

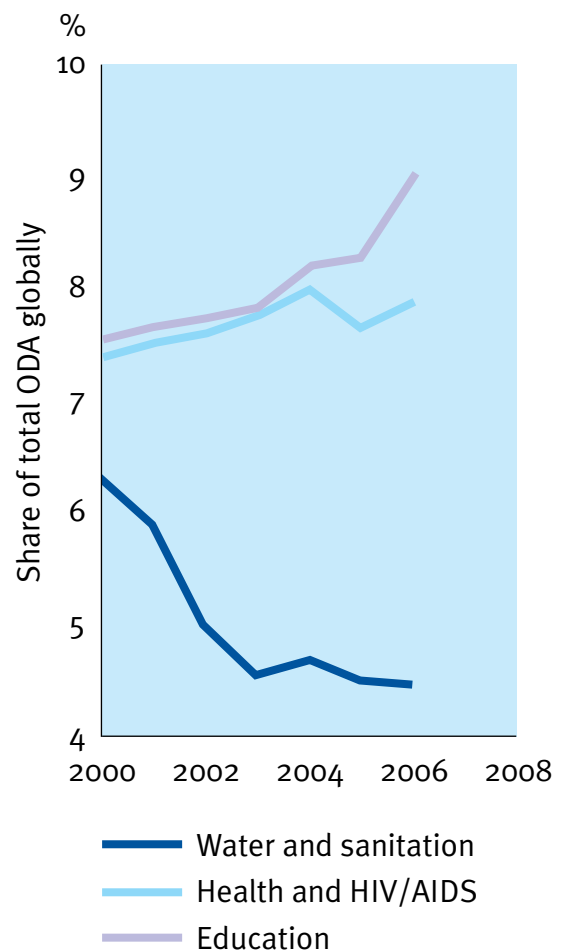
# A Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water<sup>1</sup> (GF4A) Focusing on national plans

February 2009

## The GF4A requires a 'development compact' ...

- The water and sanitation sectors receive low political and financial support among donor and developing country governments despite their critical role in development. While overall levels of aid have been rising steadily over the past decade, the share going to the sector has contracted
- Previous international declarations and calls to action on sanitation and water have faltered and financing efforts remain fragmented. There has been a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, and an absence of clear monitoring and follow-through mechanisms
- Many countries have made significant progress in formulating policies and plans, but serious and widespread capacity constraints undermine effective implementation and equitable targeting and distribution of resources. All too often, donors can contribute to this hollowing out of capacity when investments circumvent local institutions mandated to plan and coordinate

Five-year moving average aid spending on water and sanitation, health and education



Source: OEDC DAC database

<sup>1</sup> See WaterAid and Tearfund, 2008: *Sanitation and water – why we need a global framework for action*.

WaterAid's mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

We need concerted and immediate action to reverse the neglect of the sanitation and water sectors. The proposals for a GF4A offer the possibility of a **development compact** between donors and recipient governments that clearly sets out reciprocal obligations, regular monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to champion and ensure sector reforms.

## ... that responds to Paris and Accra and builds on lessons from other sectors

We need improved **aid effectiveness and mutual accountability**. The task of improving access to sanitation and water is achievable. The principles adopted in Paris (2005) (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability) and the maturation of in-country planning processes such as SWAs (sector-wide approaches) and Sector Programme Support offer tangible opportunities for reducing sector fragmentation, duplication and transaction costs and improving aid effectiveness. The ‘Paris Principles’ were further reinforced and elaborated in Accra (2008), with particular emphasis on donor commitment to strengthen government capacity to lead and manage development – this includes adaptation of such measures for fragile states.

Important lessons have been learned from similar processes in the education, health and agriculture sectors, where recent global initiatives (particularly the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative and the International Health Partnership) have contributed significantly to sector development.

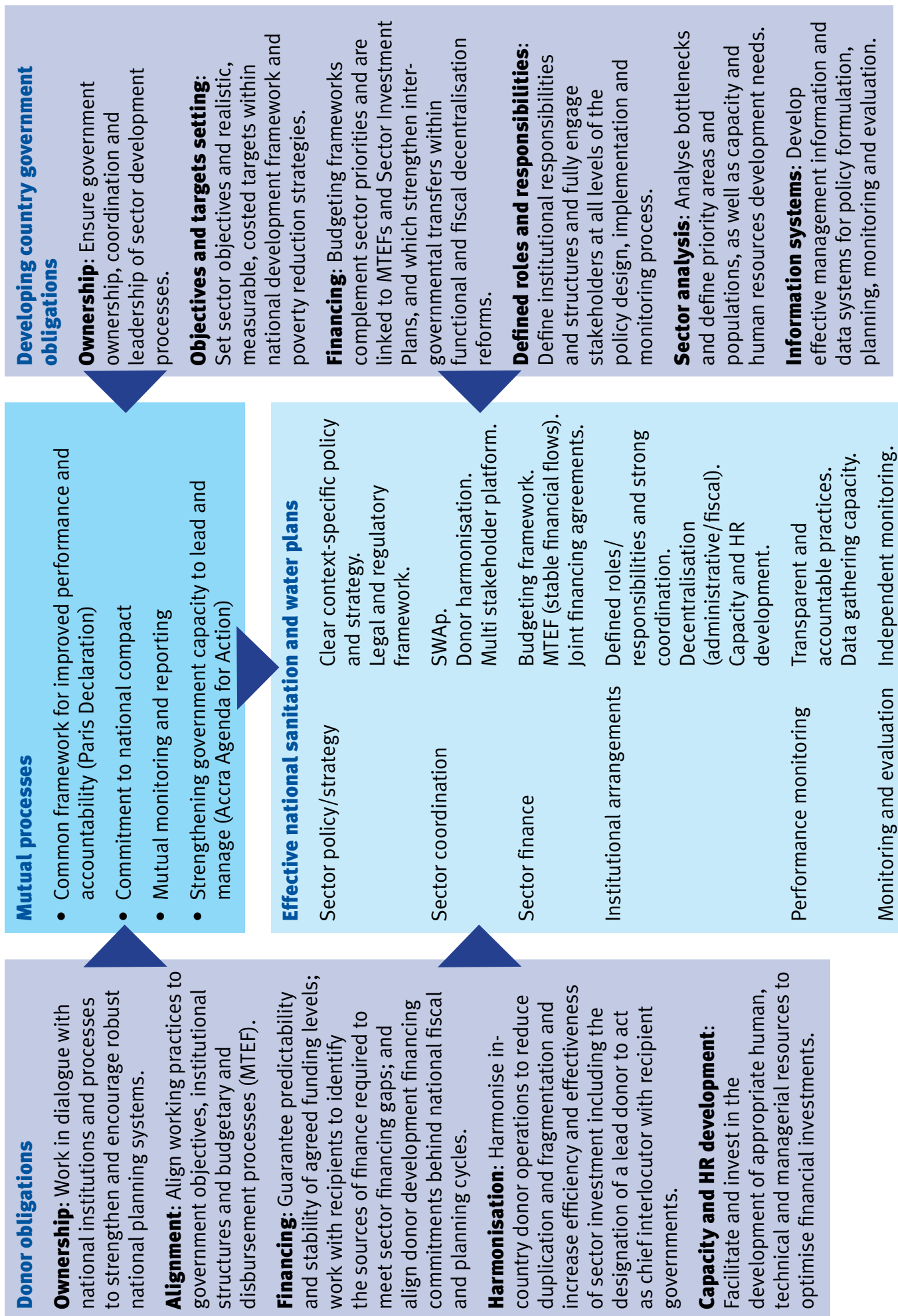
There is a lack of robust policies in the water and sanitation sectors, compounded by institutional fragmentation. What is required to begin to turn around some of these structural weaknesses is for donors to commit to supporting dynamic and adaptable government-led sector planning processes, embedded in the overall national development and poverty reduction framework, and engaging all key stakeholders – government, donors, civil society organisations and beneficiaries.

## ...with clearly defined processes of dialogue and agreed mutual obligations

The above points to the need for a serious commitment to a partnership in which donor and partner governments work with **negotiated and reciprocal obligations** – donors must harmonise and coordinate their support to reduce duplication and fragmentation and align their practices with country systems, while recipient country governments need to demonstrate a serious commitment to strengthening national planning systems. Aside from a small number of fragile states, the majority of developing countries are willing to demonstrate this commitment but frequently lack support for building the capacity to diagnose sector bottlenecks, develop strategies to address them, and develop plans to secure and efficiently utilise increased sector investments.

What is required is a set of **reciprocal obligations** on the part of donor and recipient governments that support the progressive realisation of, or strengthen existing, robust planning systems. These are outlined in the diagram opposite.

## Development compact



## ... and results in a consensus around national plans for scaled-up sector investment

WaterAid's review of donor literature, enhanced with key informant interviews,<sup>2</sup> has established that there is considerable consensus around what is required in order to scale up investment in the sanitation and water sectors on a sustainable basis, and there is agreement on the essential components that form robust national planning systems. These are outlined in the diagram on page 3, drawing on developing country case examples.

This list is not intended to serve as an exhaustive set of fixed benchmarks or thresholds that determine strong or poor performance; the nature of partnership leaves this open to revision. Rather, they should be viewed as **processes**, characteristic of robust national planning systems, that should be worked towards. Both donors and recipient country governments should aim to strengthen sector performance by investing in these processes. Inevitably, the dynamic nature of partnership will result in an overlap between the component parts; the consensus is that to achieve national plans/programmes which satisfy the requirements of both donor and developing country governments, requires a serious commitment on both sides to invest in the continuous analysis of systemic bottlenecks and to develop appropriate institutional and policy responses.

- 2 The analysis is based on a review of donor guidelines (general and sector specific, e.g. from bilateral donors as well as agencies such as The World Bank, WHO, OECD, The EC and UNICEF, among others), as well as analysis of existing country-level sector documents and academic literature on sector approaches. Key informant interviews were also undertaken with several donor representatives involved in the water sector.



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