

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a multi-stakeholder partnership committed to achieving universal, sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene services by 2030.

Based on eight country case studies, regional and global monitoring reports, as well as learning from other sectors, SWA partners have identified four key ways in which developing countries and their development partners can improve the way that they work together to achieve greater development effectiveness. By adopting these four collaborative behaviours described below, collectively we can improve long-term sector performance to deliver sanitation and water for all, everywhere and forever.



Why is behaviour change important?

Much of the investment by both developing countries and their development partners still comes through projects, often concentrating on direct infrastructure investment, and seldom within the framework of an overall sector plan that is geared towards long-term and sustained service delivery. This approach undermines the development of strong country systems and institutions that have the capacity to plan, finance, implement and monitor sustainable service delivery for all.

Delivering universal access to WASH requires strengthening and integrating capacities across the sector: the policy direction of line ministries responsible for WASH; the capabilities of core country systems; the reach of decentralized levels of government; and economy-wide capacity (private sector and civil society contractors and service providers) to construct and manage services¹. Harnessing these capabilities to build programmatic approaches brings economies of scale as well as extending reach and raising implementation rates beyond what is possible using project-based approaches. Programmatic approaches that align development assistance with domestic, private and user finance and which are mobilized against country led plans, systems and processes are more effective over time than financing infrastructure through project-based approaches.

The general principles of shifting from project to programmatic approaches are captured in the 2005 Paris Declaration, and subsequent Accra and Busan development effectiveness agendas. This series of SWA papers translate these general principles of aid effectiveness into a four collaborative behaviours specific to the WASH sector.

¹ AMCOW, 2011. *Pathways to Progress: Transitioning to Country-led Service Delivery Pathways to Meet Africa's Water Supply and Sanitation Targets*, Washington: World Bank.

As the above quote shows, motivating partners to make the shift from project-based to sector wide programmatic approaches remains a challenge – even in Ethiopia, a country that has a long history and a sophisticated discourse on aid effectiveness.

Across developing countries there is a lot of room for improvement. In 2013 over 85% of water and sanitation aid was delivered as project-type interventions²; the sector remains highly fragmented and alignment behind strong country systems has been limited.

Yet there are at least four overwhelming challenges that mean ‘business as usual’ will not be sufficient to reach everyone with sustainable WASH services without a change in approach:

- (i) **Growing populations** – Over the next 15 years the world’s population is expected to grow by over 1 billion people, nearly all of which will be in developing countries and half in Africa³. Services will need to be provided for these growing populations, in addition to those currently without access.
- (ii) **Financing shortfall** – Hutton (2012) estimated the total investments required to attain universal coverage of water and sanitation services to be in excess of US\$ 535 billion⁴. Closing the 2030 universal service delivery gap will require countries to mobilize and use all available financing sources⁵. Basic services, including WASH, will increasingly need to be provided by domestic institutions through a combination of public, private and household finance.
- (iii) **Infrastructure sustainability crisis** - Currently, around a third of rural water systems fail within 10 years and only 9% of urban utilities cover even O&M costs⁶. A lack of lasting hygiene and sanitation behaviour change means that in India more than half the people who have government latrines don’t use them⁷. To ensure lasting and permanent access to WASH, we need to move towards sustainable service delivery models, which can only be achieved through strong country systems.
- (iv) **Growing water resource sustainability crisis** - Many low-income countries are experiencing strong economic growth. Along with accelerating rates of urbanization and industrialization, enhanced spending capacity will translate into demand for higher service levels. While opening up greater opportunity for more sustainable financing, this growth in demand will also put greater stress on water resources, which will have to be carefully managed by the state.



² OECD CRS

³ UN Population Division data

⁴ Hutton. 2012. [Global costs and benefits of drinking-water supply and sanitation interventions to reach the MDG target and universal coverage](#)

⁵ WSP forthcoming

⁶ Komives, K. et al., 2008. *Water Electricity and the Poor: Who Benefits from utility Subsidies*, Washington DC: World Bank.

⁷ r.i.c.e. 2014. SQUAT Survey of of Sanitation Quality, Use, Access and Trends in rural north India

Addressing these systemic challenges requires changes in practice by both developing countries and their development partners. Without such changes, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets of universal access to water and sanitation by 2030 will not be achieved.

The Four SWA Collaborative Behaviours

SWA has identified four critical collaborative behaviours which, if jointly adopted by governments and development partners, would improve long-term sector performance and sustainability. SWA partners agree to:



1. Enhance government leadership of sector planning processes

Government leadership is essential for directing and coordinating resources – including external support - around nationally agreed sector priorities, strategies and plans. In particular, sector development requires a government-led, multi-stakeholder cycle of planning, monitoring, and learning. Where such sector planning processes are weak or not in place, partners should jointly support

efforts to build and strengthen them.



2. Strengthen and use country systems

Core country systems are the fundamental capabilities of government needed for the effective and transparent management of public resources, including those received through development assistance. These systems include: public financial management, HR management, statistics, procurement and contract management. Core country systems are key to financing capital expenditure for water and sanitation services as well as for monitoring and regulating services.

Government and partners should agree a set of intermediate steps to progressively strengthen and use country systems to develop, monitor and regulate water and sanitation services.



3. Use one information and mutual accountability platform built around a multi-stakeholder, government-led cycle of planning, monitoring and learning

In order to decide where to invest, how to sustain and improve water and sanitation services and to understand which policies and strategies work, it is crucial that sectors have reliable data and engage in critical joint reflection and adaptive management. Effective development cooperation requires appropriate,

inclusive processes that encourage all partners to demonstrate and demand mutual accountability for sector progress.



Build sustainable
water and sanitation
sector financing
strategies

4. Build sustainable water and sanitation sector financing strategies that incorporate financial data on all 3Ts (taxes, tariffs and transfers), as well as estimates for non-tariff household expenditure

Transparency and predictability of all resources is critical in allowing governments to exercise a leadership role in directing and monitoring sector investment. Sector financing strategies that incorporate financial data on all 3Ts (taxes, tariffs and transfers), as well as estimates for non-tariff household expenditure, and realistic estimates for all costs categories (including costs for building new WASH infrastructure and costs for governance and sector capacity strengthening), are critical components of effective sector planning in the medium and longer term. They are critical both to domestic accountability, and to the governments' capacity to hold external support agencies accountable and vice versa.

What next?

Experience from the health and education sectors, which have made greater progress on improving aid effectiveness than the WASH sector, suggests that a global platform such as the Sanitation and Water for All partnership has an important role to play in facilitating and monitoring improvements in collaborative behaviours across countries.

Going forward, SWA will be putting the four collaborative behaviours described in this paper at the heart of the Partnership's activities and processes. Partners are working to identify and agree the instruments and incentives for monitoring these behaviours, to enable partners to track performance, and hold each other accountable for progress towards more effective, sustainable and equitable outcomes.

The SWA partnership will provide a platform:

- For discussion of aid and development effectiveness, familiarizing SWA partners with concepts, terminology and good practice so that all partners have the confidence to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of aid and domestic sources of finance for WASH.
- For peer monitoring of development effectiveness, including the use of resources, to help donors and developing countries to understand the situation in each country and to propose specific solutions in each case.
- For dialogue on constraints identified within partner organizations to the adoption of the behaviours.
- To encourage and support countries in documenting their journeys towards greater development impact and sharing experiences.

Ultimately, achieving these collaborative behaviours requires changes in approach and risk taking by individual SWA partners. Commitment of stakeholders throughout the sector to do things better and differently is a critical step towards building a learning and adaptive sector, which will be needed to provide water and sanitation services for all.

By committing to these collaborative behaviours, and changing the way we work together, SWA partners can build WASH sector capacities for planning and delivering sustainable and equitable services for all.