Agenda For Change

A ROADMAP FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES AT DISTRICT LEVEL

AUGUST 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DRAFT

AUGUST 2017

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LIST OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A4C	Agenda For Change
AWC	At What Cost
CapEx	Capital Expenditure
CapManEx	Capital Maintenance Expenditure
CoC	Cost of Capital
ExpDS	Expenditure on Direct Support
ExpIDS	Expenditure on Indirect Support
GPS	Global Positioning System
JSR	Joint Sector Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUS	Multiple Use water Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OpEx	Operation and minor maintenance Expenditure
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWA	Sanitation & Water for All
TAF	Technology Applicability Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

GLOSSARY

District-Wide Approach The approach outlined in this document: Taking the district as a point of focus, assisting the district authorities to achieve universal and sustained access to WASH services.

Agenda for Change A global movement, through a collection of like-minded organisations, working to take a sustainable, systems building approach to achieving universal and sustained WASH access, through global advocacy, development of tools and demonstration of approaches to stimulate sector change.

Service Delivery Models Refers to the combination of management approach at service delivery level (e.g. community, private, public etc.) and the necessary vertical legal, policy, institutional, regulatory and financing frameworks which support these management structures and allows them to function effectively.

Service Authority Refers to the institution(s) with the legal mandate to ensure that WASH services are planned and delivered. Service authorities are usually, but not always, equated with local government, and not necessarily involved in direct service delivery themselves (although they may in some cases). Note – as WASH covers multiple sectors (water, health, education...) this role may be played by multiple district-level organisations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AGENDA FOR CHANGE

The targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for WASH require a fundamental shift in approaches. Not only do new services need to be brought online to reach every last person, but services and service levels need to be sustained, affordable and equitable for all. To achieve this, significant changes are needed to the way the sector works and how development partners and organisations support governments to achieve their goals. A shift is needed from a series of project-based initiatives, to a long-term holistic approach which supports permanent service delivery and seeks to strengthen local systems and capacity to deliver. Fragmented initiatives need to be harmonised under unified, government-led plans and efforts are needed to ensure the building blocks for sustainable service delivery are in place from the local up to the national level. Whilst strengthening central government systems to ensure a robust national framework, a redoubling of efforts is needed to ensure sub-national (e.g. district and municipal) authorities are able to fulfil their decentralised mandates regarding planning, financing, managing and supporting service delivery.

Agenda for Change (A4C) is a collaborative response to the shortfalls of existing approaches to address these issues systematically. A4C is a collection of like-minded organisations[1] with a common vision and commitment do doing things differently, and sustainably. A4C was launched in 2015, stemming from the 'Everyone Forever' initiative of Water for People, the Service Delivery Approach of IRC, the WaterAid 'District-wide Approach' and the wider aid effectiveness agenda included within the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership. We consider the aim of A4C as not only to contribute to achieving universal access to sustained services, but also to apply a systems approach to WASH, supporting the sector in countries from the district to national level, testing and demonstrating approaches, and bringing learning from the district, to national to global levels for scaling-up.

As a result of decentralisation it is local governments in most countries that are required to fulfil the role of Service Authority for WASH services[2]. This means they are responsible for ensuring that everyone gets access to services in their area, and that these services are sustainable. This sets them apart from the direct service providers, who are responsible for the day to day delivery, operation, maintenance and administration of services. Given this decentralisation reality, A4C takes the district level as its entry point of scale, with the goal of achieving universal and sustained access across the district. This involves helping service authorities to develop evidence-based plans to achieving and sustaining universal access across the district, to implement these district-wide plans with the support of aligned partners, through monitoring, accountability and learning together. Working at the district level allows approaches to be developed within the overall national framework, with successes brought to the national level to replicate best practice.

Implementing the principles mentioned by A4C at district level provides practical examples to other parts of the country on how to systematically plan for and achieve the SDGs for WASH. However, success at district level cannot be achieved without a robust national enabling environment and well-functioning sector into which these district initiatives can fit, operate effectively and be supported. The implementing the principles of A4C seeks to ensure existing country systems are applied in the districts, and where weaknesses exist within the sector enabling environment, to work with governments to strengthen them sector-wide. In this, we aim to take a holistic and systems-wide approach to strengthening the building blocks at all levels to ensure permanent services for all; we refer to this as the District-Wide Approach.

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1 Including Aguaconsult, IRC, Osprey Foundation, WaterAid, Water for People, with other organisations increasingly engaging

2 The term Service Authority is used for the institution(s) with the mandate to ensure WASH service delivery and carries out functions such as planning, budgeting, oversight, monitoring and support for WASH services at the local level. In most countries, the Service Authority is normally equated with decentralized local government (referred to variously as municipalities, district authorities or communes) and devolved line ministry posts (such as ministries of water, health, education); but it can also rest with higher levels of government such as regions or provinces, or even states in the case of federated countries. In this document we use the term 'district' to denote the Service Authority, however we know the service authority function may lie with multiple entities, given that WASH is a multi-sectoral issue.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THIS GENERIC ROADMAP DOCUMENT

This document aims to provide an overview for how the principles and practice of A4C can be applied at district level, following a generic (e.g. non-country specific) roadmap. In that it aims to:

1. Elaborate on the principles of A4C, at different institutional levels: global, national and district;
2. Provide an overview of the main steps of the roadmap at district level and its linkages with wider sector strengthening activities; and
3. Provide links to associated tools and resources for each step

1.3 SCOPE AND AUDIENCE OF ROADMAP

The roadmap presented here is not meant to be prescriptive. Systems strengthening processes are rarely linear and do not follow narrowly-defined steps, and as such we recognise that it is often the case that users may start halfway along such a roadmap, go back some steps, to then move forward again. Rather, the roadmap presents a framework of elements for a systems-building agenda for WASH services at the district level. The specific sequencing of activities and even whole steps will need to be adjusted to the context of a specific country or even district, recognizing that countries and sectors move at different speeds and are in various stages of development
In fact, the generic roadmap we present here is the product of its application in various countries and the collective experience of the involved organisations. In each of the countries where the roadmap has been applied, the roadmap has taken a slightly different form, with further modifications for different districts within each of those countries. The generic roadmap presented here is the result of a synthesis process involving staff from the different A4C members, and reflects the common elements from across those countries. As such we acknowledge that this roadmap is still a work in progress in most countries, and few districts have seen through all the steps. As and when more experiences are gathered, this document will be updated.

Moreover, **the scope of application to date has been in rural areas only, and arguably with more emphasis on water than sanitation**[3]. It also focusses primarily on district functions related to provision and oversight of public services, with less emphasis on service delivery models such as self-supply, which are more driven by household own initiative and investments[4]. Applying this roadmap to urban contexts, and particularly in areas served by utilities, would likely require further changes and modifications.

We also recognize that turning the generic roadmap into one that is specific for a particular context is not a straightforward task, and requires experienced facilitators. In that sense, this document is primarily aimed at professional staff of A4C members who are well versed in the sector context and processes, governments involved in the district-wide approach, and other organisations which are interested to apply its principles, and are engaged in facilitating systems change at district or even national level.

Whilst this document mainly relates to efforts to strengthen district level systems, Agenda for Change partners recognise that system strengthening efforts are also required at the national level to create an enabling environment for service sustainability. We are currently working to situate this roadmap within a broader national framework.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF ROADMAP

This report is structured into four subsequent chapters: chapter two outlines the key principles of A4C when applied at the global, national and district levels. Chapter three outlines the linkage between the district-focussed activities and country systems strengthening, and chapter four provides a step-wise guide on implementing the roadmap at district level, with conclusions in chapter five.

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3 Sanitation and hygiene aspects are captured where possible through this document, although this is an area of likely further work in A4C in the coming years, to then update this document with the evolving experiences and tools.
4 Whilst the assessment phase and district plan would capture such issues, and activities of implementation may well include supporting community mobilization, ongoing monitoring, and strengthening enabling factors for such self-help, it may not capture fully household level investments.entities, given that WASH is a multi-sectoral issue.

2. AGENDA FOR CHANGE PRINCIPLES

The A4C work is guided by an overarching set of principles, from the district, national to global level. More detailed information on the principles can be accessed at https://www.washagendaforchange.net/about

2.1 OVERARCHING GLOBAL PRINCIPLES

- We, as sector stakeholders, are committed to achieving the goal of universal access to WASH by 2030. Our mission is driven by evidence of the fundamental role of WASH in all development outcomes and in the broader poverty-eradication agenda. This target date is non-negotiable if we are to deliver on the internationally agreed SDGs.
- Access to sustainable WASH services, as recognized by the United Nations (UN), is a fundamental human right.
- To achieve universal access to sustainable WASH services by 2030 all agencies must redouble their efforts and fundamentally change their practices.
- We are convinced the sector can achieve lasting universal access by 2030 but understand that this will require new partnerships, better use of existing finances coupled with new funding sources, and a serious commitment to monitoring for improvement.
- We know that governments must lead efforts and that external agencies must work in a way that supports and builds government capacity to lead and to succeed. We commit to work collectively and adhere to key behaviours that strengthen countries' capabilities to deliver permanent and accountable access to WASH services (see Box 1).
- We know that work needs to be financed more creatively and effectively, and must address all stages of the service delivery cycle. We know that financing must come from individuals, communities, and district and national governments, and be combined with and supported by traditional aid and/or philanthropy and crucial funding vehicles like loans, social impact investments, and bonds. No robust country plan aiming to achieve universal access by 2030 should fail because of a lack of finance.
- We understand that achieving universal access to permanent WASH services requires improvement in integration and alliance-building with other sectors, including health, education, finance and the environment.
- We commit to building on and supporting country-led institutions, processes and networks aiming to achieve universal access by 2030, and will find creative ways to support countries' participation and leadership in broader sector initiatives like the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership.

2.2 AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Figure 1: SWA Collaborative Behaviours

- Achieving universal access to WASH services that last is only possible with government leadership and political commitment, and when policy makers and service providers are held to account for responsive services that reach all communities.
- Strong institutions that are accountable, responsive and well-coordinated are necessary to deliver and sustain services. All partners will work together to strengthen key sector building blocks[5], including:
  - Sector policy/strategy
  - Sector coordination
  - Sector finance
  - Institutional arrangements – which include frameworks for regulation and accountability
  - Performance monitoring – which can lead to regulation of service providers and services, and ensures inevitable challenges are understood and addressed in a timely way

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5 It is important to note that there is no globally agreed list of sector building blocks, and those listed in this document are certainly not exhaustive.

- We commit to investing and participating in a continuous process of planning, monitoring, assessment and corrective action.
- To deliver universal services we must tackle inequalities by targeting resources at the most marginalized and excluded people, and ensure the articulation of their rights to WASH services is met with responsive and accountable service provision – in short, including everyone.
- National policy-making and monitoring systems should enable – and be informed by – implementation processes at the district level, especially where there are significant gaps between stated policy and actual practices.

2.3 AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

- Success will mean every household and public institution (e.g. schools and clinics) has access to water and sanitation services that last. Although hard to achieve, this is measurable and is the cornerstone of our efforts, with a focus on nobody being left behind.
- Success at district and city levels will require new alliances and working relationships between local government, local communities and the local private sector, with governments taking the lead. External agencies should work with all these players to ensure success – and we commit to doing this in our work.
- We are not ideological about who provides WASH services. The outcome we seek is simply that water flows and sanitation and hygiene services are guaranteed for all, permanently. Different management arrangements can be constructed to achieve this result: public, private, community or in combination.
- Achievement of district-wide or city-wide access requires planning, including comprehensive investment plans. We will support district-level and city-level agencies to coordinate around the development and delivery of these plans. As external agents, we and others must respect the primacy of district and city-level planning, coordinated and led by local government.
- District-based or city-based models of universal service provision should inform national (and global) policy, programming, finance, systems and practice priorities. We commit to investing in documentation and learning from our own and others' work at the local level, and to dissemination of this to higher levels through learning mechanisms.
- The monitoring systems used by all WASH agencies should aim to strengthen local and national monitoring systems, and, where these systems are available and sufficiently robust, to use them for their own monitoring.

- We commit to jointly ensuring community empowerment and engagement is recognised as a fundamental part of ensuring the rights of all to WASH services are realised, and ensuring that governments and service providers are held to account.

3. LINKING THIS ROADMAP TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Whilst the predominant focus of the district-wide approach is at the district level, it is important to consider the district as part of the broader sector system; systematic change toward universal WASH services also requires a synchronised effort with the national system. Agenda for Change partners work by supporting the application of existing systems that are well developed, by changing or strengthening the systems that are weak, and by helping to build the systems that are non-existent. Through implementing A4C principles and this roadmap at district level, systems that exist at national (sector) level are established or strengthened at the district level, and any gaps or shortfalls in national system become more visible. The core building blocks for WASH need to be developed at both levels, and an assessment of the key components at both in the district and nationally will inform the strategy and selection of priorities for system strengthening initiatives.

Certain building blocks such as regulation may be well developed at national level but weakly applied in the district, or alternatively a building block such as monitoring may be happening effectively in the district level but has limited development and support at the national level. Implementation of the roadmap may take the form of supporting district actors to understand and apply national policies and to help adapt their way of working using national policy as a tool. Experiences in the district can then be brought to the national level to advocate for changes or improvements to country systems. Where the national level is weak, the tools and ideas in this roadmap can be used to experiment and learn within the district, to generate evidence that is used for advocacy at the national level. Ultimately the district wide approach aims to scale through learning and experimenting toward success in a single district that can then be scaled in other districts and at the national level.

4. ROADMAP FOR UNIVERSAL AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

4.1 CONCEPTUALISING THE ROADMAP

Within A4C, we have conceptualised the application of these principles through a sequential process of systems building that we refer to as the roadmap. It starts from the premise that in order to achieve universal access to WASH services, all the main building blocks that make up a strong WASH system need to be in place. We also believe that there is a logical sequence of putting these in place, as some of the building blocks can only function if other ones are already existing, or are at least are in place to some extent. However we realise that 'putting building blocks in place' is not simply a one off activity that is then 'done', but a progressive and iterative process of supporting and evolving that aspect of the sector.
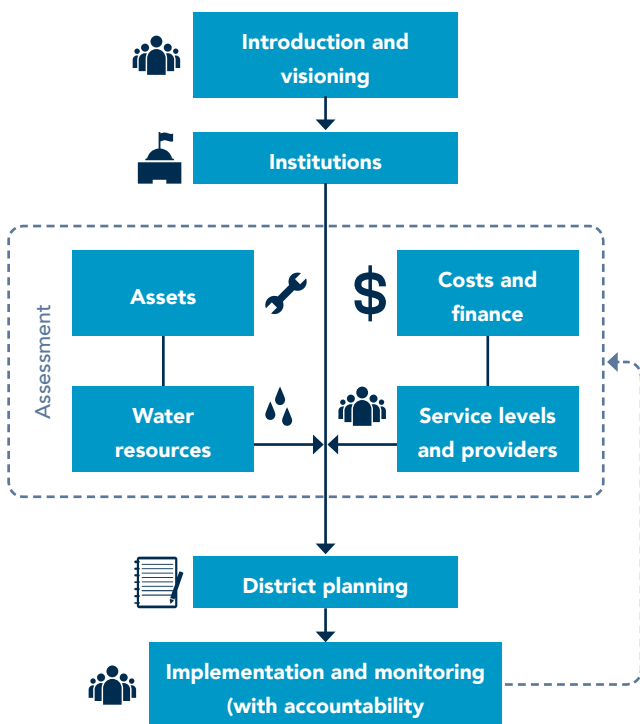

Figure 2: An Overview of the Roadmap Process

The systems building process has been conceptualised in the form of a roadmap, that follows the usual steps of a programme cycle of visioning, assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring. Through these stages the various building blocks are established, at least in their foundations, or brought to a minimal level. Over time, these building blocks are progressively expanded upon through iterations of this roadmap process. Specifically, the roadmap consists of the following steps (as shown in Figure 2):

- It starts with **introducing the concept of systems strengthening and the DWA, visioning of stakeholders,** and consensus building on how to achieve the goals of sustainable universal access.
- After this a capacity assessment of **institutions** is followed by institutional strengthening activities, to ensure a solid foundation for government-led progress.
- With the basic institutional capacities in place, an **assessment** of the current situation is undertaken across the district, identifying service levels, existing and required infrastructure, financial needs and gaps, and other related information.
- This provides a robust evidence base for **planning**, and a baseline for subsequent monitoring. This assessment-phase data is then analysed and validated, and a district WASH plan and financing strategy is produced to chart the way to universal and sustained WASH access.
- The **implementation** phase involves a harmonised, collaborative effort, with technical assistance where necessary, and regular reviews, learning and mechanisms for **monitoring and accountability**.

A series of tools have been developed that support the implementation of some of the steps outlined above. Some of these tools are generic, whilst some are examples from specific countries where A4C partners have been working. There are a wide range of tools available in the sector, and we do not necessarily prescribe only the use of the tools mentioned in this document and where tools already exist in the country's WASH sector, these should be utilised whenever appropriate, especially to ensure data collected through monitoring feeds national monitoring systems. We believe it is more important to follow the principles and apply these through the various steps outlined below, rather than being driven by the use of one of more of the tools, as these tools only serve to structure and support some of the steps.

4.2 INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT, AND VISIONING

Objective
- To introduce and build understanding and commitment to the principles and concept of systems strengthening and achieving universal and sustainable access at district level
- To develop a common vision on WASH services for the district, and develop a contextualised roadmap on how to get there

Outputs

An initial roadmap for reaching universal and sustainable WASH services at district level (at least up to the planning phase), championed by the district authority, and with commitment from the relevant (district and national) stakeholders

Method and tools

A combination of meetings and workshops. Examples of visioning tools can be found in the EMPOWERS programme https://www.ircwash.org/tools/empowers-approach-water-governance-guidelines-methods-and-tools

Contextualising the Roadmap

As every sector and district is unique, prior to introducing the roadmap, a clear understanding of the sector context is needed, to help tailor its introduction and proposed steps. This would of course require an understanding of sector policy, strategy and targets, institutional mandates at national and district level, other systems building initiatives and existing government planning processes. Whilst we assume a basic knowledge of those organisations wishing the support the DWA, certain studies may also have been undertaken as a pre-requisite for commencing on this roadmap process, such as a wider sector political economy analysis. Government engagement in the roadmap is critical. It is important to gauge the interest of district authorities in embarking on a journey of system strengthening, and developing and implementing a roadmap for universal WASH. Not all districts will be willing to engage.

Developing Stakeholder understanding of the roadmap

As the systems strengthening approach will be relatively new in many contexts, and its success relies on the consensus and commitment of stakeholders, the first step is to introduce and explain the concept and principles of A4C, and their application at district level. Applying the district-wide approach at district level is a process, and as mentioned, getting stakeholders interested and aligned from the outset is a critical element for subsequent success. Workshops at the district, and potentially national level, are required for this sub-step.

Visioning and Consensus Building

A key part of this step is the visioning, in other words, to define a shared and desired future state of the district with respect to WASH. In some instances such a visioning exercise at district level would start with building awareness of national WASH targets and commitments, and how they need to be translated down to the local level. This is particularly important as districts stakeholders are not always aware of global or national commitments. It also could include using available functionality and access data for a 'reality check' of stakeholders on current status; and facilitating a brainstorming process identifying where the district needs to get to[6]. Other methods to raise interest and commitment can include exchange visits to districts or countries where the district-wide approach has been successfully applied. Whilst stakeholders (including politicians) often place an initial focus on 'reaching everyone', the concept of 'forever' needs to be strongly emphasised, and agreement and commitment behind this reached.

Agreeing the Action Plan to Take the Roadmap Forward

Stakeholders should be facilitated, under the overall district's leadership, to develop an initial plan for the early steps of implementing the roadmap, particularly focussing on the institutions, assessment, and planning phases. This should include a timeline and identify and name responsible organisations and focal persons, and formal commitments should be sought from the key stakeholders supporting the district in WASH.

A key output of this initial step would be the endorsement and commitment of applying the DWA in the target district(s) by the relevant district-level authorities and line-ministries and potentially Memorandums of

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6 Based on the government targets for WASH within a certain period, and potentially within a shorter interim period (e.g. 5 years) which would be the initial phase of the implementation plan

Understandings (MoUs) between key organisations involved. If appropriate development partners may also be engaged at this stage for their support and potential alignment[7].

4.3 INSTITUTIONS

Objective
To ensure the key stakeholders spearheading the process (e.g. staff posts or structures within the district-level authorities) are duly established and have the minimum capacity for subsequent steps, which can be further developed during the implementation phase

Outputs
- Required institutional structures established or strengthened, particularly at service authority level
- Minimal staffing gaps addressed; stakeholders familiar with their mandates and roles; District-Wide Approach focal persons identified; associated existing country systems in place at the district level

Method and tools
- Rapid assessment of existence and basic performance of the service authority, civil society and other relevant government entities in the district using a structured tool/checklist

A principal tenant of A4C is that is government-led, however this will be a challenge if the requisite institutions, notably the service authority, lack the basic capacity to undertake this function. During this step, the required institutions will be strengthened, so that during the whole process there is a clear and dedicated lead. As WASH often cuts-across numerous government functions (water, health, education etc.), it may be that the 'Service Authority' role would be covered by numerous institutions operating at the district level, for example the district authority, and devolved line ministry functions at district level.

Rapid Institutional Assessment
A clear understanding of what should be in place in terms of institutional structures and functions at the district level is needed, to then compare with the actual situation on the ground. For example, national policy and institutional organograms may state certain functions and positions should be in place, but we often find that these are either not fully established or lack capacity. Therefore, we need to jointly assess whether or not they are indeed in place, and the extent of their existing capacity. A structured rapid, and participatory assessment should be made using a checklist adapted to the sector context (institutions and mandates as per policy), which can highlight critical gaps which will need to be addressed. Such assessments vary in scope from country to country from a basic checklist to a more comprehensive, participatory analysis. For example, it could include checking the following:

- The presence of key staffing posts in the service authority/authorities (technical, planning and administrative related to WASH) – this may relate to staff or structures in devolved line ministries at district level, the district authority itself and, if relevant, regional-level structures which support the district level;
- The presence of key structures such as a district 'WASH Office', WASH coordination platform, key civil society platforms, monitoring and accountability platforms, WASH service provider associations, etc.;
- Whether such structures are currently operational and their basic capacity to perform their mandated functions. In addition, whether they are clear on the mandate and functions which they are expected to perform as per sector policy;
- The presence and usage of key documents at service authority level, such as a district WASH plan, district by-laws related to WASH, etc.;
- The extent that country systems are in place at the country level (e.g. monitoring systems, administrative and reporting processes, etc.), and whether stakeholders are aware of and adhering to national standards and norms (such as technology and construction standards, implementation guidelines etc.)

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7 A long term commitment in the district is needed to support the district-wide approach. Obtaining donor commitment for a sustained period to follow the process and support the district in the medium-term is important to secure as early as possible.

Municipality	Institutions			Policy and planning functions		Monitoring	Technical assistance	Performance score
	COMAS	USCL	AJAM	WASH policy	WASH plan			
Municipality A	1	1	1	1	0	0.75	sd	0.79
Municipality B	0.75	0.75	0.75	0	0	1	0.25	0.50
Municipality C	0.5	0.75	0.5	1	1	0.75	0	0.64

Figure 3: An example of the scoring from an institutional assessment checklist in Honduras

Outputs of this assessment can form scorecards to highlight key issues to be addressed, to garner stakeholder commitment to address them (e.g. to gauge the district authority's commitment to recruit key vacant posts, or re-establish certain platforms), and to guide subsequent capacity support. An example of such a mapping exercise from Honduras across three different 'districts' (in this case municipalities) is given above.

An understanding of the political economy of the wider sector, and then also at the district level is important at this stage.

(Re)Establishing and Strengthening Institutions

Findings from the rapid assessment should be discussed with the district and where applicable their supporting provincial and national level counterparts. Where there are found to be gaps and weaknesses, commitment should be sought to re-establish and staff key functions/posts, and a basic, phased capacity strengthening plan developed. The establishment of these functions, platforms and staffing posts should follow existing national guidelines.

Short-term 'quick wins', particularly those required at the assessment and planning stages, should be undertaken as a priority. Those with a medium-to-long term projection could be 'parked' at this stage, to be included within the overall district WASH plan which is to follow at a later stage. Where appropriate, training should utilise the support functions of provincial and/or national level government.

Where A4C is being introduced in numerous districts simultaneously, capacity assessment and support may be needed at the provincial or national level also. For example, in Rwanda a short-term consultant was seconded into the line-ministry secretariat to assist in initial national-level coordination and strengthening of the national secretariat. Some other contexts may benefit from some form of technical assistance seconded into the local (district-level) authorities, however if this option is followed,

particular care is needed to ensure it builds, rather than substitutes, the ownership and capacity strengthening of such authorities.

The most important output from this stage would be that key stakeholders and functions exist at district level, understand their mandates, and have at least minimal capacity to undertake them. They would also have nominated focal persons for undertaking the subsequent assessment and planning phases.

4.4 ASSESSMENT PHASE

Phase Objective
To establish a rigorous evidence base for planning and a baseline against which implementation of the plan will be tracked

Outputs
- An inventory of existing infrastructural assets, and a clear understanding of the capital investment and capital infrastructural works required to achieve universal access
- A clear initial understanding of the various life-cycle costs of existing and future services, to achieve universal access, and to ensure they last
- A comprehensive baseline on WASH service levels, service providers, stakeholder capacity, and water resources
- Where needed, adequate evidence base to inform decision-making on issues such as technology options, service delivery models and behaviour change approaches

To achieve universal access at district level requires a clear plan of how to establish coverage in the first place, how to sustain it, and be based on robust evidence and a comprehensive needs assessment. The assessment

phase collects information on a range of aspects of service delivery, for example, financial, institutional, service levels, infrastructure, water resources, using a variety of tools, all of which are necessary inputs for a district level planning process. The focus on the relative aspects of the components of this phase, and decisions on whether additional studies would need to be undertaken will be based on the stakeholder's understanding of where the needs and issues are within the context of the district, and based on the existing secondary evidence base.

The number (and complexity) of information required, and size of the assessment task may appear daunting at first, and it is important to show stakeholders the end product of applying such tools from other contexts, how all information sources are pooled, and how the data can be used, before going through the individual tools themselves. In short, we believe it is important to show the stakeholders the destination, before embarking on the road to get there.

Whilst examples of tools and surveys are included in this document, it is important to ensure wherever possible the assessment phase utilises existing tools from the sector and country, and/or ensures data collected is consistent with the national monitoring frameworks[8], so that data from this assessment phase (and subsequent implementation monitoring) can directly feed into national monitoring databases if they exist. As there may not be any agreed indicators for monitoring service levels or coverage a process of indicator harmonisation may be necessary with relevant institutions. Trainings will likely need to be done with government and supporting agencies to be able to roll-out the assessment surveys and utilise the tools, and of key importance is to use the assessment phase to ensure permanent (e.g. the district and provincial/ national if applicable) institutions have the ongoing capacity to collect, analyse and use the data for future decision making. The subsequent aggregation, analysis and validation of the data collected during the assessment phase is an important step, included in this roadmap as a first component to the Planning Phase.

The level of depth which is possible to delve into in the assessment phase will likely be dictated partly by contextual factors, partly by the available finances to undertake the assessment phase, and partly by the exiting secondary data available, which may reduce the scale of primary data collection required.

Whilst the assessment phase will collect initial datasets, these datasets will likely continue to be elaborated and evolved during the planning and implementation phases.

4.4.1. COMMUNITY AND ASSET INVENTORY DEVELOPMENT

Objective

To establish an inventory of water supply and public sanitation infrastructural assets in the district, recording the status of individual major components, in addition to noting the communities that are unserved, to assist in planning and costing of infrastructural works (capital and capital maintenance costs)

Method and Tools

- Where possible, an exhaustive technical field survey of existing water supply systems, using the asset register survey form (https://www.ircwash. org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools)
- Incorporating field data into the asset register tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing- and-budgeting-tools) for subsequent analysis and decision making
- Where a full asset assessment is not realistic or necessary, secondary data can be used, such as existing water point mapping inventory data

In many districts and many countries, service authorities lack basic information on the number, types and functional status of water supply systems[9] in their area, seriously undermining their ability to plan and budget for capital maintenance and replacement works, all of which are necessary to keep services flowing over time. It also means their response to supporting service providers is reactive and ad-hoc, rather than planned and strategic.

This important step in the road map involves producing an inventory of all water supply systems in the district, using either structured surveys or checklists, or existing water point inventory datasets, to develop a registry and assist in subsequent costing for infrastructural investments.

A pragmatic, step-wise approach can be taken for the asset analysis undertaken in the district. During the assessment phase the primary objective of developing an asset register

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8 Using sector definitions, benchmarks, key indicators, survey questions, standards etc.
9 'Systems' refers to the physical infrastructure for water supply, which could be handpumps, piped water systems, rain water harvesting, protected springs, etc.

is to derive a clear understanding of the investments needed in rehabilitating and constructing water systems to achieve universal access. This understanding will feed into the planning phase budgeting work. Through time the objective is that such an asset register becomes a living tool which is kept updated, and used by the service authority(s) in their planning, budgeting and ongoing management of WASH assets in their district. If resources allow during the assessment phase to undertake an exhaustive engineering assessment of all systems in the district and to feed this into the asset registry analysis tool, then this is ideal. This is the process explained below. However if resources do not allow for a comprehensive survey, or existing secondary data is adequate, it may be possible to utilise water point mapping data for the purposes of the assessment phase, to be developed further during the implementation phase. The choice of approaches for developing the asset registry will also be influenced by the nature of water systems in the district, and their heterogeneity. For example where there is homogeneity in the types of systems in the district, and these are relatively similar to each other (e.g. point sources with the same water lifting devices), then using the water point mapping data and/or taking a sampling rather than exhaustive approach may be pragmatic. Where you have wide heterogeneity of systems in the district, or the systems are predominantly piped networks (which vary considerably per system), then a full engineering assessment may be needed.

Where a full asset inventory is to be followed, the following text describes the process and tools for the asset registry: The assessment collects basic information on community size (demand), current percentage of the community served and/or unserved, source yields, water quality, and takes GPS coordinates of the systems. It should also look at the type, age and current status of the various physical components of each facility, and question the frequency and common causes of breakdowns. The data can either be entered manually into an excel database, or collected on mobile-web systems (e.g. mWater, AKVO Flow or others) and then extracted to an excel database for analysis. Ideally all communities would be entered into such a database, including those not currently served by a facility, as this allows the register to capture those covered and not covered, to help highlight subsequent priorities.

Ideally the assessment would collect GPS coordinates, so that maps can be generated of all systems in the district. The asset and community registry database developed forms not only the baseline on coverage, functionality and status of infrastructure, but also forms a key tool for the district to keep updated as its asset register for ongoing

asset management. Some countries may have existing sector initiatives for inventory mapping and basic asset databases, and the design of the survey and analysis tool should use these, or at least ensure coherence with them.

Once the dataset is consolidated, analysis can be performed. Examples of analysis spreadsheets are provided here. The analytical tools include the opportunity to input sector standards and norms, such as average life expectancy of specific system components, standards for per capita water quantity, water quality, and number of users per water point. The tools can then automatically generate analysis on the number of facilities that are functional/non-functional, service levels provided, number of persons covered and unserved, and highlight not only facilities, but individual components within systems that are in need of repair or replacement (if the assessment included such detail). The asset analysis tools can help to colour-code rank risks of the system, and priorities for capital and capital maintenance work. By assessing the current component condition and life expectancy, the tool can predict not only current maintenance and replacement needs, but also project those that will be required in the coming years.

Figure 4: Example of GIS map of water points using AKVO Flow. Source: sustainableWASHalliance.org;
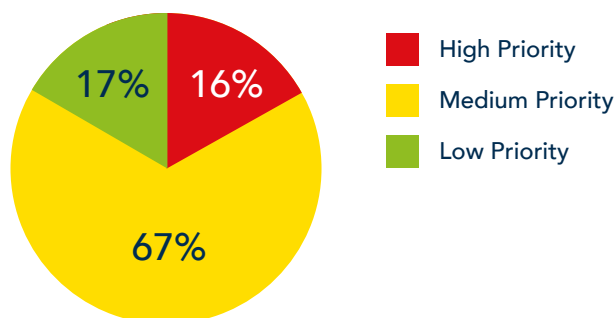

Figure 5: Example of graphs generated in the Asset Analysis Tool (Rwanda example)

Overall the data collected at this stage will be kept and used to determine investment costs for infrastructure, and would be continually updated and evolved through the implementation process.

4.4.2. UNDERSTANDING COSTS AND EXPENDITURES

Objective
To gain an understanding of, and quantify, life cycle cost components of providing and sustaining WASH services in the district and to identify the required finances to implement the plan.

Method and Tools
Interviews with and expenditure review of local authorities; Interviews with and financial review of service providers; analysis of asset registers and average unit costs (potentially also undertaking engineering designs and cost estimates) to understand infrastructure costs; consolidation of data, analysis and stakeholder validation. Various tools are presented in the table below.

There is often a focus in the sector on achieving access through investments in construction and rehabilitation, which is often simplistically perceived as a one-off exercise to reach 100% coverage. However, without considering actual and future recurrent costs such as O&M, future repairs, replacement and expansion, and the costs of monitoring and supporting service providers, universal, sustained access will never be achieved. For example, as one new facility is constructed, another in the district becomes non-functional in a never-ending conveyor belt. That is to say pouring financing into capital investments, without addressing recurrent costs, is equivalent to pouring funds into a leaking bucket. The life cycle costs of a WASH service are summarised in the table below, along with the various tools used by A4C to collect data on that cost component.

For a WASH service to be sustainable, the costs of each life cycle cost component must be covered, which may come from one or a combination of sources, typically understood to be from a combination of the so-called '3 T's. These are **tariffs** and users investments payments, **taxes** (either from local government or from inter-governmental transfers), or **transfers** of aid (either in the form of direct grants, or concessionary loans). For household facilities such as domestic toilets and household water systems (e.g.

Life Cycle Cost Component	Cost Description (simplified)	Tool used in A4C
Capital expenditure (CapEx)	Initial investments in construction and one-off software activities	Costed Asset Register / (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools) / engineering survey/ Historical Investment Tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/tools-costing-everyone-forever-bolivia)
Capital Maintenance (CapManEx)	Expenditure on more major maintenance, repair or replacement which is not routine	Costed Asset Register / engineering survey / Historical Investment Tool
Operation and minor maintenance expenditure (OpEx)	Recurrent cost of operating the system, such as fuel, staff, chemicals, and regular maintenance costs – normally borne by the service providers (or households, in the case of domestic facilities)	At What Cost or Cash Flow Analysis tools - https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools
Expenditure on Direct Support (ExpDS)	The costs incurred by the service authority (e.g. district) in planning, coordinating, monitoring and providing mobilisation and technical sup-port to service providers.	District Capacity Assessment or Direct Support Cost Tools (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools)
Cost of Capital (CoC)	The cost of accessing finance for system con-struction – e.g. interest rates on loans, particu-larly looking at the public (rather than house-hold) investments	Costing and Budgeting tool (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/irc-costing-and-budgeting-tools)
Expenditure on Indirect Support (ExpIDS)	Generally national-level costs of the sector, such as policy, sector planning and coordination and capacity building costs	Not captured in the direct-wide approach

those not provided as a public service), direct household investments (with or without private loans) are also a key source of funds.

As shown in the table, different tools are used to determine the individual life cycle components, and the data is then aggregated within one overall tool (such as the Costing and Budgeting Tool). This then provides an overview of current expenditure, and required expenditure per year to achieve, and crucially, to sustain, universal access to WASH services in the district. The outputs therefore not only provide a 'shopping list' of investment needs for universal access, but a clear indication of budget requirements for the ongoing sustaining of the services.

It should be noted that the focus in this step (and in the tools) is more on services that are provided to the public (focussing mainly on water supply services, and to a lesser extent sanitation services) Where reviewing costs for domestic sanitation or 'self-supply' private water supplies, whilst the direct support costs would factor activities in, capital and capital maintenance costs, O&M costs and the costs of capital should also factor in direct investment by the households.

As also mentioned in the subsequent planning phase section, it is important to understand the wider sector financing and budgeting mechanisms to understand how the costs of the schemes and district services fit within the wider sector financing context.

Calculating Capital and Capital Maintenance Costs

The community and asset register (see above) will help to identify communities without water supply facilities (thus requiring capital investments), communities only partially served (requiring capital expenditure for service extension), and communities with systems that require major repair or rehabilitation works (requiring capital maintenance expenditure). There are various options to derive cost estimates on capital and capital maintenance expenditure:

- Undertaking an exhaustive engineering assessment and design for all the systems and communities in the district, to derive system / community-specific investment needs. This may be particularly necessary where systems are mixed (such as piped schemes, less so for handpumps).
- Using historical and average unit costs in the sector to estimate capital and capital maintenance expenditure,

based on the information from the Asset Register. For example, this may look at unit costs of various common components of the scheme, it may look at average per capita costs, or other metrics found to be reliable for cost estimation[10].

For either option, using the asset register (which ideally will include the design life of the system components), the costing should not only calculate the initial capital and capital maintenance expenditure cost, it should also project the future capital maintenance costs (e.g. when components will need to be replaced) to help in the long-term expenditure projections in the financial plan. Depending on the sector context, in some instances it may be relevant to include calculations on costing for increasing higher levels of service (e.g. for on-premises supply to homesteads). It should also be noted that the unit cost for providing services may well increase as coverage increases. For example to achieve universal access it will require efforts to reach every last household and community, which may be more remote and more expensive per capita to reach.

Calculating Operation and Minor Maintenance Costs

To understand the costs of providing the water supply service in communities and to help indicate adequate tariff levels that would be required, meetings should be held with service providers and the community, to understand what the costs are of running the service (now and through time), and how these costs are currently and could be covered by tariffs and other revenue sources. Some countries have guidelines or protocols for determining tariffs, and should be used where applicable. Otherwise tools such as the cash flow analysis tool can be used for data entry and analysis. Through this cost and tariff review process, general information should be collected on the community (water demand), together with data on facility infrastructure cost components (and their age and design life), operating and minor maintenance expenditures, and revenues. The data can then help to project system demands and costs, and would need to be compared with revenue and expenditures over a specific period (for example 10-15 years). This process is essentially a cash flow analysis and projection. To undertake this exercise it will need to be clear who is responsible to cover the various life cycle costs, e.g. between the users (commonly through tariffs) and service authorities (e.g. districts – commonly through tariffs or transfers). For example, there is often uncertainty between who should

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10 For example for piped schemes in Rwanda, per kilometre unit costs were found to be more accurate than per capita averages, but the basis for calculation will vary by technology and context.

cover more major maintenance, and where the division lies between operation and 'minor' maintenance, and capital maintenance costs. Once the data on cash flow projections is obtained, discussions can be held regarding the adequacy of current revenues, and the potential need to modify tariffs. However in contexts where tariffs are prescribed through regulation or existing sector tariff guidelines, these should be factored into account in the process.

Unlike with the asset register which needs to exhaustively cover all water facilities and communities, a review of O&M costs and user financing can be undertaken on a small sample of systems[11], to derive broad figures that can be deemed representative for similar facilities in the district. These figures will feed the consolidated financing analysis, described below.

The data collected in this initial analysis should be progressively updated during the implementation period, as further experience and cost information becomes available.

Calculating Direct Support Costs

WASH services, and their service providers cannot exist in isolation. For example, service providers (e.g. WASH management committees, municipal or private operators, etc.) require support, monitoring and regulation by permanent organisations, such as the district authorities. Such authorities will incur costs in undertaking these activities, we well as for their coordination, planning and management of WASH services at the district level. These costs, which we refer to as 'direct support costs' are commonly financed through central government transfers and/or local taxes, but are often inadequately provided for, limiting the capacity of these authorities to perform their mandated functions. Direct support costs would capture not only support to service provision, but costs such as community mobilisation and outreach to stimulate and ensure household investments, such as supporting and monitoring CLTS and self-supply type processes.

In this step, the district support costs need to be calculated, and information on expenditures obtained to understand not only the current expenditure on district support costs, but also what would be the required district support cost allocations over time. To calculate the required allocation, a clear understanding of the mandate

of the Service Authority is needed, and information may be needed at sector level to identify common standards or benchmarks and to avoid the assessment of required costs being overly subjective. It should also be noted that the per-capita cost of providing support to communities may rise as coverage rises, particularly with authorities needing to travel to increasingly more remote areas.

This step involves interviews with and expenditure review of local authorities, and uses the Direct Support Costs Tool.

Consolidating the Financial Data

The various financial data streams on the various life cycle cost components will need to be consolidated and cross analysed. This cross analysis process, and the tools which can be used to do this are presented in Section 4.5.

4.4.3. ASSESSING SERVICE LEVELS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Objective
To establish a clear understanding of the current situation regarding WASH access and service levels, hygiene knowledge and behaviours, and capacity of service providers, on which to inform subsequent design of interventions and establish a baseline for tracking implementation progress.

Method and Tools
- Field surveys using enumerators (potentially using mobile-web software), with surveys including household surveys, institutional WASH surveys, service provider surveys.
- Where applicable, existing national survey data can be used

A district-wide plan must have a baseline against which its implementation is monitored and be based on a clear mapping of the needs. This step complements the asset registry by assessing the level of services being provided – both at household and institutions, as well as the performance of the service provider.

Depending on the resources available for the assessment phase, and the comprehensiveness of existing sector

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11 The sample size does not need to be statistically significant, but should aim to capture the diversity of technology options (and pumping/fuel types if applicable) and management models that occur in the district, in addition to other potential influencing factors (e.g. size of system, major differences in willingness/ability to pay, etc.)

survey data available, this step would either follow primary surveys, use of existing data, or a combination of the two. Existing data may include MICS/DHS datasets, previous WASH surveys in the district, etc. The following describes where further primary data is to be collected.

Most of the countries where A4C is currently working, or where we hope to work, have national monitoring systems and benchmarks in place that seek to measure service levels and service provider performance, albeit not necessarily covering all required indicators and not being fully operational. Within A4C, every effort should be taken to use those monitoring systems for this assessment, and potentially build from these, so that data collected directly feeds country systems. It may also be appropriate to consider involving the national statistics bureau (or equivalent) in the survey. As with the asset register, the surveys could potentially utilise technologies such as mobile-web applications which can also assist in the sharing of the data, and use software for easy analysis and presentation of data. Surveys would include (but not limited to):

- **Household survey:** These statistically representative surveys would cover WASH service levels that households currently access, potentially together with information on their knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding sanitation and hygiene, water consumption and could even collect information on willingness and ability to pay for WASH services. The household surveys may be complemented in some cases with aspects such as water quality sampling at the facility level, transect walks or sanitary surveys, and also issues such as equity in access to services should be captured.
- **WASH in Institutions survey:** Either a sample or exhaustive survey of the WASH status of such public institutions, and also potentially of knowledge and practices of staff and students.
- **Service provider performance survey:** This could include assessing the capacity of service providers (e.g. WASH committees, private operators, both their capacities and the support they receive from service authorities), supply chain actors, artisans, entrepreneurs, natural leaders, maintenance services, health extension workers, etc. This would help understand the challenges and opportunities within the district, for subsequent designing of tailored capacity strengthening activities.

4.4.4. WATER RESOURCES ASSESMENT

Objective
To establish a clear understanding of the water resources situation in the district (available resources, water quality, demand and multiple uses) to allow evidence based planning and design of implementation activities, and (where applicable) to establish a baseline for subsequent monitoring

Method and Tools
- Depending on the context, this may include only a desk-based review, or may also require carrying out specific measurements, surveys, and community consultations. Tools include the Multiple Use Water Services Toolkit (https://www.musgroup.net/node/15 /all https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/Adank-2012-Guidelines.pdf), FAO Water Resources Assessment Toolkit, WaterAid Water Security Toolkit

Planning and decision making for water supply services needs to consider the amount and quality of water available for service provision, taking into account current demands, likely future demands, threats to water availability and quality and historical trends. Without a good understanding of water availability and quality over time, service sustainability and service levels may be severely impacted. The level of detail and scope of the water resources assessment would depend mainly on the extent to which water resources are a current or likely future key issue for sustainable and universal WASH services.

At a minimum, this step would include a desk review of the water resources situation in the district, focussing on water quality, water quantity and reliability/seasonality. For example it would include reviewing drilling logs, hydrogeological maps, drilling success rates, data on spring yields, borehole yields, static water levels (and their changes/trends through time), pumping water levels, water quality data, data on seasonality of systems, major water demands (other than for drinking water supply) and land-use, available data on climate change projections and information relating to possible threats to water resources.

For field-level data, some elements of information collection could potentially be integrated into other steps, for example: volumetric demand of water users could be included in the household survey, community consultations regarding (multiple) water use could be done during the visits for the service provider assessment; water quality

testing and testing water levels and yields could be done during the infrastructure asset survey.

4.4.5. OTHER POTENTIAL STUDIES DURING THE ASSESMENT PHASE

In addition to those common steps listed above, there may be the need in some contexts to undertake further studies and assessments to inform decision making, budgeting and the design of activities. The table below provides some examples, but is by no means exhaustive. It may be that such studies or associated piloting could be built in as activities within the final plan, and therefore undertaken during the implementation phase rather than assessment phase. The selection or application of these further avenues of investigation will depend on the specific challenges (and opportunities) of the sector and district contexts in question, and also some of the preceding assessment phase steps may have identified issues that require further investigation.

Dimension	Objective	Method and Tools
Technologies	To factor in technology choices based on which are most appropriate and sustainable for the context	Undertaking primary studies, such as applying the WASHTech Technology Assessment Framework (https://www.ircwash.org/resources/review-frameworks-technology-assessment), and/ or reviewing secondary data (e.g. sector and programme reviews, national technology standards and guidelines)
Service delivery models and behaviour change approaches	To understand the most appropriate and effective approach or model for managing water and sanitation services / behaviour change activities etc. in the different contexts within the district, to inform the subsequent planning and activity design	This may include commissioning studies, or using existing studies and data in the sector. Also to check sector norms and guidelines for this.
Waste flows and management arrangements	To understand and quantify flows, volumes and financial aspects of solid and liquid waste to inform budgeting and service planning	This may include data collection from local authorities, service providers and households (the latter possibly through the household surveys), inputting data into tools such as the Faecal waste flow calculator (https://www.ircwash.org/tools/faecal-waste-flow-calculator)
Equity, participation and gender analysis	To understand and help to tackle barriers that stand in the way people accessing services at the local level.	This may include gender barrier analysis or assessments of accessibility and safety of WASH services as well as levels of participation. WaterAid's Equity, Non-discrimination and Inclusion (ENDI) toolkit pulls together tools from a number of sources to help do this (http://www.wateraid.org/policy-practice-and-advocacy/equality-and-non-discrimination/resources).

4.5 PLANNING PHASE

Phase Objective
Based on the analysis of collected information, to develop a **district-wide strategic and costed plan** for achieving and sustaining universal access to WASH services and improving hygiene behaviours.

Outputs
- An evidence based, phased and costed district-wide plan, including: targets and milestones, defined activities, monitoring and accountability framework, budget projection, and resource mobilisation strategy
- The plan is owned, adopted and launched by the district, with consensus and commitment to its implementation from national and local government, and supporting organisations.

Method and tools
- The overall process for analysis and planning should be participatory and inclusive, potentially including workshops, working groups and consultation meetings. Government processes are likely to guide overall process of planning and the template for the plan itself.

For the A4C principles of government leadership to be realised, the district authority should be driving the development of a comprehensive plan with which to mobilise resources, and align and harmonise their own efforts and those of the various organisations operating in the district (including centrally-funded and planned programmes). Such a plan should be developed in an objective, consultative and non-partisan manner. This plan could then also be used by civil society to help hold the service authority to account. It should be noted that in some contexts there would not be a stand-alone 'WASH plan', but a section within a wider district development plan. The planning phase should be undertaken with an existing understanding of sector and (national) governmental targets, existing strategic sector plans, and a broader understanding of the processes, templates and cycles of local government planning and budgeting.

Whilst this roadmap document presents generic steps for the planning process, existing sector and government processes for planning and budgeting should be followed wherever possible.

Consolidation, Analysis and Validation of the Assessment Phase Findings

The Assessment Phase would have generated considerable volumes of data and information which would be analysed and used for decision making during this Planning Phase. Efforts should be made to ensure the process of analysis and interpretation empowers and builds the capacity of the district (and possibly national) authorities to undertake it, rather than being undertaken primarily by consultants or supporting organisations. This may involve a combination of trainings and technical assistance to district stakeholders. The data may also need to be discussed and validated, potentially requiring a review workshop at the end of the assessment phase, or more likely the beginning of the planning phase.

Consolidation of the financial data sources:
Figure 6 shows how the various financial data streams are consolidated to produce an overall financing summary for the district. Through using tools such as the **Sustainable Financing Scorecard** or Financial Overview function of the **Costing and Budgeting tool**, the various life cycle cost components can be entered, allowing the projection of finances required through time to achieve access for everyone, and forever. This is complimented by adding information on current expenditure on the cost items in order to ascertain the current financing gap. The outputs of this will be critical for the financial planning step within the Planning Phase.
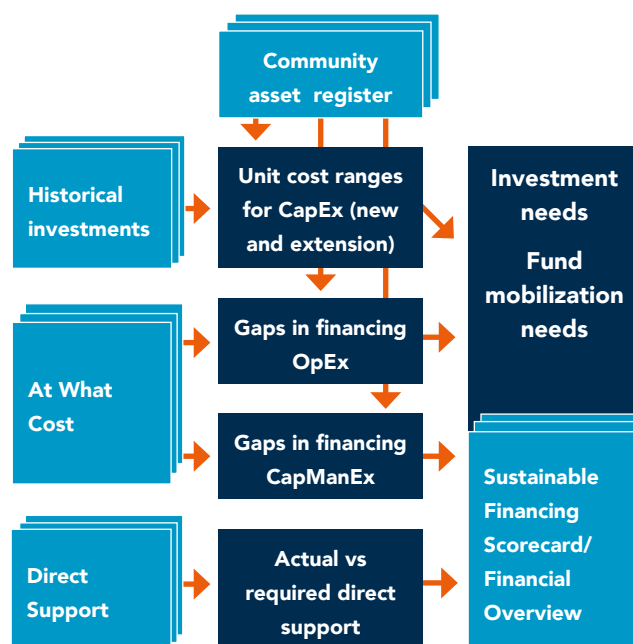

Figure 6: Consolidating the financial data sources

Key Components of the Plan:

- **Vision, Targets and Milestones**
  Once the findings of the assessment phase are presented and validated in the district, stakeholders should agree on the overall vision for the district WASH plan, to be endorsed and publically adopted by the district authority. Again whilst some stakeholders may be primarily interested in the plan to focus on reaching everyone, a strong emphasis needs to be placed on reaching everyone forever, and that it does not just become an investment focussed plan focussed on one-off capital and capital maintenance investments for coverage. The targets and milestones would need to be agreed, and aligned with existing national policy, strategy and targets, international commitments (e.g. SDGs), and the wider development strategy/plan of the district. Such a district plan would be time-bound, and potentially phased[12], with periodic review and updating after fixed periods. It may be that the overall targets and/or timeframes as set out in the initial visioning stage (section 4.2) need to be adjusted based on the findings from the assessment phase, and therefore what is realistically achievable.

- **Strategies, Activities and Approaches**
  Based on the Assessment Phase findings, a series of activities should be developed to address the various needs. These would likely include infrastructural works (capital and capital maintenance works), institutional strengthening at district and service provider level, community engagement and behaviour change communication initiatives, and coordination and monitoring activities. However, these activities could include engagement with national sector stakeholders to clarify certain aspects of policy and financing for example. The most appropriate programmatic approaches (e.g. mode of sanitation promotion etc.), service delivery model(s) and technology options would need to be selected, again with coherence with sector policy.

- **Budgeting and Resourcing**
  The outputs of the detailed costing of activities, in addition to the financing overview/sustainable financing scorecard (see Section 3.3.2), will provide the required resources - both in terms of capital (initial) and recurrent costs - of reaching everyone forever. This needs to be contrasted with current revenues, showing gaps that may need to be filled through one or a combination of the 'Three T's'[13]. Some countries have found it useful to map out the existing and historical financing flows into and within the given district, an example of which is shown in Figure 7. For domestic level facilities, such as domestic toilets and household self-supply water sources, direct household investment would also need to be factored in.
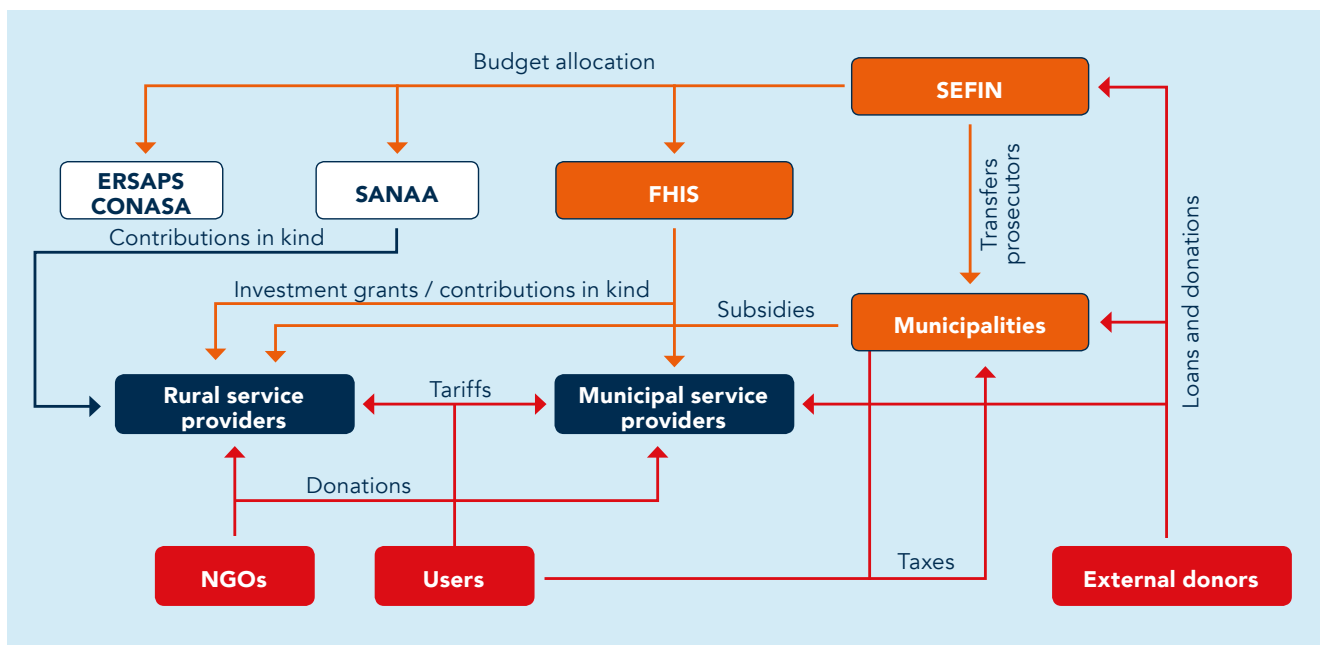

Figure 7: Example of financial flow diagram from Honduras

Source: Public Expenditure Review: Decentralization of Water and Sanitation Services. World Bank, 2014

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12 For example a plan could cover up to 2030, but be broken into 5-year phases. One example of phasing in terms of activities and targets may be an initial phase focusing on achieving universal access to basic level of service, and then service upgrading to 'safely managed' in line with the SDG targets.
13 Taxes, Tariffs, Transfers

A resource mobilisation strategy would need to be developed, and decisions taken regarding how the gaps would be addressed. For example increases in taxes or tariffs could be considered, and would need to be discussed with a clear understanding of the willingness and ability to pay of residents and users, potentially with pro-poor arrangements. Additionally, proposed changes to tariff levels should be aligned with any guidelines or frameworks set by government or independent regulators where applicable. Lobbying could be done with central government, supporting agencies (e.g. NGOs) and development partners to increase transfers, and loans may also need to be considered. A detailed budget, projected by year and aligned to the activities in the plan, would assist in the marketing of the plan to potential financiers as they could choose to fund specific activities or cost components, and it would also facilitate subsequent implementation reporting.

- **Implementation Arrangements**
  The arrangements for implementation would need to be discussed and detailed in the plan document. This may include procurement arrangements, financial flows and reporting, and roles and responsibilities of the organisations and departments involved. It may be that the implementation and financing arrangements remain flexible within the overall plan framework, for example allowing implementation and financing through a combination of conduits, e.g. through NGOs and through government, providing they work to the common plan and reporting framework.

- **Monitoring Framework**
  Building on existing sector monitoring frameworks and indicators, a clear monitoring framework for the implementation of the plan needs to be developed. This should focus not only on outputs (e.g. access) but also outcomes, considering factors such as service provider performance, service levels received, and any overall aggregate for sustainability. Such tracking should update datasets from the baseline created during the Assessment Phase. Mechanisms for collecting the monitoring data need to be included (and costed) such as periodic surveys, implementation monitoring and supervision, service provider key-performance indicator reporting, periodic participatory stakeholder reviews, etc.

Always research and utilise existing government-led monitoring frameworks first; at the least align with these so that any data that is generated can partially be used to inform them.

Accountability and Consultation

Local level planning does not necessarily equate to equitable planning, nor to whether consumers and other stakeholders have the means to articulate their views and position. Efforts therefore will be needed to ensure the plans which are developed are objective and respond to actual needs (rather than political rhetoric), are non-partisan and inclusive and are implemented. Building on the evidence-base derived from the Assessment Phase, the draft plan should be publically presented, and all relevant stakeholders consulted. Existing frameworks for local government planning should be followed, and the development of the WASH plan could be used to showcase best practice in how a robust and inclusive planning process can be done.

Plan Adoption and Dissemination

A plan is only as useful as the extent to which it is actually picked up and used; a document which sits on the shelf and gathers dust is not going to lead to change, however comprehensive it may be.

There can sometimes be a risk in developing sector-specific plans at district level that they are not integrated within wider development planning and budgeting of the district. Involving not only the technical staff but also the wider planning and administrative staff of the district authorities can help mitigate this risk; ideally the plan should be formally and publically adopted by the district authorities. It may also be that the plan is actually a chapter of a wider district development plan. The plan should be disseminated (and marketed) widely within the district, and importantly at provincial and national level, and ideally be made publically available (e.g. available online). Given that sector planning may be undertaken at different levels (e.g. provincial, national), it is important that the relevant government entities at those levels are aware of the district level plan, so that it can be factored into broader sector plans and proposals as and when they are developed.

Broad buy in from local government staff other than the WASH unit, and other district stakeholders, is key to the successful uptake and application of the plan. It is worth investing in time and resources to disseminate the plan and get such buy-in.

4.6 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING (WITH ACCOUNTABILITY)

Phase Objective
The targets of the plan are achieved in a quality, coordinated and accountable manner, and are reviewed periodically

Outputs
- Sustained and universal access to WASH services within the district, as documented in progress and review reports

Resourcing the Plan, Coordination and Alignment

Once the plan is developed it should be socialised and marketed to partners and potential funding sources, to garner commitment to finance aspects, and also to ensure agreement to align activities to this overarching, harmonised plan. In some contexts, such commitment to adhering to the plan could be formalised through formal agreements such as Memorandums of Understandings. Such agreements could also bind organisations to basic operating procedures, such as common reporting protocols and participation in coordination meetings. Ongoing efforts at district and potentially provincial and national level may be needed to ensure coordination of the various organisational' efforts and that they are aligned to (and reporting against) the same one plan.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for Implementation

To ensure the district authorities (and other implementing organisations) have the capacity to implement, manage and monitor the activities of the plan (including for example the ability to adhere to sector standards), training, mentoring and/or embedded technical assistance may be required from financiers, supporting NGOs or provincial and national government entities. Where technical assistance is provided, efforts should be made to ensure this maximises the ownership, leadership and long-term capacity of the district authorities. Where possible, continue to build the link between the district authorities and regional/national support structures, and build the capacity of such support structures.

Monitoring, Review and Accountability

Following the monitoring framework of the district WASH plan, monitoring activities should be undertaken to: track progress to targets; track service levels, WASH practices of residents and sustainability; track quality of implementation of software and hardware activities; track fund allocation/expenditure; monitor water source yield/quality, etc. The data collected through this monitoring should directly feed into the wider sector monitoring system, and of course have a clear path to corrective action based on findings from the data.

In addition to regular district (and potentially sub-district) coordination meetings, periodic joint monitoring visits and stakeholder reviews (like Joint Sector Reviews, but at the district level) should be held. These would help increase coordination of stakeholders and learning, and also boost mutual accountability of the stakeholders involved in the financing, support and delivery of the activities. Where Joint Sector Reviews are occurring in the country, the monitoring and review process should feed into this, particularly where there are sub-national reviews and consultations as part of the national process.

External evaluations, third party monitoring (e.g. through sustainability checks) and programme audits would help in strengthening accountability of implementation, as would ensuring these and progress reports are made available publicly. Other means to strengthen accountability could include formal grievance processes and mechanisms for service user or 'beneficiary' feedback (e.g. Citizen Scorecards, SMS feedback systems, etc.).

Datasets collected in the Assessment Phase should be continually updated and used for decision making, for example the Asset Register should be kept updated, and used as a key tool for ongoing monitoring, management and planning for maintenance and replacement initiatives.

Learning and Dissemination

The District-wide approach process is likely to be somewhat new in many contexts, and brings the opportunity to test new approaches using the district as a pilot area, with the aim to scale-up those which are proven to be effective and impactful. Through periodic reviews and evaluations, efforts should be made to document lessons learned throughout the phases of the roadmap. This periodic reflection and learning, potentially through coordination or learning groups, would help to strengthen the district-wide approach process, and by sharing the learning outside of the district, it would enable best practice to be scaled-up, potentially helping to stimulate upscaling of the approach to other districts of the country, and even internationally.

5. CONCLUSION

Agenda for Change is about strengthening systems, and demonstrating how things can be done to achieve universal and sustained access to WASH services. Applying A4C at the district level emphasises an approach of using governmental systems, enforcing government leadership, and providing concrete examples of how national objectives for the WASH sector can be accelerated and achieved sustainably. We believe that the district-wide approach, with the district as an entry point and unit of focus, is a way of providing a more holistic and integrated systems-wide approach to sector strengthening.

This generic roadmap should be a 'living document', updated periodically as further experience is gained in the growing number of countries in which Agenda for Change is being applied. Whilst the roadmap is presented as a relatively didactic step-wise, linear process, we recognize that in reality embarking on the district-wide approach may be more like a winding road, requiring a long-term vision, and commitment to doing things properly, and sustainably.

For more information on Agenda for Change, visit https://www.washagendaforchange.net