



 WaterAid

# Timor-Leste

Country Strategy 2016-2021  
Summary



# Introduction to the Strategy

**While one billion people have moved out of extreme poverty in the last 20 years, roughly 10% of the world's population still live without safe water to drink and one in three people live without a decent toilet.**

As a result, 315,000 children die every year. This unacceptable situation causes immense suffering, and holds back human development. It particularly affects the lives of women, who carry the burden of collecting water and caring for sick children, and the lives of girls who often fail to finish their education because of a lack of toilets in schools.

Timor-Leste has faced its own challenges in this area. As a young nation with relatively new government institutions, Timor-Leste has faced significant difficulties in providing and sustaining water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services for its population. The recent history of conflict and civil unrest has also slowed progress. The country fell just short of achieving the Millennium Development Goal target of halving the percentage of the population without access to improved drinking water. Progress on sanitation has been slower – over the same period access to improved sanitation has barely increased. While coverage gains in urban areas have been robust, rural areas are lagging behind.

In 2015 WaterAid Timor-Leste celebrated ten years of service provision and advocacy dedicated to bringing universal access to sustainable WASH services. Our achievements over the previous ten years have included steady growth of funding, coverage, people, partnerships and impact, without compromising the quality of our work.

Our new country strategy has been developed against the backdrop of these achievements, WaterAid's new Global Strategy and the new United Nations Global Goals which aspire to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. It has been informed by our own analysis, and broad consultation with stakeholders.

This strategy summary sets out WaterAid Timor-Leste's intents from 2016 until 2021, the full strategy is also available. It is not a roadmap, but a compass, helping us find our way through the fog of complex systems over the next five years, discovering a path as we go along that will help ensure every Timorese citizen has access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services by 2030.

# WaterAid Timor-Leste

**WaterAid Timor-Leste has evolved since establishment during the instability of a newly-formed government and the phasing out of humanitarian aid over the past decade. Over the previous strategy period, we have had a strong focus on building the capacity and confidence of program staff and partner organisations.**

Our partnerships have expanded and evolved to ensure sustainable and equitable service provision with local organisations and government, bringing in strategic partners from other sectors locally, nationally and internationally. Our program has grown to support WASH service delivery projects in over 180 communities in Likisã and Manufahi municipalities, providing services to over 25,000 rural Timorese to date.

Throughout this period, we've promoted a number of innovations through our programs, including the introduction of Community-Led Total Sanitation, boundary-riders, community-based associations, citizens' engagement, and gender and inclusion approaches. During the most recent strategic period we've built upon this local base and developed credibility as a trusted partner of government and sector organisations, bringing lessons from the field to support national processes and policy debates. We have also led in raising awareness and building multi-sectoral alliances. Recently, we have supported the formation of the local non-government organisation (NGO) WASH advocacy network PN-BESITL, the first National WASH

Conference and the first national celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Management Day.

Reflecting on our work over the period of the previous strategy we understand that in order to catalyse transformational change in the WASH sector we need to continue to build on our work, deepening our focus on influencing, building capacity and strengthening partnerships as key ways of working.

In this new period, we will be ready to inform the sector on key issues such as service sustainability, behaviour change and building climate resilience, drawing on evidence from our research and programming. We will build multi-sectoral alliances championing universal access to WASH as fundamental to progress in all areas of sustainable development. This will mean building new capacity in our traditional partners while building stronger links with new partners. We're now well placed to support the sector, the emerging decentralized municipal administrations and build new multi-sectoral partnerships to bring about change.

## Our Vision

WaterAid's vision is a world where everyone, everywhere has safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

## Our Mission

WaterAid's mission is to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

## Our Values

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Courage
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Respect



# Opportunities and Challenges

## Social and economic inequality

Significant inequalities persist between urban and rural communities, men and women and for vulnerable people. In particular, vulnerable people in rural communities are often deprived of information about, and access to, services. Citizens' rights to WASH, while acknowledged, are not well understood, either by duty bearers or rights holders themselves. Civil society in the WASH sector also lacks capacity in this area.

Growing political interest in the area of accountability presents an opportunity to link government commitments with sector performance monitoring. There is also potential to develop partnerships between the WASH sector and rights-focused organisations, as well as strengthen links with the media, to raise awareness and progressively eliminate inequalities.

## Constrained sector capacity and performance

Human resources in Timor-Leste are limited and government systems are still developing. At the local level, both civil society and municipal government lack capacity to deliver quality WASH services, all while increased responsibilities are being delegated to them through decentralisation.

Capacity gaps within civil society and local government will best be addressed through

a municipality-wide approach for capacity building that empowers these actors, to plan, track, review and advocate effectively across sectors.

## Financing

Financing universal access to WASH in Timor-Leste will require a significant increase in public and private funding. Financial allocations for WASH to date have been highly variable and have not yet been sufficient to meet government targets. Efficient use of existing funds are also yet to be realised. With Timor-Leste's oil resource in decline, national budgets are projected to shrink. This will be exacerbated by expected reductions in donor budgets.

Increasing financing for WASH will depend on creating political will through both advocacy and leveraging of development partner's focus on integrated approaches, in particular with stakeholders in nutrition, health, education and environment.

## Sanitation and hygiene

Hygienic behaviours and sanitation are central to achieving many of the health-related targets on reducing disease and undernutrition and yet historically they have had a low profile and are not prioritised within strategies across sectors in Timor-Leste. Low levels of adequate sanitation and hygiene practice will require

concentrated action to accelerate national coverage.

These behaviours need to be prioritised across other sectors and by leadership, their importance understood and profile raised. There are some successes, such as the open-defecation free (ODF) initiative in Bobonaro that could be leveraged to generate this momentum.

## Climate change and resilience

Due to a rapidly growing population and the impacts of climate change, protecting and effectively managing vulnerable water resources is a critical issue for Timor-Leste. There is limited capacity and understanding of water resource management within both government and communities, due to its diffuse nature and lack of clarity on institutional responsibilities.

Effective water resource management and resilient infrastructure will be increasingly important as both the quantity and quality of communities' water resources are adversely affected. The WASH sector will need to enable communities to manage and protect their water resources, while building capacity within government to assess availability, plan and manage the resource across catchments.

# Making Change Happen

**In order to realise universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene we will need to catalyse change through the following approaches:**

## Fostering leadership

Political leadership, municipal administrations and other leading members of society in Timor-Leste will need to prioritise access to WASH to achieve universal access by 2030. We will work with our traditional sector partners and new partners in other sectors to drive a narrative for the WASH sector that complements the government's aspirations to build infrastructure and strengthen the economy, while developing commitment to provide sustainable services.

We will work to raise awareness and provoke debate as to commitments, targets, resource allocation and results for the WASH sector itself, but also in related sectors, such as health, education, nutrition and environment, where access to WASH will help achieve their targets.

## Building capacity

Against the backdrop of decentralisation to the municipalities during this strategic period, it is essential that service providers at the local level have the skills, resources and systems necessary to deliver and maintain WASH services.

We will work to build the capacity of local government and community groups charged with providing services in rural communities. We will also help establish effective mutual accountability mechanisms between civil society and service providers.

## Championing equality

The government, private sector, civil society organisations and community groups entrusted with providing WASH services must be able to fulfil their obligations to all citizens.

We will continue to develop and demonstrate approaches

for providing services for the poorest and most marginalised communities and people. This will include working with gender and disability focused organisations to address gender and disability-specific inequalities, while also working with WASH sector partners to address macro-level inequalities, such as the rural-urban divide, through strategic and accountable planning and monitoring.

## Promoting integration

Good child and maternal health, women's empowerment, education, nutrition, food security, housing and urban planning require safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Therefore, collaboration across key sectors including water, health, nutrition, education and the environment, and the cross-cutting issues of gender and disability will be essential for sustainable development in Timor-Leste.

We will work to build multi-sectoral alliances with civil society, academia, the private sector and government, championing universal WASH as fundamental to progress in all areas of sustainable development.

## Collaborating within the WaterAid Federation

Working collaboratively and sharing capacity across the organisation is fundamental to being able to deliver our strategic aims. We will link with WaterAid expertise in the region and globally to ensure we are continuously learning, adapting and striving to implement best practices in-line with WaterAid's global strategic aims. This will help us to build capacity, influence, support integration and strengthen approaches.

Through programme implementation and research in Timor-Leste, and pursuit of cross-country program sharing, we will inform WaterAid's global agenda and influence the WASH sector more broadly.



# Our Strategic Intents

WaterAid Timor-Leste's strategic intents have been developed after analysis and broad consultation with stakeholders, in alignment with WaterAid's global strategy. Each intent is qualified by WaterAid Timor-Leste's anticipated change, how we can add value and the pathways we will take to realise change.

## 1. Championing WASH as a human right

We will work to place a rights-based approach at the centre of service delivery. We can add value through raising awareness of inequality with NGO, government and private sector partners and demonstrate effective, collaborative approaches to addressing inequality.

### Pathways:

- Implement WASH projects that demonstrate effective approaches to addressing inequality in WASH service provision, in collaboration with strategic partners.
- Work with government and civil society to support communities to provide constructive input to government on WASH service provision, and support service providers to act and respond to improve services.
- Work with the disability sector to support provision of services to people living with disabilities and raise community awareness.
- Work with the gender sector to eliminate gender inequality in WASH services and raise community awareness.

## 2. Strengthening municipal government

We will work to strengthen local government capacity to deliver sustainable services through integration and collaboration. We can add value through capacity building that strengthens the local administration, as well as the local WASH sector, to plan, implement and link effectively across key sectors, including health, education and nutrition.

### Pathways:

- Strengthen community management groups, as well as the support networks linking community management groups with government systems.
- Support and strengthen national and municipal planning, monitoring and tracking systems, ensuring they align across the health, education and nutrition sectors, with a focus on sustainability of service delivery.
- Strengthen local government and service provider capacity with regards to staffing, systems and influence, in order for them to obtain the resources they require to deliver sustainable services.

## 3. Securing resources for WASH

We will work with government and civil society to monitor, analyse and mobilise resources for WASH. We can add value by strengthening civil society and linking constructively with sector ministries to influence political prioritisation, national budget processes and donor interest to secure more funding for WASH.

### Pathways:

- Support civil society and sector ministries to raise awareness on WASH issues and sustainable service provision with key decision-makers and influencers.
- Support civil society to monitor and analyse national budgets in-line with community and national priorities set out in the National Strategic Development Plan, UN Global Goals and the Sanitation and Water for All process.
- Work with health, nutrition and education sectors, including government and development partners, to prioritise action on WASH related to achieving health, nutrition and education targets.

Join us to reach everyone, everywhere with safe water, sanitation and hygiene by 2030!

#### 4. Promoting sanitation and hygiene behaviours

We will work on behaviour change through inter-sectoral promotion of hygiene and sanitation and support the development of an integrated national approach. We can add value by working on implementation and policy development, collaborating with others to build consensus on effective approaches to sustainable sanitation for all.

##### Pathways:

- Build upon the successes of the open defecation free (ODF) municipality initiative implemented in Bobonaro by replicating it in targeted municipalities, with a focus on strengthening approaches to supporting the most vulnerable.
- Work with the health and education sectors to prioritise action on sanitation and hygiene behaviour change.
- Trial and demonstrate approaches that result in sustainable changes to sanitation and hygiene behaviours.
- Build upon successes of national handwashing and sanitation behaviour change communication campaigns, and support broader rollout in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and sector partners.

#### 5. Climate resilience

We will work with communities to help them understand and manage the quantity and quality of domestic water, both of which are increasingly under pressure. We can add value through the demonstration of approaches to enable communities to measure, manage and protect their water resources, and build supporting capacity within local government.

##### Pathways:

- Demonstrate and adapt water safety planning approaches with rural communities, in collaboration with local government.
- Demonstrate and adapt community water resource management strategies with rural communities, in collaboration with local government.
- Utilise the evidence-base generated to share best practice and increase government and development partners resource allocations for climate-resilient WASH.

#### 6. Assessing our performance

We will work in an adaptive manner with the aim of learning from our achievements and failures and sharing with others. We will then reflect and respond to the changing context and lessons being learned on a regular basis to ensure we are effective and are doing the right things.

##### Pathways:

- Undertake an annual planning and review process which will document our ambitions, set the parameters around which we will work, support accountability and provide a structure to our knowledge and learning.
- Contribute to the evidence base on effective approaches to integrated sustainable development and develop engaging knowledge products, based on our research work and program learnings.





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