

# Improving Decentralized Sanitation Solutions in Ethiopia through Market-based Interventions



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## Background

USAID Transform WASH (2017 to 2023) aims to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) outcomes in Ethiopia by increasing market access to and sustained use of a broader spectrum of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation.

Transform WASH achieves this by transforming the market for low-cost quality WASH products and services: stimulating demand at the community level, strengthening supply chains, and improving the enabling environment for a vibrant private market.

USAID Transform WASH is a USAID-funded activity implemented by PSI in collaboration with SNV, Plan International, and IRC WASH. The consortium is working closely with government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Water and Energy, the One WASH National Program, and regional and sub-regional governments.



Figure 1 – USAID Transform WASH activities

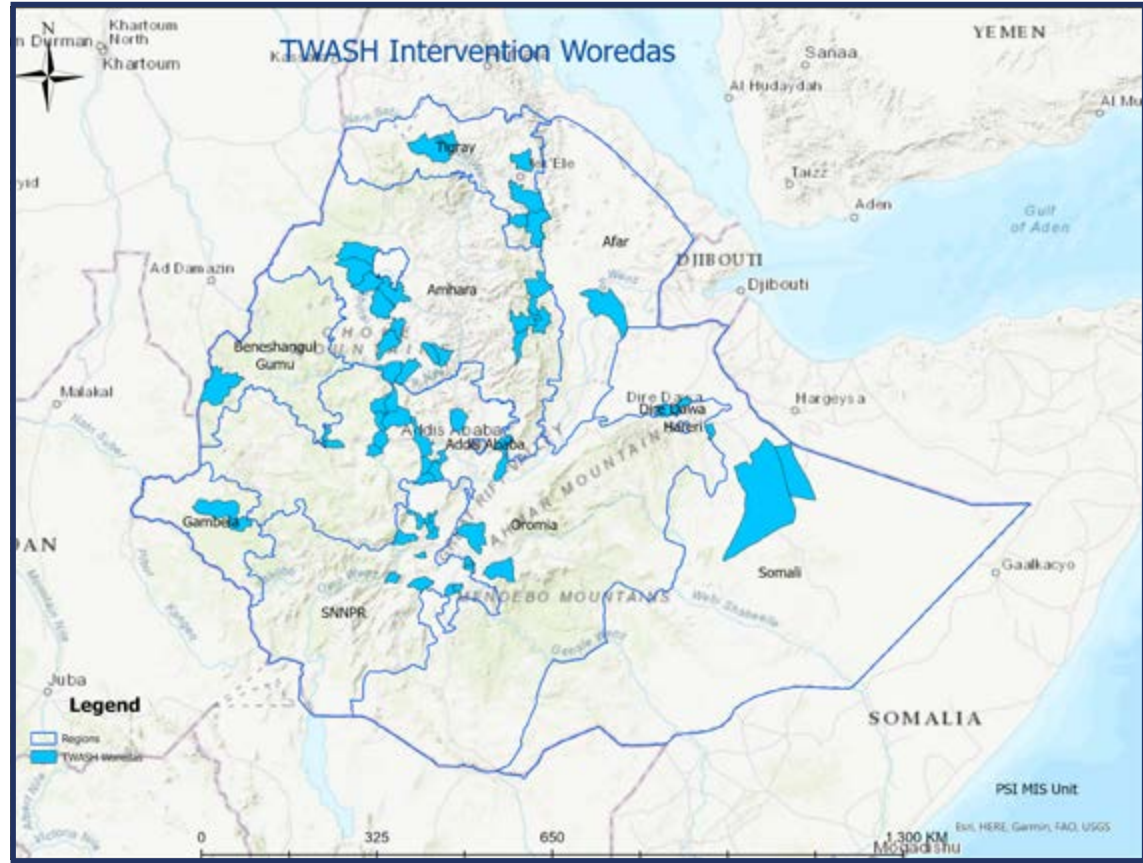


Figure 2 – USAID Transform WASH intervention districts in Ethiopia

## Sanitation challenge

The majority of Ethiopia’s population uses dry pit latrines. Most of these latrines are classified as unimproved (EDHS, 2016; JMP 2021).

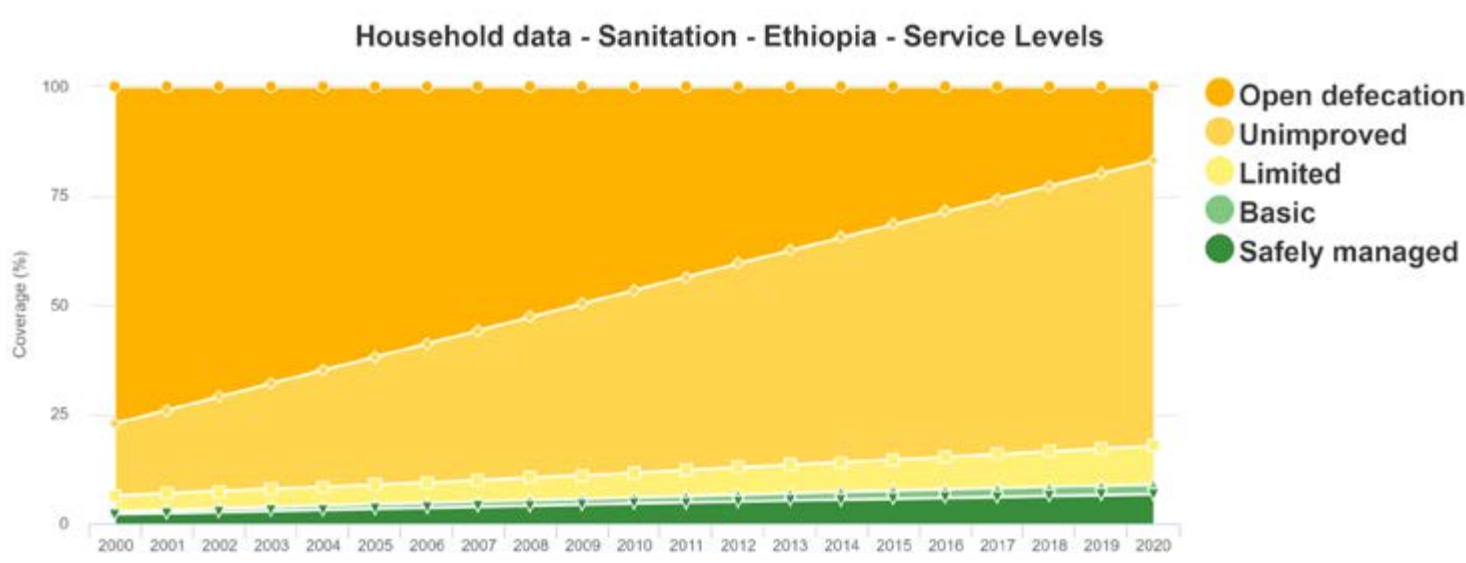


Figure 3 – Sanitation service levels in Ethiopia (WHO/UNICEF JMP)



Figure 4 – Unimproved pit latrine



Figure 5 – Improved pit latrine

## Market-based sanitation

Market-Based Sanitation (MBS) can be defined as a development approach to improve sanitation in a country by building the sanitation market of goods and services for which the customer makes a full or partial monetary contribution (with savings and/or cash equivalents) toward the purchase, construction, upgrade, and/or maintenance of their toilet from the private sector. It does this by strengthening domestic private sector supply of and stimulating and activating customer demand for sanitation goods and services (UNICEF, 2020).

‘Sanitation market development’ can be used interchangeably with MBS. ‘Sanitation marketing’ or ‘SanMark’ is a component of MBS which focuses on the specific activities of businesses offering sanitation products and services, while MBS also aims to more broadly strengthen the enabling environment for market growth.



**What is market-based sanitation?**  
Scan the QR code and watch the animation.

## Achievements

**Laid the foundation for MBS in Ethiopia.** USAID Transform WASH has been a major force for strengthening market-based sanitation approaches in Ethiopia, vital to helping tens of thousands of Ethiopians move up the sanitation ladder, and has set the stage for long-term, sustainable solutions to improving sanitation. The project’s significant achievements and the team’s learning along the way are important contributions to the WASH sector and development as a whole and need to be shared.

**More than 20 product/service options.** USAID Transform WASH has introduced 20 new/innovative WASH products and service packages. Diverse products (e.g., SATO pan with various installation options, SATO stool and AIM plastic slabs) have been introduced to meet the needs and purchasing capacity of users. The team has also encouraged and supported companies to understand the market potential of their products and to start local manufacturing in Ethiopia. Main achievement has been that SiAfrica, which already had a presence in Ethiopia, has started manufacturing AIM plastic slabs in Addis Ababa in 2021.

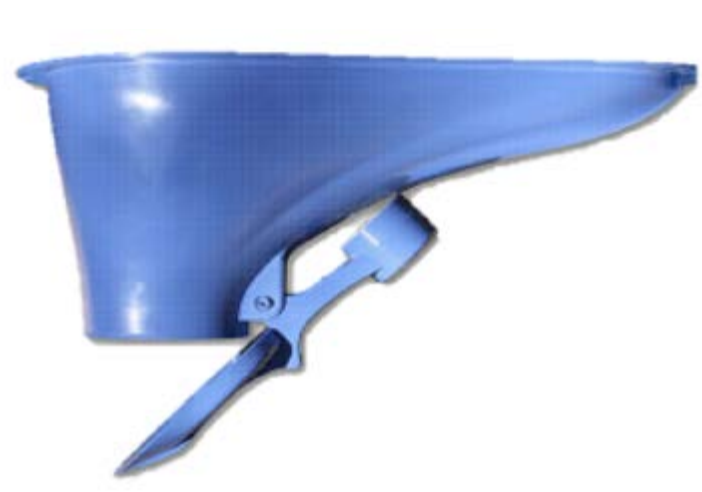


Figure 6 – SATO pan



Figure 7 – AIM plastic slab

**More than 400 new businesses.** Currently, USAID Transform WASH has more than 400 business partners in the supply chain. The supply chains established by Transform WASH have proven to be sustainable and resilient. Regional distributors have proven this through regular procurement of WASH products, and some retailers have entered the wholesale business, selling to other nearby retailers. Partnerships with experienced business operators have ensured continuity of operations and sustained availability of sanitation products and services.

**More than 100,000 customers served.** After initial preparatory activities, Transform WASH business partners started selling products in mid-2018. By June 2022 more than 100,000 products had been sold. Initially, most sales were done through retailers engaged at an early stage. After the introduction of the DQ approach, sales through mason/installers and door-to-door promotion have become the most important way of selling the sanitation products.

## Key messages

**Plastic products are an attractive add-on to make improved pit latrines more desirable at relatively small additional cost.** USAID Transform WASH has focused on the introduction of plastic products from the very beginning. While a plastic toilet pan does not upgrade a dry pit latrine to the “improved” status, it helps in keeping away flies and keeping the toilet clean. These products are new and motivate households to invest in an upgrade.



**Safe sanitation for everyone. Where to start.**  
Scan the QR code and watch the animation.

**Low-cost upgrade options that complement the installation of concrete slabs are needed to reach households with lower purchasing power.** The Transform WASH approach that started with providing floor solutions (cement slabs) diversified to include a range of business models with products/ services that better met consumer needs and demand. Of these approaches, “skirting” and retrofits are very attractive low-cost options to upgrade traditional latrines to improved status and better consumer experiences.



**Practical lasting solutions to sanitation.**  
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**Door-to-door promotion and installation services are more promising than selling sanitation products at a fixed location.** Door-to-door promotion, through a problem-led sales approach (DQ approach), has proved that businesses can increase demand for their own products and services most effectively with training and coaching. While intensive, the DQ approach can be scalable if adopted by capacity building institutions, which needs more development. USAID Transform WASH experiences show that the methodology can encourage about 25 to 30% of households to upgrade to improved sanitation. A door-to-door toilet upgrade service delivery model helps to reach more households and minimizes the households’ burden of improving their own toilets.



**How to create a sustainable sanitation business?**  
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**References:** Achenbach, M., 2022, *USAID Transform WASH Synthesis report*. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH | EDHS, 2016, *Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Report of the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland USA | JMP, 2021, *Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2020: Five years into the SDGs*. Report of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Geneva and New York | UNICEF, 2020, *Guidance on Market-Based Sanitation*. New York: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2020

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