection of appropriate service options
  - Understanding of and ability to mainstream issues of gender and social inclusion into programmes
- Split participants into groups to consider the skills/resources and identify those which are available/required for effective delivery of activities.
- Plenary discussion
- Write down list of resources/skills still required.

Resources:
- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens
Exercise 9: Partnership mapping

Time: 1hr 30mins

Objective: Participants are clear on who they need to partner with to undertake specific activities and what the nature of those partnerships are.

Method:
- Identify all of the partners whom you think you will need to partner with to help deliver your activities.
- Write these down on a flipchart paper
- Draw a circle around the partners who are directly involved/central to the achievement of the project (primary partners)
- Partners outside of the circle are secondary partners
- Draw lines to connect the partners with one another, write along the lines the kind of agreement required and the resources that each partner brings to the work (for example, money, time, expertise, profile/reputation etc.)

(See the partnership training for full method & resources)

Resources:
- Flipchart paper
- Marker pens

Additional resources

Political Economy Analysis Toolkit
The PEA toolkit provides a structured approach for analysing how change happens; from the national to the local level. It can help shape our country strategies, programmes and even ‘everyday’ decisions. The toolkit consists of four different tools. These are complementary, but can be used separately as a stand-alone exercise, too. Each tool includes facilitation guidance, a set of core questions and discussion points, and participatory exercises to help visualise the political economy features being analysed. They are intended to help produce rapid good quality analysis, to increase our understanding of which strategies, tactics or decisions may be appropriate in the different contexts in which we work.
System strengthening and empowerment project design toolkit (Updated Sept. 2020)

Equality, non-discrimination and inclusion (ENDI) toolkit
The ENDI toolkit gives practical guidance and support on reducing inequalities in our programme and advocacy work. It introduces the most important equality, non-discrimination and inclusion (ENDI) principles, and includes practical activities, development tools and checklists for you to apply to your work with partners and communities.

Guidelines on embedding and integrating a human-rights based approach
A Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) can help to analyse the issues around inequitable power relations that prevent the poorest and most marginalised people from realising their right to safe WASH. This document provides guidelines for integrating the principles of an HRBA into programme design, and spells out some of the practical implications of adopting this approach, both at operational and organisational levels.

Making Rights Real tools
Making Rights Real (MRR) tools help to introduce the human rights concepts to local government officials and can be used as part of an ongoing process of engaging them. Making Rights Real tools aim to help you have constructive, solution-focused conversation about challenges local government officials face and inspire them to do better, using human rights concepts. Experiences of using Making Rights Real show that local government have not just shown willingness to address problems but have also taken action as a result.
System strengthening and empowerment project design toolkit (Updated Sept. 2020)

Annex 1
### Building block

#### Coordination & integration

- Humanitarian actors coordinated through WASH Cluster by UNICEF – no one working on long-term development. Integration in Health / Education/ nutrition / Social services OCHA Humanitarian Action Plan or government relief plans, no development plan. Hygiene components included without rigorous planning.

#### Policy, strategy and planning

- No coordination of agencies. No/limited integration of WASH into health, education, nutrition.
- Plan responding to donor priorities – sustainability / resilience building not addressed. Weak use of evidence based while planning for WASH components.

#### Financing

- Emergency spending directly through NGOs and UN Agencies.
- No fiscal decentralized spending. Donor spending on District Plan ("On Plan") – not covering lifecycle costs.

#### Institutional arrangements and capacity

- Focus on saving lives by providing access rather than on building life-saving institutions. Institutional mandates are often not clear.
- Institutions exist on paper but not functional. Overlapping, unclear roles and responsibilities for WASH.

#### Accountability & regulation

- No accountability mechanisms exist between service authorities/providers and users. There is no mutual accountability between government and development partners. Civil society is non-existent.
- Accountability mechanisms (…) exist on paper but few are used in practice. Feedback is often tokenistic and not used to improve service delivery. Civil society is weak, and there is little or no accountability of development partners. No national hygiene standards are set.

#### Monitoring

- Through WASH cluster and to donors.
- No common monitoring or review process. No plan to assess the programme effectiveness.

#### Service delivery & behaviour change

- Ad hoc emergency interventions. Hygiene programme focused on emergency kit distribution and knowledge improvement only. Sanitation interventions subsidized.
- Fragmented project/approach interventions. multiple missions, and reporting systems. No post implementation support. Programme only focuses on awareness raising rather than behaviour change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building block</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Strengthening</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; integration</td>
<td>Humanitarian actors coordinated through WASH Cluster by UNICEF – no one working on long-term development. Integration in Health / Education/ nutrition / Social services OCHA Humanitarian Action Plan or government relief plans, no development plan. Hygiene components included without rigorous planning.</td>
<td>No coordination of agencies. No/limited integration of WASH into health, education, nutrition. Plan responding to donor priorities – sustainability / resilience building not addressed. Weak use of evidence based while planning for WASH components.</td>
<td>Geographical coordination of agencies within the district. Pilot initiatives to integrate hygiene into health, nutrition, education. Plan in place to extend services but not to sustain them or build resilience. Plan included to conduct FR and creative process but partially operationalise.</td>
<td>Agencies aligned behind comprehensive district level strategy/policy. Integration of hygiene into ongoing health, nutrition, education programme. Credible plan to deliver sustained universal access and long term resilience. Thorough formative research and creative process are considered to plan and design WASH intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangements and capacity</td>
<td>Focus on saving lives by providing access rather than on building life-saving institutions. Institutional mandates are often not clear. Institutions exist on paper but not functional. Overlapping, unclear roles and responsibilities for WASH.</td>
<td>Partially functional institutions with weak capacity. Roles and responsibilities not fully clear for WASH. Absorption capacity of institutions are weak.</td>
<td>All necessary institutions and capacities are in place with clear roles and responsibilities with proper allocation of budget for WASH eg regulator, health, education, nutrition, HR, IT systems.</td>
<td>Accountability mechanisms are institutionalised, with government and development partners demonstrating and demanding mutual accountability for sector progress. Feedback is used to inform and improve service delivery/behaviour change. Strong civil society with duty bearers held to account. National guidelines on WASH standards operationalised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability &amp; regulation</td>
<td>No accountability mechanisms exist between service authorities/providers and users. There is no mutual accountability between government and development partners. Civil society is non-existent. Accountability mechanisms (…) exist on paper but few are used in practice. Feedback is often tokenistic and not used to improve service delivery. Civil society is weak, and there is little or no accountability of development partners. No national hygiene standards are set.</td>
<td>Mutual accountability for sector progress is emerging, and limited mechanisms exist for user feedback. Feedback is not systematically used to improve service delivery/behaviour change. Civil society gaining strength. National hygiene standards available but not used.</td>
<td>Accountability mechanisms are institutionalised, with government and development partners demonstrating and demanding mutual accountability for sector progress. Feedback is used to inform and improve service delivery/behaviour change. Strong civil society with duty bearers held to account. National guidelines on WASH standards operationalised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Through WASH cluster and to donors. No common monitoring or review process. No plan to assess the programme effectiveness.</td>
<td>Both coverage and post implementation support to all users fully addressed by duty bearer. Routine institutions capacitacated to continuously delivered / reinforce behaviour change. Programme focused on sustained behaviour change. A menu of service delivery approaches are available and are applied contemporaneously. The right approaches are defined for each context.</td>
<td>Both coverage and post implementation support to all users fully addressed by duty bearer. Routine institutions capacitacated to continuously delivered / reinforce behaviour change. Programme focused on sustained behaviour change. A menu of service delivery approaches are available and are applied contemporaneously. The right approaches are defined for each context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment and water resources</td>
<td>Water resource protection and management policies exist but are not implemented. Threats to water resources are poorly understood. No monitoring of water resources. Critical pathways for diseases transmission understood but no focus intervention to break pathways. No focus on changing social norms and behavioural settings. Disaster resilient technology often not considered.</td>
<td>Water resource protection and management policies exist but are poorly implemented. Threats to water resources are well understood but not responded to in plans. Monitoring is weak. Critical pathways for diseases transmission understood and key behaviours identified but intervention poorly designed and implemented.</td>
<td>Water resource protection and management policies are implemented and there is coordinated management across sectors. Threats to water resources are monitored and inform resilience planning. All critical pathways for disease transmission addressed focusing on key behaviours. Intervention focused on changing physical and social environment and disturbing behavioural settings with the provision of behavioural products. Disaster resilient WASH.</td>
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<td>Gender and social inclusion</td>
<td>WASH interventions reinforce gender stereotypes and / or put women &amp; girls at risk through lack of consultation with women &amp; girls and lack of understanding of gender-related country context</td>
<td>Women physically represented in decision-making, and sex &amp; age disaggregated data (SAAD) is required for all WASH interventions</td>
<td>Women actively involved in decision-making, and sex &amp; age disaggregated data (SAAD) is required and used for planning</td>
<td>Women hold leadership positions and are actively involved and responsible for WASH services &amp; decision-making.</td>
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### Annex 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building blocks</th>
<th>Building block description and, Suggested 'Desired' building block state (to be contextualised)</th>
<th>Sub-building blocks</th>
<th>Guiding questions to analyse strength of building block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Policy, strategy and planning | Description: Policies, strategies and strategic plans at the national and local government levels aim to achieve sector targets and help to mobilise resources, aligning stakeholders around a common vision. | • Policy Development and/or review  
• Strategy Development and/or review  
• Plan Development and/or review  
• Standard Setting | How well do WASH-related policies adequately address the critical challenges faced, including issues of inequality and sustainability?  
To what extent are sector policies transparent, inclusive, equitable and gender sensitive?  
To what extent are strategies for achieving policy objectives clearly defined and operational?  
Are annual plans developed through a participatory and inclusive process to achieve policy targets? |
| Institutional arrangements and capacity | **Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):** Coherent policies endorsed by Government have a clear poverty focus designed to address country specific challenges and priorities. Policies are supported by implementation strategies and plans are routinely developed and used by stakeholders. An enabling legal framework provides regulatory guidance. | • Clear roles and responsibilities  
• Staff performance management | How well do policies/plans establish realistic targets for service coverage and quality standards that progressively eliminate inequalities in access and ensure sustainability?  
Are institutional roles and responsibilities for WASH in different locations (rural/urban; household/community; schools; health care facilities) clearly defined?  
To what extent has decentralisation been achieved? Has both financial and decision-making responsibility been decentralised?  
Do the institutions responsible for WASH have the capacity and resources to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively?  
What skills and knowledge need strengthening to ensure the workforce have the required competencies and capabilities? |
| Coordination and integration | **Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):** Progressive decentralisation of sector functions to WASH institutions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Institutions possess the human, technical and financial resources required to deliver on their responsibilities. | • Sector coordination mechanisms  
• Sector working groups  
• WASH integration  
• Cross-sector coordination | How well do stakeholders (including NGOs) align their approaches with national policy and guidelines?  
Is there a mechanism to support collaboration and coordination between stakeholders in the sector (including rights groups, small scale private sector, media etc)?  
Is there an effective annual review process that tracks progress towards sector plans and targets? Are all relevant stakeholders involved in the review process?  
How well do government ministries responsible for WASH coordinate with each other (including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health)? |
| Financing | **Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):** Clearly defined sector budgeting process linked to a medium-term sector investment plan, joint | • Life cycle costing analysis  
• Financing strategies  
• Budget advocacy  
• Budgeting | How well are the life cycle costs of service delivery known and budgeted for by national and sub-national government and service providers?  
Do criteria exist for determining equitable allocation of funds and are they applied?  
Are there strategies to provide financing for ongoing costs, including large-scale capital and maintenance expenditure and replacement costs? Are there national guidelines on affordable tariff setting and tariff collection; and are these enforced?  
Has an adequate budget for the proposed scope of work set out in the annual WASH plan been agreed? What proportion of the budget was currently utilised? |

Guiding questions to analyse strength of building block

- How well do WASH-related policies adequately address the critical challenges faced, including issues of inequality and sustainability?
- To what extent are sector policies transparent, inclusive, equitable and gender sensitive?
- To what extent are strategies for achieving policy objectives clearly defined and operational?
- Are annual plans developed through a participatory and inclusive process to achieve policy targets?
- How well do policies/plans establish realistic targets for service coverage and quality standards that progressively eliminate inequalities in access and ensure sustainability?
- Are institutional roles and responsibilities for WASH in different locations (rural/urban; household/community; schools; health care facilities) clearly defined?
- To what extent has decentralisation been achieved? Has both financial and decision-making responsibility been decentralised?
- Do the institutions responsible for WASH have the capacity and resources to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively?
- What skills and knowledge need strengthening to ensure the workforce have the required competencies and capabilities?
- How well do stakeholders (including NGOs) align their approaches with national policy and guidelines?
- Is there a mechanism to support collaboration and coordination between stakeholders in the sector (including rights groups, small scale private sector, media etc)?
- Is there an effective annual review process that tracks progress towards sector plans and targets? Are all relevant stakeholders involved in the review process?
- How well do government ministries responsible for WASH coordinate with each other (including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health)?
- How well are the life cycle costs of service delivery known and budgeted for by national and sub-national government and service providers?
- Do criteria exist for determining equitable allocation of funds and are they applied?
- Are there strategies to provide financing for ongoing costs, including large-scale capital and maintenance expenditure and replacement costs? Are there national guidelines on affordable tariff setting and tariff collection; and are these enforced?
- Has an adequate budget for the proposed scope of work set out in the annual WASH plan been agreed? What proportion of the budget was currently utilised?
### Service delivery and behaviour change

**Description:** Service delivery and behaviour change. WASH should be available to all on an ongoing basis. Service options, management arrangements, technologies, procurement processes, quality control processes and behaviour change strategies are necessary to deliver inclusive WASH and sustain it.

**Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):** Defined models, approaches and standards for extending coverage / uptake and maintaining quality of services and behaviours. Models for service delivery could include working with utilities, private sector providers through market systems, through local NGOs, government extension workers, rights groups or other mechanisms appropriate to context.

### Monitoring

**Description:** Monitoring of sector performance enables progress to be tracked against targets and helps to inform where course correction is necessary. Ongoing service level monitoring using harmonised indicators, helps government to develop strategic plans identifying where they and others should invest in new WASH and target support to sustain existing WASH delivery.

**Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):** Sector information management capacity, agreed framework for performance assessment (equity, sustainability), access to information and independent monitoring mechanism of sector performance strengthened/established. Effective, regular and inclusive monitoring, evaluation and review of sector performance.

### Accountability and regulation

**Description:** Accountability and regulation. Governments are responsible for developing policies, laws and regulations and making decisions that affect their citizens. Whilst WASH commitments may exist on paper, they may not be implemented unless governments are held to account. Similarly, service providers, WASH users, donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society actors have responsibilities that may not be exercised unless they too are held to account.

### Service delivery and donors, strategies for sustainable sector financing. Effective financing mechanisms release adequate funds for delivery of plans on a timely basis. Joint financing agreements between government and donors, strategies for sustainable financing which covers new and existing services and behaviour change interventions.

### System strengthening

- Management models for inclusive service delivery and post-implementation support
- Quality control, contracting and procurement processes
- Asset management
- Private sector engagement

### Accountability

- How diverse is the range of users / stakeholders providing feedback through empowerment tools? Are regulatory mechanisms for WASH at a national, sub-national and local levels in place and operational? To what extent do they enable governments to hold service providers accountable?
- How are users / citizens able to hold service providers accountable for the quality of WASH services?
- How effective are mechanisms that enable users / citizens to hold governments accountable for WASH decision making?
### System strengthening and empowerment project design toolkit (Updated Sept. 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description:</strong></th>
<th><strong>How well are the barriers to achieving greater gender equality and social inclusion being addressed?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A clear legal and regulatory framework is in place that articulates the accountabilities of the respective providers of WASH services and service users. The framework is used to hold the providers, authorities and users to account. Transparent accountability mechanisms enable users to hold government and those responsible for service provision to account; as well as enable government to hold service providers accountable. Accountability mechanisms are used to explain decisions, allocations or performance, as well as inform future work.</td>
<td>Gender and social inclusion</td>
<td>How are women participating in sector forums, including coordination processes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of women and/or marginalised people in WASH decision-making/coordination mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td>How well is sex and age disaggregated data being monitored and used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex/economic disaggregated data captured in WASH MIS / indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do service delivery models address the needs of marginalised and vulnerable people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of women and/or marginalised people to engage in WASH decision-making/demand WASH rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent is investment in WASH prioritised/targeted towards most marginalised/in need populations/locations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Environment and water resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description:</strong></th>
<th><strong>How are water allocations determined in line with sustainable use, social equity and economic efficiency?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resource protection and management is coordinated and threats to water resources are monitored and inform resilience planning.</td>
<td>Environment and water resources</td>
<td>How are threats to water security identified and what process is in place to assess them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hydrogeological assessments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are plans to monitor priority threats developed and to what extent are monitoring plans used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water resources monitoring (water quality, groundwater levels, rainfall, surface flows etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>How effective has monitoring data been in managing and / or addressing realised threats?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are water allocations determined in line with sustainable use, social equity and economic efficiency?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catchment protection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Active and empowered people and communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description:</strong></th>
<th><strong>To what extent do people / communities have access to information about WASH e.g. coverage, water quality, budgets, planning processes?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowered people and communities are aware of and demand their rights to water and sanitation. They actively engage in planning, monitoring and providing feedback on WASH services to ensure their rights are met.</td>
<td>Active and empowered people and communities</td>
<td>How actively are users/communities engaged in planning and monitoring of WASH services to ensure their rights are met?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rights awareness and empowerment</td>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do users / communities know of and demand their rights to water and sanitation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO strengthening</td>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do marginalised people know of and demand their rights to water and sanitation?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Strong government leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested 'Desired' state (to be contextualised):</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description:</strong></th>
<th><strong>To what extent are government leaders ensuring WASH is well coordinated, planned, financed and monitored?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong government leadership is needed to ensure sustainable WASH is prioritised for investment, WASH interventions are coordinated and reach the most marginalised. Without government leadership, WASH interventions will be fragmented; unaligned to government policy and may not scale up.</td>
<td>Strong government leadership</td>
<td>To what extent do government leaders engage and listen to most marginalised people?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencing/ advocacy</td>
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<td>To what extent are WASH interventions aligned to government policy and plans?</td>
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<td>Capacity development</td>
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<td>To what extent do government leaders spearhead and/or initiate WASH interventions/programmes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment and analysis</td>
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### Annex 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQUALITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION &amp; INCLUSION</th>
<th>Harmful</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Transformative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination &amp; integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy, strategy and planning</td>
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<td>Financing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangements and capacity</td>
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<td>Accountability &amp; regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water resources &amp; environment</td>
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