



AGENDA FOR CHANGE



REPORT

GHANA WASH SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT NATIONAL LEVEL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

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Executive Summary

This national-level performance assessment of Ghana's WASH systems provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services across the country, integrating insights from district-level assessments. The assessment seeks to identify systemic gaps and opportunities for enhancing WASH service delivery and outlines recommendations to optimize resources, policy formulation, and system performance.

The assessment reveals both strengths and critical weaknesses across several key areas. Financial management for WASH services shows a disparity, with relatively strong funding for urban water but inconsistent and insufficient support for rural water, sanitation and hygiene. There is a notable gap in financial management and accountability, compounded by underutilization of innovative financing models and inconsistent funding, particularly for rural areas.

In terms of service delivery and infrastructure, while planning for infrastructure development is well-structured, challenges remain in construction quality, long-term maintenance, and service delivery disparities between urban and rural areas. Significant issues include inadequate fecal sludge management capacity and limited private sector involvement in service delivery.

The planning process benefits from comprehensive frameworks and strategies yet lacks integration of climate change considerations and faces challenges in stakeholder engagement and budgeting. Monitoring practices are hindered by inconsistent data collection, limited real-time analysis, and fragmented efforts that do not adequately cover all communities.

Water resources management is constrained by poor water quality, insufficient enforcement of regulations, and underfunding of the Water Resources Commission and related watershed management activities. Institutional arrangements and coordination show well-defined roles and capacity-building programs, but face challenges related to fragmented responsibilities, inconsistent communication, and lack of integration among stakeholders.

Regulatory and accountability frameworks are present but suffer from inadequate enforcement, limited monitoring capacity, and insufficient transparency. Additionally, learning and adaptation mechanisms are underutilized, with limited documentation and integration of lessons

learned into new programming.

The assessment highlights a complex landscape of strengths and weaknesses within Ghana's WASH systems. To address the identified issues, it is necessary to enhance resource allocation and financial management, improve infrastructure quality and maintenance, integrate climate resilience into planning, standardize monitoring practices, strengthen water resources management, streamline institutional coordination, and reinforce regulatory enforcement and transparency. Expanding knowledge-sharing platforms and better utilizing lessons learned will also be vital in improving the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH services across the country, ensuring equitable access and improved service delivery for all communities.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) is essential for public health, economic development, and overall human well-being. Ghana has made significant strides in enhancing WASH services over recent decades, driven by government initiatives, national policies, and collaborations with both international and local Non-Governmental Organizations. Despite these advancements, disparities persist, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas where access to clean water, adequate sanitation, and hygiene practices remain insufficient compared to urban centers. Challenges such as seasonal water scarcity, climate change impacts, economic constraints, and low levels of hygiene awareness exacerbate these disparities. In rural areas, unreliable infrastructure and inadequate maintenance further impede access to safe water and sanitation. To address these issues and improve WASH service delivery, a comprehensive understanding of systemic gaps is crucial.

In response to these challenges, the WASH sector in Ghana has increasingly embraced a systems approach to deliver sustainable services. According to IRC, WASH systems strengthening involves enhancing various elements of the WASH systems, such as institutional coordination, financing, infrastructure, monitoring, and regulation to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

To build on this approach, the Agenda for Change Ghana Collaboration, in partnership with the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, organized a national workshop to conduct a comprehensive assessment of WASH systems using the building blocks assessment tool. This framework provides a thorough evaluation of critical components, including service delivery, institutional arrangements, financing, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. The goal is to identify gaps, weaknesses, and bottlenecks that hinder effective service delivery and to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.

This national-level assessment aims to link insights from previous district-level evaluations, which covered 14 districts and identified specific gaps and opportunities for improvement in WASH services. By comparing district-level findings with national perspectives, this assessment will help to understand how local system performance aligns with and influences national-level WASH strategies. It will also engage stakeholders, optimize resource allocation, and establish a baseline for tracking progress in WASH

service delivery across Ghana.

1.2 Objective of the Assessment

The objective of the national-level WASH systems performance assessment is to evaluate the effectiveness of WASH systems across Ghana by linking insights from district-level assessments with national-level perspectives, to identify systemic gaps and opportunities for enhancing WASH service delivery.

1.2.1 Specific Objective of the Assessment

The specific objectives of the assessment include the following.

- i. Assess and analyze the gaps and weaknesses in the current WASH systems at the national levels to determine how these challenges impact the delivery of sustainable WASH services
- ii. Examine how findings from the 14 district-level assessments align with national-level WASH system performance assessment.
- iii. To gather insights and recommendations for improving WASH services and provide evidence-based recommendations for optimizing resource allocation, policy formulation and enhancing system performance.

2. Concept of the WASH systems Strengthening

2.1 Overview of Agenda for Change

Agenda for Change is a collaboration of like-minded organisations that have adopted a set of common principles and approaches, who work collectively to advocate for, and support national and local governments in, strengthening the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems required to deliver universal, sustained access as outlined under Sustainable Development Goal 6. The collaboration was established in May 2015 to support, amplify, and promote WASH systems strengthening across membership countries. Agenda for Change coalition employs a collective action approach to achieve systems strengthening.

The Ghana collaboration is made up Catholic Relief Services (CRS), WaterAid, World Vision, PATH, Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) and IRC.

2.2 Overview of WASH systems performance assessment using the Building Blocks Framework

To deliver positive change towards water, sanitation, and hygiene service delivery, a systems-wide approach is critical as it tackles key building blocks of the water, sanitation, and hygiene sector. System strengthening involves taking actions and supporting interventions that are considered likely to strengthen one or more elements of a whole system. This includes strengthening both the factors (technology, financing, regulation, coordination, service delivery, etc.), as well as the capacity of actors and their inter-relationships, to improve the quality and sustainability of WASH services and ensure that all populations are served. WASH systems are made up of complex, interconnected components referred to as building blocks that help the WASH systems to function. A strong and resilient WASH sector is achieved if more building blocks are strengthened. The agenda for change coalition identifies eight (building blocks) which work together to achieve functional WASH systems.

The building blocks include institutional arrangement and coordination, service delivery and infrastructure, monitoring, planning, finance, regulation and accountability, water resources management and learning and adaptation.

2.2.1 Institutional arrangements & coordination

This building block focuses on sector policy and planning, service provision, and the existence of service authority. In addition, the building block seeks to clarify the mandates and roles, and responsibilities of various sector actors as well as assess their capacity. Furthermore, the block highlights the coordination mechanisms in place that lead to harmonized action within the WASH sector and with related sectors.

2.2.2 Service Delivery Infrastructure

This building block focuses on the availability of clear frameworks, capacity, and roles that exist, including procurement, construction, and asset management (including development and maintenance) for delivery of sustainable WASH services. Additionally, the block assesses the availability and appropriateness of technologies and service delivery models for the context.

2.2.3 Monitoring

This building block focuses on the availability and status of national and subnational monitoring frameworks and their use by all parties and actors to measure and report on the quality of services delivered (service level). The block further assesses the use of data to improve the quality of services on a routine basis.

2.2.4 Planning

This building block focuses on the availability of clear frameworks for the development of plans and budgets at all levels of government and all levels of service providers, as well as whether there is clarity about and capacity for their development.

2.2.5 Finance

This building block focuses on availability of clear frameworks and funding for financing service delivery, including full life-cycle costs, and clearly identified sources for each component.

2.2.6 Regulation & Accountability

This building block focusses on the existence of a clear regulatory framework. Additionally, the block focuses on clarity of the regulatory

functions with clear separation in roles between regulators and service providers. The block also prioritizes the existence and application of regulatory capacity. Equity and accountability mechanisms are considered under this block.

2.2.7 Water Resource Management

This building block focuses on the availability and implementation of clear framework for the allocation and management of water abstraction and water quality. Additionally, this block assesses systematic practices of catchment protection, planning for multiple uses of water, dialogue platforms for water resource disputes, and effective arrangements for hydrological monitoring.

2.2.8 Learning & Adaptation

This building block focuses on the existence of capacity and frameworks to capture lessons learned and to adapt and update service delivery models, approaches, and the wider building blocks.



3.0 Methodology

The methodology followed for the performance assessment of the WASH systems at the national level is summarized below.

- i. Stakeholder identification and engagement
- ii. Organization of building blocks performance assessment workshop.
 - a. Reviewed the performance assessment report from 14 districts
 - b. Reviewed previous WASH systems performance assessment report.
 - c. Conducted the national level assessment of the performance of the WASH systems.
- iii. Data analysis and reporting.

3.1 Stakeholder Identification and Engagement

Stakeholders were identified from various sectors, encompassing local government authorities (including departments), development organizations, private sector actors, media and regulators.

Following the stakeholder mapping process, formal letters were prepared and sent to all identified stakeholders, soliciting their participation in the building blocks performance assessment workshop in Accra. Stakeholders were identified from diverse operational and thematic areas.

3.2 Building blocks performance assessment workshop

The workshop was attended by a diverse group of participants (NGO, public and individuals) operating in the district.

Key stakeholders / institutions that participated in the workshop are listed below.

- World Vision
- Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR)
- Ghana Education Service (GES)
- Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS)
- WaterAid Ghana
- Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA)
- National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
- Skyfox
- PATH
- IRC
- Pronet

- 4WARD
- Safe Water Network
- SAHA Global
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- Ministry of Science, Environment, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)
- Water Resources Commission (WRC)
- Global Communities

Participants were grouped according to their areas of expertise and assigned blocks corresponding to their specialities for assessment and rating. Four groups were created, with each group responsible for evaluating and rating at least two blocks. Following the group discussions, participants convened in plenary sessions and allowed the various groups to make presentations of their findings for inputs by other participants present. The presentation by the groups included a recommendation on the average rating.

Table 1.0 provides the details of the groupings that were used for the assessment.

	Group Members	Building Block
1	• World Vision • MSWR • GES • CONIWAS • WaterAid Ghana	• Institutional Arrangement • Policy and Legislation • Regulation and Accountability
2	• CWSA • NDPC • Skyfox • PATH • IRC	• Planning • Finance
3	• Pronet • 4WARD • Safe Water Network • SAHA Global	• Service delivery and infrastructure • Monitoring
4	• CRS • MESTI • WRC • Global Communities	• Water Resources Management • Learning and Adaptation

The assessment of the WASH systems comprised eight (8) building blocks: institutional arrangement and coordination, finance, service delivery/infrastructure, planning, monitoring, learning and adaptation, regulation and accountability, and water resources management. Participants utilized this framework to identify weaknesses across various areas of the WASH system. The building block assessment framework offered a qualitative narrative description of each building block, with stakeholders assigning scores to evaluate the performance of each block in light of the current state of the WASH system. Each building block is assessed using a set of three to seven key indicators/guiding questions, enabling an evaluation of the WASH system's strength. The indicator statements represent essential components of the WASH sector that one would expect to find in an ideal or robust WASH context.

3.3 Rating Criteria and Interpretation

The ratings provided were categorized as follows:

1 to 1.8	1.9 to 2.6	2.7 to 3.4	3.5 to 4.2	4.3 to 5.0
Very Weak	Weak	Intermediate	Strong	Very Strong

The scoring process was a collaborative effort involving relevant stakeholders from the WASH sector, Government Partners and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in the performance assessment of WASH systems using the building blocks framework. Subsequently, the scoring was validated by all stakeholders present at the workshop. For each of the blocks, the stakeholders rated water, sanitation and Hygiene components. Only the water resources management Block was rated for only water.

3.4 Data analysis and reporting

The data analysis and reporting section comprised a comprehensive examination of the outcome of the works by the four (4) groups. All blocks (institutional arrangement and coordination, finance, service delivery/infrastructure, planning, monitoring, learning and adaptation, regulation and accountability, and water resources management) were assessed. Insights derived from the WASH systems strengthening workshop contributed significantly to understanding the weaknesses within the WASH systems, as perceived by relevant stakeholders.

4.0 Findings from the National Level WASH System Performance Assessment

4.1 Finance

The performance assessment of the finance building block in WASH systems for Ghana is critical in evaluating how effectively financial resources are mobilized, allocated, and utilized to support water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Key financial documents guiding WASH sector financing include the National Budget etc. The National Budget outlines the annual financial allocations for various sectors, including WASH, and provides a framework for tracking expenditure and ensuring that funds are directed toward priority areas. The medium-term development plans also offer the opportunity for the development of annual budgets and expenditure plans. This seeks to ensure better alignment of financial resources with strategic goals and medium-term priorities.

Other publications and documents including the WASH sector development programme identifies the financial needs and mechanisms required to support sustainable WASH services. Despite some progress in mobilizing resources, there remains a significant financing shortfall, especially for large-scale infrastructure projects and ongoing maintenance. Funding from governmental sources is often inconsistent and insufficient, while reliance on external donors can lead to volatility and uncertainty in financial planning. There is also a gap in efficient financial management and accountability mechanisms, leading to potential misuse or misallocation of funds. Additionally, innovative financing models, such as public-private partnerships and community-based financing, are underutilized, limiting the potential to diversify funding sources.

Furthermore, stakeholders at the performance workshop highlighted several challenges within the finance building block. These include insufficient financial resources allocated to WASH, inadequate mechanisms for tracking and auditing expenditure, and gaps in financial planning that fail to fully account for the costs of operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure. Additionally, there is a need for improved coordination between national and local financial management systems to ensure that funds are effectively disbursed and utilized. Addressing these challenges involves strengthening financial planning processes, enhancing

transparency and accountability, and ensuring that financial resources are allocated in a way that supports both immediate needs and long-term sustainability of WASH services. Generally, Urban areas have received more funding when compared with rural areas.

Stakeholders scored the finance block strong for water (3.6), intermediate for sanitation (2.8) and weak for hygiene (1.4).

4.2 Service Delivery and Infrastructure

In Ghana, WASH service delivery and infrastructure are key focus areas for both the government and various stakeholders.

The performance assessment of the infrastructure development and management building block (Infrastructure and service delivery) in Ghana's WASH systems is essential for evaluating how well physical assets are planned, constructed, and maintained to support sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Key documents guiding this aspect include the WASH Sector Development Programme, and several Operation and Maintenance Guidelines. These documents provide a broad overview of infrastructure needs and strategic framework for infrastructure investments across various sectors, including WASH, and prioritises key projects based on national development goals and regional needs. The WASH Sector Development Plan details specific infrastructure projects, including the construction of water supply systems, sanitation facilities, and hygiene infrastructure, aligning these projects with strategic priorities and budgetary requirements.

Operation and Maintenance Guidelines offer practical guidance on how to ensure that WASH infrastructure remains functional and effective over time. They outline procedures for regular maintenance, repair, and management of facilities, aiming to extend the lifespan of infrastructure and improve service reliability. However, the assessment reveals several challenges in the infrastructure development and management block. These include inconsistent quality of construction, inadequate attention to long-term maintenance, and gaps in the implementation of operation and maintenance guidelines. Additionally, there is often a lack of coordination between different levels of government and stakeholders involved in infrastructure projects.

Generally, the delivery of WASH services faces several challenges across districts in the country and this was also expressed by the stakeholders at the workshop.

Inadequate equipment for fecal sludge management, such as vacuum trucks and engineered fecal sludge treatment sites for the safe management of fecal sludge. The low numbers of water dependent toilets do not present a profitable business case for private sector venturing into faecal sludge transport. For the rural areas, households are expected to construct improved latrines, which hygienically separate human excreta from human contact. The toilets at the rural household levels are mostly dry toilets and are usually not appropriate for motorized evacuation when full. The dry toilets, once full, are covered up or abandoned with the expectation that a new one will be constructed.

Inadequate capacity of assembly leadership both in terms of technical expertise and necessary logistics, for effective management of WASH facilities.

Limited participation of private actors (including vacuum truck operators, latrine artisans, water scheme managers) in delivery of WASH services.

Ownership and roles for asset management are well-defined, however operational guidelines, tools are not readily available. Despite progress in constructing and rehabilitating water facilities, significant disparities in access remain, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The existing infrastructure often lacks the robustness to withstand climate-induced stresses, such as prolonged droughts and flooding.

Maintenance and management challenges persist due to insufficient local capacity and resources, leading to frequent breakdowns and service interruptions. Additionally, there is a gap in comprehensive data collection and monitoring systems, which hampers the ability to make informed decisions and respond effectively to infrastructure failures. The coordination between various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, NGOs, and the private sector, needs strengthening to ensure a cohesive approach to infrastructure development and management. For Water the case may be better for the urban area but poor for rural and peri-urban areas. The team suggested it is disaggregated for Urban and Rural Areas.

Overall, WASH infrastructure management encounters various issues related to operation and maintenance and asset management.

Stakeholders scored this building block strong for water and intermediate for sanitation and hygiene.

4.3 Planning

Planning for WASH service delivery is a crucial aspect of ensuring access to safe and sustainable WASH services for all citizens. The planning process involves various stakeholders, including the government, development partners, NGOs, and communities, and is guided by national policies and strategies.

Generally, and across all levels of the WASH system, there exist frameworks, strategies and policies for planning and budgeting. Key documents are available that guide planning in Ghana's WASH sector include the National Water Policy, the National Sanitation Policy, and the Sector Medium-Term Development Plan. The National Water Policy outlines the principles and strategies for water resource management and service delivery, providing a comprehensive framework for addressing water access and quality issues. Similarly, the National Sanitation Policy focuses on improving sanitation and hygiene practices across the country, emphasizing the need for sustainable sanitation infrastructure and community engagement. The Ghana WASH sector development programme (2022 to 2030) also provides key information of the status of WASH and key areas that require significant attention if the country is able to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Furthermore, the Sector Medium-Term Development Plan offers a detailed roadmap for implementing WASH policies, setting specific targets, and prioritizing interventions based on regional needs and resource availability. These documents collectively guide the planning process by establishing clear objectives, defining roles and responsibilities, and setting out implementation strategies.

However, stakeholders through this assessment identified gaps in the integration of climate change considerations into these planning documents, suggesting a need for enhanced incorporation of climate resilience measures. Furthermore, there is the need for improved stakeholder engagement and alignment between national plans and local realities to ensure that planning processes effectively address both current and emerging challenges in the WASH sector. Also, the plans are not adequately budgeted for.

Stakeholders rated this block 3.6 for Water and Sanitation and 2.9 for hygiene. That is strong for Water and Sanitation and Intermediate for hygiene.

4.4 Monitoring

Monitoring of WASH service delivery in Ghana is crucial for ensuring that WASH programs and projects are implemented effectively and that the intended benefits reach the target populations. The monitoring process involves tracking progress, assessing performance, and adjusting as necessary to improve service delivery.

The performance assessment of the monitoring building block in Ghana's WASH systems is crucial for evaluating how effectively WASH services are tracked, evaluated, and improved over time.

The WASH Sector Performance Report offers an annual overview of the sector's progress, highlighting achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement based on data collected from different regions. District Water and Sanitation Plans outline localized monitoring activities and performance metrics, ensuring that regional-specific issues and progress are adequately tracked. Despite these frameworks and reports, the assessment identifies several challenges within the monitoring building block. These include inconsistent data collection practices, insufficient integration of monitoring findings into decision-making processes, and limited capacity for real-time data analysis. Additionally, there is often a lack of standardized indicators and methodologies across different regions, which can lead to discrepancies in performance reporting.

In most districts, monitoring efforts are often divided, focusing on specific partner or project interests. These projects typically bring their own monitoring and reporting systems, which are not sustained once the projects are completed. Apart from project-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts, there is limited continuous monitoring and reporting of sanitation services conducted by the assembly technical departments. This limitation is often attributed to the absence of essential logistics (including motorbikes) required for sustained monitoring and reporting activities; hence monitoring is not conducted in all communities within the municipality. This results in limited data availability which hinders its effective use in service delivery. The sector has for the past few years tried to roll out a sector information system, however, this has not been successful yet.

Stakeholders scored this block intermediate across water sanitation and hygiene

4.5 Water Resources management

Water resources management is a critical aspect of ensuring sustainable access to clean water for all citizens. The management of water resources is guided by various policies and regulations, with the aim of protecting water sources, promoting equitable access, and ensuring environmental sustainability. This includes the buffer zone policy and the environmental protection acts. These documents provide a comprehensive framework for the management and development of water resources, addressing issues such as water allocation, pollution control, and conservation. It outlines strategic objectives and measures to ensure the sustainable use of water resources across the country.

The Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Plan focuses on the holistic management of water resources, integrating policies and practices across different sectors to optimize water use and address challenges related to water scarcity and pollution. There are structures at the national level for water resources management and the decentralized structures / committees at the water shed level are also functional and operational. Despite these frameworks and structures, the assessment highlights significant challenges within the water resources management block.

Notably, water quality in Ghana is frequently below acceptable standards, with issues such as contamination from agricultural activities, inadequate wastewater treatment, and pollution from improper waste disposal. Also surface water quality levels had deteriorated significantly with unsustainable livelihoods. There was no detailed and up to date assessment of the ground water aquifer levels for various areas. Additionally, there is often insufficient enforcement of water quality regulations and limited capacity for effective monitoring and response. Illegal small-scale gold and sand extraction activities in the water bodies are also adversely affecting the country's water resources. The water resources commission, who are mandated to manage the country's water resources are usually underfunded and hence not able to adequately manage the water resources. Donors and development partners usually provide support, but this is not adequate.

Stakeholders rated this block very weak (1.4)

4.6 Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

The assessment of this block revealed the presence of institutions

responsible for formulating guidelines and overseeing WASH activities at all levels, from the national level to the district level. The institutions involved have clearly defined mandates that are well-integrated into the local government structure. Regular capacity-building programs are organized for staff members.

The performance assessment of the institutional arrangement and coordination building block in Ghana's WASH systems is crucial for evaluating how well different institutions and stakeholders work together to deliver effective and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Key documents guiding institutional arrangements include the National Water Policy, Environmental Sanitation Policy (under review), and the Inter-Agency Coordination systems at the district levels etc. Additionally, the ministry of sanitation and water resources is responsible for overall policy formulation, whereas the agencies such as Water Resources Commission, Ghana Water Limited, Community Water and Sanitation Agency and the district assemblies lead implementation. These outline the roles and responsibilities of various institutions and set the overall strategic direction for the WASH sector. It defines how different government agencies, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to achieve national WASH goals. This provides a structured approach for coordinating efforts and resources across different sectors and levels of government, ensuring that WASH initiatives are harmonized and aligned with broader development objectives. Furthermore, technical working groups on water, sanitation, emergency and WASH in schools have been established by the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources to coordinate WASH interventions. Despite the existence of these frameworks, the assessment reveals several challenges within the institutional arrangement and coordination block. These include fragmented responsibilities among multiple institutions, inconsistent communication and information sharing, and inadequate mechanisms for resolving conflicts and aligning objectives. NGOs and international donors provide technical and financial support, enhancing capacity and resources.

However, there is a notable lack of coordination between district leadership and WASH stakeholders in general. Most WASH interventions at the district level are project-based, leading to a lack of integration between water supply, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives by the district. Additionally, there is often a lack of clear accountability and defined roles, which can lead to overlaps or gaps in service delivery.

Stakeholders rated this block as strong for water (3.4), intermediate for sanitation (2.1) and weak for hygiene (1.6).

4.7 Regulation and Accountability

The assessment of this block revealed the existence of guidelines for regulation and accountability. Utility service providers (Ghana Water Limited) adhere and apply guidelines that are set by the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) for water quality and service delivery, while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) monitors environmental compliance. Community Water and Sanitation Agencies are mandated to regulate rural water supply. The Water Resources Commission (WRC) Regulations provide a framework for regulating water use, quality standards, and pollution control, establishing guidelines for compliance and enforcement.

The Sanitation (under review) and Water Policy outlines the regulatory framework for water, sanitation and hygiene services, including compliance requirements and enforcement mechanisms. Despite these regulatory frameworks, the assessment highlights several challenges within the regulation and accountability block. These include inadequate enforcement of regulations, limited capacity for monitoring and inspections, and insufficient transparency and public reporting on service performance. Additionally, there is often a lack of clear accountability mechanisms for addressing violations or failures in service delivery, which can undermine public trust and the effectiveness of WASH services. The stakeholders acknowledge that regulation for water for the urban space was significantly improved. That of the rural and peri-urban space was lacking and needed strengthening.

Stakeholders rated the water block intermediate (2.3) for water and very weak for sanitation and hygiene. The rating for water is largely attributed to the improved regulation that is seen under the Urban Water sector.

4.8 Learning and Adaptation

The assessment of the learning and adaptation block focuses on the presence and effectiveness of established mechanisms and platforms for learning at the district level. These mechanisms encompass joint sector reviews, donor collaboration platforms, interactions between donors and government entities at the district levels, district WASH committees,

resource centers, and availability of WASH related platforms. There is considerable untapped potential for scaling up the documentation and sharing valuable lessons learned within the sector and among various stakeholders. However, the current state of knowledge and report sharing among WASH stakeholders remains limited. Dedicated platforms for sharing these insights among WASH stakeholders are notably restricted with only a few platforms such as National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP), WASH sector progress report and technical working groups. Though, the reflections and insights generated during these events, they are not adequately incorporated, expressed and effectively adapted during project implementation. Learning has been shared but the efforts to adapt various learnings into new programming was not slow. Stakeholders scored this building block intermediate (2.9) across water, sanitation and hygiene

4.9 Summary of the Performance Rating

	Water	Sanitation	Hygiene
Planning	3.6	3.6	2.9
Learning and Adaptation	2.9	2.9	2.9
Water Resource Management	1.4		
Regulation and Accountability	2.3	1	1
Monitoring	2.4	2.4	2.4
Policy and Legislation		4	3
Institutions Arrangement	3.4	2.1	1.6
Infrastructure Development	4.2	3.6	3.1
Infrastructure Management	3.5	2.5	2.5
Finance	3.4	2.8	1.6

Comparing National Level and District Level Assessment Findings

The national-level assessment findings reflect the systemic issues experienced at the district level. Structures, policies, and frameworks for

the sustained and coordinated delivery of WASH services are in place and performing their functions creditably at the national level. However, their implementation at the district level often falls short, leading to suboptimal functioning or non-existence of these frameworks in practice. Key issues contributing to these gaps include financial constraints, inadequate coordination, and a general lack of effective application of WASH-related laws, policies, and guidance. Additionally, the concept of decentralization, particularly in WASH service delivery and regulation, appears limited. Many WASH-related interventions and actions remain highly centralized, hindering effective local implementation. The alignment between national and district-level findings indicates that systemic issues, such as financial shortfalls, infrastructure management problems, and regulatory weaknesses, are pervasive across both levels. These issues contribute to disparities between urban and rural areas, inconsistencies in service delivery, and challenges in adapting to emerging needs. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions that tackle both systemic and localized challenges, ensuring that resources, planning, and monitoring efforts are effectively aligned with the needs of all districts.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The assessment of Ghana's WASH systems reveals a complex landscape with notable strengths and critical gaps across key building blocks. Financial resources are often insufficient and unevenly distributed, particularly affecting rural areas, while infrastructure management suffers from inconsistent quality and inadequate maintenance. Planning processes are well-structured but need better integration of climate resilience and local realities. Monitoring efforts are hindered by inconsistent practices and limited real-time data analysis, impacting effective service delivery. Water resources management faces challenges in quality control and regulatory enforcement, exacerbated by inadequate funding. Institutional arrangements show fragmented coordination and unclear roles, leading to gaps in service integration. Regulation and accountability mechanisms, though present, require enhanced enforcement and transparency, especially in rural contexts. Finally, learning and adaptation mechanisms are underutilized, with limited knowledge sharing and integration of lessons learned into new programming. Addressing these systemic issues through targeted interventions and improved coordination can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH services across the country.

Recommendations are summarized for each of the building blocks

5.1 Finance

1. **Enhance Financial Planning:** Develop comprehensive financial plans that align with strategic goals, incorporating both immediate and long-term needs.
2. **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore and implement innovative financing models such as public-private partnerships and cost recovery approaches to reduce reliance on inconsistent governmental and donor funding.
3. **Improve Financial Management:** Strengthen mechanisms for tracking, auditing, and accountability to prevent misuse and ensure efficient allocation of funds.
4. **Increase Funding for Rural Areas:** Prioritize equitable distribution of financial resources to address the specific needs of rural and underserved communities.

5.2 Service Delivery and Infrastructure

1. **Standardize Construction Quality:** Implement and enforce stringent quality standards for WASH infrastructure to ensure durability and functionality.
2. **Enhance Maintenance Practices:** Develop and implement comprehensive maintenance plans, ensuring regular upkeep and repair of facilities.
3. **Boost Private Sector Engagement:** Create incentives and support mechanisms to increase the involvement of private actors in WASH service delivery.
4. **Strengthen Rural WASH Services:** Improve infrastructure and management in rural areas, focusing on sustainable and context-appropriate solutions.

7.3 Planning

1. **Integrate Climate Resilience:** Incorporate climate change adaptation and resilience measures into WASH planning.
2. **Improve Stakeholder Engagement:** Enhance involvement of local communities and stakeholders in planning processes to ensure that plans address local needs and conditions.
3. **Ensure Adequate Budgeting:** Allocate sufficient resources to fully fund planned WASH interventions, aligning budgets with strategic priorities and local needs.

7.4 Monitoring

1. **Standardize Monitoring Practices:** Develop and implement standardized indicators and methodologies for consistent data collection and performance reporting.
2. **Enhance Real-Time Data Analysis:** Invest in technologies and systems for real-time monitoring and data analysis to improve responsiveness and decision-making.
3. **Strengthen Continuous Monitoring:** Expand continuous monitoring efforts beyond project-specific activities, ensuring regular and comprehensive tracking of WASH services.

7.5 Water Resources Management

1. **Improve Water Quality Monitoring:** Conduct regular and detailed assessments of water quality and groundwater levels, addressing contamination and pollution sources.
2. **Enhance Regulatory Enforcement:** Strengthen enforcement of water quality regulations and increase capacity for monitoring and response.
3. **Secure Adequate Funding:** Advocate for increased funding and support for the Water Resources Commission to enable effective management and regulation of water resources.

7.6 Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

1. **Improve Coordination Mechanisms:** Establish clear mechanisms for coordination and communication among institutions, ensuring alignment of WASH initiatives at all levels.
2. **Define Roles and Accountability:** Clearly define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, reducing overlaps and gaps in service delivery.
3. **Integrate WASH Initiatives:** Move beyond project-based interventions to integrate water supply, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives into social cohesive strategies.

7.7 Regulation and Accountability

1. **Strengthen Regulatory Enforcement:** Enhance enforcement mechanisms for WASH regulations, ensuring compliance and addressing violations effectively.
2. **Increase Transparency:** Improve public reporting and transparency regarding service performance and regulatory actions.
3. **Focus on Rural Regulation:** Enhance regulatory efforts and support for rural and peri-urban areas to ensure equitable service standards and enforcement.

7.8 Learning and Adaptation

1. **Expand Learning Platforms:** Develop and promote additional platforms for sharing lessons learned and best practices among WASH stakeholders.

2. **Integrate Insights into Programming:** Ensure that insights from learning events are actively incorporated into program design and implementation.
3. **Strengthen Adaptation Efforts:** Foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within the WASH sector to enhance responsiveness and innovation.

References

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