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Strengthening mutual accountability in partnerships for WASH

Part 2: Summary of six country case studies

For Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Partnership

IRC, UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures, and SWA Research and Learning Constituency partners

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Research team

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About the research partners

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Summary

Background

This report shares findings on research that aimed to inform the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM). SWA¹ is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that provides a platform for collective action and change in water, sanitation and hygiene. It mobilises both sector and non-sector actors to ensure achievement of Sustainable Development Goal targets (SDG) 6.1 and 6.2.

SWA R&L partners co-designed and collaborated in an empirical study on multi-stakeholder collaboration, accountability, MAM implementation and COVID-impacts in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in six selected SWA partner countries. This was Part 2 of a wider study, which also included conceptual development, a literature review and investigation of partnerships beyond the WASH sector (Part 1).

The research aimed to inform evolution and refinement of SWA MAM such that it strengthens country processes and contributes to the three objectives of SWA's strategic framework (2020-2030). These three objectives are: (i) to build and sustain the political will to eliminate inequalities in water, sanitation and hygiene; (ii) to champion multi-stakeholder approaches towards achieving universal access to services; (iii) to rally stakeholders to strengthen system performance and attract new investments.

In the context of SWA, mutual accountability refers to the process by which partners i) work together to build robust, transparent and responsive accountability systems, and ii) agree to be held responsible for commitments they make to each other.

Research overview

From September to December 2020, a rapid study was undertaken by Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Research and Learning Constituency partners and collaborators to investigate the challenges in strengthening accountability between WASH actors at national level. Collective action, will be vital towards achievement of the SDGs related to WASH, enabling resources to be effectively aligned in support of government policies. Accountability between stakeholders – or mutual accountability – is considered a necessary condition for effective collective action between WASH actors.

Six countries were involved in the study: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru and Somalia. A main objective was to inform SWA's strategy to strengthen national multi-stakeholder processes and to assess the effectiveness and impact of the SWA Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM).

Recommendations focus on the strengthening of multi-stakeholder processes in WASH and possible actions within the context of the SWA partnership, including further development of the MAM.

Research findings

Key conclusions are:

¹ "Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a global partnership of governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to coordinate high-level action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively." See <https://sanitationandwaterforall.org/>

Sector coordination and multi-stakeholder platforms:

- multi-stakeholder platforms are present, but overall coordination efforts are found to be insufficient, and many platforms are functioning poorly in the face of numerous constraints.
- platforms across the study countries are more typically focused on dialogue and information exchange, and less on enabling collaborative efforts and accountability.

Accountability mechanisms:

- limited practice found in the use of the accountability mechanisms towards corrective action or to drive mutual accountability between stakeholders.
- most countries face challenges in availability and accessibility of timely and adequate information, an important condition for the promotion of accountability.

Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on coordination and accountability:

- mixed impacts on sector collaboration and accountability across the study countries, highlighting the value of partnerships and of having capacities in place, and revealing gaps e.g. in information systems.
- new opportunities for new and improved sector collaboration have emerged as well as opportunities to raise the profile of WASH and support COVID-19 prevention.

Country engagement in SWA:

- the SWA partnership and its global activities were found to be widely known among WASH sector stakeholders in the study countries, but awareness and active engagement around a nationally owned SWA agenda is limited, with few links made to existing multi-stakeholder platforms.
- SWA is not yet recognised for a substantial focus on collective efforts between national WASH stakeholders and on strengthening their mutual accountability but there are opportunities, and a great need for this to gain benefits from alignment and coordination of efforts.
- submitted MAM commitments include commitments by partners of one, or only a few, constituencies and those commitments were formulated and prioritised with limited participation of fellow constituency partners.
- monitoring of the MAM commitments by the national SWA partners is not consistent and are seldom embedded in a nationally driven monitoring and review system.

Recommendations

As well as general recommendations, specific recommendations address SWA government partners, SWA constituencies, including the research and learning constituency, the Steering Committee and Secretariat.

The main recommendation is that SWA partners should put more emphasis towards building on and strengthening the work of multi-stakeholder platforms in WASH at national level.

A key short-term agenda for different SWA bodies and platforms is proposed:

- All SWA partners to actively promote, support and engage in improving sector collaboration and mutual accountability in the countries where they operate.
- SWA government partners to champion working in multi-stakeholder partnerships and invest in coordination.
- The SWA Steering Committee to more proactively and strategically support the MAM based on what is required for effective implementation, including ensuring the needed resources for continued research and learning for improving the MAM.
- The SWA Secretariat to further develop the MAM design and implementation based on the insights of the study, with more emphasis on national ownership, follow-up of the national MAM process, alignment and strengthening of multi-stakeholder platforms.

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Introduction

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership provides a global platform for collective action in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), mobilising sector and non-sector actors to ensure achievement of the WASH targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and related goals. Priorities for action are linked to strengthening governance through stronger political commitment, multi-stakeholder engagement and appropriate financing for WASH services.

At the country level, SWA seeks to strengthen national processes and institutions. These national processes across the WASH sector are government-led, but involve a wide range of partners from civil society, the private sector, utilities and regulators, research and learning institutions and external support agencies (ESA's) including UN agencies and International Financing Institutions (IFIs).

SWA's commitment to collective action and the strengthening of national processes and systems is reflected in its Strategic Framework (2020-2030), its Guiding Principles, Building Blocks and the Collaborative Behaviours, and includes the implementation of a Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM)². The SWA collaborative behaviours articulate a focus on how partners work together to put an effective sector in place: enhancing government leadership, strengthening and using country systems, using one information and mutual accountability platform and building sustainable sector financing strategies. The MAM seeks to encourage partners to action by making commitments, to promote alignment of activities and collaboration between partners in the countries and, crucially, for all partners 'to walk the talk'.

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has put governments, their WASH sector partners and this collective action and accountability under pressure. Globally, SWA has responded to the pandemic through a leader's call to action (signed by heads of state, world leaders and leaders of key sector agencies) and through virtual mobilisation and learning events to harness the network's power and to encourage and support countries and partners.

In this context, a group of SWA Research and Learning Constituency partners, with financial support and guidance from the SWA Secretariat, undertook a rapid study on multi-stakeholder processes and mutual accountability (see Figure 1). The first part of the study was a review of approaches taken to accountability in multi-stakeholder partnerships of other sectors beyond WASH (see Willetts *et al.*, 2021). The second part of the study sought to investigate the multi-stakeholder processes that are in place at national level across the WASH sector, and relevant mechanisms for stakeholders to hold each other accountable for progress under SDG6 in the six countries researched. It also examined impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on these processes and the SWA Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM) implementation.

A MAM Study Working Group (see acknowledgements for details) was formed of all the organisations contributing to the study, and feedback was provided by a Project Reference Group (see acknowledgements for details). The research was funded through the SWA Secretariat. The study was coordinated by the University of Technology Sydney, Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF), Australia (part 1), and IRC (part 2). This report summarises the findings from this second part of the study and its production was coordinated by IRC.

This document is structured to first provide an overview of the research and its methods, and then findings are summarised around key research questions. The document concludes with a discussion on implications for SWA and an agenda for further research.

² See the Part 1 report (Willetts *et al.*, 2021) for further introduction.

Box 1: Some key terms as used in this report

Mutual accountability: a process by which partners i) work together to build robust, transparent and responsive accountability systems, and ii) agree to be held responsible for commitments they make to each other (Willetts et al., 2020).

Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM): The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is a Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership process for governments and other stakeholders to make commitments together on specific actions each actor will take to achieve their targets set in the short- to medium-term on the road to reaching the SDGs.

Multi-stakeholder platform: a '...body (voluntary or statutory) comprising different stakeholders who perceive the same ... problem, realise their interdependence for solving it, and come together to agree on action strategies for solving the problem' (Röling, 1994)

WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) sectors: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene are bundled together because it is known that the combination of these improves health and development outcomes, including gender equality. WASH interventions seek to improve access to water and sanitation services and improve hygiene behaviours and are delivered by multiple actors.

Why this research?

The rapid study had two main objectives:

1. To increase understanding of national multi-stakeholder processes and (mutual) accountability in WASH. This included how these have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and opportunities for strengthening accountability between national-level actors and strengthening SWA engagement through implementation of the SWA MAM.
2. To engage national Research and Learning institutions and build each other's capacities through participation in the study, particularly strengthening participation in the national WASH sector and knowledge of SWA processes. This was intended to lead to ideas and momentum for future wider and more comprehensive action research on mutual accountability in the WASH sector by SWA Research and Learning constituency partners.

Research approach

Research questions

The study in the countries was guided by the following four main research questions that are also the focus of this document:

1. What coordination mechanisms are in place in each country to coordinate between stakeholders in the WASH sector(s) and encourage joint progress to achieve SDG6 and national (WASH sector) plans?
2. What are the most important accountability mechanisms in the country that influence WASH actors at national level?
3. What has changed in each country with respect to coordination and accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What is the countries' engagement in the SWA partnership and does participation in the SWA MAM – as one of those accountability mechanisms - contribute to mutual accountability in the country?

Methods and approach

During the period September to December 2020, research activities were undertaken across six selected case study countries across 3 continents and covering a wide range of different contexts: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru and Somalia (see Figure 1). The selected countries were all SWA partners and chosen to represent a mix of countries from different geographical regions, including low income and (lower) middle-income countries and where possible including active Research and Learning constituency partners. These countries have also had varying levels of engagement with the SWA partnership and with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, including older and newer partners.

The country case studies were led by nationally based Research and Learning (R&L) institutions and global SWA R&L partners³. Nationally based research teams worked closely with one of the global (or regionally) based SWA R&L constituency partners⁴ and together formed a study working group. This group jointly developed the research framework for the study and co-designed common research tools through a series of virtual meetings. In each country research methods included: stakeholder mapping, review of documents, online survey, key informant interviews and a workshop with national stakeholders. Most research was conducted virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions and there was no (inter-) national travel.

A project reference group with representatives from the broader R&L constituency and the SWA partnership, including the relevant SWA regional and country advisors, provided inputs and guidance to the study team. The SWA Secretariat supported the study through participation in the study working group.

Research teams identified and sourced nationally-focused documentation across these issues and identified key WASH stakeholders in each country at the national level. A centrally administered and common online survey was sent to these key stakeholders (see Box 1). Responses were well balanced across countries with a minimum of 15 responses each in Burkina Faso and Somalia and a maximum of 25 in Peru. The responses provided a basis for follow up key informant interviews by the research teams in each country. Draft analysis in each country was discussed as part of a stakeholder workshop with key informants and other key stakeholders invited. In some cases, the number of participants was relatively low, and the depth of engagement hindered by the need to conduct workshops online. Each research team then authored a short country summary report based on the various sources of data and information. This synthesis report is based upon those reports.

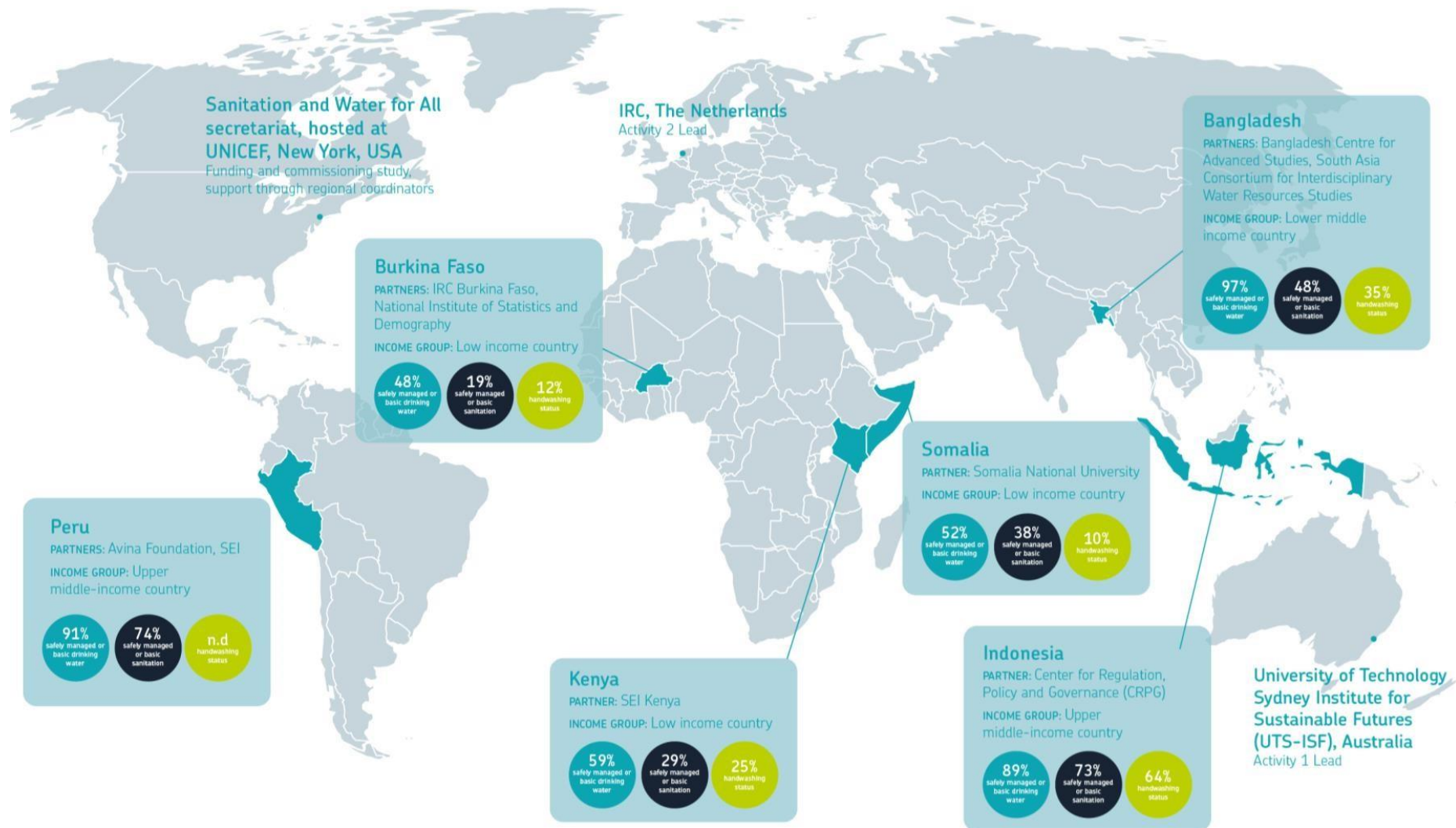
Box 1: Scope of data collection and engagement

In total 106 people contributed to the online survey: 16 respondents were from Bangladesh, 15 from Burkina Faso, 16 from Indonesia, 19 from Kenya, 25 from Peru and 15 from Somalia. The respondents represented a range organization types, including government institutions, organisations from civil society, development partners, academia and the private sector. The survey was followed up through interviews by the nationally based research teams with a total of 44 interviews (10 in Bangladesh, 5 in Burkina Faso, 7 in Indonesia, 7 in Peru, 9 in Kenya and 6 in Somalia). The local (online and in person) workshops were attended by 56 participants in Bangladesh, 4 in Burkina Faso, 6 in Kenya, 25 in Indonesia, 10 in Peru and 9 in Somalia to discuss the findings.

³ with the exception of Bangladesh

⁴ South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS), Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI), IRC and UTS-ISF

Figure 1



Research Findings

Multi-stakeholder collaboration in WASH

In all of the study countries **multiple multi-stakeholder platforms in WASH** were identified at the national level. However, the country cases illustrate how these were **not always operational or effective** in delivering on coordination, and critical gaps were identified.

The types of platforms that exist vary with context. For example, in **Somalia**, where there is an ongoing civil war and an emergency context, the WASH sector is focused on humanitarian activities and the WASH cluster – a specific form of coordination focused on humanitarian WASH – coordinates activities at national scale. The WASH cluster in Somalia is chaired by UNICEF and currently the NGO Polish Humanitarian Action, works through 13 regional cluster organisations and lead agencies in districts. There is also an inter-ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) in Somalia chaired by Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), with membership of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Planning and UNICEF. However, the activities of this committee are currently limited by a lack of resources and wider stakeholder participation.

Research question: What coordination mechanisms are in place ... to coordinate between stakeholders in the WASH sector(s) and encourage joint progress to achieve SDG6 and national plans?

Burkina Faso, also a low-income country, similarly to Somalia has multiple platforms that span both humanitarian and development-focused WASH activities. Here sector coordination across stakeholders was assessed to be working relatively well by the country research team, reflecting the recent efforts of government and its partners. But significant gaps were identified by interviewees, especially a lack of organizational and technical capacity, and limited participation of civil society in the sector's platforms. There was also a risk and inefficiency identified in different platforms operating independently with virtually the same actors.

In **Kenya** and **Bangladesh**, middle income countries with potential higher capacities and an increasingly amount of resources to invest, critical gaps in multi-stakeholder processes were still reported.

While there were many platforms identified that cover a variety of roles in **Kenya**, some of these exist only on paper and were not operational in practice. There were five broad-based multi-stakeholder forums identified in water and sanitation including an emergency response forum, a campaign platform and a caucus that brings together departments from the 47 county governments. Three other multi-stakeholder forums convene specific groups of water and sanitation stakeholders including a development partners group, a private sector (water service providers) association and a network of civil society organizations. While platforms for specific stakeholders were reported to be active and holding regular meetings and activities, the broad-based multi-stakeholder forums were all found to be either ad-hoc, dormant or dysfunctional. This includes the Joint Sector Working Group which could potentially be the most influential platform but has not produced an annual report or met for five years.

There were functioning multi-stakeholder platforms in **Bangladesh**, but a lack of adequate funding and skilled staffing affects the performance of these collaborations. Some were meeting infrequently, some struggling to maintain government participation, and most were assessed to be under resourced.

In **Peru**, there were at least 7 different platforms identified in WASH stakeholder coordination, each of them seeking coordination and dialogue among particular groups of stakeholders (Box 2). Not all the relevant platforms are solely WASH focused, such as the multi-stakeholder platform for poverty alleviation (Mesa de Concertación de Lucha Contra la Pobreza-MCLCP). The MCLCP is a joint initiative by the Peruvian government and civil society, supported by a rotating technical secretariat that is led by one of the development partners. It was considered effective by interviewees, having more than 20 years of experience in multi-stakeholder coordination and monitoring implementation of national public policies. The MCLCP

hosts various working groups including one on WASH. The case illustrates well that having functioning multi-stakeholder platforms is not enough. These platforms were all assessed to enrich the dialogue and strengthen the spaces for participation on WASH issues in **Peru**, but did not necessarily promote collaboration between each other, even when the same actors were participating across the different platforms. The study participants identified that platforms were partly overlapping and there was little collaboration between the mentioned platforms, but there was interest to coordinate work around implementation of the national and regional WASH plans.

Box 2: Platforms for stakeholder coordination in Peru

Multi-stakeholder platforms	Objective and participants	Convener or lead organisation
Mesa de Agua	Platform for dialogue between development partners and Ministry for Housing, construction and rural WASH (MVCS)	Led by MVCS with support from the technical secretariat currently being coordinated by the Suisse development agency (COSUDE),
2030 Water Resources Group	Brings together government and private sector representatives on water resources management	Led by the World Bank
Rural Water and Sanitation Working Group	Part of the multi-stakeholder coordination platform for poverty alleviation (MCLCP) that gathers technical staff of various Ministeries (including Health and Finance) and WASH NGO's.	Facilitated by the technical secretariat of the MCLCP
National WASH Cluster	Brings together government and civil society organisations and is active in dealing with emergency issues.	Promoted by UNICEF
Foro Peruano para el Agua - Global Water Partnership (GWP) Peru,	A multisectoral platform bringing together government, academia and NGOs around water resources management and water security issues.	It is currently chaired by the National Water Authority (ANA), (Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation)
Red Agua Segura	Coordination platform that brings together most of the NGOs in the WASH sector, with focus on their coordination with community-based service providers in rural areas	Currently the Network is chaired by the NGO Rural Educational Services (SER).
Perú (FENTAP), national federation for WASH service providers' staff	Organization for WASH workers employed by WASH service providers.	

In **Indonesia** there were multiple multi-stakeholder forums identified which function as platforms for communication, coordination, and sharing of information (see also Box 3). Three key platforms are: 1) the ad-hoc and informal *National Pokja AMPL* (Drinking Water and Environmental Health Working Group) which, upon the issuance of Minister of Public Works and Housing regulation, is under discussion to be merged into

National Pokja PKP (Housing and Settlement Working Group). The establishment of National Pokja PKP is pending a presidential decision; 2) *Jejaring AMPL* which was set up to support coordination with NGOs; and 3) the Sanitation Partners Group (SPG) focused on urban sanitation. These forums were generally considered effective in enabling coordination between WASH stakeholders.

As well as ongoing organised multi-stakeholder platforms, there are of course **other avenues for collaboration and interaction** between stakeholders, formal and informal. For example, conferences such as those organised by Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation (MoWSI) and the Water Services Providers Association (WASPA) in Kenya were cited as critical and important moments and reminding us that coordination can be derived from many sources.

Box 3: Using social network analysis to characterise WASH networks

In Indonesia and Peru, social network analysis (SNA) was tested as a tool for further research on WASH networks. SNA of WASH networks in Indonesia using survey data revealed low density, high fragmentation and low cohesion in the networks, with some organisations having unique networks that they operate within. However, this may partially be due to incomplete analysis, since not every organisation named in the network participated in the survey. Analysis of the strength of connections showed that donor and aid organisations have stronger ties compared to local NGOs and research organisations. In Peru, the network demonstrated a high dependence on national government organisations who are central to its operation. International organisations were identified to be playing a peripheral role to government and brokering connections with NGOs.

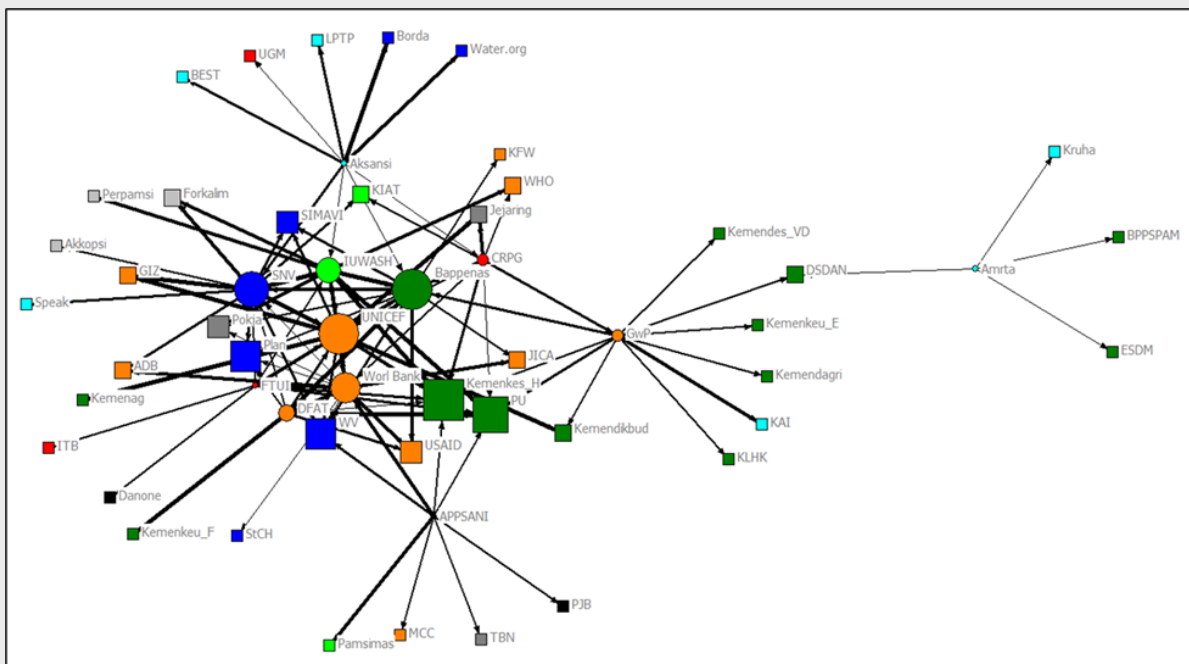


Figure shows tie strength between WASH stakeholders where node colour represents organisation type (Association = Light Grey, Development Partner or UN agency = Orange, National Program = Light Green, Network = Dark Grey, Government national = Dark Green, International NGO = Dark Blue, Local NGO = Light Blue, Private Sector Organisation = Black, Research/Education institute = Red), shape represents organisation completion of survey (Completed survey = Circle, did not complete survey = square), size of the node denotes in-degree where the larger the node, the greater the in-degree of that node, and the thickness of the line denotes strength of tie where the thicker the tie, the thicker the line and the more frequent interaction between the two organisations

In Indonesia, three key players (CRPG, Aksansi and Appsani) emerged through the SNA which altogether have access to more than three-quarters of the network and could potentially act as knowledge-brokers in the network. Similarly in Peru, five key players were identified to each hold unique networks, that can access more than half of the 63 nodes within the network. The SNA demonstrated significant room to strengthen the cohesion of the WASH networks, which is an important basis for considering how to also improve mutual accountability across WASH stakeholders.

Three common issues emerging from the case studies that constrain the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder platforms in WASH are the **fragmented nature of the WASH sectors, resourcing, and gaps in representation**.

The **fragmented nature of WASH** presents particular challenges for multi-stakeholder platforms. The concept of WASH integrates three issues – water, sanitation and hygiene - that each have multiple service delivery models across rural and urban contents. In Somalia for example, the two national government institutions that govern the WASH sector are the Federal Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH). There is overlap in the responsibilities of the two institutions and weak coordination between them. In Kenya, there has been confusion over roles and accountability for sanitation, with the recent shift of the sanitation department to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (so now the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation or MoWSI) and establishment of sanitation directorate at MoWSI seen as a positive step towards streamlining the sanitation mandate in government.

Most case studies found **gaps in resourcing** for the functioning of multi-stakeholder platforms (e.g. Kenya and Peru) and in some this has led NGOs or development partners to take the helm rather than government. In some cases, these organisations have the resources and were able to prioritise such coordinating activities. Where this happens – the WASH Cluster in Somalia and the role of UNICEF are the most obvious examples – these organisations have special responsibilities and challenges to work towards the development of capacities and driving government leadership of such processes. As identified in Kenya, there is always a risk that platforms will be undermined by organisations pushing their own agendas.

Gaps in representation were also identified in some countries such as private sector involvement in key platforms in Kenya, Bangladesh, and in some cases NGOs and research and learning institutions such as in the case of Burkina and Peru. In Peru, the government participates in platforms, but with very high levels of turnover in staff. All the platforms in Peru expressed a strong interest to dialogue with the *Ministerio de Vivienda, Construcción y Saneamiento* (MVCS) but participation by the MVCS in practice was found to be challenged by high staff turn-over. The need for representation to span national and local contexts was highlighted in Bangladesh (and Box 4 illustrates one way the gap is being bridged).

Box 4: Spanning national and local levels

The Bangladesh study highlighted the role of national organisations in strengthening local civil society organisations. The Citizens Platform for SDG is a platform formed by 104 organisations across the country to work towards reaching the SDGs. The secretariat of the platform is hosted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The Platform provides an opportunity to track the progress of SDG delivery; sensitise policymakers towards challenges in implementation; bring transparency in the implementation process; and facilitate exchange of information and coordination among all those working on the SDGs in Bangladesh. The platform mainly consists of NGOs, CSOs, research organizations and the private sector. According to participants, although this platform focuses on all targets of SDGs, recently it has been actively working on SDG6. They still lack reports of their activities in this sector.

Accountability mechanisms and WASH

Seeking to improve the performance of multi-stakeholder platforms, existing accountability mechanisms in countries can potentially be used or built on to develop mutual accountability⁵ between national WASH stakeholders. The most important accountability mechanisms within countries were identified. One of the questions in the online survey asked about mechanisms used to hold stakeholders accountable to plans and commitments in the WASH sector. Table 1 shows a summary of the 43 responses received to this question, with meetings of various kinds, platforms such as committees and roundtables, and reports being the most mentioned groups of mechanisms.

Research question: What are the most important accountability mechanisms...that influence WASH actors at national level?

Table 1: Mechanisms used to hold stakeholders accountable to plans and commitments in the WASH sector - combined responses from online survey across all six countries (grouping based on words used in survey response)

Mechanism	No. responses
Meetings (sector coordination, partners, interagency, working groups, cluster)	7
Committee/ platform/ roundtable/ group (e.g. aid effectiveness group, national SDG steering committee, general assembly)	7
Reports (Impact reporting, sector performance, voluntary, reports to municipalities, local govt to management, activity reports, implementation)	7
Sector framework/ sector dialogue framework	4
Plan or planning (gap closure plan, joint planning, annual performance agreement)	4
Joint objectives, targets and goals (e.g. for National Sanitation Plan, groups of organisations with common interests)	3
Annual forum or conference	2
Budget oversight or monitoring processes	2
Mapping of Organizations and what they do	1
Joint Programme (e.g. Programa Agua para Todos)	1
Regulations	1
Other	4

Some of the specific examples identified from the six countries and summarised in Table 2 to further illustrate the wide range of mechanisms that are potentially available.

There was however little practice identified across the cases in the use of any such accountability mechanisms to drive mutual accountability between stakeholders. There was rather a much stronger developed practice of upwards accountability to government, and in some countries, public accountability to citizens. In **Indonesia** for example, government was considered publicly accountable and development partners and NGOs report to government. Government here has well established practices of internal upwards-focused accountability. But the government does not have obligations to be mutually accountable to other stakeholders. **The existing multi-stakeholder platforms in Indonesia are intended to facilitate communication between WASH stakeholders, but do not enable mutual accountability between them.**

⁵ See Willets *et al.*, 2021 and the part 1 research report for further discussion of mutual accountability.

Here the case study recommended a forum for mutual accountability suggesting this need not be a completely new forum, but the existing multi-stakeholder forums (in this case Pokja AMPL or Jejaring AMPL) could be redesigned to facilitate mutual accountability. This was not considered to be straightforward to implement however, with trade-offs identified between strengthening mutual accountability within either a government-led platform (that doesn't include all stakeholders) or the broader platform (potentially detrimental to its more informal character).

Similarly, in **Peru**, the Ministry (MVCS) states in the national WASH policy that its responsibility includes coordination and alignment of actors and the establishment of accountability mechanisms. Accountability is understood in this context as **a one-way responsibility** of the government towards its citizens with emphasis on informing the Peruvian citizens.

Accountability to citizens has gaps. There was a particular challenge identified in holding government accountable in **Kenya**. Here the media can play an important role for example including recently calling out cases of corruption affecting the sector. Examples from Kenya also showed that organisations are likely to be more accountable to project donors than beneficiaries or other sector actors and there is always the risk that development partners set the agenda as reflected in the popular expression "he who pays the piper calls the tune".

Availability and accessibility of **reliable information** has been identified as an important condition for accountability (Willetts *et al.*, 2021), and several examples on these gaps and the potential for monitoring to provide a basis for mutual accountability were highlighted in the case studies:

- In **Kenya**, the national framework for sector monitoring and reporting is weak so most sector reporting is driven by external processes such as the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) or the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting System (WASSMO).
- In **Peru**, various government-led information systems include relevant data on the WASH sector. However, those are partial and not easily accessible. Up-to-date information related to SDG 6 and the National and Regional Sanitation Plans is not centrally available on the MVCS website and is difficult to access, particularly by those organisations that do not have the tools and knowledge to tabulate, assess and use the information.
- In **Bangladesh**, there are gaps and inaccuracies in the management data shared on WASH. For example, information in the Dhaka WASA Management Information System (MIS) and Dhaka WASA official website (www.dwasa.org.bd) include audit reports, annual reports and other reports but these are not being updated frequently.
- In **Indonesia**, there is unequal access to information on sector performance yet it is considered essential to enable mutual accountability between stakeholders.
- In **Peru**, there is no platform or mechanism for civil society that could enable their role in monitoring progress and holding the government accountable. Non- WASH specific government-led initiatives for strengthening youth and citizen's participation in monitoring the government on implementation of its objectives may provide good practices for lesson learning.

Table 2: Examples of accountability mechanisms identified by country case studies (selected to illustrate a range of mechanisms not by importance)

Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Kenya	Indonesia	Peru	Somalia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG tracker established by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) in partnership with the Cabinet Division and the Prime Minister's Office providing updates on SDG6 progress WASH Budget tracking and open budget meetings at local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reports (and their discussion in multi-stakeholder platforms CNP-PNDES, CDS-EEA) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system Civil society engagement e.g., engagement and advocacy focused campaign promises by presidential candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memoranda of Understanding between stakeholders, committees and working groups Project reporting to donors and project evaluation Monitoring public expenditures and reporting corruption by the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reports from relevant ministries (e.g from Bappenas (Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Public Works, and Ministry of Health) BPKP (government's internal auditor) reports Complaint to Ombudsman (https://ombudsman.go.id/pengaduan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government led non-WASH specific Information systems: e.g. El Sistema Integrado de Administración Financiera (SIAF), A national system for monitoring progress the SDG's and the national survey on budgetary programmes (ENAPRES), la Consulta amigable y el Sistema Invierte PE Government led WASH monitoring systems for rural (DATASS). Good practices/ government enabled mechanisms for citizen participation and control e.g., Centro de Atención Ciudadano (CAD) monitored by the Ministerio de Vivienda, Construcción y Saneamiento (MVCS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National WASH cluster meetings and action points WASH Project approvals by government Reporting to Audit General office for government activities

COVID-19 and its impacts on collaboration and accountability in WASH

By the end of January 2021 when this report was written, over 100 million COVID-19 cases had been reported worldwide and there were over 2.1 million deaths (source: John Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Centre). Across the study countries, the most cases and deaths were reported initially in Peru, where deaths escalated rapidly in mid-2020 and later in Indonesia (Table 3 provides an illustration of impacts based upon publicly available reported data, which has limitations).

Table 3: COVID-19 impacts in study countries (in January 2021). Source: John Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Centre

	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Indonesia	Kenya	Peru	Somalia
Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (Rounded to nearest 1000)	533,000	10,000	1,020,000	100,000	1,110,000	5,000
Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 deaths	8087	120	29331	1753	40272	130

All of the study countries implemented lockdown measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 during the period March-May 2020, and strict measures had been retained in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya and Peru until the time of writing in January 2021 (see Figure 3 which provides an illustration of the stringency of lockdowns measures based on indicators such as travel bans, workplace and school closures, and where 100 is the most severe). Burkina Faso and Somalia had relatively few restrictions in place by January 2021.

Research question: What has changed ... with respect to coordination and accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic?

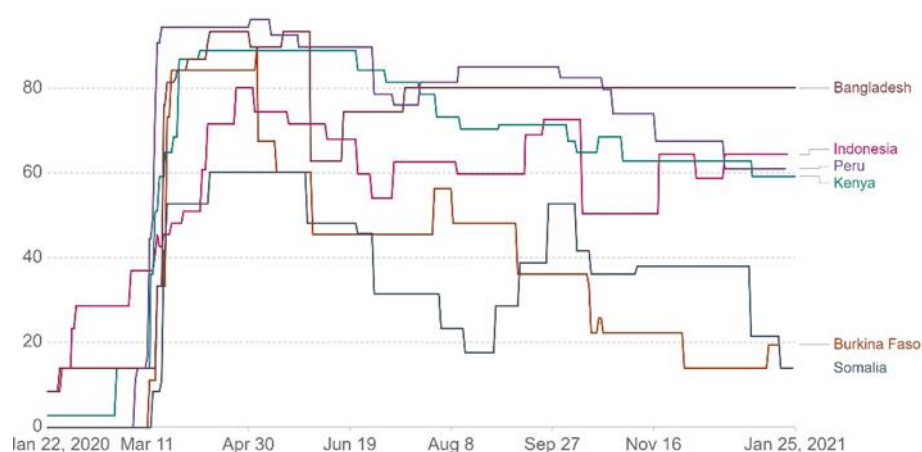


Figure 3: COVID-19 Government Stringency Index (Source: ourworldindata.org and Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker)

Improving hand hygiene is an important COVID-19 control measure, triggering major efforts to improve generally poor hand hygiene. At the same time, nearly all WASH related organisations have been affected by lockdown measures and restrictions on travel and work. Box 5 illustrates some of the impacts in Somalia for example.

Box 5: Impacts of COVID-19 in Somalia

COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to essential humanitarian WASH services across the country. It has affected the capacity of WASH Cluster partners to maintain essential water, sanitation and hygiene service provision while these are essential to the prevention and control of the pandemic in communities and health facilities. On the other hand, COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to stress the importance of hand washing and better hygiene practices. Awareness messages on hand washing as preventive measure against COVID-19 have been distributed through all Somali media. Hormuud, the most popular mobile telecommunication service, has put messages onto the cell phone of every person: if you call you will hear that message until the person picks up. But other routine activities have suffered. Just one example has been the halting of the quarterly meetings of Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) in Somalia.

The impacts on coordination and accountability have been mixed. Out of the 90 respondents that answered the question in the online survey, most (36%) said that there was no change in accountability during the pandemic related to WASH, while 29% said that it had improved and 22% said that it was absent or had got worse.

In some countries, like in Indonesia, where accountability was not directly impacted by the pandemic, it was found that new and virtual ways of communication between sector stakeholders facilitated easier communication with government stakeholders.

The pandemic has highlighted the lack of reliable information on WASH services in some cases. For example, in Peru, government sought to prioritise WASH services to those without access but were hindered by a lack of reliable information about existing WASH service levels, particularly in rural areas. Monitoring water quality became more difficult owing to travel limitations and difficulties to collect information from the communities. Increasingly, there is also a challenge to monitor the implementation and results of interventions by sector stakeholders. The study also points to some emerging and new opportunities for enhanced coordination and collaboration (see Box 6 for examples from Peru).

Box 6: New opportunities for coordination and collaboration

In Peru, the Covid-19 pandemic provided new opportunities for enhanced sector coordination and collaboration:

- **Enhanced inclusiveness and connectivity.** The progress of remote coordination increased over time with a greater virtual connection. This generated savings in resources for efforts in the sector, especially for actors who live outside the capital and also for actors within the different regions.
- **Coordination at government level.** The two responsible ministries, MVCS and the Ministry of Health, collaborated closely giving priority to prioritise drinking water services to those without access while the Ministry of Health intensified its campaign on hygiene behaviour change.
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration.** UNICEF through the COVID-19 emergency platform and with the leadership of the MVCS and the participation of local and international NGOs, mapped the impacts of Covid –19 restrictions on drinking Water Service Providers, the demands of the systems and the population during the pandemic.
- **Innovation and engagement of academia.** MVCS in alliance with the Swiss Cooperation (COSUDE) and the University of Engineering and Technology (UTEC), initiated efforts to identify the presence of COVID-19 in the wastewater of the cities of Arequipa and Lima. The Technical Agency for the Administration of Sanitation Services (OTASS) launched an O-Emergency app to monitor the supply of drinking water to the population served by the public network in urban areas.

National engagement in the SWA partnership

The study included six countries that are all SWA partner countries, meaning that in those countries at least one of each government's ministries with a responsibility in WASH was an SWA partner. The level of engagement with the SWA partnership and its activities varied significantly among the six countries.

Research question: Is participation in the SWA MAM ... contributing to mutual accountability...?

Commitments have been made as part of the MAM process in each of the countries. However, only in two study countries have members of multiple constituencies made commitments: Somalia where government and UNICEF have both made commitments; and Bangladesh where government have recently added commitments to those made earlier by civil society. In Burkina Faso, Indonesia and Peru, commitments have been made by their respective governments but not by other actors. In Kenya only private sector actors have engaged into the MAM process until recently. No research and learning partners have yet made country specific commitments in the study countries.

Table 4: SWA MAM commitments by country

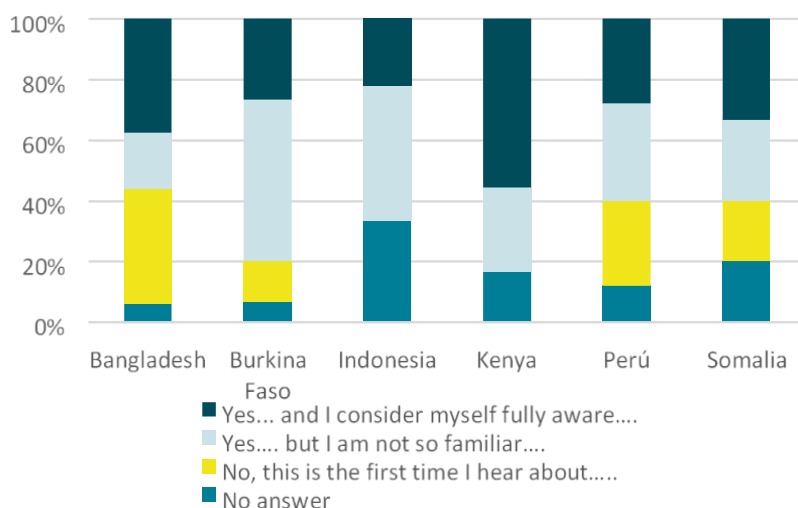
No. of existing commitments in SWA MAM database	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Indonesia	Kenya	Peru	Somalia
Government	5	2	3	-	3	3
Civil Society	5	-	-	-	-	-
Private sector	-	-	-	3	-	-
External support agencies	-	-	-	-	-	3
Research and learning	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: <https://www.sanitationandwaterforall.org/about/our-work/mutual-accountability-mechanism>

Most of the 106 respondents to the online survey had heard about SWA (67%) and considered themselves to be either fully or partially aware about its objectives and activities (see Figure 3). A significantly lower number, some 25% and 19% respondents respectively, considered that they were either fully or partially aware of SWA MAM commitments in the country. About a quarter of respondents (22%) had participated in some way in the SWA MAM processes. Clearly there remains an opportunity to increase awareness and engagement about SWA, but particularly about the MAM process and its relevance at country level. As an example, one interviewee from Indonesia noted that: 'stakeholders have heard about SWA as a global partnership, but they were not aware of its specific activities...'

The largest group of respondents (40%) did not know if SWA MAM makes a contribution to accountability, but very few (2 out of 106 respondents) said it was not useful. Some 18% said the SWA MAM makes a partial or strong contribution to improved accountability. This is low, but likely reflects a combination of a relatively limited number of commitments tabled under the MAM across multiple constituencies in these specific countries and, where commitments have been made, relatively low engagement of stakeholders.

Figure 3: Responses to question 'Are you aware of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership and its activities'.



Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Kenya joined the SWA partnership soon after its establishment, while the governments of Indonesia, Peru and Somalia only joined the SWA partnership more recently⁶. There was no obvious relation observed between the duration of the countries' trajectory in SWA and the level of awareness on SWA and its activities by the countries' sector stakeholders (Figure 3).

The challenge of linking a global network to national multi-stakeholder processes is illustrated well by the example of Burkina Faso (Box 7). This global and national disconnect was also found in the Peru case study. The results highlight interest and a focus on SWA's global agenda (including the webinars, the High-Level Sector Ministers meetings and Finance Ministers' meetings) by the SWA in-country partners, rather than the SWA partners seeking to pursue collaborative efforts nationally.

Box 7: A global-national disconnect in engagement by Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso's relationship with SWA is primarily at the global level and external facing, with weaker linkages made to date to national multi-stakeholder processes (as discussed above these were assessed to be functioning relatively well). Reflecting this, the finance minister has never missed high-level meetings, but the Ministry of Finance has not been present in the national SWA platform for several years. The Government's SWA MAM commitments have been defined by a small group and are not yet well discussed or owned by a wider partnership. While they have been put on the global agenda, the commitments have not been formal items on the agenda of national level meetings. As a result, national accountability mechanisms within the sector do not yet incorporate these commitments.

Fragmentation of WASH responsibilities within the national governments was also reflected in countries' representation in the SWA partnership and is another contributing factor to the above mentioned disconnect. In Burkina, the national SWA Partnership is coordinated by the Director General of Sanitation who reports to the Secretary General while the main sector coordination platform (GTN) is headed by a different Minister or Secretary General. In some countries, key ministries like the Ministry for Health or Finance are not partners, and do not yet participate in SWA. In Kenya, the government has been represented in SWA by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (responsible for sanitation policies) while sector leadership on drinking water was with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation that was not a SWA partner and hence was not as engaged in SWA activities. This has now changed as sanitation has moved to join the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and

⁶ Bangladesh 2010; Kenya 2010; Burkina Faso 2011; Indonesia 2017; Peru 2017, and Somalia 2019

Irrigation, and with it the SWA focal point. In Indonesia, the national planning ministry is a SWA partner, but not the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Public Works and Housing who both have major responsibilities for WASH.

The study results show that awareness on the SWA-MAM is higher and sometimes restricted to those that were directly engaged with the formulation and prioritisation of the MAM commitments. In Bangladesh there was a higher awareness on the SWA MAM commitments among the SWA CSO partners for example. In Peru, only 8% of the participants were fully aware of the government MAM commitments that were prioritised at the level of the government by the MVCS.

each constituency or group of partners records their own SWA-MAM commitment(s) and participation in the identification and prioritisation process of those commitments was therefore found to be limited to relatively few partners within the constituency concerned. From the case study results it is however difficult to gain full insight into the processes and the sequence of activities developed by the constituencies in each country to formulate and prioritize their respective MAM commitments. There is scope for further research in this area.

In Peru, the country commitments in the MAM were proposed by the MVCS (2019) and are derived from the National Drinking Water and Sanitation Plan 2017-2021 (Plan Nacional de Saneamiento), that sets out the government's sector policy objectives for all administrative levels (national, regional and local governments) on wastewater and rural drinking water services. It was difficult to follow how those commitments were selected and who exactly participated in this process. In Burkina Faso, the commitments were defined by the national SWA focal point in the Directorate for Sanitation and have not yet been subject to a formal meeting with the SWA partners in Burkina, nor are they part of the agenda of any of the various multi-stakeholder platforms.

Ideally, the MAM government commitments should be monitored through a national WASH monitoring system. In practice, monitoring the MAM commitments cannot rely on a national monitoring system or process, because the MAM commitments are not yet included in a national plan (Burkina Faso), or the WASH plan from which the MAM commitments are derived, is not supported by a mechanism that systematically monitors implementation. The low level of awareness on SWA commitments by stakeholders, and the loose formulation of the commitments was found to be not helpful in monitoring the commitments, particularly by those stakeholders who were not involved in the MAM process.

Work is already underway to strengthen the linkages between the SWA MAM and national multi-stakeholder processes. In Kenya for example, a joint meeting was held in 2020 where SWA MAM commitments were adjusted. Stakeholders reviewed commitments made by government, that had been drafted and pending for some time (hence not being included in Figure 3 above) and sought to ensure ownership of them by both MoWSI and MoH, and also CSOs, private sector, research and learning institutions and external support agencies. The commitments are now SMART, government-led and, with this initiative, Kenya is the first country to have commitments tabled by all constituencies and aligned. The commitments emphasize monitoring and reporting, financing framework, scaling up rural and urban sanitation, support to counties to implement WASH, and improved sector coordination (see Box 8 for example of revised commitment). Stakeholders at the workshop discussed sector investments that need to be prioritised and presented to the SWA Africa Finance Ministers' Meeting (FMM) in November 2020.

Box 8: Example of revised commitments in Kenya

Original commitment: To strengthen inter-ministerial, inter-departmental and sector coordination through the Technical Working Groups.

Revised commitment: To strengthen sector coordination for improved governance.

Discussion: Coordination is critical to ensure that all the proposed commitments are realized. MoWSI and MoH need to speak with one voice, coordinate other ministries and partners with a stake in sanitation and ensure that all the dormant Technical Working Groups and quarterly meetings are revived.

Commitment 5: Strengthen sector coordination for improved governance by December 2021

Stakeholder	Commitments
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the formulation, sign and operationalise the Water Sector Inter-Governmental Coordination Framework by June 2021 Plan and convene the Annual Water and Sanitation Conference by December 2021
Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate effective and efficient operation of the Sector Inter-Governmental Coordination Framework by June 2021. Partner with GoK on the Annual Water and Sanitation Conference before, during and after the conference by December 2021.
Non-State Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and monitor the finalization of Water Sector Inter-Governmental Coordination Framework by June 2021 Support government and mobilize CSOs for the Annual Water and Sanitation Conference by Dec. 2021; and make presentation on the CSOs contributions to the Water Sector.
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and participate in 8 No. TWGs, meeting and workshops across different platforms to facilitate increased integration of WASH services across different contexts In collaboration with other key stakeholders (e.g. Ministries, regulator) work of ensuring creation/finalization of clear institutional framework and regulatory frameworks for the WASH sector.

MAM commitments are expected to be drawn from the national sector plans or strategies, developed by governments and other actors through multi-stakeholder planning and review processes. The ambition is that all SWA partners collaborate in the making of commitments, and in reporting back on their actions and achievements relevant for these commitments. With implementation of the MAM, the SWA partnership aims to support and re-enforce national planning and review processes. From the experiences in the case study countries, we learn that the national planning and review processes are challenged by poor sector collaboration and weak multi-stakeholder platforms that need more government leadership, support and funding. The accountability mechanisms lying behind the sector partnerships were one of the weakest elements in sector planning and review processes.

Conclusions

The study addressed four main issues: 1) national multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms in WASH, 2) accountability mechanisms that influence WASH actors at national level, 3) impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on WASH coordination, and, 4) the role of SWA, the MAM, and its contribution to mutual accountability in countries. The key conclusions across these issues were:

1) Sector coordination and multi-stakeholder platforms

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships were found to be numerous and substantial time and resources was being invested. Platforms had different purposes, and sometimes operated in parallel and with overlaps. But overall investments were found to be insufficient, and many platforms were functioning poorly in the face of numerous constraints.
- The fragmented nature of WASH is a challenge but also underlines the need for smart investments in coordinating partnerships. Government leadership in sector collaboration was weakened by gaps in coordination between the different government institutions with a responsibility in WASH. In some cases, this has led NGOs or development partners to take the helm rather than government. Stronger government leadership is needed to further raise the profile of multi-stakeholder platforms and to ensure more investment in their coordination.
- Multi-stakeholder platforms in WASH have space to develop and evolve: Platforms across the study countries are currently more typically focused on dialogue and sharing information exchange, and less on enabling collaborative efforts and accountability. Skills and capacities need to be developed to improve the performance of platforms and develop these wider purposes.

Research question: Is participation in the SWA MAM ... contributing to mutual accountability...?

2) Accountability mechanisms

- Most countries have a wide range of mechanisms that are potentially available to support accountability between stakeholders. Experiences mainly included upward accountability to government, or to donors, and public accountability by governments to citizens (with an emphasis on informing). There was limited practice found in the use of the accountability to drive mutual accountability between stakeholders or corrective actions.
- Most countries faced challenges in availability and accessibility of timely and adequate information and that is likely an important condition for accountability.

3) Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on coordination and accountability

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had mixed impacts on sector collaboration and accountability across the study countries, highlighting the value of partnerships and the importance of having coordination capacities in place, and revealing gaps e.g., in information systems. Across the study countries, and from different perspectives, coordination had variously improved or worsened during the pandemic so the picture is mixed. Opportunities for new and improved sector collaboration emerged as well as opportunities to raise the profile of WASH and support COVID-19 prevention through improvements in hygiene.

4) Country engagement in SWA

- The SWA partnership and its global activities were found to be widely known among WASH sector stakeholders in the study countries, but awareness and active engagement around a nationally owned SWA agenda was limited in the six countries studied. The link between existing multi-stakeholder platforms and their potential for the SWA partnership and its national objectives or activities was found to be not yet sufficiently made.
- Participation of country partners in SWA global events was useful to bring country voices into the global arena and contributed to the partners' commitment to the global partnership but was not sufficient for change to happen on the ground,

- SWAs overall engagement to strengthen collective action between these national WASH stakeholders was not yet sufficient or successful in achieving change, but there are opportunities and a great need for this to gain the benefits that follow from alignment and coordination of efforts.
- The SWA MAM has contributed to generating awareness and interest on accountability. The experiences in the countries studied show that the submitted MAM commitments include commitments by partners of one, or only a few, constituencies and that those commitments were mainly formulated and prioritised with limited participation of fellow constituency partners. Ownership of the MAM process at national level in these countries was limited and was not yet closely linked to national multi-stakeholder processes. There is much scope for leveraging the existing multi-stakeholder platforms for a broader stakeholder involvement in the formulation, prioritisation or monitoring of the MAM commitments.
- The government MAM commitments were, in some countries, based on national sector plans and as such part of the broader sector planning process. A challenge was however that national plans often lacked a solid monitoring system that provides adequate and timely evidence on progress in implementation of the commitments. With that, monitoring of the MAM commitments by the national SWA partners in the countries studied was seldom embedded in a nationally driven monitoring and review system, as often monitoring and review systems were weak (fragmented) or not existent.

Recommendations

For the SWA partnership

Looking forwards, the study results highlight the importance of effective multi-stakeholder platforms for collaborative efforts towards nationally agreed sector policy priorities and plans. Stronger government leadership through enhanced commitment by, and better coordination between, the responsible WASH ministries is critical for more effective functioning multi-stakeholder platforms. At national level, SWA partners should put more emphasis on building on and strengthening the multi-stakeholder platforms, or more simply, strengthening interactions between existing SWA partners in each country at national level. The SWA partners could support this by:

- Advocating for a broader and more representative engagement of country actors in the partnership, seeking a broader representation of each of the various constituencies and by encouraging a more representative engagement of national governments, articulated around a nationally defined agenda.
- Strengthening existing multi-stakeholder platforms, advocating for more support, funding and commitment for those platforms and ultimately helping to facilitate a wider purpose that includes mutual accountability.
- Seeking effective ways to achieve high level country support and government leadership of multi-stakeholder platforms and accountability between stakeholders.

MAM implementation

To address those challenges, the SWA partnership should further develop the MAM's approach and implementation with more focus on national adaptation of the MAM process within the context of country planning and review cycles, and the support provided by multi-stakeholder platforms to those cycles. Specific recommendations include:

- To focus support on strengthening the fundamentals of country-level multi-stakeholder platforms as a key enabling factor for mutual accountability. The framework developed by Willetts et al. (2021) in part 1 of the study provides a framework to strengthen these partnership processes and identifies five key elements to strengthen in mutual accountability cycles.
- Related, to give more attention to strengthening national planning cycles, including for example strengthening sector monitoring system as a more central part of MAM implementation. This is commonly identified in existing commitments.
- As intended in MAM design, to prioritise joint or aligned commitments at country level based on agreements by all main sector stakeholders and national plans, instead of individual organisational or

constituency commitments. This way the MAM could promote a broader engagement of the country SWA partners and could more naturally link with existing multi-stakeholder platforms. This ultimately makes it possible to promote mutual accountability at national level.

Follow-up research

There are other opportunities identified for follow-up study and action research:

- Creating a stronger knowledge base in the partnership on effective national multistakeholder platforms and accountability mechanisms including the MAM. Activities could include support to the documentation of good practices and effective multi-stakeholder platforms, further (action) research on enabling factors for sector collaboration through effective multi-stakeholder platforms, enabling implementation of sharing and learning between countries on strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- To gain better insights in the functioning of existing accountability mechanisms and their potential for use and contribution to mutual accountability in the context of effective sector collaboration.
- Amongst others, further action research might build on the piloting of SWA results framework ladders, e.g. to develop additional indicators (with similar ladders) to guide proposed phase 2 action research drawing on the framework developed by Willetts *et al.*, 2021).

Next steps

Based on the above, a key short-term agenda for different SWA bodies and platforms might include:

- All SWA partners to actively promote, support and engage in improving sector collaboration and mutual accountability in the countries where they operate.
- SWA government partners to champion working in multi-stakeholder partnerships and invest in coordination.
- The SWA Steering Committee to more proactively and strategically support the MAM based on what is required for effective implementation, including ensuring the needed resources for continued research and learning for improving the MAM.
- The SWA Secretariat to develop the MAM design and implementation based on the insights of the study, with more emphasis on national ownership in the design and follow-up of the national MAM process, and alignment and strengthening of multi-stakeholder platforms and national planning cycles.

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