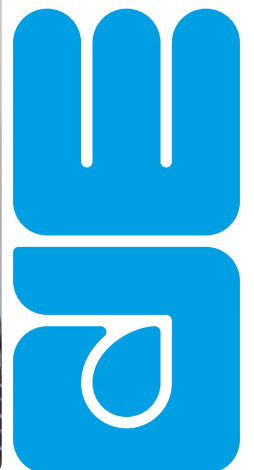




Framework

Partnership



WaterAid

Together, the documents below set out how we will achieve our vision of everyone, everywhere with clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) by 2030.

Global strategy

Our role and how we work

Quality programme standards and policies

Frameworks and delivery concepts

- Guidelines
- Toolkits
- Resources

The frameworks define our position, approach and programme standards for all our areas of work: a) our cross-cutting principles – human rights, sustainability, equality and inclusion, and partnership; b) our core programme approaches – systems strengthening and empowerment, WASH in other sectors, and hygiene behaviour change; c) our thematic/geographic work – water, sanitation, hygiene, and urban WASH. The frameworks point to accompanying guidelines, toolkits and resources to provide more detail on how to apply the frameworks in practice.

Our frameworks are developed through a collaborative process, involving staff across the global organisation and external stakeholders. This ensures our position, approach and standards are based on experience and best practice, making our work more effective. They are periodically updated as our learning, and that of the wider sector, evolves.

Our frameworks have been developed and approved through the Global Programmes Executive. The programme standards from all the frameworks are collated into our *Quality programme standards*.¹

Partnership framework

Position

We have always believed that working through partnerships is fundamental to achieving change at a greater scale and with greater sustainability.

History shows us that political leadership; capable and well-resourced water, sanitation and health sectors; and informed, motivated citizens are crucial to delivering clean water, decent sanitation and good hygiene. The scale of change necessary to achieving lasting, inclusive and universal services is massive, and is only possible through deep collaboration within and across sectors, building momentum through many voices, the spread of ideas and collective action.

We will only achieve our vision and mission through collaborating with a wide range of partners from government, civil society, academia and the private sector to improve policy and practice relating to WASH. Our role is to be a catalyst and agent of change, enabling local institutions to make and sustain long-term improvements in access to WASH.



A partnership is a collaborative arrangement between organisations that is based on a synergy of their goals and opportunities. Sometimes this involves a transfer of funding or resources between the organisations, but often it does not.

We work in partnership to bring together complementary strengths of different stakeholders so that together we make a bigger difference.



WaterAid/Ernest Randrianimalala

● “I can really say that this water project has made us closer to each other. Before, there was not that much cohesion between women from the village, but now we have something that keeps us together and that is really great.” A group photo of Sabine, third from right, and some members of the women’s association of Beanamamy village. Bevato commune, Madagascar.

Approach

Putting partnership at the heart of development is essential to achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is set out as SDG 17: revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

A series of international initiatives guide how to make the most of partnerships in development work:

- The international principles of aid and development effectiveness² emphasise country ownership of development, alignment of development partners behind local systems and objectives, and mutual accountability between development stakeholders.
- The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative has established a set of collaborative behaviours³ based on these principles, which governments and development partners need to adopt to achieve global WASH goals.
- With other international NGOs we have developed the Agenda for Change⁴ principles, to coordinate our work on WASH, in line with the SWA behaviours.

We are committed to applying all of these principles to our work. This framework sets out how, in practical terms, we do so.

Four values guide our practical approach to working collaboratively with others, in line with the overarching principles of the three initiatives mentioned:

- **Complementarity or synergy in working towards a shared vision:** recognising the contribution and added value each partner brings.
- **Mutual respect and support:** recognising that each partner has the right to determine its own organisational direction and priorities.
- **Accountability:** being answerable to each other as partners, and to wider stakeholders including communities, governments and donors.
- **Equity:** ensuring decision-making processes are as fair as possible, within the reality that unequal power relations exist, and striving to increase less powerful partners' capacities to engage.

Most partnerships in the WASH sector involve several stakeholders. To be effective we have to understand what our most important contribution is to each partnership, and maximise its value.

Each partnership is unique, affected by both the specific context of WASH in a country or district and the internal factors that affect individual organisations. External and internal factors change continuously, so we must treat all partnerships as dynamic and evolving. We must continuously assess and review our role in each partnership, taking into account feedback from partners, so that we remain effective and relevant.

- After the signing of the declaration of intent between WaterAid Nepal, Anglian Alliance, the Nepal Water Supply Corporation, local communities and the Government, Tripti Rai (Country Director, WaterAid Nepal) and Muni Sah (Mayor, Lahan Municipality) shake hands. Lahan, Nepal.



Country programme partnerships

Each country strategy is based on analysis of the WASH sector and stakeholders in that country, including analysis of power and political economy.⁵ These analyses should guide how we select who we form partnerships with, and what sorts of relationships will be most likely to bring about change in this context.

Different country strategies require different combinations of types of relationships and types of organisations in WASH and other sectors. These organisations might include:

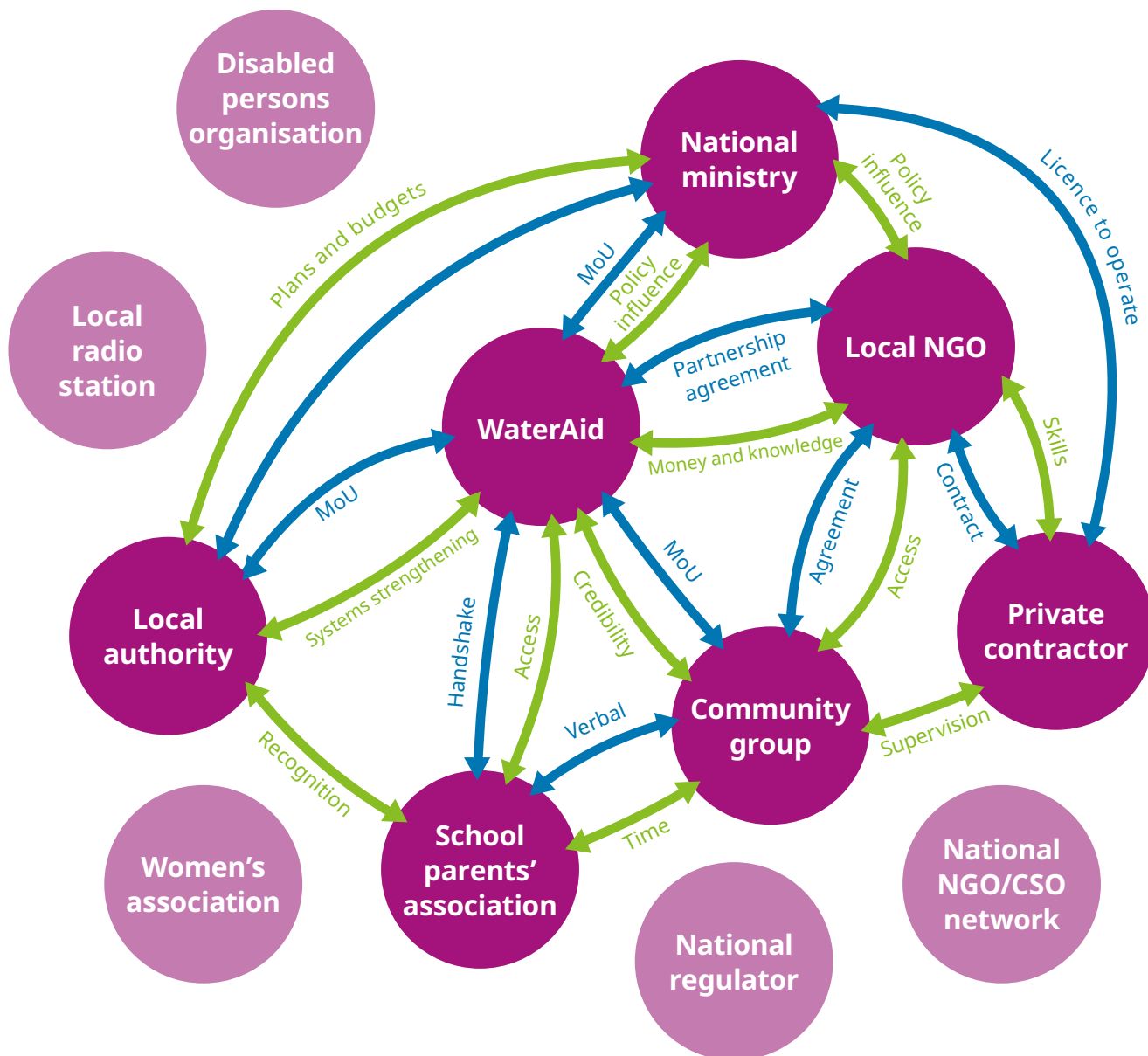
- **Government ministries, departments and agencies responsible for WASH, at all levels**, including local, national and state-level municipalities, regulators and public utilities.
- **Government ministries, departments and agencies in other sectors**, including, for example, those responsible for decentralisation, education, health, urban, social services, gender, youth and children.
- **Civil society organisations**: national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs); community-based organisations, local religious groups and faith-based organisations; networks and alliances; and advocacy and campaigning organisations.
- **Organisations working for increased rights and accountability**, including community groups, disabled peoples' organisations, women's groups, minority rights groups and groups of people living with HIV.
- **Private sector organisations**, including large, medium and small-scale private enterprises such as utilities, sanitation marketing entrepreneurs, spare part suppliers, masons and pit emptiers. Private sector trade bodies, platforms or initiatives should also be considered.
- **Academic, research and teaching institutions.**
- **International development partners**, including bilateral and multilateral donors, development banks, foundations and NGOs.
- **Media**, including journalist groups and unions, and television and radio broadcasters.
- **Embassies** and high commissions.

In each country the approach to partnership will be specific to the context and scope of the country programme. It will:

- Be based on an **analysis of stakeholders and potential partners** who will help to achieve the strategic aims and objectives.
- Set out **what sorts of partnerships with what sorts of organisations** will help to achieve strategic goals in that country or region, based on the analysis of sector blockages and opportunities for change.
- Identify **which organisations, or types of organisations**, to work with, and establish for each what kind of relationship is needed, and what our role in the partnership would be.
- **Ensure a strategic approach**, setting out long-term aims for each relationship, especially where the aim is to support empowerment and strengthening of the partner in order to strengthen the sector and empower citizens to claim their rights.
- **Incorporate a monitoring plan** to continuously assess and review our role in the partnership, including a mechanism for receiving feedback from partners and applying lessons to continuously improve the partnership's effectiveness.
- The partnership strategy should be reviewed regularly throughout the strategic period, and should be flexible enough to allow country programmes to take advantage of ad hoc opportunities for collaboration.

An example of complex partnerships involved in a programme at sub-national level

All programmes involve many stakeholders, who are connected through a range of formal and informal agreements, with resources flowing between them. These include tangible resources such as money, and intangible resources such as knowledge, contacts and skills. This diagram illustrates just one possible example. Every programme looks different.



- Partners involved in this project
- Examples of potential partners not involved in this particular project

MoU = Memorandum of understanding
 CSO = civil society organisation

Strategic fit

We facilitate and catalyse change, supporting sector stakeholders – including government bodies and service-delivery organisations – to fulfill their roles and responsibilities for ensuring citizens have WASH services that last. We also support citizens and civil society to hold governments to account and actively claim their rights to WASH. And we collaborate in global advocacy for more focus and resources for WASH.

We recognise that working with some partners will affect our relationships with others, so need to consider carefully what combination of partnerships will be most effective towards achieving lasting WASH services for all. We also recognise that all relationships bring risks. We need to be clear about what these are in each context.

We work collaboratively with others to achieve our global strategic aims,⁶ as set out below.



Equality

We collaborate with partners that help us to focus on the needs and rights of people who are being left behind. We bring people's voices to the centre of WASH programmes and policies that seek to address the barriers they face.

Sustainable services

We collaborate with stakeholders at all levels who advocate or are responsible for sustainable services for all. Our role is to support and strengthen their willingness and ability to reach everyone with services that last.

● Martin Nyanzi Mawejje, sanitation engineer with Water for People Uganda, visiting Turinawe Isaac, founder of Terikigaana Sanitation Services, one of the small businesses started for safe management of faecal sludge, Kalerwe, Kampala, Uganda.

Hygiene

We collaborate with stakeholders involved in developing, creating and implementing hygiene behaviour change campaigns at scale. This includes people across different sectors, including health and education, and specialists in creative marketing.

Integration

We nurture collaboration and partnerships with key stakeholders in other sectors, such as health, nutrition and education, to ensure they prioritise and resource WASH within their policies, programmes and budgets.

Rationale

1. WASH interventions implemented by international NGOs are unlikely to have lasting benefits if they are not fully embedded in national systems and do not have the local ownership needed to sustain them after the project ends.

The long-term responsibility for ensuring everyone has lasting access to WASH services lies with national stakeholders. These include national and local government agencies, community-based organisations, and public and private sector service providers. The state is responsible for ensuring the systems and institutions needed for everyone to have access to WASH are in place.

As an international NGO, our role is to be an agent of change, working collaboratively to establish locally owned solutions and institutional arrangements that will last, with government playing a central role. Working with a wide range of stakeholders to create lasting change through local ownership requires a combination of different partnership approaches.

2. National stakeholders responsible for ensuring everyone has sustainable services are often restricted by poor capacity and coordination.

Analyses across countries with poor WASH coverage show that capacity and coordination are major challenges for national stakeholders in the WASH sector.^{7,8} We collaborate with national and other international stakeholders to help improve individual organisations' capacities to fulfil their responsibilities. We also use collaborative approaches to improve coordination and links between stakeholders, and help to strengthen systems needed to sustain WASH services.

3. National stakeholders might have limited exposure to learning and experience from other actors and other countries.

Several factors might hinder national stakeholders from learning from others, including time, resources, capacity, and knowledge of international networks or research from other countries. As a global organisation specialising in WASH, we collaborate with practitioners, researchers and policy makers at every level. Through our partnerships we are able to link local and context-specific knowledge with global knowledge, WASH sector expertise and lessons from other sectors. Working in partnership at all levels enables us to increase learning exchange, knowledge generation and innovation between stakeholders. This also enables us to maximise our influence as a global organisation.

● Zarau Abdalla, water vendor at the clean water point in Kibonde Maji, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



4. People who are marginalised and have poor access to WASH face barriers to realisation of many other rights. It is not possible to address their marginalisation and lack of power by focusing only on WASH.

Access to WASH is essential in itself and the foundation for many other rights, but is often not a priority for people who lack access to all basic services and development opportunities. Organisations of or those working with marginalised groups bring in-depth experience of the challenges and realities they face. As an organisation specialising in WASH, we collaborate with those working for the rights of marginalised people, such as women's rights organisations and disabled people's organisations. Through this we can learn from people about their WASH needs, the barriers they face in accessing services and how we can best work together to address these. Supporting people to engage in decision-making processes and claim their rights to water and sanitation can help strengthen their capacity to claim other rights.

● Thames Water and the Central Region Water Board in Lilongwe, Malawi, signing a Frame of Corporation agreement for their partnership.



5. The scale of the problem we seek to address is too big for us to tackle alone. Globally, resources are limited and responsibility for WASH is spread across different sectors.

2.1 billion people do not have access to safely managed water and 4.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation. These are huge numbers, but we are determined to meet the SDG target of reaching everyone by 2030. The only way to do this is through collaboration, thereby increasing the scale and scope of our work, influencing a wider group of stakeholders and leveraging resources. This includes collaborating not only with stakeholders who work specifically in the WASH sector, but also those responsible for WASH in other sectors such as health and education. In this way we can increase the prioritisation of WASH and the quality of its implementation.

6. Advocacy that is not rooted in local context and driven by national stakeholders lacks legitimacy and credibility.

National governments are accountable to their citizens for the provision of WASH services. International NGO advocacy to influence national policy and practice lacks legitimacy if it is not driven by national stakeholders who are responsible for holding their governments to account. Similarly, advocacy at the global level by international NGOs lacks legitimacy if it is not based on genuine collaboration with local actors.⁹ Our legitimacy and credibility in service delivery and advocacy depend on our close collaboration with national and local stakeholders, including communities, so that we can draw on direct experience of every aspect of WASH. At the global level, collaboration with other reputable organisations strengthens our credibility and impact.

Quality programme standards*

Minimum standards

- M8.1 We will strengthen collaboration between governments, communities, private sector and other stakeholders, with governments taking the lead for sustainable WASH services.
- M8.2 We will identify partners on the basis of critical analysis of sector blockages, capacity gaps and opportunities.
- M8.3 We will establish clear governance structures and processes to ensure all partners, including WaterAid, comply with the agreement and are transparent and responsive throughout the partnership cycle.*
- M8.4 At the beginning of partnerships and projects we will agree strategies for exiting them, and regularly review plans for phasing out.*

Full standards: strategy level

- S8.1 We will forge new alliances and working relationships between governments, communities, and private sector and other stakeholders, ensuring governments take the lead in making sure sustainable WASH services are accessible to all.
- S8.2 We will develop a partnership strategy for each country, based on analysis of stakeholders and potential partners. This will set out what sort of partnerships with what sort of organisations will help to achieve strategic goals, and what sort of inputs would be required from WaterAid.

* While each thematic area of our work has its own set of standards, you will need to take a holistic approach, meeting all relevant standards in your programme work. See *Quality programme standards*¹ for the full list.

Full standards: programme level

- PG8.1 We will identify partners by analysing sector blockages, capacity gaps and key stakeholders, identifying opportunities for WaterAid to add value by collaborating with others to help achieve transformational change.
- PG8.2 We will base our partnerships on a clear understanding of and mutual respect for the identities, roles, contributions and interests of all partners and organisations involved.
- PG8.3 We will put in place clear governance structures and processes to ensure all partners, including WaterAid, comply with the partnership agreement and are transparent and responsive. We will ensure all parties clearly understand the implications of non-compliance.*
- PG8.4 We will develop plans for learning and capacity development with partner organisations, in line with the partnership's objectives. We will design these to address specific gaps we have identified through participatory capacity needs assessments, and will include plans to embed the knowledge in the organisation.*

Full standards: project level

- PJ8.1 We will implement an agreed transparent process for the selection and assessment of effective new partners.*
- PJ8.2 We will agree governance and accountability mechanisms to apply to partnerships.*
- PJ8.3 We will allow adequate time for communication and encourage equitable feedback, regular 'health checks' of the partnerships, and reviews.
- PJ8.4 We will include mutually agreed success indicators in the partnership agreements, and regularly assess them with our partners.*
- PJ8.5 At the beginning of partnerships and projects we will agree strategies for exiting them, and regularly review plans for phasing out.*

* Indicates specific minimum commitments that apply to formal partnerships.

Glossary

Partner

In its broadest sense we use the term partner to refer to any organisation we collaborate with to help reach our objectives. The term can also be used more specifically.

Partners or partnership

A focus on **partners** (for example, in a partner review) means a focus on the **organisations** that we work with. A focus on partnership (for example, in a partnership review) means a focus on the **relationships** between different organisations and how well the collaboration as a whole is working.

Formal partnership

Where we sign a partnership agreement setting out agreed objectives, roles, responsibilities, processes and deliverables of all parties. Formal partnerships often involve a transfer of funds.

Strategic partnership

Collaboration to achieve agreed common interests and long-term goals. For example, working with stakeholders who have important roles and responsibilities for ensuring sustainable WASH services.

Tactical partnership

Collaboration to carry out specific deliverables or achieve a particular outcome as part of a programme.

Transactional relationship

Where the focus is on delivering specific programme outcomes and there is less emphasis on capacity development or organisational development.

Transformational relationship

Where the relationship also aims to empower and build the capacity and profile of the organisations involved.

How we classify working relationships

The type of partnership arrangement varies depending on the long-term and short-term aims and objectives of the relationship.

Some collaborations are mostly **strategic**, in which partners are working together over a substantial period to create a solution based on their respective strengths. Others are mostly **tactical**, where the primary focus is to produce specific shorter-term project outputs.

Partnerships also range from those that are mostly **transactional** to those that are mostly **transformational**, designed to empower the partner to be more effective, independent and sustainable, as well as deliver specific outputs.

We have different working relationships that we classify into four broad types: formal partnership; collaboration; consortium; and contract.

1. Formal partnerships are based on signed agreements that set out agreed objectives, roles, responsibilities, processes and deliverables of all parties. These include objectives for the programme that the partnership is aiming to deliver and for the partnership itself. Organisational development is often included in the partnership goals. A partnership should contribute to mutual learning and mutual accountability.¹⁰

2. Collaborative partnerships are generally less formal and involve working with other organisations on knowledge sharing, advocacy or a specific activity. They do not usually involve a formal partnership agreement or significant transfer of funds, but partners may develop a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to express the shared intention of the collaboration and each party's roles and responsibilities.

3. A consortium is a group of organisations set up to pursue a common aim that no member of the group could achieve alone. A funded consortium set up to achieve specific objectives is bound by a formal agreement with defined roles and responsibilities. In this type, one organisation, known as the prime, is responsible for managing the grant and distributing funds to the other partners.

4. Contracts are agreements with suppliers of goods or services, defined by a contract that sets out the goods or services they will provide, the terms and conditions and the payment to be made. The supplier delivers the services or goods according to the buyer's specifications. A contract is not a partnership.

Many partnerships also involve **capacity development** of key stakeholders to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. Different partners bring different expertise to the partnership. Our role in capacity development varies according to the specific skills and needs of the stakeholders involved and who is best able to provide capacity development support to whom.

In all cases, developing and maintaining a working relationship between different organisations requires time, attention and a range of skills. It is important for all the organisations involved to articulate what partnership means in each context, to clarify expectations between partners and how the partnership will help both us and our partners to achieve strategic goals.

References

- ¹ WaterAid (2018). *Quality programme standards*. Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/quality-programme-standards
- ² United Nations (2015). *Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*. Available at un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships
- ³ Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). *The collaborative behaviours*. Available at sanitationandwaterforall.org/about/the-four-swa-collaborative-behaviours/.
- ⁴ *An agenda for change: achieving universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene by 2030*. Available at washagendaforchange.net
- ⁵ WaterAid. *Political economy analysis toolkit*. Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/political-economy-analysis-toolkit
- ⁶ WaterAid. *WaterAid's Global Strategy*. Available at wateraid.org/uk/our-global-strategy
- ⁷ Hueso, A (2016). *Is 'access to adequate and equitable sanitation' for all by 2030 achievable? Perspectives from sector experts on what needs to change to realise the Sustainable Development Goal*. *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development*. 6 (4): 650–57. Available at doi.org/10.2166/washdev.2016.078
- ⁸ Nathaniel Mason N, Binat Sarwar M, Mosello B and O'Leary D (2017). *How to reduce inequalities in access to WASH*. ODI for WaterAid. Available at odi.org/publications/10832-how-reduce-inequalities-access-wash
- ⁹ Dany C, Schneiker A (2015). *International NGOs: Experts, advocates and activists*. e-paper for Development and Cooperation. Available at dandc.eu/en/article/international-ngos-play-various-roles-global-politics-their-scope-influence-varies-do-their
- ¹⁰ WaterAid (2018). *Guidelines on partnership agreements*.

Resources

- WaterAid (2017). *Guidelines on finance partnerships*. Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/guidelines-on-finance-partnerships
- WaterAid documents on partnership. Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/partnerships
- WaterAid. *Programme accountability framework*. Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/organisational-monitoring-and-accountability
- Evans B, McMahon J, Caplan K (2004). *The partnership paperchase: structuring partnership agreements in water and sanitation in low-income communities, building partnerships for development in water and sanitation (BPD)*. Available at bpdws.org/bpd/web/d/doc_77.pdf?statsHandlerDone=1
- OECD. *Paris declaration and Accra Agenda for Action*. Available at oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm

Please reference this publication as:
WaterAid (2019). *Partnership framework*.
Available at washmatters.wateraid.org/partnership-framework

How we work and arrange our knowledge

This framework forms part of a body of documents that define how we work and how we arrange our knowledge, as shown below. For WaterAid staff, this framework and related documents can be found on our intranet page, KnowledgeNet, which is structured in the same way.

Our strategic aims	Sustainable services	Integration	Equality	Hygiene
Who we seek to serve	The poorest and most marginalised people			
What we work on	Water	Sanitation	Hygiene	
Cross-cutting principles	Human rights	Sustainability	Equality and inclusion	Partnership
Where we work	Large cities and towns	Small towns and growth centres	Rural and remote districts	Global and regional
How we bring about change	Our role and how we work			
	Systems strengthening and empowerment	WASH in other sectors	Hygiene behaviour change	
Project delivery concepts	Outline project delivery concepts			

Political leadership; capable and well-resourced water, sanitation and health sectors; and informed, motivated citizens are crucial to delivering clean water, decent sanitation and good hygiene. We will only achieve our vision and mission through collaborating with a wide range of partners from government, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Our role is to be a catalyst and an agent of change, enabling local institutions to make and sustain long-term improvements in access.

This framework defines our position, approach and programme standards for partnerships.



Visit washmatters.wateraid.org

Front top: Muluken Wondirad, Debre Tabor Water Utility Manager, assessing the water pipe network map, Debre Tabor, Amhara, Ethiopia. WaterAid/Behailu Shiferaw.
Bottom: "The commune has established ways of working and collaborating with people living with disabilities in the rural commune of Morondava, particularly in terms of helping and supporting them with their needs, and also in terms of making their lives easier inside the community." Kolo Frijof, Mayor of Morondava commune and Saidson shaking hands after their meeting. Mayor's office, Morondava commune, Madagascar. WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala.
Back: Viviana Penalver Gomez, Comejenes Community Council President, at WaterAid's water collection point in Comejenes, Colombia. WaterAid/Jordi Ruiz Cirera.

