WaterAid Ethiopia Country Programme Strategy 2023–2028

Strengthening systems for universal, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change
Abbreviations and acronyms

CSO  Civil society organisation
EC   Ethiopian calendar (September-August)
EFY  Ethiopian fiscal year (July-June)
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HH4A  Hand Hygiene for All
IWRM  Integrated water resources management
JMP  Joint Monitoring Programme
M&E  Monitoring and evaluation
NGO  Non-governmental organisation
SDG  Sustainable Development Goal
SWAp  Sector Wide Approach
TSEDU  Total Sanitation to End Open Defecation and Urination
WASH  Water, sanitation and hygiene
Executive summary

WaterAid is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that is determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere. It has transformed the lives of millions of people living in poverty and exclusion over the past forty years.

In Ethiopia, WaterAid has been engaged in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector since 1983. We partner with communities, the Government, civil society organisations (CSOs), the private sector, media and academia on:

To date, we have reached more than six million people across the country through WASH programmes.

- WASH service delivery
- Capacity strengthening
- Evidence building
- Influencing policies and strategies on sustainable WASH services and behaviour change

WaterAid Ethiopia has developed this five year Country Programme Strategy (2023-2028) to align with WaterAid’s Global Strategy (2022-2032) and its commitment to ending the WASH crisis. The strategy is based on the country context, the expertise we have developed and the value we can add as well as the organisational successes we have had over the last three decades in the WASH sector.

Ethiopia is a country of 120 million people, of whom only 50% have access to basic drinking water services, 9% to basic sanitation and 8% to basic hygiene. Sustainability of WASH services and facilities is an ongoing challenge due to poor management, weak implementation and service provision capacity, and a lack of appropriate technologies. The country is also vulnerable to climate extremes that negatively impact on access to WASH services and their sustainability.

Rainfall variability and recurrence of droughts and floods often affect WASH services beyond food security and peoples’ livelihoods.

To address the core challenges facing WASH services and build on its previous successes, WaterAid Ethiopia has prioritised two aims for the strategy period:

1. Achieve universal, sustainable and safe WASH services in focused geographic areas to influence wider change.
2. Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change.

Country programme strategy
April 2023 to March 2028

Our vision: An Ethiopia where everyone, everywhere has sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene

Our aims

- Achieve universal, sustainable and safe services in focused geographical areas to influence wider change
- Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change

Our approach – strengthening systems

Service delivery and capacity strengthening
Influencing
Partnerships and alliances
Gender equality and social inclusion
Evidence, learning and innovation

National Sub-national Local
To achieve these aims, we will employ system strengthening as our core approach and employ the following approaches:

- **Service delivery and capacity strengthening**
- **Influencing**
- **Partnerships and alliances**
- **Gender equality and social inclusion**
- **Evidence, learning and innovation**

We will regularly monitor our progress on achieving the anticipated outcomes during the strategy period and remain open to the need for adjustments based on contextual changes.
WaterAid's ten-year Global Strategy (2022-2032) is committed to 'ending the water, sanitation and hygiene crisis for everyone, everywhere'. To contribute towards this global ambition, WaterAid Ethiopia has developed this five-year Country Programme Strategy (2023-2028) to align with the Global Strategy whilst taking into account its unique country context.

Our Country Programme Strategy is a bold organisational commitment to advance peoples’ access to sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change. In the following pages, we set out our priorities and anticipated changes informed by lessons learned from previous strategies and building on our successes and the value we have so far added to the WASH sector in Ethiopia, the region and beyond.

The Strategy outlines the ambitions we aspire to in line with WaterAid’s global directions and commitments. It also takes into account the Ethiopian WASH sector ecosystem because wider change will require strong partnerships and advocacy work beyond WaterAid’s direct influence.

Detailed programme and strategy resourcing plans are developed in a separate document to accompany this Country Programme Strategy.
Our vision: A Ethiopia where everyone, everywhere has sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our mission: Transform lives through sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our values: They define our culture and unite us across the many countries in which we work. They are at the very heart of WaterAid – who we are, what we do and how we do it. They are:

- **Respect**: We treat everyone with dignity and respect, and champion the rights and contribution of all to achieve a fairer world.
- **Accountability**: We are accountable to those we work with and to those who support us.
- **Courage**: We are bold and inspiring in our actions and words, and uncompromising in our determination to pursue our mission.
- **Collaboration**: We work with others to maximise our impact, embracing diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.
- **Innovation**: We are creative and agile, always learning, and prepared to take risks to accelerate change.
- **Integrity**: We act with honesty and conviction, and our actions are consistent with openness, equality and human rights.

WaterAid Ethiopia recognises that access to inclusive, sustainable and safe WASH is the foundation for prosperous and dignified lives for everyone. We strive to ensure that everything we do with our partners and allies has the greatest positive impact on the lives of people living in poverty and exclusion. The Country Programme Strategy aims to motivate people and institutions to help resolve the WASH crisis. It is ambitious and will require collaboration by a wide range of WASH actors and other interested actors/sectors.

We will engage with and influence service providers and the Ethiopian Government at national, sub-national and local levels to bring about impactful change, serving as a catalyst for sustainable and safe WASH services to households, healthcare facilities and schools in rural and urban areas.

We will work to improve WASH service delivery, develop capacity and management models and make strong evidence-based cases to demonstrate the positive impact that access to WASH has on society, the economy and public health, as well as its links with climate change.

Reaching the people most vulnerable to poverty, exclusion and climate change will be our guiding principle. We will ensure that women, girls, young people, people with disabilities, and other groups living with marginalisation are at the heart of all that we do.
Country context

Geography and economy

- Population of 120 million (2021) with an annual growth rate of 2.85%.
- Covers an area of 1.1 million km².
- Of the total population, 78% is rural but urbanisation is rapidly increasing.
- Low-income country with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita income of US$ 1016.
- The country currently consists of 12 Regional States and two City administrations with more than 1,020 woredas/districts and over 1,000 towns. Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, is the seat of the African Union Head Quarter and is the third largest diplomatic hub in the world, next to New York and Geneva. It is also home to the headquarters of the African Union.
- Ethiopia registered double-digit economic growth for a decade in the 2000s. However, it has stagnated in recent years, with an annual economic growth rate of 5.6% in 2021 due to factors such as conflicts in parts of the country, climate change (mostly drought), COVID 19 and high inflation.

Government of Ethiopia and WASH

The current Government has been in power since 2018. It has introduced reforms, including revising the restrictive CSO law. Among others, it has recently developed its Ten-Year Development Plan – Pathway for Prosperity (2021-2030) with the aim of transforming the country's development. The plan projects an annual average GDP of 10% from 2020-21 to 2029-30. This growth rate, if realised and sustained, is considered enough to reduce poverty levels from 19% in 2021 to 7% in 2030.

The plan projects an increase in the share of the service sector from 39.5% in 2021 to 42.1% in 2030. It also considers WASH to be a key component within the service sector. This is positive for the involvement of CSOs such as WaterAid as it will allow them to contribute to planned changes. Focus areas for the WASH sub-sector of the plan include:

- Improving access to climate resilient potable water supply and sanitation services.
- Ensuring the sustainability of existing potable water supply facilities.
- Harnessing renewable energy as an alternative source of energy for organisations supplying potable water in rural areas.
- Strengthening urban sewage disposal systems by building the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

The Government has also made commitments to expand climate resilient WASH programmes and implement the Universal Access Plan and the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) through its One WASH National Programme.

There has been an increase in WASH financing by the Government over the last three years. In the 2012 Ethiopian fiscal year, the WASH budget was Birr 65 million, rising to Birr 1.9 billion in 2013, and Birr 1.6 billion in 2014.
However, the budget, allocated from various sources, was only 10% of what is required to fully implement the One WASH National Programme. There were also challenges in using the allocated budget and implementing the programme due to lack of capacity in sector offices at various levels.

- **Only half** of the Ethiopian population has access to basic drinking water services
- **9%** has at least the basic sanitation
- **8%** to basic hygiene services
- **30%** of healthcare facilities have a basic water source on their premises, **59%** have access to basic sanitation, and **52%** carry out safe disposal of infectious waste
- The 2022 JMP report further indicates that only **15% of schools** have access to basic water, **40% to sanitation** and **5% to hygiene services**

2021 Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report.

Although Ethiopia has policies and strategies on WASH development and has been implementing WASH programmes for decades, progress towards better service levels is low, and tens of millions still lack basic WASH services. Moreover, many of the WASH services that do exist are not sustained due to poor management, lack of appropriate technologies, lack of capacity (shortage of technical staff and lack of planning skills) and the effects of climate change.

According to the 2021 National WASH Inventory report, the average rate of non-functioning WASH services was 19%, with the most non-functional schemes being those on spot (17.9%), and piped water supply systems (1.1%). Lack of access to WASH resources leaves women and girls more vulnerable to violence and they risk missing out on income generating and/or educational opportunities.

### Climate change and WASH

Alongside all of these challenges, the impact of climate change is adding more complexity to the WASH context. Ethiopia has a long history of drought, which is partly attributable to climate change. Drought has been increasing in magnitude, frequency and impact since 1970s.

It has been negatively affecting the quantity and quality of water, polluting the environment and water sources through flooding when it does rain, and threatening the sustainability of WASH services, peoples’ food security and livelihoods.

Records show that the mean annual temperatures increased by 1.3°C between 1960 and 2006 (Ethiopian calendar) and this is predicted to increase to 3.1°C in the 2060s. From 1981 to 2017, more than 70% of the country witnessed medium to extremely high seasonal and inter-annual rain variability. This has contributed to the seasonal drying of water sources in many parts of the country and is considered the second main reason for the non-functionality of rural water supply schemes.

Drought exacerbates the prevalence of water-borne diseases, epidemics and other infectious diseases. It lowers the water tables of shallow wells and reduces the volume of surface water. Seasonal flush and river flooding caused by rainfall variability and intensity often damage sanitation infrastructure and pollute shallow wells and springs. These are major risk factors for the spread of diarrhoeal disease in the country.

The Government has put in place policies, strategies and plans in response to climate change. Some of these documents include the:

- Climate Resilience Green Economy Strategy
- National and sectoral sustainable development plans that contribute to the
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- National Adaptation Plan
- National Determined Contribution
- Green Legacy Campaign
One WASH National Programme

Through the One WASH National Programme, the Government has been working to align and implement climate change into policies over the last ten years. The programme is a coordinating platform for WASH actors who also have climate resilience initiatives, including NGOs, United Nations Agencies, bilateral and multilateral organisations, development banks and the private sector.

Through all the efforts, good progress has been made to expand WASH coverage. However, around half of the country’s population do not enjoy their rights to WASH.

They miss out on basic WASH services due to:

- Lack of capacity to implement policies and strategies.
- Lack of effective WASH services management.
- Lack of climate resilient technology options.
- Lack of financing for new infrastructure and operation and maintenance of WASH schemes.
- Lack of technical support.
- Weak coordination between WASH actors
- Lack of effective monitoring mechanisms for decision making.

There are also critical gaps in implementing regulations that contribute to water security issues including water allocation, water permits and tariffs, and water pollution control, to name a few. Lack of coordination between high-water users also contributes to poor water resource management. WaterAid Ethiopia believes that the existence of policies, strategies, frameworks and plans presents an opportunity to implement its Country Programme Strategy.
Memuna Malima, 65, at home, who fell into a tardition hand-dug well located near her village in the Gololcha District, Bale Zone, while collecting water and has been unable to move as much since the incident that broke her leg.

"Now, we don't use the well anymore. We collect water from a tap. It's constructed near our house. I have stopped collecting water since that bad moment. My leg doesn’t allow me to move as I used to.

Besides, I can’t carry a jerrycan full of water now as I am getting older. But I am very much excited because now my family can access clean water near our house. It really makes our life easier. Now, my children fetch water. They don't travel far to get water. What is more, the water is clean."
Our role

Building on our strengths

In the last three decades, WaterAid Ethiopia has been one of the few international NGOs that focuses on sustainable and safe WASH services in the country.

We have established good relationships with communities, the Government and CSOs, and played a strategic role in developing WASH-related policies, strategies and frameworks such as:

- Water Policy and Strategy.
- Climate Resilient WASH Framework.
- WASH and Environmental Health Strategy.
- School WASH Strategy and Implementation Guide.
- Total Sanitation to End Open Defecation and Urination (TSEDU) Ethiopia Initiative.
- National Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) roadmap.

We have also:

- Spearheaded the development of service delivery and management models.
- Introduced technology options.
- Piloted gender responsive and climate resilient WASH.
- Provided technical support to the Government on WASH.
- Implemented systems strengthening as a way of working.
- Promoted the integration of WASH with other sectors through programme and policy work (e.g. health, education, climate).

Our niche role in the WASH sector involves:

- Demonstrating sustainable service delivery and management models (e.g. rural multi-village systems, utilities’ governance, professionalising WASH services management).
- Introducing WASH systems strengthening as a way of working in the sector.
- Implementing woreda- and city-wide approaches (e.g., Sustainable WASH project, Agenda for Change, the 20 Towns Urban WASH Capacity Strengthening Project, strengthening WASH services in healthcare facilities and schools).
- Developing the Woreda WASH Strategic Plan.
- Establishing a Management Information System for WASH.

Our work has also made a significant contribution to climate change action, including sharing lessons from piloting climate-resilient WASH services, and watershed management and restoration to improve water availability.

The outcome of the previous Country Programme Strategy evaluation confirmed that WaterAid Ethiopia is a pioneer in:

- Advancing the WASH agenda at policy and implementation levels.
- Piloting multi-village rural pipe water systems and management models.

The review also found that we have enhanced the management capacity of utilities and improved service provision and sustainability of WASH services through the 20 Towns Urban WASH Capacity Building Programme which considers WASH as a system.
Over time, WaterAid Ethiopia has developed strong technical capacity and a wide range of skills to demonstrate, innovate and provide support to the Government, communities and other WASH and climate resilience actors on effective delivery of WASH programmes.

As a result of our WASH interventions and engagements, we have learned the following key lessons:

1. **Strengthening WASH systems is key for the sustainability of services**
   We learned that challenges to the sustainability of WASH facilities do not have a single cause. They are the collective effect of all the actors (people and institutions), factors (social, economic, political, environmental, technological) and the interactions between them. We learned that strengthening systems requires strong Government commitment, partnership and collaboration among actors, and taking the time to learn lessons.

2. **Gender inequality and social exclusion must be built into programmes**
   We learned that it is essential to prioritise gender responsive WASH programmes and policy discourses, to listen to and consider the voices of women and girls, to engage men and boys, and to address disparities with a specific focus on gender equality and social inclusion.

3. **Impacts of climate change deserve special attention**
   We learned that because climate change puts all WASH successes at risk, it is key to develop climate resilient WASH models for scalability, and enhance our influencing work to align with climate change in WASH sector policies, programmes, plans and budgets.

4. **Innovation, appropriate technology and effective management models are key to sustainable WASH services**
   We learned that using solar powered technologies and effective management models enhances WASH service sustainability. We learned the importance of collecting, adopting and testing innovations, focusing on key areas such as improving sustainability, inclusivity and resilience.

5. **Partnerships and alliances**
   We learned that working with partners and alliances, including CSOs, rights holder groups, organisations for people with disabilities, women’s groups and the private sector, is key to achieving inclusive, sustainable and safe WASH services, and for learning, sharing and collective influencing.

**Our future contribution**

This Country Programme Strategy stands on the strong reputation, competence and innovative excellence that WaterAid Ethiopia has developed over time. We will build on our foundations and use the unique advantages we have demonstrated in developing inclusive, sustainable, safe and resilient WASH service delivery, management models and capacity strengthening work. We will endeavour to bring transformative change in the strategy years through strengthening WASH systems.

We are committed to further deepening our service delivery and capacity strengthening, as well as enhancing our work on gender equality and social inclusion, and youth and community engagement in WASH programmes. We will strengthen our woreda- and town-wide approaches, promote action research and pilot innovative technologies and approaches for wider use.

![Solar panels in Ambomesk, Ethiopia. March 2023.](Image)
In the strategy period, WaterAid Ethiopia will be known for:

- Demonstrating innovative technologies and approaches
- Piloting sustainable service delivery and effective management models for inclusive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services.
- Advocating for replication of these models and accelerating action towards universal access to WASH.

Learning and sharing via different platforms will be an integral part of our work as we encourage others in the wider sector to adopt proven solutions and reach those beyond our geographic focus areas.

We will prioritise developing sustainable service delivery and effective management models, along with behaviour change approaches that can be adapted to achieve sustainable and inclusive WASH services. All initiatives under this strategy will engage women, girls, young people, people with disabilities and other groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion.

We will foster partnerships and alliances with the Government, donors, research institutions, the private sector, academia, rights holders and networks to replicate best practice and strengthen coordination mechanisms in the WASH sector. We will also build our own technical skills and capabilities to provide professional and technical assistance to relevant Government offices, service providers, communities and other WASH actors.
Our aims

We have prioritised two key aims at the heart of our Country Programme Strategy. These aims take into account:

- The huge unmet needs and demands of people for WASH services in the country.
- Our programme excellence and the capacity we have built over the years.
- The strong partnerships we have established with the government and like-minded organisations.
- Our aspirations to further involve private sector actors.
- The relationships we have developed with multiple donors.
- Our strong funding base.

When prioritising these aims, we considered the country context, the value we can add to achieving sustainable WASH, existing initiatives, the enabling environment, commitments by the Government and other stakeholders, and future development prospects for the country.

Our two prioritised aims are:

1. Achieve universal, sustainable and safe WASH services in focused geographic areas to influence wider change
2. Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change

To implement our aims effectively, we will build on our strong foundations, transforming the success of our previous work and strengthening existing initiatives.

For universal access to WASH, we will build on our experience of:

- Sustainable service delivery and management models.
- WASH systems strengthening and the woreda- and city-wide approaches (Sustainable WASH Project, Agenda for Change collaboration, the 20 Towns Urban WASH Capacity Strengthening Project, strengthening WASH services in healthcare facilities and schools).
- Gender responsive and climate resilient WASH services.
- Watershed management practices.

Melaku, 17, an 8th grader in Merawi Primary School also a fundraiser in his school’s WASH club and one of the trainees of the hygiene and sanitation training, which was organised by WaterAid. North Mecha District, Amhara Region.
Women of Buriya Kebele standing by the edge of a hand-dug well where they used to collect water from, Buriya Kebele, Gololcha District, Bale Zone, Oromia Region.
Aim 1: Achieve universal, sustainable and safe WASH services in focused geographic areas to influence wider change.

Why this Aim?
Having access to WASH services should be normal for everyone, everywhere but, in Ethiopia, 50% of the population currently lacks access to basic water services, 91% have no access to basic sanitation and 92% lack hygiene services. In addition, WASH services frequently fall short of their intended purpose due to:

- Poor management.
- Lack of adequate budget.
- Inefficient service delivery models and technology options.
- Ineffective behaviour change approaches.
- Lack of inclusiveness in service delivery.
- Lack of community engagement, especially women, girls, young people and people with disabilities, in WASH actions.
- Lack of strong implementation and service provision at local levels.
- Lack of collective action.

All of these factors prevent people's needs and rights to WASH services being met.

How will we achieve this aim?
Over the strategy period, we will play a critical role in collaborating with the Government, communities, civil society organisations, academia, the private sector and financial institutions to make a tangible impact on universal, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change.

We will work with partners to strengthen WASH systems and reach households, healthcare facilities and schools.

We will generate service delivery and management models as evidence for influencing work (e.g. multi-village water supply services, professionalised community management models, improved utilities performance through the Cluster Approach, inclusive school WASH models). We will work with influential individuals and those in positions of power to influence change outside of the targeted woredas, towns and regions of Ethiopia.

We will work in partnership with other parties interested in WASH to address barriers in the WASH system such as coordination, regulation and water permits and tariffs. We will play a catalytic role in strengthening effective coordination of WASH actors at various levels to maximise impact.

What will we do?
1. Increase gender-responsive, universal, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change in selected areas, and influence wider change outside these areas

We will:

- Demonstrate appropriate and inclusive technologies, and effective and sustainable service delivery and management models.
- Establish strong WASH product supply chains.
- Rehabilitate WASH facilities.
- Increase gender responsive and inclusive WASH coverage and apply innovative and effective behaviour change approaches.
- Design and implement gender responsive and inclusive WASH interventions for households, healthcare facilities and schools.
- Influence change outside the geographic areas we are working in by generating, learning and sharing evidence.

1. Cluster Approach: is an approach utilised by WaterAid Ethiopia for supporting selected Cluster-Lead Towns that are linked with surrounding town water utilities to further cascade down the skills and capacity gained to more towns in collaboration with their respective zones.
2. Ensure women, girls, young people, people with disabilities and other groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion are included in WASH programming
We will:
- Engage women, girls, young people, people with disabilities and other groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion in WASH programme planning, implementation, monitoring and decision making to help transform gender equality and social inclusion.
- Improve gender relations and social norms.
- Include women and young people in the formulation of policies and in implementing and managing WASH services.
- Work with other actors to establish effective accountability mechanisms for gender responsive WASH programmes.

3. Strengthen the capacity of local actors and service providers to implement WASH services
We will:
- Strengthen the capacity of local WASH actors and service providers (e.g. professionalised community management models, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees (WASHCOs), utilities, municipalities, the private sector) to improve performance, service quality and sustainability of WASH services.
- Improve WASH sector actors’ capacity for coordinating, planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring, as well as using their budgets and budget absorption.

4. Enhance water resource and environmental management
We will:
- Work to build the capacity of woredas and support Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water Safety Plans to reduce pollution and land degradation and improve water and land use practices and waste management.
- Engage communities and increase their awareness, knowledge, skills and practice of water resource management, source protection, waste management, setting buffer zones and accountability mechanisms.

5. Support the development of costed WASH strategic plans, and financing and establishing a functional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system
We will:
- Work with WASH actors to develop and implement context specific and costed WASH strategic plans and institutionalise integrated M&E systems, including a management information system with harmonised indicators.
- Work with the Government and other actors at national, sub-national and local levels to formalise and contextualise WASH policies, strategies, roadmaps and guidelines.
- Advocate for increased financing and effective implementation of strategic plans.

Outcomes
- Gender responsive, universal, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change increased in selected areas and replicated/adapted outside the focus areas.
- Women, girls, young people and people with disabilities are included in gender responsive WASH planning, implementing, monitoring and decision making.
- Enhanced capacity of local WASH actors and service providers for effective implementation and service provisions.
- Enhanced water resources and environmental management practices.
- Costed WASH strategic plans and M&E system in place. Financing increased for implementing plans and sustainability of WASH services.
Alamerew Mulusew, a guard for the solar panel and water source, watering the mango seedlings, Sertekez village. Burie Zuriya, West Gojjam Zone.
Aim 2: Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change

Why this aim?

Ethiopia is one of countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Climate change affects WASH, so improving the resilience of WASH services is key for adaptation. Climate change affects the quantity, quality and reliability of water. Increased intensity and recurrence of droughts, floods and extreme weather conditions are manifestations of climate change, and these have a negative impact on the water cycle, further exacerbating the vulnerability of water and sanitation systems. Communities, especially women, girls, people with disabilities and groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion are impacted the most by climate change, despite doing the least to cause it.

Therefore, inclusive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services are needed to manage existing and future climate threats and to ensure services are restored quickly so that communities can bounce back. Water is a shared resource, and its use needs effective management. Women and girls are most affected as they shoulder the burden of collecting water. During the dry season, when water is scarce, their daily water collection becomes even more difficult, forcing them to miss out on economic and educational opportunities which negatively affects their decision-making roles.

How will we achieve this aim?

We will work to strengthen the resilience of WASH services and the behaviour of communities to cope with existing and future climate threats/shocks so that they can maintain water security, access sanitation services and follow good hygiene practices.

We will use a WASH systems approach for climate resilient WASH interventions and collaborate with climate resilience actors to pilot inclusive and resilient WASH services, as well as advocate for institutionalising effective preventive measures.

What will we do?

1. Demonstrate gender responsive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services and behaviour change

We will:

- Develop gender responsive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services and management models.
- Support communities, institutions and service providers to assess climate vulnerabilities, threats and shocks.
- Work for WASH to contribute to climate resilience and adaptation.
- Prioritise the voices and participation of women, girls, young people and other groups vulnerable to poverty and exclusion, as they are impacted the most in water scarce environments.

2. Engage with WASH actors and high water use sectors to improve water security and climate resilience

We will:

- Strive to improve the practices of high-water users and contribute to waters security and ecosystem protection.
- Generate evidence about the impacts of existing high water users' practice on freshwater resources.
- Create effective coordination mechanisms at various levels.
- Work with the Government, the private sector and other WASH actors to promote best practice in water use and management.
3. Build the capacity of sectors and communities to integrate and implement WASH and climate change policies, and influence investment in climate resilient WASH finance

We will:

- Build the capacity of the Government and communities to demonstrate how strong systems can increase a community's adaptive ability, reduce the vulnerability of communities and services to climate change, and reduce the cost of climate change impacts.

- Support the representation of women and young people in decision making processes. This will ensure that the voices of women and young people are heard and they have a role in formulating and implementing WASH and climate policies.

**Outcomes**

- Inclusive, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services and behaviours are demonstrated.
- WASH actors are effectively engaged with high water use sectors to improve water security and climate resilience.
- WASH and climate change adaptation are aligned with national policies and there is increased capacity to implement them.

**Linking the two aims**

To maximise our impact, we will link our aims wherever possible by integrating climate resilience interventions into universal access actions using WASH system strengthening. We will use evidence from both aims to enhance cross-learning and sharing.

**Geographic and target reach**

We will implement our Country Programme Strategy at national, sub-national and local levels. Our strategic regions will be Amhara and Oromia Regional States with the possibility of expanding to other regions based on strategic significance, emerging needs and opportunities, as well as context changes.

Our universal access to WASH aim will be implemented in selected woredas/districts and towns, and our resilience of WASH to climate change aim will be implemented in woredas/towns across the strategic regions, depending on their relevance, available resources and our growth ambitions.

Over the next five years, our target is to reach seven million people with sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change.

**Theory of change**

Access to universal, sustainable, safe and climate resilient WASH services and behaviour change is possible. We believe it is a person's right and achieving it will require effective collaboration with communities, the Government and other WASH actors, along with increased mobilisation and use of resources.

If we achieve the outcomes indicated for our two aims by employing strengthening systems as our core approach, with our five key areas of working cut across them, then we will certainly contribute towards this end.

This can only be realised, however, if the following core assumptions hold true throughout the strategy period:

- Economic and political stability.
- The Government prioritises WASH and is willing to adapt models for scale-up.
- Active engagement of WASH actors.
Ayelu Sinke, one of the residents of Woynima village, Jabi Tehnan District, who received WASH training organised by WaterAid in partnership with the local health bureau.

"I have learned about good hygiene and sanitation from health professionals. We used to open defecate before. It’s been almost a year since we constructed this toilet. Our life has changed a lot because of the toilet. We have never been to a health facility after this, we are living a healthy life. The place is clean, and we spend our days in our compound happily. It is also comfortable for us to work in our backyards."
Our approach

Achieving inclusive, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change requires strengthening of WASH systems. Therefore, we will use system strengthening as our core approach across the two aims.

We will focus on key building blocks, including:

- Service delivery and behaviour change
- Environment and water resources
- Financing, policy, strategy and planning
- Gender equality and social inclusion
- Coordination and integration
- Monitoring

We will work in partnership with national, sub-national, and local WASH actors on key components of the building blocks such as:

- Accountability and regulation
- Institutional arrangement
- Strong government leadership
- Community empowerment

The country WASH situation analysis and learning from our previous strategy demonstrate that we will have maximum impact when we align and balance service delivery, capacity strengthening and influencing across our work. We will pay equal attention to WASH interventions across the aims.

We will enhance our work on gender equality and social inclusion, partnerships and alliances, innovation and evidence generation, and private sector engagement.

Throughout our work, emphasis will be given to addressing the needs of women, girls, people with disabilities and other people vulnerable to poverty and exclusion. We will also focus on engaging communities and young people in planning, implementing, monitoring and decision-making processes.

We will make our work more transformative by:

- Incorporating systems strengthening as a core way of working.
- Piloting universal access to WASH in selected woredas and towns.
- Piloting service delivery and management models.
- Strengthening capacity, gender responsiveness and inclusivity.
- Working with and through partners, enhancing our private sector engagement and increasing our influencing work at national, sub-national, and local levels.
- Enhancing our innovation, evidence generation and knowledge management work to maximise impact and improve WASH services and behaviour change outside of our focused geographic areas.
Service delivery and capacity strengthening

We will support the Government (at national, sub-national and local levels), service providers and communities to expand and sustain inclusive and safe WASH services and behaviour change. Our service delivery and capacity strengthening work will demonstrate:

- Inclusive service delivery and management models.
- Innovative behaviour change approaches.
- Water safety and water resources management.
- Demand creation for WASH services and behaviours

Our work will include strategic planning, budgeting and life cycle costing, and helping to establish and strengthen platforms for data management and monitoring for informed decision making. We will strengthen the capacity of service providers and the Government (at national, sub-national and local levels) to better coordinate WASH sector actors and implement policies, strategies and plans effectively. We will strengthen the capacity of communities, associations and other relevant institutions to sustain WASH services and improve water resources and environmental management. We will also strengthen our engagement with the WASH sector, high water users, utilities and institutions.

Partnerships and Alliances

The achievement of universal, sustainable and safe WASH services and behaviour change will only be possible through collective action and leveraging there sources and strengths of various actors. We will build on our existing partnerships with communities, the Government, media, and CSOs, and expand engagements with networks, academia, women’s rights organisations and financial institutions towards our shared goals.

We will also enhance our engagement with the private sector around resource mobilisation, WASH supply chains, innovation and technology and supporting our work. Through partnerships and alliances, we will work to replicate best practice to maximise our impact and influence the sector for sustainable WASH services.

Since the soil in Cheboch village is being washed away by rain and running water, it was impossible for the farmers in the area to cultivate the land, however, after the intervention of Watershed management, the areas had recovered and become much suitable for cultivation. Merawi Town, North Mecha District, Amhara region.
Influencing

We will play a crucial role in advocating for inclusive, sustainable and safe WASH services by analysing the blockages to WASH policies, strategies, programmes, financing and coordination frameworks at national, sub-national and local levels.

We will use our experience and the lessons we have learned from our woreda- and city-wide approaches and systems strengthening to advocate for sustained, inclusive and safe WASH services, as well as increased climate resilience knowledge and better cross-sectoral coordination.

We will also influence in partnership with WASH actors and other stakeholders (CSOs, the media, bilateral and multilateral organisations, the private sector and rights-based organisations) by generating evidence and sharing lessons at national, sub-national and regional levels.

We will explore opportunities to work with regional and global organisations (e.g. African Union) to influence change and maximise our impact.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

We firmly believe that without gender equality and social inclusion, the impact we anticipate will not be achieved. Therefore, gender equality and addressing unequal power will be at the centre of our approach in all actions towards ensuring universal WASH access and climate resilient WASH.

We will closely work with women rights and people with disability organisations, like-minded CSOs, youth groups, and the Government towards this end. Across all our work, we will advance gender equality and social inclusion for long-term changes in social and gender norms and systems.

We will actively take a do-no-harm approach through our implementation of gender responsive WASH programming.

Evidence, learning and innovation

We will generate evidence and learning from the successes and failures of WASH service delivery and behaviour change interventions implemented by us and other WASH actors. This will allow us to continually learn, adapt and improve our work for greater sustainability and inclusiveness.

We will conduct action research in collaboration with others to generate evidence on inclusive, sustainable, safe and effective WASH services, management models, behaviour change and capacity building solutions with due consideration for women, girls, young people and people with disabilities.

With our partners, we will be innovative in using new technologies and adapting contextualised service delivery, management models and technical solutions, drawing on the evidence of others and sharing this learning widely. We will do this by expanding our partnerships with research institutions, academia and other knowledge-based organisations, investing in innovation and filling data gaps, including for those people excluded from WASH services.

Most importantly, we will amplify our work with communities to share and replicate locally led learning and knowledge to others for wider change at national, regional and global levels. WaterAid Ethiopia recognises that the context within which we operate is dynamic and so we will employ an evidence-based and learning-driven adaptive programming approach.

We will consider the strategic significance of emerging needs and opportunities to our broader vision and mission and respond to them to remain relevant and agile.
Mayet, Kalkidan’s cousin, washing her face with water from a tap installed in Kalkidan’s compound Chibah village, North Mecha District.
Our people

WaterAid Ethiopia will analyse the skill sets and competencies that are needed to realise our Country Programme Strategy commitments. We will retain and attract talent, and holistically develop staff capacity, including the appropriate skills and approaches we need to achieve our goals.

We will nurture our values amongst staff, employ staff engagement mechanisms, create a conducive working environment, and promote transformational leadership across the organisation.

We will identify and implement context relevant actions from the WaterAid East Africa Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2022-2025) to improve power relations, diversity and inclusion. We will also develop mechanisms to increase the number of female staff and people with disabilities in the organisation and strive to achieve a better mix during the strategy period.

Funding the strategy

WaterAid Ethiopia will increase and diversify its funding base, focusing more on larger, strategic, multi-year funding opportunities.

We will maintain and strengthen the strong bonds we have with the loyal supporters who have contributed to our success and mobilise more supporters in Ethiopia and abroad.

We will endeavour to mobilise high-value funding from sources that are aligned to our aims, including the private sector and the Government, and we will work with strategic partners in consortia to enhance our resourcing capacity.

To deliver the strategy outcomes over the five-year strategy period, we have planned a funding target of £20–30.5 million. We will engage and collaborate with potential supporters/donors to fulfil the funding needs.

Workeye Gulelat, 55, collects water from the public waterpoint in her village. Jara Town, Gololcha District, Bale Zone.
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WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Only by tackling these three essentials in ways that last can people change their lives for good.