

# Strengthening Engagement in the SWA Partnership at Country Level

## Summary of Six Case Studies

Commissioned by the SWA Country Processes Working Group in 2017



### Conclusions from the case studies:

- There is a range of experience of engaging with SWA at country level, not all of it positive
- Productive engagement has resulted in the SWA Framework providing a structure for country planning approaches and SWA being a catalyst for sector coordination and accountability
- Unproductive engagement has occurred where interaction with SWA has been limited to a few stakeholders and engagement has been in global level SWA meetings only, and not connected to other sector processes
- Pakistan is an interesting example of a country where the SWA Framework has had significant positive influence on sector dialogue and the planning process
- There is a need for the partnership to better connect with existing national and regional multi-stakeholder fora and processes, especially sector performance reviews such as JSRs
- There is a need for SWA to avoid generating requirements in support of the partnership rather than the country, thereby creating an additional burden on countries

### What is the background to the case studies?

In 2017, the Country Process Working Group of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership undertook country case studies in six countries - Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe - to look at the ways partners were working together at country level to strengthen country processes, and how these processes were supported or enabled by the SWA partnership. The intention was also to advise the partnership on how it could maximize its impact in driving progress in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector, and how SWA's activities (global high-level meetings, webinars, tracking of sector commitments made by governments) were adding value at country level. The case studies also examined how SWA's Framework of Collaborative Behaviours (CBs) for development effectiveness and fundamental sector Building Blocks (BBs), described in the figure below, was being applied in partner countries. This summary is designed to describe the main findings and the implications for the SWA partnership.

### The SWA Framework

The SWA Framework, developed by SWA partners working together, consists of the five foundations for a strong sector, and the four key ways in which developing countries and their development partners can improve the way that they work together to achieve greater development effectiveness. All SWA constituencies (governments, external support agencies such as bilateral donors and development banks, civil society organizations, the private sector, and research and learning organizations) are expected to work together to operationalize the Framework.

Partners structure their work around the **Building Blocks** that are the fundamental components of a well performing sector:



And adhere to the **Collaborative Behaviours**:



### How were the case studies prepared?

In response to outreach by the Working Group, SWA partners offered to initiate and/or resource case studies in a variety of countries that had been engaged in the partnership. The selection of countries was driven mainly by the government’s willingness to engage and the availability of a willing partner and resources. A SWA partner proponent helped to identify, support or fund an author and, in some cases, contributed in the drafting of the case study. The participating countries, proponents and authors are detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Case study countries, proponents and authors**

Country	Sponsor Partner	Case Study Author and Affiliation
Burkina Faso	IRC	Christian Bere, Consultant
Ethiopia	UNICEF	Abiy Girma, National WASH Program Coordinator
Madagascar	USAID	Ridjanirainy Randrianarisoa, WaterAid Madagascar
Malawi	WaterAid	Clare Battle, WaterAid, and James Mambula, Consultant
Pakistan	UNICEF	Ministry of Climate Change
Zimbabwe	UNICEF	Solomon Makanga, MakConsult

## What was the experience of case study countries regarding engagement with SWA and the application of the Framework?

### Burkina Faso

The Minister of Water and Sanitation of Burkina Faso participated in the High-Level Meetings in 2012, 2014 and 2017, and Burkina established a multi-stakeholder Commitment Monitoring Committee to monitor the country's HLM commitments and engage with the partnership. Since 2015, Burkina Faso has held a seat on the Steering Committee of SWA. However, the case study found that the broader sector community has little awareness of SWA, its activities and the Framework. SWA is perceived as a mechanism for monitoring against progress in the sector and, possibly, a way for those directly engaged to gain exposure to the global sector community.

While there is general support for the elemental parts of the SWA Framework, there are no specific plans to advance the Framework, and no defined mechanism or channel for SWA-related communications. Apart from filling in templates as part of monitoring the government's commitments tabled at SWA high-level meetings, or the completion of the country profile, there is no sustained communication linked to the SWA process. The case study revealed that the SWA partnership is minimally aligned with the sectoral dialogue and not at all with political dialogue at national level.

### Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a long history of implementing a sector-wide approach and considers itself to have embarked on a path like that of SWA in terms of endorsing Collaborative Behaviours and building blocks before the partnership evolved. In fact, in 2014, Ethiopia's experience was used to inform the development of the SWA Framework. The government has shifted towards a broader sector-wide approach and launched the One WASH National Programme, an integrated plan prepared by four key Ministries (Water, Health, Finance and Education), with the objective of universal access to WASH services. Ethiopia has attended all the SWA High Level Meetings to date and was the host of the SWA Sector Ministers' Meeting in 2016.

The case study found that Ethiopia has integrated participation in SWA within its established, locally driven, channels and structures for achieving universal coverage. The case study suggested that the government sees its main role in SWA as helping other countries learn from its experience.

### Madagascar

Madagascar has been a member of SWA since 2010, attending HLMs in 2012 and 2014 the SMM in 2016 and the FMM in 2017. However, the case study revealed that SWA activities are confined to the central level of the WASH ministry, and there is a lack of communication between the few institutions and sector stakeholders involved on SWA issues.

SWA is not perceived as improving collaboration, and SWA commitments were not consistently monitored and did not benefit from a systematic and in-depth follow-up at country level. The case study also revealed there was no specific contribution of SWA to improved sector financing or development of sector data and evidence; there is no sector information platform consistently used by donors or development partners. Most WASH actors are not familiar with the SWA Framework. A high rate of staff turnover in the WASH ministry, and changes in sector approach have been factors in the limited understanding of SWA and uptake of the Framework. SWA is

recognized for its ability to organize capacity building activities such as webinars and opportunities for discussion. Actors praise these for their ability to build sector knowledge, but would like SWA focal points to better promote them. Overall, broader engagement with the partnership is needed.

### **Malawi**

Malawi has been an SWA partner since 2012, and has participated in the FMM and the SMM in 2014, the 2015 Partnership Meeting, the 2016 SMM, and the 2017 HLM. In general, Malawi has taken a reactive approach to SWA, although there is now an SWA Task Force. Through this task force, sector stakeholders came together to brief the sector minister in advance of the 2016 SMM, and actively followed the preparatory process for the 2017 SMM. Like Burkina Faso and Madagascar, awareness of SWA, and related activity and communication, is concentrated in a small group of active members, in this case from the water ministry, UNICEF and WaterAid. Among donors and development banks there is only limited recognition of SWA. Among those who had heard of SWA, it was a tool to help partners push for universal access and to achieve the UN targets for water and sanitation (first the MDG targets, and then the SDG targets), with a specific focus on commitment generation. The case study identified actions to generate greater awareness and engagement (including embedding SWA processes within broader sector coordination mechanisms), and broaden understanding of, and engagement with, SWA beyond a small group. The case study noted that communication and guidance from SWA should be more explicit on the need for integration of the SWA Framework at a country level.

### **Pakistan**

Pakistan has been engaged with SWA since 2010 and attended the HLMs in 2012, 2014 and 2017. The Ministry of Climate Change and other stakeholders from Pakistan have attended and contributed to the SWA Steering Committee and working groups. After struggling with achievement of commitments tabled at the 2012 HLM, the Ministry created and led a national steering committee to drive the development of a smaller number of more focused commitments and related implementation actions. Based on strategic priorities shared by provinces, the national steering committee facilitated consensus among the public and private sector partners on the final commitments as well as their monitoring and reporting. The result was a list of five commitments that were widely agreed within the sector. Pakistan tabled these at the 2014 HLM and had achieved nearly all of them by 2017.

From 2016 onwards, Pakistan adopted the use of the SWA Framework at both national and provincial levels after learning about it during the SWA Sector Ministers' meeting convened in Addis Ababa. The Framework has been used to structure the Punjab WASH Sector Status Report in 2016, initiate the dialogue for establishing the baseline figures for SDG Targets 6.1 and 6.2, and initiate a Joint Sector Review process. This process is leading to the development of what is being termed "homegrown" commitments; practical and short duration commitments developed by WASH stakeholders participating in provincial JSRs, designed to address priority bottlenecks impeding the realization of SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 at provincial level.

### **Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe participated in the 2016 SMM in Ethiopia and the 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2017 HLMs. Zimbabwe has been a member of the SWA Steering Committee since 2015. SWA activity has been supported by a national multi-stakeholder coordination committee, which in turn receives

support from the National Action Committee (NAC), mandated to coordinate and provide policy guidance to the WASH sector. The case study indicated that consistent feedback on SWA activities to the broader stakeholder community has enhanced WASH sector awareness of, and commitment to, SWA activities and the SWA Framework.

The SWA Framework has assisted the Zimbabwe WASH Sector to realize the need to develop a stand-alone National Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy, comprehensive WASH Sector Master Plan responsive to the SDGs, and a National WASH Climate Change Response Strategy. From its original focus on SWA meetings, the coordination committee is now focused on a long-term national WASH sector Master Plan and the three relevant ministers are collaborating on sector funding and the potential to increase private sector engagement. The case study identified the need for support in developing country strategies for engaging the legislature; and for more opportunities for all WASH stakeholders to participate in SWA activities.

### Summarizing the range of experience

The case studies revealed a range of experience with SWA at country level. This range can be expressed in terms of two parameters: 1) engagement with SWA events, such as Sector and Finance Ministers' Meetings, and setting and following up commitments tabled at SWA meetings and 2) using the SWA Framework in planning and guiding sector activities. **Error! Reference source not found.**

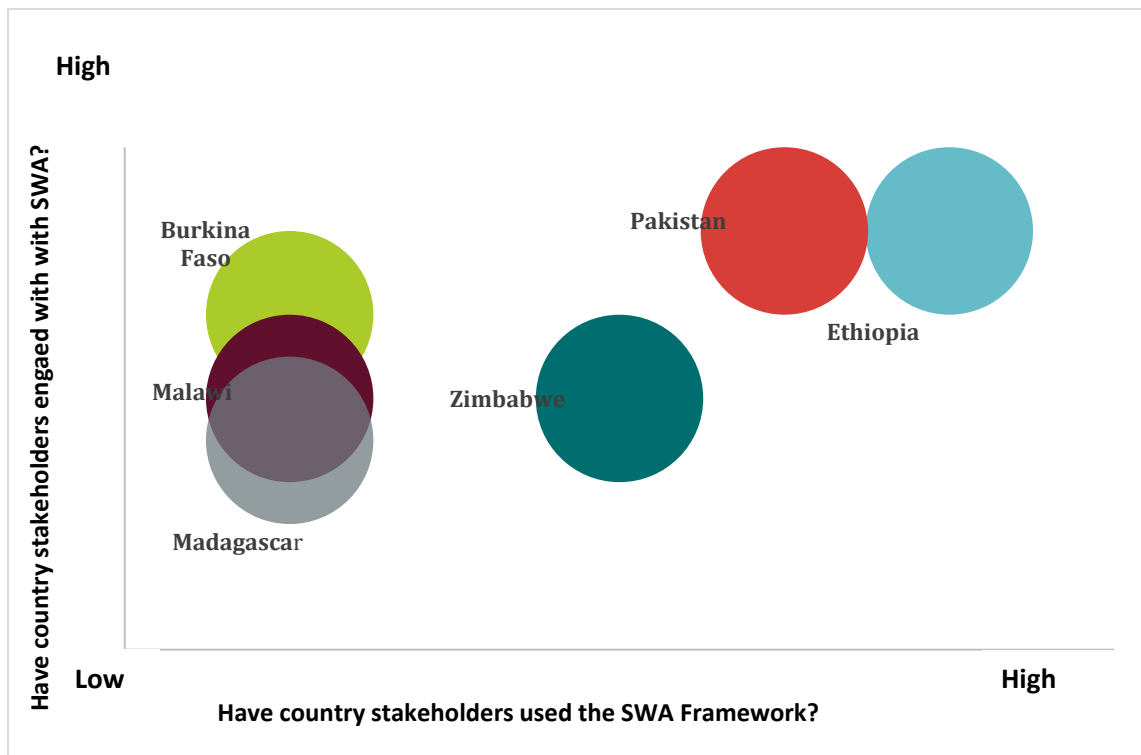
shows the indicators used in the case studies to measure these parameters.

### Engagement with SWA

Awareness and Use of Framework	Engagement with SWA
Small group is aware of the Framework	Attend HLMS and/or SMM, FMMs
Framework has been broadly disseminated	Participate in SWA webinars and learning events
Framework is generally useful	Develop commitments to table at HLMS
Framework is guiding sector planning	Monitor/Follow up on commitments
Framework is fully integrated in sector activities	Have channels for broad dissemination/participation in SWA activities

Using a somewhat subjective plotting, Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the relationship each country has with SWA in terms of the parameters<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the plotting of Ethiopia was problematic: Ethiopia does use the SWA Framework almost in entirety, but its adoption of the CBs and BBs predates SWA's endorsement of the Framework and even Ethiopia's engagement with SWA. In the plotting of Ethiopia's experience, this was tabulated as full awareness and use of the framework.



**Figure 1 Range of Country Experience with the SWA Partnership**

### What can we learn from the case studies?

The case studies identified two basic forms of engagement with SWA.

On the one hand, there is what can be termed “**productive**” engagement:

- Tools and knowledge broadly shared, and expanded, to develop Building Blocks and establish Collaborative Behaviours
- Engagement complements a country-led process, such as an ongoing sector dialogue for planning, monitoring, and course correction
- CBs and BBs provide a structure for country planning approaches
- SWA engagement serves as a catalyst for sector coordination and accountability

And on the other hand, what could be called “**unproductive**” engagement:

- Interaction with SWA and the Framework limited to a few stakeholders
- Engagement reactive to global SWA meetings
- Development partners not modelling collaborative behaviours
- SWA engagement and requests creating a parallel process and additional work

Across the case studies, there were four main ways in which SWA engagement added value at country level.

1. Ratification of, and support for, country-led processes
2. Catalyst for sector coordination and accountability
3. Structure for planning approaches
4. Tools, knowledge and activities to develop sector systems

Examples of this are:

- Ethiopia, where the SWA WASH Costing Tool was used.
- Pakistan, where SWA engagement brought about significant change, and coordination units were created in order to develop SWA commitments which then evolved to take on other roles, SWA tools were used, and, most notably, the SWA Framework was used as a construct for sector dialogue and planning.

#### Conclusions from the case studies include:

- SWA brings different value in every country depending on the context and needs
- SWA is better able to make a contribution to sector strengthening in countries which have already embarked on, or are receptive to, improved processes; this was the case in Ethiopia and Pakistan, for instance.
- Engagement around SWA commitments and the Framework can help coalesce sector coordination, planning and learning if the engagement is inclusive and integrated with on-going country processes.
- The “reach” of SWA within a country matters; where engagement with SWA is limited to a few stakeholders and is largely reactive to external requests and global meetings, the Framework is less likely to gain traction. Where SWA interaction is better integrated within a broader sector coordination body, there is better uptake of the Framework.
- Where a country has lost momentum for sector reform, the benefits of SWA engagement are limited. SWA country engagement has not triggered change where a locally-driven process is not already emergent.
- The behavior of development partners, and alignment of their programming, is vital to adoption of the Framework at a country level.

In addition, the case studies pointed towards improvements in:

**Communication and collaborative action** among SWA partners and country stakeholders, for instance by using a system of focal points

**Knowledge development and sharing**, shaping learning agendas and investments around identified demand at a country level, building from the available tools and resources of the SWA partnership and individual partners in country. The partnership should engage *all* constituencies

at country level, and in particular draw in Research and Learning partners to capture and share knowledge and tools and enable country-to-country learning.

## How can the SWA partnership use this learning?

### Recommendations

These lessons lead to the following recommendations for the partnership as a whole:

- There is a need to re-balance partnership activity with a primary focus on country processes, using the Framework as the main value-added of SWA;
- Partners working at country level, and the Secretariat, need to better connect with existing multi-stakeholder fora and processes, especially JSRs;
- The partnership, working through the Steering Committee and its global working groups, and the Secretariat, should avoid generating requirements in support of the partnership rather than the country, thereby creating an additional burden on countries.

### Actions across the partnership

The recommendations translate into a set of actions:

**SWA partners in each country** should map the value of SWA against country needs, based on government-identified priorities and the Framework, and maintain an in-country strategic partnership to deliver that value. The partners should take better advantage of existing platforms to kick-start the process, and expand them to ensure they are truly multi-stakeholder. Working with Government, partners should identify areas requiring targeted support, and seek this support among SWA partners. Where priorities cannot be addressed through the in-country SWA partnership, requests should be channeled to the Secretariat for support from the larger partnership.

**The SWA Steering Committee (SC)** should orient Partners to work together to embed the Collaborative Behaviours into their processes, instruments and incentives and strengthen existing country-led processes, with special attention to the cyclical process of planning, monitoring, review and course-correction. This process includes regular multi-stakeholder sector reviews such as JSRs. The SC should support partners to shape learning agendas and investments in response to priorities and demand identified at a country level, and should pro-actively work to harmonize, rather than duplicate, activities, training, meetings and events.

**The SWA Secretariat** should support the country partnerships by ensuring that in-country multi-stakeholder processes are the cornerstone of all activities. It should develop a strategy for engagement with regional bodies and fora whereby SWA could help broker better alignment of targets and resources.